

# Salam Alum osce ACADEMY in Bishkek

OSCE ACADEMY ALUMNI MAGAZINE

“I believe that transformation of our societies is possible only when voices of all are heard and every group is represented equally. IDEA is a mission-driven organization that prepares young advocates who use non-violent means to bring positive changes in their communities.”

Alumna of the Year 2017  
Elvira Kalmurzaeva '15  
(pg 7)

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Dear Readers,

We are pleased to present our seventh issue of the Alumni Magazine SalamAlum.

This year, 2017 has been filled with Academy and alumni events and achievements. The OSCE Academy welcomed a new Director Dr. Alexander Wolters and new Finance/Administrative Manager Ms. Lilia Melzetedinova.

Two of our graduates had the opportunity to experience professional engagement provided by the OSCE Academy – internship at the State Agency for Investment and Export Promotion under the Ministry of Economy of the Kyrgyz Republic and fellowship at the Secretariat of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly International Secretariat.

The Junior Public Officers Programme in Afghanistan proved to be a success therefore the Academy has signed a new Agreement with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan regarding the internships of graduates for another five years.

The Academy’s Partner Institutions, Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) and Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP), continue to provide unique opportunities for our alumni. Some of the experiences are shared by alumni in this magazine. The Alumni Network continues to develop academic and thematic activities to meet the interest of alumni and attract more new partners and donors.

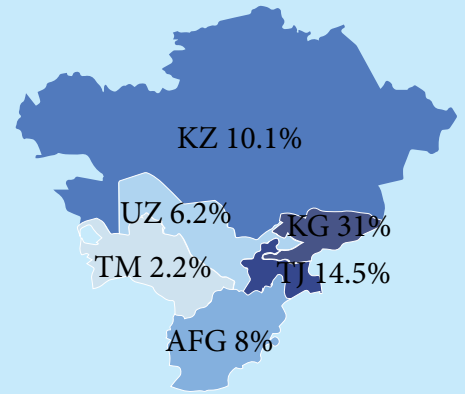
OSCE Academy is proud of the achievements of its alumni. This issue highlights some of the success stories of our graduates who are working in different spheres, including civic engagement, work in the governments and academia.

Our sincere gratitude goes to the OSCE, the OSCE participating states and especially to the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Norwegian Institute of Foreign Affairs (NUPI), which specifically fund the alumni activities of the OSCE Academy

**Victoria Orazova,**  
*Alumni Affairs Coordinator*

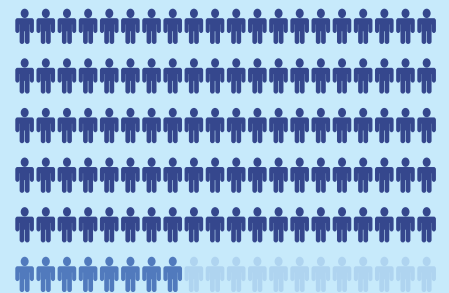
## Alumni Network in Numbers

### Geography



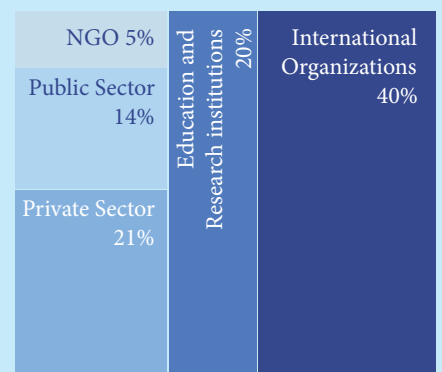
Out-of-Region 28%

### Employment



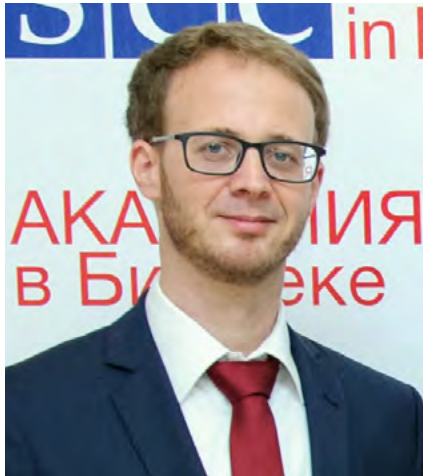
- Employed 80%
- Continue Education 8%

### Employment by Sectors



The data provided illustrates the general statistics, which is based on the results of the Alumni Survey 2017 and contains information on 330 alumni.

## OSCE Academy Updates



### Dr. Alexander Wolters

*New Role, New Challenges, New Opportunities page 5*

In March 2017 the OSCE Academy installed a new Director, Dr. Alexander Wolters, who joined the Academy in August 2013 as a Visiting Professor, through the partnership between the OSCE Academy and the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). Dr. Wolters was, at that time, teaching Political Theory, Contemporary Security Issues, and European Politics to students of the MA in Politics and Security Programme.



### Ms. Lilia Melzetdinova

In July 2017 the OSCE Academy welcomed new Finance/Administrative Manager Ms. Lilia Melzetdinova. Lilia holds MBA from the Management Academy under the President of KR (2006), Diploma in Management of Marketing, HR, Advertising, PR and Finance from Kyrgyz-Russian Slavonic University in Bishkek (2002) and Higher education in World Languages Faculty from Osh State University (1998). Before joining the team of the OSCE Academy Lilia worked with the UN Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) Secretariat Support to Joint Steering Committee and Peacebuilding and Recovery Facility (PRF) projects and UNDP in Kyrgyzstan.

## Junior Public Officer 2017

In 2017 first Junior Public Officer, Alan Mamatov '16 (MA in Economic Governance and Development Programme) completed the internship at the State Agency for Investment and Export Promotion under the Ministry of Economy of the Kyrgyz Republic, under the Agreement signed on 16 June 2016.



*“The JPO programme developed by the OSCE Academy in Bishkek is truly a unique experience for a young graduate and a precious addition to a master’s degree. There, I received a chance to enhance obtained knowledge with practice, and participate in promoting large-scale investment projects. Moreover, as a JPO from the OSCE Academy, I was constantly given complicated tasks on the same level with the experts of the agency. I encourage our prospective graduates to apply, and would like to send my warmest gratitude to the OSCE Academy for organizing such powerful opportunities for its students.”*

**Alan Mamatov**

# New Role, New Challenges, New Opportunities

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*Dr. Alexander Wolters has been part of the Academy for several years, teaching courses to MA in Politics and Security students, but in this interview he will share his views on the Academy from a new position.*

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**Q.: Dr. Wolters, congratulations on your appointment! Alumni and students were happy to hear that you are now the Director of the OSCE Academy. What was your reaction when it happened?**

**A.:** I was both relieved and excited when I got the final news. Relieved that a long process to get ready and to prepare for this position was finally met with a positive result; and excited knowing that I was entering now a new stage in my professional career. Even more so, I was very much looking forward to head the Academy and to engage with project work and the development of new educational programmes for our institute.

**Q.: As a professional, what are the challenges and opportunities you face in this position?**

**A.:** The challenges were and are multiple and most of them I face because I find myself in a position where management questions occupy me for most of my time. I believe that is less surprising considering that in the past I concentrated on teaching and research. Today, as director, questions of budgeting and human resource management, of institutional development and visibility, are constantly re-appearing on my agenda. And these are both challenges and opportunities, since even when faced with new complexities I also always learn something new and gain invaluable experience.

Second, if we turn to the Academy, in the broader context in which we operate, has changed and is still changing. Events

and developments in the OSCE world affect our institute and compel us to reach and to further develop our institutional structure and to reach out to new partners and to find additional support. Combined with my vision of the Academy as a full-fledged graduate institute, this requires that we reform ourselves, build up our own capacities and start developing ideas for new programmes. I am glad to be in this quest together with an extremely professional team that likewise seeks to move the Academy to a new level. As it happened, we just received, after long and intensive preparations from the side of our colleagues, an unlimited accreditation for our MA in Economic Governance & Education programme. This stands as one of the examples of our successful work at the Academy to make our programmes sustainable and also underlines the solid grounding of our institutional framework.

**Q.: The OSCE Academy is a well-established institution, but you probably brought new ideas on further development of its activities. What are they?**

**A.:** As mentioned above, my vision of the Academy is that of a graduate institute. That means that I hope we will manage both to expand our MA programmes toward a third one and, with the support of partners abroad and here in Kyrgyzstan, to start developing a PhD programme in the field of political sciences. Such plans follow our attempt to engage more into opportunities to organize educational exchange with partner universities and institutions in Europe via Eras-

mus+, the EU funded programme to facilitate such projects. I hope we will be able to offer to students the opportunity to visit partner universities in Europe for module classes and perhaps, at some point, full semesters. All that requires a lot of work and preparation, but I am hopeful that we will fill our first application coming in Spring. And third, but not least, a change that I would like to see realized at the Academy is the establishment of full-time faculty positions. For quite some time our Academy has been host to many visiting professors and very much benefited from their insights and their commitment. In addition to our guest lecturers I want to have faculty members that stay with the

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*“Even more so, with our location in Bishkek and with students and scholars from the whole region and from further afar, we form a unique community at a special place to make this engagement an intellectual adventure of its own.”*

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Academy permanently and help us attract partners and projects, work towards institutional outreach in Bishkek and towards the region, and also allow us to provide regular access to advisors and supervisors for our students.

**Q.: How do you see the importance of the OSCE Academy in nowadays wider Central Asian region?**

**A.:** I believe the Academy and the work we do is more relevant than ever. Our world is transforming and the international relations regime that we thought solid and lasting has been severely shaken. We only begin to form a better understanding of those new and

often frightening dynamics and the developments and events they trigger. Here at the Academy we sit down with new efforts to engage into this formation of a better understanding. Even more so, with our location in Bishkek and with students and scholars from the whole region and from further afar, we form a unique community at a special place to make this engagement an intellectual adventure of its own. Here at the Academy people meet that are exposed to these changes, often in dramatic ways, yet also best prepared to work and deal with in the years to come. I think that makes our Academy a very exciting place and the programmes we run most relevant to our students, but also, to all who care about our chances to manage the changes around us to all our benefit.

**Q.: What would you wish/advice to our alumni community?**

**A.:** I would like to wish that our alumni community stay connected among themselves, with our partners close by and far away, and of course with our Academy, our colleagues and our staff. I think in order to be a community we need to actually care for our connections, to make sure to come together in real life (not only via social media – though this is important too) and to conceive and develop new projects. I hope we will find more and new ways to reach out to our graduates and I invite our alumni to come to the Academy with their suggestions and ideas and to sit down with us and together think how to realize those ideas in the best possible way.

# Idea to have an **IDEA**



*Elvira Kalmurzaeva is a graduate of the MA in Politics and Security, class of 2015. This year Elvira received the Alumna of the Year 2017 Award for her professional achievements, her enthusiasm and contribution to the development of the youth of the region. During her studies, Elvira was one of the most active students and after the graduation started realizing her ambitions further. Today Elvira is the Executive Director of the International Debate Education Association in Central Asia (IDEA CA), who finds time to run marathons, fight for human rights, and participate in many other projects.*

**Q.: Elvira, what is IDEA and why do you think it is important to have it in Central Asia?**

**E.:** IDEA Central Asia is a youth-led for youth organization that empowers young people to actively participate in their community's lives. We aim to build an open and inclusive society by developing critical thinking skills in youth, establishing dialogue platforms and increasing sensitivity towards inequality. IDEA CA uses debate technologies and other various methods and actively promotes peer-to-peer approach. For the last three years, we have trained more

than 3,000 young people from the CIS countries and implemented about 20 projects. The organization is a part of international network with offices in UK, the Netherlands, Tunis, and Macedonia.

We work in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Recognizing the fact that Central Asia has a vibrant political environment and while youth is a majority of our society, it is important that they are able to contribute to policies and community development processes. I believe that transformation of our societies is possible only when voices of all are heard and every group



Participants of the International Ch. Aitmatov Debate Academy

is represented equally. IDEA is a mission-driven organization that prepares young advocates who use non-violent means to bring positive changes in their communities.

**Q.: What is it to be a CEO? Did you face any challenges while managing your organization? And how do you overcome them?**

**E.:** It has been a year since I became the Executive Director and to be honest, it is a constant learning process. There are many things I learned by doing. I am very passionate about the work that we do in IDEA. Stories of our alumni inspire us to keep up our work and feeling that I am part of big changes makes me happy. Since we are youth organization, there is no strict hierarchy in the office. Most of the decisions are taken together with the team. Of course, as a CEO, I have greater responsibilities and make sure that organization is moving in a

right direction in terms of achieving our own strategic goals. It is my first experience managing a team of ten - fourteen people.

Challenges become an important part of my everyday life. I don't see them as a huge problem now, however, I used to panic at the beginning then I realized that it is not the way to handle every situation. At the end of the day, all these issues force me to be more creative. I am a very demanding manager and that's why sometimes it is not easy to get along with me. My first two months were the most difficult. I had to make some very serious decisions and work on building own team. When you work with people it is always delicate; one has to be sensitive to the needs and peculiarities of everyone. I realized that when you are a manager you tend to forget that they are humans with own views in the first place, and then that they are your employees. In our organization it is important that every team

member shares IDEA's vision and understands why our work is valuable. Thus, we constantly remind ourselves about big goals we have put on front of us.

In addition, when you are passionate to contribute to your community, it is often hard to prevent burning out. Field work is the best part of our job, however, I got to experience it very little. In times of burnouts or when I run out of ideas for project proposals, I leave my office work and meet with our participants, interview them and hang out with them. They are really an endless source of inspiration.

I also combine my hard work in the office with sport and parties with friends. This year I managed to run a half-marathon and train for another one. It helps me to concentrate on my own thoughts and clear mind.

**Q.: Did the OSCE Academy experience help you in this uneasy task?**





**E.:** Certainly! Since we are working in the Central Asian region, the knowledge I received about socio-economic and political contexts helps me to define the causes of existing issues and frame our activities. Thanks to the Academy, I also gained a network of people from all three countries. They help me with recommendations and contacts. I became more sensitive to human rights issues, including gender inequality, while discussing with classmates during our seminars in the Academy. Moreover, my Master life taught me how to multi-task and work hard. These skills definitely help me now to manage the organization.

**Q.: In your position, with lots of traveling, you must be a good time-manager. Can you give some hints on how to deal with many issues in a short period of time?**

**E.:** Frankly speaking, I don't know the answer. I, myself, am

trying to find the best way to organize all processes so that we deliver good quality work on time. It sounds so cliché, but I deem that good time management is based on good planning. I make a “to do” list for every day, week, month, quarter and a year, categorize some tasks according to its importance and urgency. I usually start my day with small assignments. Completed tasks encourage me to continue and give more enthusiasm to finish the list.

However, sometimes planning does not prevent some unexpected interventions. I have days when partners want me to have a quick look on an idea and send them feedback right away; donors request to change the event's concept and update it asap; board members need some information; a staff person asks for help with a training module, etc. Sometimes it is 6 pm and I have not completed any tasks that I gave to myself. If you are a planner freak, it is the most horrible thing that

may happen to you. I learned that sometimes it is OK not to control everything and take life easier. Only sometimes though.

**Q.: What are your plans for near future?**

**E.:** I love my work and it is a great privilege to manage a team of brilliant young professionals. I hope to continue expanding our work and contributing to the empowerment of youth. Right now, we are working on development of a curriculum for the Ministry of Education that includes interactive methods of teaching and hopefully very soon we will be able to integrate it into our school system.

Later I want to try politics; maybe I will join one of the government structures or run for office. This is a good time for me to think about my own gaps and skills I have, as well as analyze where I can be helpful the most.

## Alumni in the Public Sector

*Work in the Public Sector provides a chance to bring positive change in the country on the decision-making level. In this issue the OSCE Academy Alumni Network is pleased to publish five stories of alumni from Afghanistan who dedicated their lives to service in the Public Sector.*

**Zahidullah Jalali '09,**  
*MA in Politics and Security  
Programme*

### The school you are attending matters!

I attended one of the elite schools, the Amani High School, which was established by the Afghan and German Governments back in 1924 in Kabul, and had devoted part of the post-school time to participate in private courses to boost my English language and computer skills. It was much about learning, thanks to the full package support provided by my parents. The last year of

your school in Afghanistan is all about how to succeed the entrance exam and get enrolled in a higher education institution, preferably the public Universities. You have to already make your mind up about your future career and choose the field of your interest.

Anyhow, I attended the mentioned exam and I made the necessary score for the Medicine Faculty in the University of Kandahar Province, Afghanistan. At least my parents were happier to see my future profession in the field of medicine, but they probably did not know that I am seeking other opportunities too. Making it to any of the medicine faculties in Afghanistan has never been an easy job and it still remains a highly demanded field of education requiring the highest grades.

An accidental meeting with a school time friend changed the rest of the story. He brought up the issue of scholarship scheme for the undergraduate programme at the American University of Central Asia (AUCA) in the Kyrgyz Republic. It took my special attention and we both went to get the application forms. We basically managed preparing every scholarship requirement

together and we both have been on board until the interview session' but he was not lucky enough to go further. After the preparatory programme, I chose the undergraduate programme ICP (major) and Business Administration (minor) at the American University of Central Asia and that's where the destiny took a different path.

The knowledge obtained at the American University qualified me for the Masters Programme at one of the reputable post-graduate schools in the region, the OSCE – Academy. I did my Masters in Political Science and probably I was the first Afghan to join the Alumni family of the OSCE Academy in 2009. The year at the OSCE Academy has been remarkable for many reasons and it turned to be a gateway for new opportunities. I got acquainted with a couple of well-respected people who later helped to make my determination and dreams come true. The following year I attended the European Training Course in Security Policy at the Geneva Center for Security Policy (GCSP) which had been a significant addition to my knowledge and broadened my perspective on Security issues. And it was there when I received the offer to join the Foreign Service of Afghanistan, which happened right after my return to Kabul.

My work experience at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is a differ-



ent story, which I will avoid to discuss here, but I had the opportunity to serve in different capacities at the Ministry and Afghan Missions in Bishkek and Kiev. In April 2017, based on the nomination of the Afghan Government, all SAARC Member States (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Maldives) approved my appointment as the Director General of the SAARC Arbitration Council (SARCO) with effect from 13 October 2017. SARCO is a specialized body of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), with its headquarter in Islamabad, Pakistan.

I have always felt proud about the schools I have attended and they mattered in every job I have applied for or every position I have been considered for. I never miss a chance to visit them and refresh the good old memories there. And, I also take this opportunity to thank and appreciate my parents, my spouse (Suhaila, Alumna of the American University and OSCE Academy), my respected instructors, the staff members, colleagues and dear friends who have accompanied and remained beside in this long journey and contributed.

### **Hijrat Zakhilwal '12**

*MA in Politics and Security Programme*

**I** was born in Jalalabad, Afghanistan, in April 10, 1986. I received my Bachelor's degree in Political Science, minor in International Relations from the University of Carleton, Ottawa, Canada in 2010, and the Masters of Arts in Politics and Security of Central Asia from the OSCE

Academy, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan in 2012.

In 2010, I joined the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as Monitoring and Evaluation Consultant to managing support team focusing on the National Area Based Development Programme (NABDP) at the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD). Following that I joined the Ministry of Counter Narcotics as Policy and Planning Advisor to the Minister, where I monitored some of the international conventions, and similar movements to formulate policy researched trends in the systems, budgets and social aspect and other programmes to recommend to research and advocacy on ceased drugs.

I also worked briefly with the United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime as a consultant on the development of Afghanistan Drug Reporting System. Following a successful implementation of the drugs reporting system for UNODC, I joined a World Bank-funded programme called Sustainable Development of Natural Resources Programme (SDN-RP) at the Ministry of Mines & Petroleum as a strategic communications advisor.

Since 2013, I became the CEO of the Silkaram Group, and have been responsible for project contract management within Afghanistan, UAE and Canada, preparing annual budget, assessing administrative processes, and maintaining government relations.

Recently, in 2017 I became the first Honorary Consul of Brazil in Afghanistan. The principle objective of the Honorary Consulate along with other functions is to defend the rights and to present assistance, in case of emergency or otherwise, to Brazilian citizens in its jurisdiction, always in coordination with the Embassy of Brazil in Islamabad, Pakistan.



**Zabihullah Mudabber '16**  
*MA in Economic Governance  
 and Development Programme*

**W**hen working, when networking, and when making friends, I try to keep my priorities straight and my moral compass intact. I believe networking is one of the most powerful instruments of personal development, success and leadership.

Before starting my studies at OSCE Academy I was working at the Ministry of Commerce and Industries (MoCI) of Afghanistan as a manager, where I established a strong relationship with my office colleagues and worked to bring about positive change. In 2015 when I was awarded the OSCE scholarship to seek out educational opportunities for personal

growth and get my MA degree in Economic Governance and Development in Central Asia - the OSCE Academy, I decided to make sure that I take full advantage of this professional network and confirm that I find like-minded highly qualified individuals to work together for the common cause of peace, trade and development and building inclusive institutions in Afghanistan.

During my studies at OSCE Academy, I was regularly in contact with my colleagues at MoCI and I was closely following the important events and achievements of the Ministry. Afghanistan's accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) was one of the major achievements in this duration. Since Afghanistan's membership in the WTO was a new ex-

perience for the country with very little practice in multilateral trading system and mechanisms. It led to discussions with my visiting lecturers from the Institute of Law Studies, Polish Academy of Sciences and Norwegian Institute of International Affairs at the Academy and later into Costs and Benefits analysis and my Master's thesis.

We did analysis of Afghanistan's accession to the

WTO and I published my first article "Afghanistan's Accession to the WTO: A Cost and Benefit Analysis". After that, I wrote my Master's thesis on "Challenges and Opportunities of Afghanistan's Accession to the World Trade Organization" which was highly appreciated by the Minister of Commerce and Industries of Afghanistan H.E Mr. Humayoon Rasaw and Deputy Minister for Commerce. The study was an initiative that I have conducted because a significant portion of academic research was missing on the topic at that time. This appreciation and my hard work led to another milestone in my career and the leadership of the Ministry decided to appoint me as the head of the WTO department in the post accession era for Afghanistan.

I am currently the director of the WTO affairs at MoCI and responsible to plan and lead the work of the WTO affairs directorate and report the work of the WTO department to the Minister and Deputy Minister for Commerce. My inspiration and steadfastness for my commitment to utilize my skills and education for the reform of Afghanistan's trade and economic sector emanate from the faith that I have on myself. I believe Afghan youths are the strongest and most powerful force for building a prosperous Afghanistan; and the future of Afghanistan could be different and better if we the youths start serving Afghanistan in the best way.





### **Sona Khal Mohammad '16**

*MA in Economic Governance and Development Programme*

## **Towards Fulfilling my Dream**

**A**t the end of my six years educational journey in US, I decided to come back to Afghanistan and have a part in the reform and development of my Country. But before coming back, I decided to enrich my knowledge and focus my education specific to Afghanistan and its role in the region. Therefore, I chose OSCE Academy as my next path; oblivious that it would be one of the best decisions in my life. I am thankful to the Academy for creating an amazing learning and innovating environment as well as building a lifelong relationship.

The government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan has recognized that Afghanistan has the potential to become the centre of economic integration and

transit, trade and energy in the region. Thus, the government is determined to take care of regional economic cooperation. After the decades of conflicts in the last 16 years, Afghanistan started a new chapter of bilateral relations with its partners within the region and beyond under the frame work of the Joint Economic Commissions. Bilateral cooperation covers Trade, Investment, Education, Health, Cultural and historical ties, Infrastructural projects and broader Economic issue of mutual interest. OSCE Academy equipped me with all the academic and key knowledge to set a step closer to where I am and dreamed to be in the future.

I am currently working with Afghanistan Ministry of Finance- Chief of Staff as a senior specialist in Bilateral Economic Commission Directorate. In this position I am putting my theoretical knowledge from the Academy in a practical work frame. My main job is to facilitate and provide technical

support on convening Bilateral Economic Commissions and prepare reports on regional development projects including progress report, briefing on projects, prepare materials and resources to the Minister for presenting and discussing at the meetings and conferences. Drafting and finalizing agreements and Memorandum of Understandings with the relevant ministries, embassies and internal authorities; meanwhile, analysing Afghanistan economic relations and growth with the partner countries are other aspects of my working area. I am deeply grateful for OSCE to pave the way to reach my goals and am eager to leverage my education, experience and abilities attained from the Academy to make a significant contribution in the process of building my community and development of my country.

**Sharifullah Danesh '16***MA in Economic Governance and Development Programme***I chose staying over migration**

I graduated from MA Economic Governance and Development in 2016. I am currently studying my second masters through Chevening Scholarship programme 2017-18. I am studying 'MA International Development Management' at the School of Peace Studies and International Development - University of Bradford in UK.

**Employment**

I have had worked for more than 10 years with donor funded INGO projects (2004-2015). In 2015, I decided to obtain my Master's degree and work in public sector. After the successful completion of BBA in Finance, the best option would be to go for an MBA in Finance.

But, the post-2014 challenges including massive emigration of youth from Afghanistan gave me a reason to think of a different academic discipline, because I chose staying over migration. I picked up OSCE Academy's MA syllabus and found it responsive to my professional and career development plan. Luckily, I was granted the scholarship and as committed after the graduation, I started my job at the Administration Office of the President – National Procurement Authority (AOP-NPA) as Senior Administrative Specialist.

**The impact of studying at OSCE academy in Bishkek on my professional and career Development**

The studies at the academy played a vital role in reaching those objectives. It provided me the opportunity to join Ministry of

Foreign Affairs through the JPO programme coordinated by the OSCE Academy. This was a stepping stone to start working in public sector. Moreover, the modules in macro-economic, economic governance and regulations, project management and development studies had already improved my competency to be part of large public policy reform project within Administrative Office of the President in Afghanistan. I started working as Senior Adminis-

trative Specialist with NPA-AOP under Afghanistan Public Financial Management Reform Project (PFMR II-WB). I can proudly say that the assignments and practices during economic governance and regulations modules had enabled me to work in regulatory reform projects in the public sector. Above all, the studies at the OSCE academy made it possible to succeed in obtaining another prestigious scholarship award and become part of global alumni community.

**From International NGOs to Public Sector; Challenges and Opportunities.**

I have worked for more than 12 years with International NGOs in Afghanistan. Working in the public sector was a challenging job for me, particularly when someone like me has never been in a public position or has come from a more convenient working environment. On the one hand, it was my first public service and on the other hand NPA was a newly merged entity within AOP structure. Obviously, newly established public entity come with new policies or reforming former ones. NPA was not only under the process of perpetual reforms in public procurement regulations, but also promoting e-Procurement and e-Governance. During the short period of time, I learned a lot and put into practice what I had learned in my previous jobs and the academic modules at the OSCE Academy. Above all challenges, working in an independent organization like National Procurement Authority (NPA) under the direct administration and collaboration of President's office is highly inspiring and motivational.



There are essential needs for young leadership in the public offices. Therefore, after the graduation from my second master's degree, I would like to return and join public organizations, particularly those promoting public policies and development in the country. Moreover, I would like to be part of an academic institution in Afghanistan to deliver what I have learned throughout the degree programmes.

Eventually, I would like to call upon the Afghan students and graduates at the OSCE Academy and around the world to choose "staying over migration" and be part of the developmental changes in the country.

*The OSCE Academy is always proud of speaking about the alumni achievements and their career developments. Success stories of alumni motivate current and potential students to move further, and encourage new graduates to put up new goals and move towards them. Raushan Bolotalieva '11 and Mingul Seitkazieva '07 describe their experiences before, during and after the OSCE Academy and provide a great example of successful young professionals.*

## Life after Academy

By Raushan Bolotalieva '11,  
Kyrgyzstan

Looking back to my post-graduate studies at the OSCE Academy and then tenure with the OSCE mission in Kyrgyzstan, I would describe this valuable page of my life with a legendary phrase of Britain's Iron Lady. She replied giving a right formulation of success "What is success? I think it is a mixture of having a flair for the thing that you are doing; knowing that it is not enough that you have got to have hard work and a certain sense of purpose." Likewise, OSCE Academy has provided me a good opportunity to get closer

to achieving the success of being a powerful woman in a very male sector of security.

In fact, I have invested much effort and time, which resulted in having professional skills and a certain purpose as well as understanding that now I have to work with much more passion. Knowledge gained through a post-graduate MA programme in Politics and Security, which I completed at the OSCE Academy in 2011, has been put into practice with the police-related projects of the OSCE field operation in Kyrgyzstan to get insight into the sector of security. All these have paved





At the founding conference of the Kyrgyz Association of Women in the Security Sector with Member of the Parliament A. Altybaeva and the Head of the OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek H.E. Ambassador Pierre von Arx

my way to success which is embodied in my becoming Security Sector Governance/Reform and Gender Advisor to Members of Parliament as well as the Deputy Chairwoman of Kyrgyz Association of Women in Security Sector. The OSCE Academy has greatly inspired me with its exemplary study process which is tailored for the needs of Central Asian graduates. In my mind, the Master of Arts in Politics and Security Programme has been designed to perfectly combine taught courses, modules with public lectures and meetings with high-level policy makers from national, regional and international levels. Based on international standards of teaching, the MA programme has immersed its students into the one-year-studies focused on politics, comprehensive security and international relations. It needs to be reminded that young people from Central Asia and Afghani-

stan are admitted to the Academy by means of a highly competitive selection process.

Owing to my studies at the OSCE Academy, I have been selected to do my internship at the Norwegian Institute for International Affairs (NUPI) and later to improve my capacity at the Moscow Diplomatic Academy. I have greatly benefited from my internship at NUPI where my scientific supervisor, Dr. Indra Overland, headed the Department of Russian and Eurasian Studies. Under the guidance of my supervisor, I wrote MA thesis which was entitled “The Osh events: implications for early warning theory and methodology.” In addition to writing my MA thesis, I provided assistance with NUPI projects by developing databases of research institutions, translating articles and contributing to the research work of NUPI fellows. Moreover,

I presented my MA thesis as well as OSCE Academy during meetings with Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The course at the Moscow Diplomatic Academy included many interesting round tables, lectures and discussions held by representatives of the Russian MFA, the faculty of the Diplomatic Academy and OSCE/ODIHR. I have managed to broaden my knowledge of such international organizations as the UN, OSCE and Council of Europe. Sessions held by the OSCE/ODIHR trainers were practice-oriented and therefore, I have learned all necessary information on international election observation. Modules on the OSCE activities including result based management, project management, gender mainstreaming in project management and recruitment in OSCE were of particular interest to me since I



wanted to seek employment with OSCE.

Knowledge received at the MA programme has been translated into tangible work experience with the OSCE mission in Kyrgyzstan where I was engaged in developing, implementing, monitoring and evaluation of the activities within the Police Matters Programme. With the support of my colleagues I have contributed to strengthening parliamentary and civil oversight of police and wider security sector reform as well as establishing the Kyrgyz Association of Women in Security Sector (KAWSS). These efforts have been highly appreciated by my counterparts from Parliament, Government and Ministry of Interior and as a result I have been awarded with certificates, letters of gratitude and medals.

I have closely cooperated with the Forum of Women MPs of the Kyrgyz Parliament to strengthen parliamentary control over the police and law enforcement reform. Accordingly, regional sessions of the Forum of Women MPs have been organized in the south and north of the country to oversee the reform process. The regional sessions to promote the parliamentary control, were consolidated with important decisions. As a result of these sessions the reform has been promoted to such extent that President of the Kyrgyz Republic has approved a decree on Law Enforcement Reform Measures and Inter-Agency Working Groups have been established by the Government and Security Council to develop new legislation on law enforcement of the Kyrgyz Republic.

Moreover, I have closely interacted with the Interior Ministry's Public Council to encourage civil

control over the police and law enforcement reform. As a result, regional sessions of the Interior Ministry's Public Council have been organized. Moreover, I have supported delivery of the public opinion survey carried out at the end of 2014, 2015 and 2016 as an external assessment of the new police performance evaluation system. The survey results compiled in an analytical paper were presented at the Interior Ministry's high level annual collegians and in the regional sessions of the Interior Ministry's Public Council. In addition, I have joined forces with the OSCE Secretariat to make the public opinion surveys available at the organization's website.

I am particularly proud of playing a special role in establishing the Kyrgyz Association of Women in Security Sector (KAWSS). This has been achieved through mobilizing support of Parliament and providing expert advice to Kyrgyz Association of Women Police (KAWP) in its will to unite women from other law enforcement and security-providing institutions. As a result, I have developed a concept paper on establishing Kyrgyz Association of Women in Security Sector (KAWSS) to enhance women's role in security sector governance. On 2 March KAWSS was established at a founding conference organized by the OSCE in cooperation with the KAWP, the Presidential Administration, the Parliament, the Security Council, the Supreme Court, the Government, the Prime Minister's Office, the Interior Ministry and all state security-providing structures. The conference brought together around 100 delegates representing the above-mentioned national stakeholders, civil society and

international organizations.

In my current capacities as SSG/R Advisor to MP A. Altybaeva and KAWSS Deputy Chairwoman, I believe that I could make a better contribution to enhancing women's policy-making role in the security sector of Kyrgyzstan. I have already managed to raise the profile of these issues by messages sent by MP Altybaeva at international conferences organized by OSCE and other organizations. There is still much more to be done in terms of raising the capacity of women and men employed in the security sector, promoting parliamentary oversight of the security sector as well as empowering women's role in public and political life. Moreover, these challenges could also be jointly discussed by women representing security sector from other Central Asian states as a regional co-operation effort.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank all who helped me including faculty of the OSCE Academy, my scientific supervisor, my colleagues from OSCE particularly Pavel Khalashnyuk, Ibrokhimzhon Ulmasov and Shamshybek Mamyrov, for working side by side with me to make our joint work a success. I do hope that three above-mentioned numerous achievements, which are highly evaluated by our local counterparts, will be sustained and strengthened adding value to the KAWSS and the OSCE mission in Kyrgyzstan. In 2018 the OSCE mission will be taking stock of the advances being made in Kyrgyzstan for 20 years of its operation. I believe that these achievements gained with the support of the OSCE will feature this undertaking to become the jewel in the crown.



**By Mingul Seitkazieva '07,**  
*Kyrgyzstan*

**A**ssalam Aleikum, dear readers of the SalamAlum journal,

I was born in Kadamjay, one of the remotest corners in Fergana valley that inherited post-Soviet complex of border, enclaves and inter-ethnic problems between three Central Asian states, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan.

While being a student of Osh State University, I took part at the very first OSCE Central Asian Youth Network (CAYN) in Uzbekistan. Together with my peers from other Central Asian countries, I took part in a research seminar on regional problems.

Afterwards, I joined the Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED) to con-

duct research and gather data to identify potential sources of tension and conflict in cross-border communities of the three southern Jalal-Abad, Osh and Batken oblasts of Kyrgyzstan. To sum up, my personal experience of living close to border and research on border disputes on grass-roots level made me search for possible resolution of tense situation in Fergana valley. My MA in Politics at the OSCE Academy in Bishkek offered me the resolution.

I liked challenging atmosphere at the OSCE Academy with teaching staff from Europe, Australia, Russia and Kyrgyzstan. I found conflict resolution course and transcendence approach taught by Austrian peace mediators and practitioners Gudrun Krammer and Wilfred Graf very insightful in terms of finding efficient

ways in addressing cross-border and inter-ethnic disputes. Another inspirational course at the OSCE Academy, Human Rights in non-European world taught by Dr. Scott Newton from School of Oriental and African Studies in London that gave insights into modern inequality and discourse on priority of political rights vs. economic rights. And of course, many thanks to Dr. Tim Epkenhans for sharing his brilliant systematic knowledge that helped me understanding global and regional phenomena in Political Islam. And finally, I also need to mention the course in history of Central Asia where we discussed the difficult process of national territorial delimitation “razmezhevanie” in Central Asia 1920s by the central Soviet government in Moscow and its impact on creation of enclaves and ethnic

composition of the southern parts of Kyrgyzstan.

Apart from studies, it was nice to live in Bishkek (the city named Frunze in Soviet times) where my parents studied back in 1960s at the Polytechnical Institute and Medical Academy; both of which are located close to the Botanichesky Pereulok and to walk the same streets my parents walked so many years ago. With the only difference that maybe my parents did not feel how fragmented Kyrgyzstani society along regional (north-south dichotomy), ethnic, clan, tribal lines as I felt myself when I lived in the capital of independent Kyrgyzstan in 2006-2007. Often political opposition protests against second president Bakiev's government happened in Bishkek and there were discussion topics at our classes with Dr. Vanessa Ruget which focused on "failed states" theory that helped me better understand society of Kyrgyzstan.

I am proud that I am a graduate of OSCE Academy because it is a unique chance to explore the Central Asian region through friendships, networks and internships. I was lucky to explore Turkmenistan, almost exotic and closed country due to its geographical and political distance to other Central Asian countries. I was invited by the OSCE Center in Ashgabat to participate in its internship programme in summer of 2007. It was a great opportunity not only to learn about OSCE field activities but also to see the beauty of Karakum desert, Caspian sea, Amudarya river and the modern architecture of Ashgabat.

The most important treasure that I received through OSCE

Academy is friends from all over Central Asia and beyond with many of whom I have been keeping in touch during 10 years after graduation through reunions in Bishkek and Vienna.

My post-Academy period is connected with Vienna. After graduation I was invited by the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (OSCE PA) to work as a Research Fellow in its Vienna Liaison Office. The OSCE PA is one of the institutions of the OSCE headquartered in Copenhagen. This Fellowship was a great school for multi-lateral diplomacy and parliamentary cooperation. It is often referred as "the fourth parliamentary dimension" of the OSCE. The OSCE PA Office in Vienna represents Parliamentary Assembly at the Permanent Council, Forum for Security and Cooperation, Committee on Environmental and Economic Affairs, Human Dimension Meetings, Advisory Committee on Management and Finance, meetings with Asian and Mediterranean partners for Cooperation and other OSCE interests that takes place in Hofburg. I encourage all OSCE Academy students to apply for the Research Fellowship of the OSCE PA. I would like to thank OSCE PA staff in Copenhagen and Vienna for this unique opportunity to work and learn about parliamentary dimension of the OSCE.

Currently, I work at the Vienna International Centre based Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) which mission is to eliminate nuclear tests around the world through implementation of its global verification network of seismic, infrasound, acoustic and radio nuclear stations. The CTBTO is the leader in nuclear non-proliferation and global

security. Working in international environment with colleagues from all over the world, I attend various cultural events in the VIC. Also, I want to establish Central Asian club in Vienna International Centre.

Living in Austria, I developed new interests and made personal achievements like learning to bike.

I like Vienna because it is a mix of an international city with the cultural touch of the Habsburg Empire. It is also a city with great musical tradition. However, living in Austria I understood that integration into Austrian society is difficult and in order to understand the Austrian culture I took German and Transcultural Communication courses at the University of Vienna. I also found my family in Austria and I raise multi-lingual children. Living abroad I understood that it is very important to integrate but not assimilate. I also feel important to transmit to my children my Central Asian cultural code. My son Ermek Georg attends Sunday Kyrgyz language courses, organized by the Kyrgyz diaspora. Culturally, Austrians are very formal in address and like acknowledgement titles such academic titles Dr. and Mag. Another cultural feature different from this part of the world I come from is that Austrian women automatically change their last names after marriage and take their husband's last names. In my culture women keep their family names after marriage.

Living abroad, I understood a lot about Central Asia and started to value Central Asian culture.

## One-Year Stay at NUPI

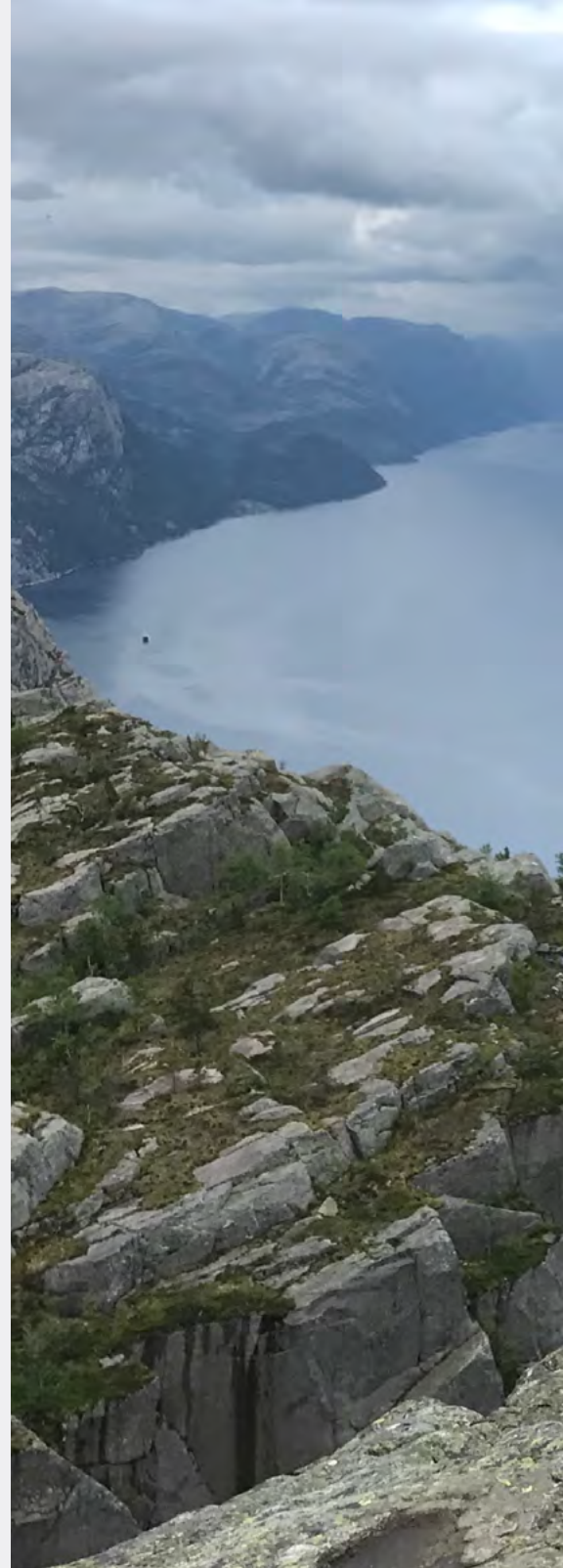
**Galina Khegay '16,**  
*Uzbekistan*

I did my internship with NUPI during my MA studies in 2016. Though it was short and I was overwhelmed by my thesis project at the time, by the end of my stay I applied for the fellowship and hoped to come back. Besides, after Trolltunga hike, it was a must to conquer other spectacular fjords of Norway.

The fellowship was a perfect combination of professional growth, career development, self-study, and fun. I attended events where I met Prime-ministers, Ministers of Foreign Affairs, and Ambassadors; talked to academics whose works I used to study; got to experience tough and, at times, tedious realities of research; traveled to Florence to present my research work on migration at the Euro-

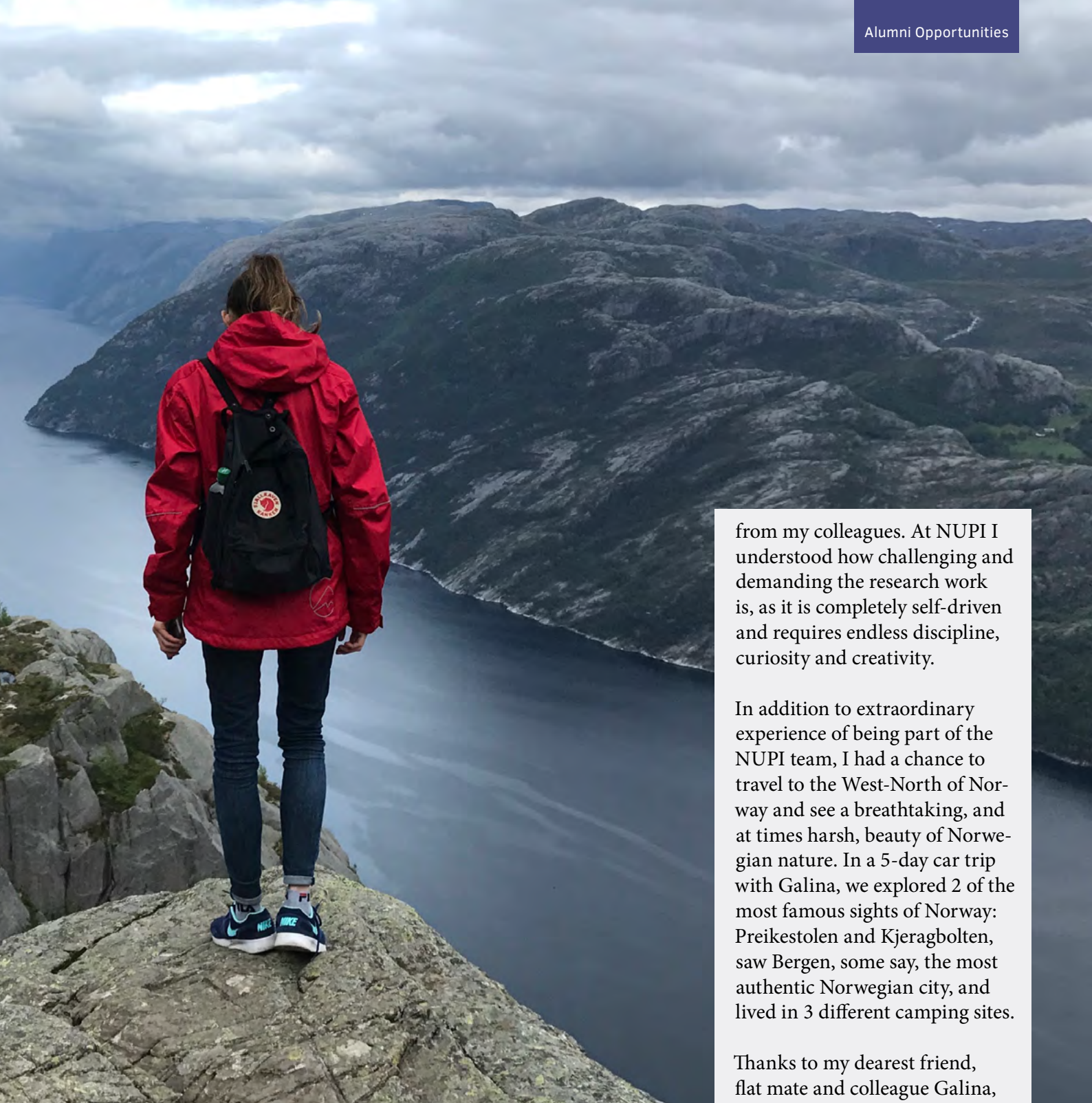
pean University Institute; found new topics of interest and set new goals. None of this would have been possible if the OSCE Academy had not accepted me for the MA programme in 2015, and if Indra Øverland and Helge Blakkisrud had not found me suitable for the position. I am grateful for all of it.

The year inv was exceptional also because I was blessed with the right person next to me - Saule. Together we studied for the torturous GRE, literally got lost in one of the fjords in Norway because of fog, visited haunted places, met extraordinary people, hosted great gatherings at our place, were in different awkward and funny situations, and had hundreds cups of coffee while having endless conversations.



Exploring Norway

Saule Aripova (left) and Galina Khegay (right)



**Saule Aripova '15,**  
*Kyrgyzstan*

**A** visiting research fellowship at NUPI was professionally valuable and a personally enjoyable experience. NUPI provides a highly stimulating environment with seminars, workshops, and varied social events inspiring for scholarly

pursuits of all kinds. We got to listen to outstanding speakers like president of Estonia, Ministers of foreign affairs from Georgia and Moldova, as well as distinguished scholars at NUPI. I had a chance to work on my own projects and get valuable feedback

from my colleagues. At NUPI I understood how challenging and demanding the research work is, as it is completely self-driven and requires endless discipline, curiosity and creativity.

In addition to extraordinary experience of being part of the NUPI team, I had a chance to travel to the West-North of Norway and see a breathtaking, and at times harsh, beauty of Norwegian nature. In a 5-day car trip with Galina, we explored 2 of the most famous sights of Norway: Preikestolen and Kjeragbolten, saw Bergen, some say, the most authentic Norwegian city, and lived in 3 different camping sites.

Thanks to my dearest friend, flat mate and colleague Galina, this year in Norway was full of warmth, support, soulful talks and amazing food. This year will be an unforgettable memory also because of wonderful friends we made in Oslo. It is here that I understood how conscious, responsible and smart people truly make their home country prosperous. I am very grateful for the opportunities the OSCE Academy provides and want to thank our research team at NUPI for this unforgettable experience.

## Fellowship at the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly International Secretariat



Sergey Marinin (middle), with the ex-President of the OSCE PA Christine Muttonen, Secretary General Roberto Montella and other Fellows

### **Sergey Marinin '14,** *Kazakhstan*

**H**i, my name is Sergey and I am an Alumnus of 2014 class (Politics and Security). I am currently in Denmark at the research fellowship programme, representing the OSCE Academy being the first of a kind. My story began almost one year ago before I finally found myself in Copenhagen in September 2017. The decision to try myself in the programme was quite spontaneous and instinctive, like some of the most important decisions in my life. At the time of the application I worked in the field of human rights, which also became possible thanks to the OSCE Academy networking. The entire selection process, change of my arrival date (it was postponed by three months), obtaining a visa took nine months in total. The long wait made me even more

determined to join the fellowship.

Here I am in Copenhagen. The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly International Secretariat staff met me with warmth, introduced me to my main duties and functions. Currently I work at the Media and Communications department, familiarizing myself with various editing programmes and tools and, of course, sometimes I do some research projects. At the moment, I am working on the Annual Report of all election campaigns PA observed. I also have a few 'regions of expertise' assigned to me such as Central Asia, Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova. Among other things I assist in organizing different meetings and conferences. I have not been here for a long time, but I enjoy my stay very much and already

managed to take part in a couple of major events. More to come.

I keep telling all my friends and colleagues that the OSCE Academy in Bishkek is an exceptional academic, educational and training institution. It is even more than that – it is a strong and vibrant community of brilliant people, who support each other, promote the region and contribute to their local societies. The importance of the Academy for the region can hardly be overestimated. And I would like to express my sincere gratitude to everyone at the Academy for the opportunity to become a part of a larger OSCE family, the possibility to learn from top international professionals and for providing me with lots of support through my career.

## European Scholarship for Central Asia to study at the GCSP and University of Geneva



Regina Sokolova (right), with her group mates

**Regina Sokolova '14,**  
*Tajikistan*

### Experience in Geneva is a milestone in my life.

When Ms. Julie Hollins informed me that I was granted a European Scholarship for Central Asia to study at the GCSP and University of Geneva, I had a mixed feeling. But by the end of the programmes I knew that this experience was a milestone in my life.

The learning environment at the GCSP is truly unique and holistic. High-ranking military officials, diplomats, mediators, scholars and practitioners with an extensive international experience deliver presentations on variety of security-related topics, make

dynamic group work and discussions, ask to solve crisis situations and come up with extraordinary solutions. Geneva is the center of international governance and being next to the Graduate Institute I had a chance to attend open lectures and discussions on contemporary security challenges, multilateral diplomacy, global trends in terrorism, human rights and role of state and non-state actors in peace building. The learning experience and shared classes with NISC (New Issues in Security Course) participants not only enriched my knowledge about contemporary security and leadership topics, but has turned my thinking upside down.

Despite the intensive schedule we also had fun. Our group represented a diversity of cultures

and professional backgrounds. Each participant shared his/her distinctive expertise on certain issues and home region. We organized multicultural dinners with national food, participated in social events organized in Geneva where learned about Swiss culture, history and people.

The course succeeded in harmonizing knowledge and experience to prepare us as policy-makers and leaders. I am grateful to the OSCE Academy, GCSP and University of Geneva for learning and networking opportunities. I express my deepest gratitude to GCSP and UNIGE faculty members as well as my group-mates for their contribution to my professional and individual transformation.



*Our magazine is returning back to a nice tradition of sharing love stories. The year of 2017 presented us with new alumni-family Madina Muratova '15 and Sino Ruziev '15 from Tajikistan. We warmly congratulate them on this occasion and share their story with all alumni.*

## Love Story of Madina and Sino

**Q.: Madina and Sino, tell us how did you meet?**

**S.:** Well, let me start first. It was the 7th of March 2014 and I just came back from Cyprus. The first place I have been invited to was Zerkalo where my future beloved Madina Muratova was working as an analytical specialist. To be honest, I thought I made a really weird impression on Madina the first time I met her as I started our first discussion really weird by asking if I had to prepare coffee for the whole office from

the first day. But I think the real spark between the two of us was born in the working process when we started to collaborate together as a team. It was also that time when we found out that we were meant to study the Master degree together in the OSCE Academy. By the way, it was Madina's constant insistence for me to apply as I did not actually plan to continue with academic learning.

**M.:** I would agree with Sino. The first impression was interesting and I never saw a person that would smile so warmly and share a positive energy even during the tough stressful deadlines. It was

a celebration of Women's International Day in our office and he joined the team very quickly. Further, in a month we were assigned to do one research project that was a beginning of our collaboration.

**Q.: You have studied in one class at the OSCE Academy. Did that year play a role in your relationship?**

**S.:** I think it was a very important turning point for our relationship. We spent most of our time in the Academy, shoulder by shoulder, writing papers and preparing presentations. Thus, the time spent in the Academy showed us to what degree and extent we were ready to compromise our personal differences.

**M.:** For me, the year at the OSCE Academy was twice as difficult as I came from a sociological back-



ground with the very general picture of what politics and security is. The first couple of months I was annoying Sino so much with obvious questions on concepts, facts, and theories. At that time, I understood that Sino is a very patient and tolerant person that made me admire him a lot.

**Q.: With your academic backgrounds, do you often discuss/debate on political issues during dinners?**

**S.:** Well, we often discuss political issues not just during dinners but mainly during the whole day. I even began to wonder how Madina can stand me always talking. Indeed Madina and I find each other in harmony while discussing various issues and that makes me love her even more for her understanding and patience.

**M.:** What can I say? I love him for talking about the politics and then starts to debate a lot when it concerns social trends. His interest in world politics and diplomacy always keeps me updated on whatever is going on around the world. My husband is an eternal and never ending source of new information.

**Q.: How do you build your family model? Do you have special roles and duties assigned or every day is different?**

**S.:** Well, we try as much as we can to divide our duties equally and some duties we do together. For example, if Madina cooks I do dishes. If I cook then she does the dishes. On Sundays, we come together for overall cleaning up of our apartment. We also visit our close relatives. One time my side and the next her side. The



decision-making process has been based on the process of joint discussions.

**M.:** Being raised in a Tajik family, comparatively modern, but still patriarchal, I was always not welcomed with my Feminist points of view. Now, I am so happy to be with Sino, who has not only values as equity, equal division of responsibilities, but also practices it in our life. We do everything together, we make decisions jointly and look forward to our future together.

**Q.: What would you recommend to our Alumni Network and students?**

**M.:** Study hard, but never forget to build the network as we are one of the strongest networks in the region. Thanks to OSCE Academy network, we meet so many friends in Tajikistan from the region and it is always tremendously interesting to travel and see our friends from Academy. Also, but not recommend, would wish that everyone will find their soul mate, as I did.

*Development of the Central Asian region is the prior goal of the OSCE Academy alumni. International experience helps alumni to acquire new skills and knowledge and apply them in their home countries. Natalia Lee '13 and Svetlana Dzardanova '09 share about their international experiences and its implication on their professional development.*

## Central Asian Korean in Papua New Guinea



Natalia (on the right) with her colleagues from the Budget Team

**I** was representing Kazakhstan along with my other two classmates in the first cohort of MA Economic Governance and Development programme at the OSCE Academy. It was my first ever experience in many aspects: studying in foreign language and having friends from all over Central Asia and Afghanistan. It taught me a lot about being truly open-minded and the beauty of diversity. Moreover, it opened a door into a development industry for me, as my thesis supervisor later became my employer at

GIZ after my graduation. I had an opportunity to travel across Kyrgyzstan with GIZ and encounter poverty and problems I only heard about, but could never imagine their real scale. It became my passion and gave new meaning to my life to do something useful for development of the country. However, I soon noticed that I was lacking international experience and expertise, so I went on studying and got a scholarship for MSc Development Economics at the University of Sussex, UK.

### ODI Fellowship Scheme

Overseas Development Institute is a research think-tank and based in London. ODI offers fellowship to postgraduate economists and statisticians and is open to everyone from all over the world with a Master's or PhD in economics or statistics (<https://www.odi.org/odi-fellowship-scheme>). The fellowship contract runs for two years and cannot be prolonged.

I applied while I was studying at Sussex and got invited for an

interview. I was the first person from Kazakhstan they interviewed. The fellowship is demand-led, and the governments choose themselves who they would like to have. That's why I had no idea where my posting would be. And so, it happened that the Papua, New Guinean government found me suitable for their Department of National Planning and Monitoring. Only later on my colleagues here said that they liked my experience at GIZ with the mineral resources sector and thought I might be helpful for them.

### **Day-to-day job and PNG context**

My department is responsible for planning the development of the country, including policies, strategies, and capital investment. I am involved in drafting the major development policy papers and formulating and consolidating capital investment budget. Working on the national budget is the

most interesting and challenging part, and I really get my hands on all the technical details of public financial management.

Papua, New Guinea is a resource-rich country which has extensive reserves of oil and gas, gold and copper. Moreover, it is one of the largest exporters of agricultural commodities – coffee, cocoa, vanilla and coconut. However, for a developing country, it can be difficult to manage its natural resource endowment. It is also the case for PNG, and as a development economist I am excited to work here.

Culturally and ethnically PNG is a fascinating and very diverse country with beautiful nature and even more beautiful people. Even though security is an everyday issue, my managers, colleagues and friends here are so incredibly supportive and caring, it makes life here enjoyable. I feel privileged to be able to learn from them, and

if I can help with my technical knowledge that is just great.

### **In conclusion**

Working in a foreign government gives me a unique opportunity to see how a developing country's government works from the inside. I've worked in the development sector ever since I graduated from the OSCE Academy, but now I see the development from perspective of the government and the challenges it faces. I think if you want to pursue a career in development, it is very important to understand how the counterpart government works, what they need and most of all, what is their capacity to absorb donors aid.

It has been 6 months since I arrived to PNG. It is an intense, challenging and incredibly interesting experience, and it's only the beginning of this journey.





## From Cross Culture Programme in Germany to Tackling Bride Kidnapping in Kyrgyzstan

By Svetlana Dzardanova '09, *Turkmenistan*



A year ago today I was in Stuttgart amidst my Cross Culture internship writing myself a letter that later was to be sent by IFA CCP team to my address in Bishkek. Enjoying the surroundings and new people, I did not yet fully realize how much the experience would

change me. The Cross Culture Programme offers young professionals and volunteers from Germany and countries of the Islamic world an opportunity to get experience abroad (I hope many of you reading this will also use the opportunity. Learn more here: <http://www.ifa.de/en/funding/crossculture-programme.html>).

I found myself among other lucky CCP scholars from Morocco, Egypt, Algeria, Jordan, Tunisia, Pakistan, Iran, Central Asia, Belarus, Russia, Ukraine and Germany of course. My internship was a perfect combination of academ-



Round table Bride kidnapping. The status quo and the formation of public opinion approaches, practices, problems, opportunities

ic exchange, inter-cultural experience, travel and research. It is worth mentioning right away that IFA CCP team did great job organizing planned events and side activities enriching our experiences in Germany both in professional and inter cultural terms.” “One of these events undoubtedly was Stuttgart week-long training meeting with CCP team and German language classes. I consider CCP one of the best programmes I have ever been part of. Inter-cultural workshop by Tanja Reisser and Ulrike Krone were on what culture is and what it is not, on accepting and understanding differences and similarities, stereotypes and prejudices. I met so many people that do things so differently from me, like architecture, music, journalism, filming and culture. Its amazing people involved in

many amazing projects. I feel lucky and privileged to get to know all these young leaders for their communities that strive to make lives around them better. I learned a lot from our trainers and other participants: German planning with Moroccan smile and Algerian positive attitude would make few examples.

My three-month internship was with the Centre for OSCE Research at the Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg (IFSH), which is the institute I have long been interested in due to their expertise in Central Asia and the fact that they were one of the founders of the OSCE Academy in Bishkek back in 2002. One of the immediate pluses of internship at the IFSH was the opportunity to visit colloquiums and lectures.

I, however, enjoyed very few of them as majority were held in German and also my extensive travel schedule for planned and side IFA CCP activities. In spite of this, I still remember an outstanding presentation by Dr. John Heathershaw at the Institute for International Politics at Helmut Schmidt University on “Dictators Without Borders” book of his and Dr. Alexander Cooley authorship. I worked with Dr. Anna Kreikemeyer and Dr. Esther Somfalvy on Horizon2020 proposal and Prospects for Peace Research in Central Asia Between Discourses of Danger, Normative Divides and Global Challenges international conference at IFSH 17-18 November 2016 funded by the German Foundation for Peace Research. Both my supervisors inspiring professionals were very supportive and made my

stay comfortable and beneficial.

I enjoyed different German cities during October Fest, the Unity Day and also was there long enough to still catch the Christmas miraculous atmosphere with glühwein, night walks and friendly smiles. I enjoyed most places I traveled in and outside Germany and it became clear that this country is not only about a big multicultural and financial centre like Berlin, Frankfurt and Hamburg (my favourite forever), but even more so about Marburg and Halle and Bremen where you can grasp real German lifestyle and see what German daily routine is or holiday season looks like. I should mention the house I lived in – a beautiful piece of art built in 1902 was full of nice and open people. Living across from the history museum and Platen un Blomen and few buildings away from Komponistenquartier where Brahms lived and worked as well as Reeperbahn, St Pauli, made my evening walks unforgettable.

I got back to Bishkek and the office at the OSCE Academy and one day received a letter I had addressed myself few months earlier. It was also a very motivating experience. I again was lucky that CCP Plus Programme extended to include Central Asia. A great and timely idea allowing alumni of IFA CCP to contribute to the communities they live in. I applied for a project and received a grant.

The project I am working on now aims at youth as the main audience to inform, engage and fight bride-kidnapping; still common practice in Kyrgyzstan.

The main idea behind this is to change the perception of the practice from generally accepted tradition to illegal crime.

I have been living and working in Kyrgyzstan for many years now and I remember my first encounter and shock of realizing that the practice of bride kidnapping was real. My roommate almost became a victim of bride kidnapping and later yet became wife of the person who attempted to kidnap her. So one imagines, I take it personal. In Kyrgyzstan the ugly practice of Ala Kachuu-Zorduk (bride-kidnapping) still prevents many smart and promising young women from education, from leading a decent life, from seeing the world beyond her abusers' household and chores. The criminal code of Kyrgyzstan provides for up to 7 years of imprisonment for kidnapping of a person under 17 to enter a marriage relationship. Despite legislation, law enforcement authorities do not consider kidnapping and forced marriage a serious crime. I always wanted to contribute and become part of the solution. This project is a chance for me to get actively engaged into the issue and hopefully only a first step to providing a multifaceted response to the problem. We want to work with youth via art and debates.

One of the instruments we use is a short story written by local writer Altyn Aman "Erkinay" soon to be published in three languages and also to be animated by cartoonist Tatyana Zelenskaya who did the series of stories of kidnapped women "I was kidnapped..." another very important part of our project is a 4-day intensive debates

training and tournament organized in cooperation with IDEA Central Asia among school children on gender issues and bride kidnapping. It will take place between 9-12 December 2017. We are now also working on information leaflets to be distributed in schools and universities.

The main idea of these informative products is to show that this is not a tradition and there is nothing cool, manly or brutal about kidnapping a human being (being strong, masculine and cool is very important in Kyrgyz society). All these products will be promoted and shared via social media channels like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram. I am really grateful to all amazing, bright, inspiring people who joined the project and want to promote better opportunities for young women and girls and this starts with them knowing their rights and freedoms.

There is also an idea of follow up with a big national programme that will involve state structures, activists, school, universities and offer a series of focus groups, workshops, trainings, films, art exhibitions to different target audiences of schoolchildren, young women, young men, parents throughout the project year to change the perception on the phenomenon.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to CCP team and thank them once again for the great job they are doing connecting people of different cultures and backgrounds and making our projects possible!

## MA in Politics and Security Programme 2016-2017



Aaron Joshua Pinto,  
Canada



Abdul Hameed  
Fedayi,  
Afghanistan



Ayan Serikov,  
Kazakhstan



Azis Isa,  
Kyrgyzstan



Baatyrkan Kubanych  
uulu, Kyrgyzstan



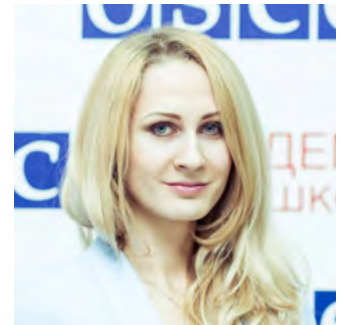
Chyngyz Israilov,  
Kyrgyzstan



Ermek Baisalov,  
Kyrgyzstan



Firuza Kazidzhanova,  
Tajikistan



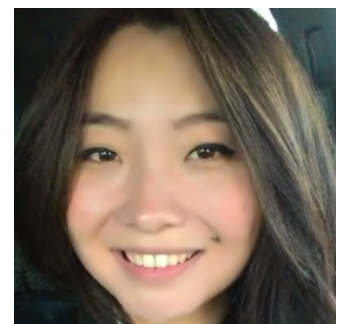
Galina Kolodzinskaia,  
Kyrgyzstan



Gulzhan Begeyeva,  
Kazakhstan



Jyldyz Abdylbaeva,  
Kyrgyzstan



Kasiet Erkinbekova,  
Kyrgyzstan





Musilmbek Buriev,  
Tajikistan



Nemat Haydarinezhad,  
Afghanistan



Nuriza Begaliev,  
Kyrgyzstan



Romal Sulimankhil,  
Afghanistan



Sayed Qutbzadah,  
Afghanistan



Shakhlo Alavova,  
Tajikistan



Shamsiya Alibakhshova,  
Tajikistan



Suhrob  
Abdullojonov,  
Tajikistan



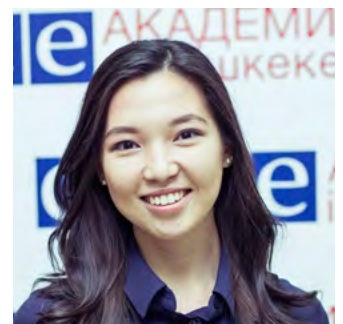
Yerlan Kassym,  
Kazakhstan



Yorkinjon Khaydarov,  
Uzbekistan



Yrys Abdieva,  
Kyrgyzstan



Zhanygul Kaparova,  
Kyrgyzstan

## MA in Economic Governance and Development Programme 2016-2017



Abdykaiyr Eshmamatov,  
Kyrgyzstan



Aigerim Almazova,  
Kyrgyzstan



Akbar Saidakhmatov,  
Kyrgyzstan



Azamat Esenamanov,  
Kyrgyzstan



Banidkhuu Chantsal,  
Mongolia



Danat Tumabayev,  
Kazakhstan



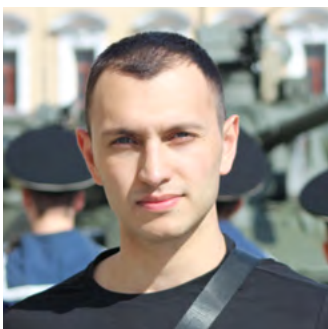
Dzhamshet Salomov,  
Tajikistan



Faizullah Azizi,  
Afghanistan



Feraidon Salaatin,  
Afghanistan



Fikret Aliev,  
Kyrgyzstan



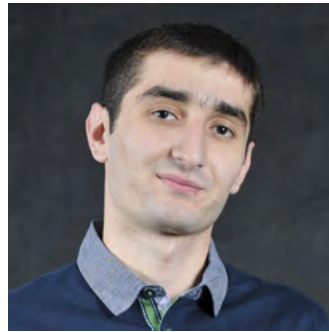
Inomullo Mirboboev,  
Tajikistan



Javlon Juraev,  
Uzbekistan



Kanykei Nurdin kyzy,  
Kyrgyzstan



Khalil Kadzhiev,  
Kyrgyzstan



Madina Bandishoeva,  
Tajikistan



Medina Abylkasymova,  
Kyrgyzstan



Mohammad Haroon,  
Afghanistan



Naqibullah Ahmadi,  
Afghanistan



Sabrinisso Valdoshova,  
Tajikistan



Sitora Ramkhudo,  
Tajikistan



Umedakhon Pulatova,  
Tajikistan



Zafar Sultonov,  
Tajikistan



Zhamila Aitakunova,  
Kyrgyzstan



Zhoodar Dzholdoshov,  
Kyrgyzstan

OSCE Academy in Bishkek  
1A, Botanichesky pereulok  
720044 Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic  
Tel: +996 312 54 32 00 (ext. 117)  
Mob: +996 770 98 41 02  
E-mail: [alumni@osce-academy.net](mailto:alumni@osce-academy.net)