

Central Administration Office in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

About UCA

The University of Central Asia (UCA) is an internationally chartered university dedicated to advancing the sustainable development of mountain societies through education, research, innovation, and regional engagement. UCA works to improve the resilience, prosperity and quality of life of mountain communities across Central Asia and beyond. Founded in 2000 as a private, not-for-profit and secular institution, UCA was established through an International Treaty signed by the Presidents of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan and His Late Highness the Aga Khan IV.

UCA's mission is to promote the social and economic development of Central Asia, particularly its mountain regions, through internationally recognised education, applied research, innovation and the preservation of cultural heritage. UCA's development approach combines research, education, and local engagement to address region's development challenges. Its long-term presence in mountain communities allows the University to connect knowledge and skills with practical solutions, while building local capacity, sustained beyond individual projects.

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KEY DEVELOPMENT ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2025

Restoring Irrigation and Community Resilience in Khorog

In partnership with the Khorog Mayor's Office and local community, UCA's University Town Development (UTD) programme restored a critical 250-metre section of the 1.5-kilometre Dasht irrigation canal. More than 150 residents worked across four community days to install the pipeline over difficult mountain terrain. The gravity fed system now delivers 40 m³ of water per hour, restoring reliable irrigation to over 164 households and UCA's agricultural land. By reducing water loss and reservoir-filling costs by 75–95%, the intervention strengthens food security, land stewardship, community participation, and institutional trust in Khorog.

***SDG 6**: Clean Water and Sanitation*

Building Municipal Resilience Capacity in Naryn

Through its Certificate Programme in Urban Resilience (CPUR), UCA's Naryn Urban Resilience Programme equipped around 40 professionals in Naryn with practical skills on climate, environmental and urban resilience. Following the completion of 17 applied modules, participants developed eight proposals, five of which received funding for implementation. One grant activity included planting 31 trees at School No. 9, benefiting approximately 600 members of the school community. Another small grant initiative delivered emergency-preparedness lessons and quizzes to around 1,000 schoolchildren and community members. Overall, CPUR funded five small-grant initiatives reached 5,000 residents. Participants also contributed to the preparation of the five-year Green Naryn Programme and developed 17 green-economy actions, such as prioritisation of tree planting, green space maintenance, irrigation planning, and other decisions, driven by training learning outcomes. Those actions were incorporated into the city's Socio-Economic Development Plan, which demonstrated how practical learning can directly inform municipal action.

***SDG 11**: Sustainable Cities and Communities*

Advancing Women Entrepreneurs in Afghanistan

UCA's Afghan Women Access to Knowledge Economy (AWAKE) project funded by the Bill Gates Foundation, expanded economic opportunities for women in Afghanistan by combining entrepreneurship training, mentorship, research, and targeted financial support. The programme reached 3,428 learners across 23 provinces, including 3,265 women through 155 training intakes, and supported the creation of 887 small businesses. These enterprises generated an estimated 1,774 additional jobs for women, extending benefits beyond direct participants. In the entrepreneurship component, 106 women received dedicated mentoring and developed business plans and 20 received micro-grants to launch or expand businesses across sectors including agriculture, handicrafts, food production, and services and overall, 1,400 women completed wider entrepreneurship training. Participants reported increased incomes, expanded customer bases, and greater use of digital platforms to market products and secure sales. Survey of 1,412 women across seven regions showed improved access to mobile phone and internet.

***SDG 5**: Gender Equality*
***SDG 8**: Decent Work and Economic Growth*

Expanding Skills across the Region

In 2025, the School of Professional and Continuous Education (SPCE) enrolled 28,573 course participants across Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, and Afghanistan. In Kyrgyzstan, eight of 100 entrepreneurship trainees received grants to develop or expand their businesses, while 140 teachers and 100 civil servants received professional training. In Kazakhstan, 139 schoolteachers gained skills in using artificial intelligence in education. Despite continuing restrictions in Afghanistan, 4,238 women accessed SPCE courses, representing nearly 40% of national enrolment, and four female teachers returned to work following engagement with community leaders and local authorities. In Tajikistan, SPCE reached 13,590 participants and raised $ 6,905 to support vulnerable learners, while its Bokhtar Learning Centre was named Khatlon's Best Learning Centre for the second consecutive year.

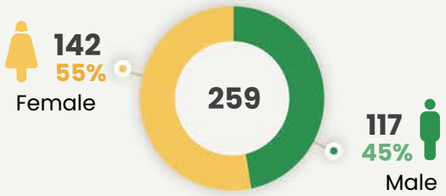
***SDG 4**: Quality Education*

UCA
UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL ASIA

University of Central Asia
Development Facts at a Glance
2025

UCA DEVELOPMENT STAFF

Total Development Programmatic Staff

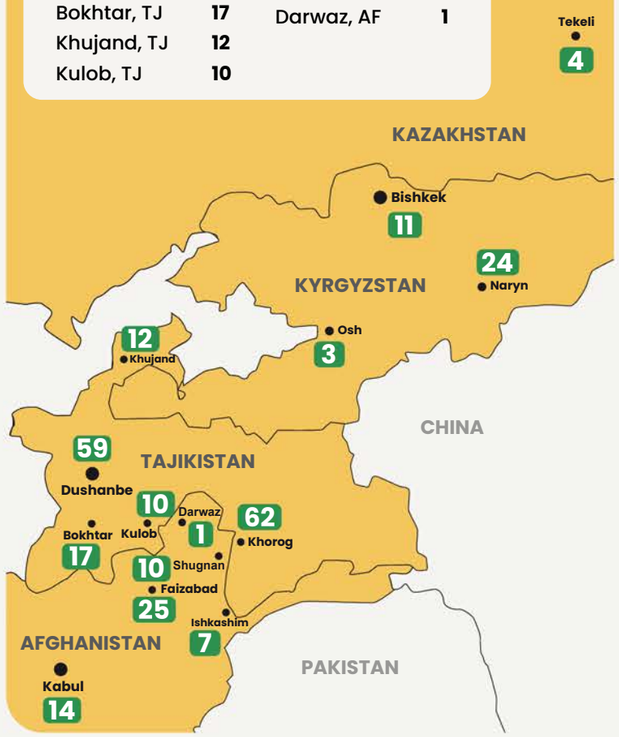


Development Programmatic Staff by Nationality

Tajikistan	**160**	(62%)
Afghanistan	**57**	(22%)
Kyrgyzstan	**38**	(15%)
Kazakhstan	**4**	(1%)

Development Programmatic Staff by Location

Naryn, KG	24	Tekeli, KZ	4
Bishkek, KG	11		
Osh, KG	3	Faizabad, AF	25
		Kabul, AF	14
Khorog, TJ	62	Shugnan, AF	10
Dushanbe, TJ	59	Ishkashim, AF	7
Bokhtar, TJ	17	Darwaz, AF	1
Khujand, TJ	12		
Kulob, TJ	10		





Artificial Intelligence training
for schoolteachers in Tekeli, Kazakhstan.

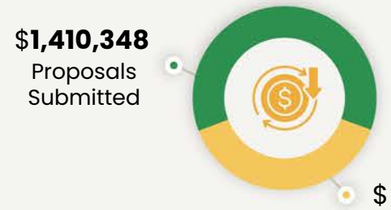


Erzhan Tolobek uulu crafts
traditional leather saddles and accessories
in his workshop in Naryn, Kyrgyzstan.



Teaching Knowledge Test for preparation
course participants in Kulob, Tajikistan.

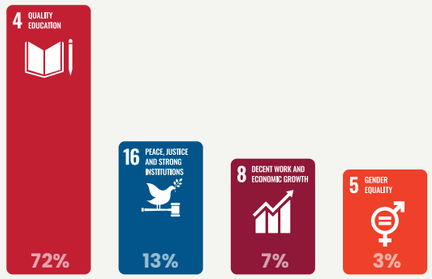
DEVELOPMENT GRANT CAPTURE 2025



Funding Agencies 18

Bilaterals	31%	$272,634
AKDN	31%	$271,866
Multilaterals	23%	$204,116
Other (NGOs, Academia, etc.)	14%	$127,795
National Governments	1%	$12,410

Top SDGs in Development Projects



Quality Education · Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions · Decent Work and Economic Growth · Gender Equality

Key Development Grant Themes

Employment
Business & ICT Skills · Digital Marketing
Professional Development
Women's Economic Empowerment
English Language Training
Regional Outreach · STEM Education
Migration & Displacement
Community Recovery
Border Security Personnel

DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES 2025

School of Professional and Continuing Education Enrolments

Short-Term Programmes	15,482
Short-Term Courses	6,471
International Projects	4,468
Seminars	911
Professional Development Courses	544
Outreach Programmes	374
Certificate Programmes	224
TVET	99

University Town Development Initiatives

- Contribution to the Khorog Development Plan (2026-2030)
- Stronger digital infrastructure through Naryn Smart24 initiative
- Youth-led solutions in Naryn and Khorog

Mountain University Partnership Initiatives

Naryn State University
Dairy production resumed;
Ecotourism research

Khorog State University
AI laboratory established;
Library software development

Karakoram International University
Glaciers & climate change research;
Kitchen lab & student café