

SalamAlum

OSCE ACADEMY
in Bishkek

ISSUE 8 | WINTER 2018

OSCE ACADEMY ALUMNI MAGAZINE

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**ACADEMIC
LIFE IS AN
ADVENTURE**

- Farkhod Aminjonov '09, pg. 6



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Dear Readers,

It is our great pleasure to introduce the eighth issue of our Alumni Magazine SalamAlum. This year, 2018 has been fruitful not only for the Alumni Network, but for the OSCE Academy in general.

In summer, the Academy yard, as well as, the wiring system of the building was renovated. With the physical renovation also come the new developments within the Academy's activities. Among many other additions, the Academy now has permanent faculty

members and a new visiting professor via German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). The Academy Paper Series was launched, which is the summary of reports of the academy's major events. The Associate Research Fellowship was further developed. It was launched at the end of 2017 to attract more researchers. A Preparatory Summer School was launched to prepare newly accepted MA students for graduate studies. New trainings were developed to meet the demand for creating personal branding of young professionals and improving interview as a method for research data collection in social and humanitarian fields.

The Alumni Network keeps growing in size and activities. The academy takes into account all alumni opinions during its events and tries to implement the new ideas suggested. As a result, in 2018 the Academy began thematic events: a workshop on gender issues held in Bishkek and a conference on brain-drain in the region held in Vienna. Also, the annual alumni conference with the security seminar were merged to allow alumni to present their work to external experts and receive feedback.

Academy's international, long-term partners - Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) and Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP) continue to provide exclusive opportunities, scholarships and fellowships to our alumni. The Junior Public Officer's Programme continues the introduction of our graduates to the Public Sector successfully. It operates in Afghanistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

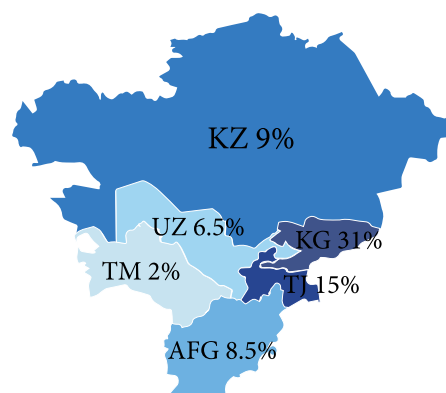
Most importantly, we are proud to present, in this issue, success stories of our alumni, who have become well-known researchers, experts, civic activists and government representatives.

Our sincere gratitude goes out to the OSCE, the OSCE participating states and especially to the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Norwegian Institute of Foreign Affairs (NUPI), Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Finland and Austria, who specifically fund the alumni activities of the OSCE Academy.

Victoria Orazova,
Alumni Affairs and Communications Coordinator

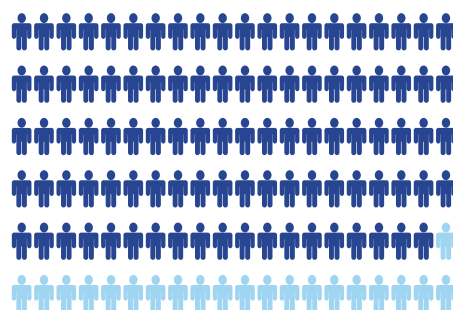
Alumni Network in Numbers

Geography



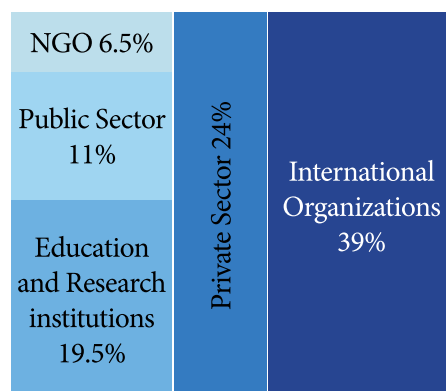
Out-of-Region 28%

Employment



- Employed 84%
- Continue Education 9%

Employment by Sectors



The data provided illustrates the general statistics, which is based on the results of the Alumni Survey 2018 and contains information on 386 alumni.

OSCE Academy Updates

Faculty

In July 2018, OSCE Academy established two permanent faculty positions. We welcomed Dr. Emil Dzhuraev and Dr. Nazgul Jenish to our community. Additionally, in September 2018 Dr. Anja Mihr joined the Academy Faculty team via the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) as a visiting professor.



Dr. Emil Dzhuraev holds a PhD in Government and Politics from the University of Maryland, College Park. He has been affiliated with the OSCE Academy since 2005, and has been teaching courses in comparative politics, Central Asian regional politics, international politics and security, political theory and research design. He has also taught at the American University of Central Asia, University of Maryland and other institutions.

Dr. Dzhuraev's research interests include state-building, constitutional politics and rule of law, Central Asian political development, and foreign policy and security of Central Asian states. Beyond his academic work he regularly engages in consultancy and policy research with Kyrgyzstan and international institutions. He is a frequent political commentator on regional affairs in various media outlets.



Dr. Nazgul Jenish holds a PhD in Economics from the University of Maryland, College Park. She was a professor of economics at New York University, where she taught graduate and undergraduate courses and conducted research in econometrics, game theory, and statistics. Her research interests focus on mathematical modeling of socio-economic phenomena, statistical learning, and development economics.

Dr. Jenish publishes in top world peer-reviewed economics and statistics journals, and delivered guest lectures at Yale, Princeton, Columbia, Cambridge, and Duke Universities. She also has extensive experience in governance and economic policy analysis through her work and consultancy with international organizations, including UN agencies and the World Bank. She served as program manager at the United Nations Development Program in New York.



Anja Mihr (Ph. D) joined OSCE Academy as a DAAD Visiting Professor in 2018. She teaches in the Politics and Security Program. Dr. Mihr is founder and Program Director of the HUMBOLDT-VIADRINA Center on Governance through Human Rights in Berlin, Germany. She has held professorships in human rights, international relations democratization and Transitional Justice at the Willy-Brandt School of Public Policy, Erfurt University, Germany and at the Netherlands Institute of Human Rights (SIM), University of Utrecht, Netherlands.

Dr. Mihr has served as Head of the Rule of Law department at The Hague Institute for Global Justice as well as several of Visiting Professorships for Human Rights such as at Peking University Law School in China together with the Raoul Wallenberg Research Institute on Human Rights, Lund University in 2008. In 2006-2008, she was European Program Director for the European Master Degree in Human Rights and Democratization (E.MA) at the European Inter-University Center for Human Rights in Venice (EIUC), Italy. She received her PhD in Political Sciences from the Free University in Berlin, Germany, in 2001.

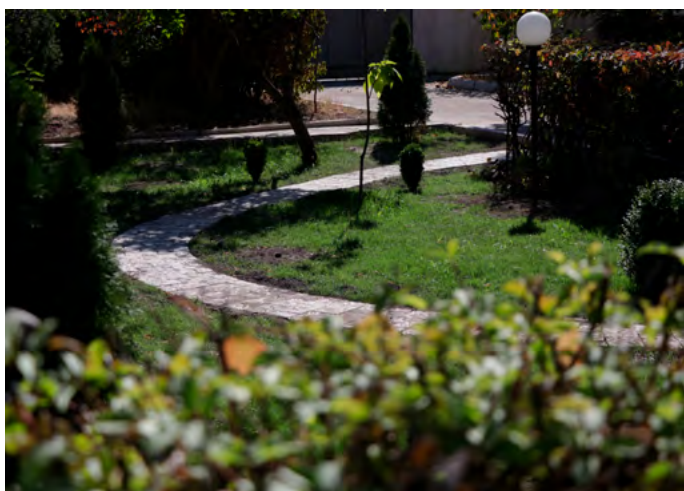
Academy Papers Series

In April 2018, OSCE Academy launched a new series of reports to provide summary reflections on conferences, workshops and seminars organized by and taking place in the Academy. The purpose of the new *Academy Paper Series* is to continue the main questions and problems raised and discussed during the events. The reports are published in English and Russian languages and available online at: <http://osce-academy.net/en/research/sumrep/>

Associate Research Fellowship

The Associate Research Fellowship (ARF) was launched in 2017 and aims to support PhD Candidates and/or Post-Doctoral researchers in conducting research projects and provide institutional affiliation to independent researchers. The length of the fellowship is from six to twelve months and is open to Bishkek-based and non-Bishkek residents. The Academy provides Fellows with access to the library and all available online resources as well as with an opportunity to present their research and to deliver lectures to students and public. To learn more about this Fellowship and to apply, please, visit our website: <http://osce-academy.net/en/research/arf/>

Construction



In August 2018, renovation began on the interior of the OSCE Academy building and outside in the yard. Through financial and logistical support from the OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek the Academy began renovation of its electric grid and installation of air conditioning inside the building, as well repair of the pipe and sprinkling system in the yard. To create a friendly student atmosphere and provide space for study outside, the Academy built a wooden terrace in front of the building and further developed its garden.



ACADEMIC LIFE IS AN ADVENTURE

Farkhod Aminjonov graduated from the MA Programme in Politics and Security in 2009. In less than ten years Farkhod has had numerous achievements to add to his academic and professional portfolio. In 2015 Farkhod received his PhD and today he is one of the better known energy experts in the region. He taught the Energy Module for the OSCE Academy MA Programme in Economic Governance and Development this year. Currently Farkhod works at the Narxoz University and is affiliated with a number of research projects, and institutions. In this interview, Farkhod shares how he achieved it all and how he manages to keep up with it.

Q: Farkhod, when did you realize that ‘energy’ is a topic you would like to study and research?

This is one of my favored stories. I often tell it to my students while introducing myself in the beginning of courses I teach. It was a Fall Term 2009, at the OSCE Academy, during a Module on Energy Politics taught by Indra Overland from NUPI, when I decided to link my research and career to studying energy.

This is what I share with my students (based on true story):

“When I applied to the Academy, I proposed to study ethnic minorities in Central Asia. I thought that with human rights and democracy related topic, I would have a better chance to get a scholarship to the OSCE supported academic institution. But, when Indra Overland delivered a very dynamic, thought-provoking and incredibly interesting Module on



*Pick Chimbulachka,
Almaty, Kazakhstan*

Energy Politics, I thought to myself: this is something I would like to work on. It's now been almost ten years that I study and research energy with a particular focus on Central Asia. And, I love my job!"

Q: Oil and gas industries, for example, attract many young people to business sector. But you decided to look at it from academic perspective. Why academia?

I often get this question. However, I think just because one is interested in energy politics and security, does not necessarily mean that he or she can be successful in a oil and gas business. For some reason, I never imagined myself working in a business sector. Now, I am afraid, it is a bit too late. I very much enjoy the academic flexibility to study whatever I want, but more importantly whenever I want. I think I am already diagnosed with the chronic disease of all people working in academia — inability to meet deadlines. In business, this can be a fatal mistake to your career. And, I very much enjoy teaching, especially when all the discussion with students somehow lead to cases from the energy sector.

Since you brought this question up, I think I would not mind working for a short period as a consultant in or with an energy company (to make some money), but I think in the end, it is the academia where I feel myself comfortable.

Q: Besides your main job you are also engaged in a number of projects. Could you shortly describe the main ones?

I never thought that a scholar's life could truly be adventurous. Some of the projects, which I was part of, proved me wrong.

I was invited by a unique program to participate in the "Study and Dialogue Programme for Asian Experts on Climate and Energy" organized by the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung. We met CEOs of leading energy companies and institutions, Parliamentarians of the European Commission, and leading experts in digitalization and smart energy systems in Brussels, Bonn, and Berlin.

This summer, I led a team of scholars working on water-energy issues for the expedition "From the Glaciers to the Aral Sea" organized by the Swiss Agency for Cooperation and Development, Kazakh-German University and International Fund for Saving Aral Sea. During the three weeks of the expedition we crossed the territory of four Central Asian countries (7000 km) by car. We reached the roof the world— Pamir mountains and several glaciers; visited the largest water reservoir in Central Asia— Toktogul in Kyrgyzstan and the highest hydro-power plant in the world— 300 meters high Nurek HPP in Tajikistan; studied water distribution networks of the Syrdarya basin in Uzbekistan; and discussed the Aral Sea catastrophe sitting on the Kokaral dam (Northern Aral Sea) in Kazakhstan.

Another memorable study trip was a conference on the "Tran-Siberian Express" going from Irkutsk to Vladivostok. We discussed the "New Silk Road and Future of the Regional Cooperation" for three days with the final stop at the branch of the Russian Academy of Science in Vladivostok. Three day on the train, looking out of the window at charming views on the never ending Siberian forests while discussing Silk Road Economic Belt initiative and sharing interesting stories with each other was a fascinating experience.

I was in Afghanistan for a fieldwork in February 2016, when the Taliban, for the first time since they were in the country, attacked the pylons of the electric power transmission lines and cut Kabul city off of the power supply from the Northern Central Asian neighbors. I consider this field research, supported by the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Afghanistan, in which I studied Central Asian countries' contribution to Afghanistan's energy security from inside Kabul, as one of my most important research projects as a scholar.

Q: You also have a family? How do you manage your time?

Yes, I have a family. I love my wife and two beautiful girls (Korlan and Arisha) so much.



Regarding the second part of your question, there are three important things in my life that I often struggle to balance: family, work, and my hobbies (jogging and hiking). I do not know why, but there is always a trade-off between these three priorities. Perhaps, twenty-four hours in a day is not enough. Or, my expectations are too high to be in all three directions simultaneously. Here is my recipe for managing my time. Because, I often have to prioritize two of them, I respond to worrisome signals. When I gain extra weight, I revive exercise and go hiking more often. When I feel I am falling behind in my career development, I start applying for projects. When I start receiving complaints that I spent too much time working and my wife in protest stops making draniki for breakfast on Sundays, this is a clear sign that family needs me. Tak i zhivem!

Q: What was a dream-job for ten-year-old Farkhod? Did you ever think you will become a scholar?

Like never. I always wanted to be a lawyer. The Hollywood movies with scenes of court hearings where lawyers hypnotized the jury with their speeches winning legal cases, were my favorites. That is probably why I decided to study International Law at the University of World Economy and Diplomacy (UWED) in Tashkent. I wanted to work in an international law firm, represent clients at court, and always win cases. After graduation from UWED, I applied to five MA programs, mostly in law, abroad. I was accepted to four of them. However, none granted me a scholarship. The only place that provided a scholarship was

Farkhod with his spouse at Brooklyn Bridge

Despite very busy working schedule Farkhod always finds time for his beloved daughters

OSCE Academy. So, I decided to take my chance, which I don't regret a second. Studying at OSCE Academy change my life. I love my job. You know what I think. What I liked the most about the lawyers in the movies was their ability to win all the debates and discussion. Now, I engage in the discussions with students almost every single day. Guess who wins most of the time.

Q: Do you have a role-model or someone who motivates you to move forward and achieve even more?

No. Absolutely not. I do not like to compare myself to someone. And I never do. Everyone has his or her own life to live through. I have my own goals. I think that I know what I want to achieve in my life, when and how. Trying to get as far as possible in my life journey will always be good enough for me!

Q: What are you plans for a near future?

Ok. I think my near future plans are:

1. Get a job either in China or in one of the Middle-Eastern countries to study energy sector governance in those regions.
2. Take my photography skills to the next level.
3. Take a holiday, and spend the laziest two weeks of my life somewhere by the Indian Ocean.
4. Submit my three, almost finished, articles for publication in peer-reviewed journals.



Around Central Asia: Kazakhstan

In the previous issue of SalamAlum graduates from Afghanistan working in public sector shared their success stories. This time we move to Kazakhstan and get acquainted with our alumni working with society, in research sphere and in the government. Malika Tukmadieva 2012, Karlygash Kabatova 2014, and Tengiz Chikanaev 2016 tell us about their jobs in different spheres, but with one goal - development of the home-country.

Making Hidden Open: New Research Hub for Young Scholars

Malika Tukmadieva, MA, *Politics and Security*, 2012.



After graduation Malika received a European Scholarship for Central Asia for the Master of Advanced Studies in International and European Security from the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP) and the European Institute of the University of Geneva (IEUG), which is offered exclusively to Academy alumni. Malika was a part of different research projects and eventually, together with friends, she established own research lab in Astana.

Q: Dear Malika, what is PaperLab and how did it start?

Paperlab (Public Policy Research Lab) is an informal network of young researchers from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan with sociology, cultural studies, political science, and economics backgrounds. Many of us are proud alumni of the Academy. Thanks to our common background (the Academy and the Soros Foundation Kazakhstan's Public Policy Initiative Fellowship) we are longtime friends and colleagues with a shared view on social issues and research sphere in the region. PaperLab started from this friendship and joy of intellectual exchange, in early 2016. We decided to collaborate on several research projects in such areas as labour policies, education, migration, and urban development.

Q: What are the goals and activities of PaperLab?

As young professionals, we saw difficulties accessing the research sphere in general and the lack of open data, and the expertise (at least in Kazakhstan) is often kept behind the closed doors. It is often unnecessarily considered to be intelligence. Therefore, in early 2016 we started a discussion club in Astana, through which we can communicate research findings with decision-makers and get feedback/ exchange from the society.

Our vision for the club is that research should be open, available, and understandable. Every discussion is formed around a research project of a young researcher, with recognized experts/

policy-makers invited only for the supporting roles in order to bring new voices into the Kazakhstan policy discourse.

In-line with the same vision of creating an enabling environment for quality research and breaking out of the "liberal bubble", this year we began a capacity-building project called Making New Experts. The project works closely with young Kazakh experts to strengthen skills and encourage communicating research findings to the wider society through social networks and traditional media. The project consists of a series of trainings on efficient engagement with media and mentoring support from prominent communication experts.

We also host regular monthly informal meetings for the research community in Astana and Almaty, where researchers can meet colleagues from different fields and on various career stages beyond strict agendas and offices.

Q: This means that you work not only with researchers, but also with policy makers? Is it challenging to attract policy-makers?

We aim to make each of our discussions practical, with recommendations, and without the problem statement being the main focus of the discussion. The discussion club is oriented at facilitating dialogue with policy makers. We have been fairly successful, so far, in government's position being represented. In almost every discussion we have had at least one representative of a competent ministry/ agency. Often policy-makers are interested in the research results, requesting copies of the presentations and following-up events with feedback. We can say we are successful in working with lawmakers as well, some Parliament Deputies are regular participants of our discussions.

Q: What are your short-term and long-term goals and projects?

Because PaperLab is not a formal institution, but rather a community of like-minded people, it is very hard to make long-term plans. We try to have fun and enjoy our



"It is a creative process - trying to find new perspectives, new people, new ways of presenting the content. For example, we collaborate with prominent Kazakh artists to announce a topic in a brighter, sometimes provocative or entertaining way."

"As we believe that research should be open and try to promote wider engagement of population in development of policies, all of our events are open to public and live streamed on PaperLab's Facebook page."

current activities, we are continuing improving the quality, playing with formats, tools and expanding the geography.

For example, we are working on breaking the discussion club out of the "liberal bubble". We hold meetings in the Russian and Kazakh languages, but also experiment with mixing Kazakh and Russian languages. Kazakhstan's urban landscape is increasingly divided by language. The two parallel value systems are forming separate discourses, public spaces, and platforms that rarely intersect. We form mixed language panels and encourage participants to speak in their native languages, which creates a relaxed atmosphere for people to speak up on such sensitive topics as gender or religion.

Q: Do you receive a feedback from researchers and ordinary interested citizens?

Even though we do not directly influence political decisions, we are shaping the environment and culture with open discussion between researchers, activists, policy-makers and citizens on important social issues. This is very important for a country in which the public expert space is rather narrow and formalized. Our projects create space, around which communities are forming, it is rewarding to see people participating on the regular basis, exchanging contacts and finding new partners during/after our events. I think we are becoming more optimistic about our society thanks to our work, as we meet a many interesting people and see how new ideas form and the change takes place.





Adolescent Sexuality Education is UYATEMES.kz

Karlygash Kabatova, MA, *Politics and Security*, 2014.

Karlygash is from Kazakhstan and an experienced researcher and civic & social activist. On 1 June, on International Day for Protection of Children, Karlygash launched UyatEmes.kz – a website on sexuality education for adolescents. Now Karlygash is invited to talk shows, interviews, radio, and conferences to discuss the issues related to early pregnancies, sexuality education, sexual harassment and gender issues, etc. Why and how she works on such an important and at the same time sensitive issue is shared in her interview:

Q: Dear Karlygash, how did it all start? What was the push factor to launch UyatEmes.kz?

It all began as a research project. In 2016 Kazakhstan news was full of reports of newborn babies found in the streets, on the road sides, in trash bins and even inside public toilets. At the time I just finished my research fellowship in the Soros Foundation-Kazakhstan's (SFK) Public Policy Initiative program and became very interested in this. Together with my friend, a fellow alumnus, of the OSCE Academy, Sergey Marinin, -who also took part in the SFK's fellowship- we decided to conduct joint research to get to the bottom of why these horrible things were happening. Through our research, we found that schools did not provide any classes on sexual health literacy and safe sexual behavior in a systemic way. We also found that parents are not willing to discuss this topic because they're ashamed and embarrassed because "it's not in our culture."

Later, while at the Central Asia Program at the George Washington University, I conducted another study on youth access to sexuality education outside of school and found that there were no informal sources of reliable information in Russian or Kazakh language. Therefore, I decided to create such a source myself.

Q: Who supports your project?

The basis of the website was developed at a hack-a-thon in Kiev in November 2017, where I traveled for a few days, from Washington, D.C. I teamed up with a brilliant illustrator from Belarus and a great IT specialist from Uzbekistan and together we created a prototype of UyatEmes.kz. My project won one of the four prizes - a small grant offered by the organizer. This is how I secured the initial funding to support UyatEmes.kz and now I'm looking to apply to more grants as those funds are over. Friends suggested that I start crowd funding to partially finance the project but I'm still doubtful about this.

As for support -in regards to human resources- other than the illustrator and the IT specialist, I have two professional consultants - a sexologist and a gynecologist. They reply to anonymous questions from our young readers. My cousin is a professional translator and translates the articles from Russian into Kazakh.

Q: Now it been a while as the project started. Today's results- is it something you expected to receive? Or more?

What I ultimately want to do is, on one hand, to raise awareness about the need of normalizing discussing sexual health of youth and teaching them about that in schools. On the other hand, I want to provide as many young people as I am able to, reliable information on sexual health and give them a safe place to discuss these issues. I didn't expect to receive, for sure, the amount of support that has been given.

Very often I receive messages of support from different people; university students and young professionals, parents, older people. Sometimes I

meet a person at an event and discover that they know that UyatEmes.kz, supports the need of Sex Ed and wish me luck in pursuing my goals.

Within the first week since launching the website, was visited by more than 8,000 viewers. Currently there are about 5,000 regular monthly visitors. Another unexpected thing is that though intended for teenagers, about 80% of UyatEmes.kz visitors are aged 18-34. There are objective reasons for this is that younger generations are more attracted to Instagram than a website. Still, the hunger of young people for reliable information written simply about maintaining sexual health is obvious.

Q: Sexual Education is not a topic that was and is openly discussed in our societies; do you face any antagonism from elder generation for your work?

Probably it's because of my liberal bubble -of educated Russian and English speakers- that I don't face as much negativity as I expected before launching the project. This is not to say that Kazakh speakers are less educated but it is my personal observation that there are more conservative people among Kazakh speakers, even those who studied abroad.

I encounter cyber-bullying or dismissive comments on my work sometimes. I saw comments under one of my interviews - several men said that a woman like me should be killed and discussed how it should happen. Another time, a self-proclaimed "educated religious leader" commented that I was just a dilettante that wants donor money. At times, my impostor syndrome is especially strong and such comments can hurt a little but I'm working on "growing a thicker skin" and not taking them too seriously.

I think the problem is that often the concept of Sex Ed is distorted and misinterpreted. The ultimate goal is not to corrupt the innocence of children and promote early sex, it is to teach youth to care for their health, make informed decisions, and behave in a safe manner. It is a life skill as important as learning to read and write.



At the 21st European Regional IAAH Conference 2018 and III National Conference in Adolescent Health, "Equal opportunities for healthy development for all adolescents" on 3-5 October, 2018

Q: How do you cope with it?

I need to stay practical and focused on my work. I don't want to "fight windmills" and prove something to those who are not willing to be open. I receive very much support from my

friends, people close to me, and even people that I don't know. Going to events and getting to know other activists, experts in their fields, who work for the good of our societies is also energizing! As banal as it sounds, it really helps me move forward.

My older brother is very supportive of my project and proud of me. My dad is embarrassed of even hearing about my work. When I sent my dad a link to my first interview named "How to talk about sex with children" and he said to my mom, "Why did she even send me this? Discuss it without me!" So, yes. Some people are not willing to change and it's OK.

Q: What are you plans for a near future and in a longer-term?

The main goal now is to secure funds for the project!

I have plenty of ideas on how to make the project more practical and attractive to young people, such as creating an online game, making a series of stop motion videos, and maybe even adding cartoons or comics, or maybe creating a pod-cast. I'm advocating for the introduction of Sex Ed in schools, but while it's not happening yet, I'm trying to offer an alternative, informal source. I attend conferences and speak at events to raise awareness about the need to teach young people to take care of their sexual health. However, perhaps it is time for me to focus on just one thing - advocating for Sex Ed in schools or developing UyatEmes.kz into something bigger. This is the long-term decision that I need to make.

Analyzing and Evaluating State Treasury

Tengiz Chikanayev, MA, Economic Governance and Development Programme, 2016.



Treasury Community of Practice (TCOP) Plenary meeting on Risk Management, 2017, Vienna, Austria

Tengiz Chikanayev, alumnus 2016, MA in Economic Governance and Development Programme works at the Treasury Committee of the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Kazakhstan and in his interview he shares how he manages to cope with all his important tasks and responsibilities.

Q: Tengiz, you came to OSCE Academy with some experience in studies and employment? Why did you decide to get another MA degree?

A: Before coming to the OSCE Academy, I had been working in the Treasury Committee of the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Kazakhstan as a chief-expert in internal audit division. However, at that time I was thinking about getting another master's degree in economics in order to get a deeper understanding of the economics discipline. Without deeper understanding of economics, it is difficult to succeed in PhD. Getting PhD is my primary goal.

Before applying to the master's degree at the OSCE Academy, I did my bachelor's degree at the Kazakh National Technical University named after K.I. Satpayev and master's degree at the University of Essex.

Over last ten years, I have been working in the banking and public sectors. Currently, I am a public servant at the Treasury Committee of the MoF of Kazakhstan.

Why I chose OSCE Academy? Firstly because of the scholarship. Secondly, because of the great teachers that are coming from all over the world to Kyrgyzstan. Finally because of the internship opportunities in Europe.

Q: What has changed after your graduation of the MA in Economic Governance and Development Programme?

A: After graduation with a MA in Economic Governance and Development Programme, I observed some positive changes like appreciating learning more and re-boot my career. Later, I was appointed as a head of the analysis and evaluation division of the Treasury Committee of the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Kazakhstan. In this division, my duties have increased several times.

Q: What are your responsibilities now?

A: Currently, I am supervising eight people in my division. My responsibilities in this regard are producing macroeconomic and fiscal policies coordinate territorial treasuries to compile the national budget and fiscal discipline and debt management. Monthly I produce a budget execution report for the Minister of Finance.

For example, the analysis of the state budget requires a wide range of analytical skills and computational thinking.

How would you assess the effectiveness of the state ongoing programs or public spending from the treasury perspective?

In Kazakhstan, we have several levels of budget, such as 1) the republican budget; 2) the regional budget, the budgets of the city of publi-

can significance, the capital; 3) district (cities of regional significance) budget; 4) budgets of the city of district significance, village, village, rural district. Moreover, we have an oil fund that transfers money to the republic budget for certain development programs.

The Government entities that spend the most are the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Population 2,6 trillion tenge and Ministry of Health 1 trillion tenge.

Every country in the world allocates the larger slice of its budget on the social aspects.

If you do an analysis of the state budget, you might observe that the economy of Kazakhstan has high state involvement. For instance, the treasury pays the salaries of every civil servant which includes 98,499 thousand people in a central state bodies along with its territorial divisions and local state bodies. There are around 13,029 public institutions in Kazakhstan.

At present, I also supervise the effectiveness of extensive network of seventeen departments, 188 district offices across Kazakhstan in regard to budget execution, reporting, and transparency.

After completing my MA at OSCE Academy, I implemented new mechanisms for budget execution in the Treasury Committee such as the introduction of the fourth budget level at the local government, treasury support of public procurement in the construction sector, and registration of PPP obligations and concession. At the same time, I conduct training for young financiers at the Finance Academy of the Ministry of Finance of Kazakhstan.

In September 2018, I met the Korean delegation from Korea Public Finance Information Services here in Astana who shared their knowledge in digital budgeting “digital brain – dBrain system”.

Q: This is very impressive and sounds like it keeps you busy 24/7. How do you manage your time?

A: After graduation in 2016, I have tried to effectively manage my time beginning with prioritizing goals and planning and delegating some tasks to other people. It is very important to break up assignments into separate parts. For instance, in budgeting we have four stages of budgeting like planning, approving by law, execution and inspection or control.

Q: What would be your advice to our students and recent graduates?

A: I would recommend OSCE Academy students and recent graduates embrace opportunities, to try new things, and ask for help when needed.

I strongly believe that the young generation of Kazakhstan who getting a quality education will lead our country to the bright future.



Alumna of 2018



I am honoured to be selected as Alumna of the Year of the OSCE Academy. This award motivates me to continue on my chosen path. I am thrilled that alumni of the OSCE Academy-some knowing me personally some not, casted their vote in my favour. Thank you all for your trust. (Uguloy Mukhtorova)

Every year the Alumni Network selects an alumnus/a, who had a significant professional and/or academic achievements and deserves the title of Alumnus/a of the Year. This year, out of five strong candidates, Uguloy Mukhtorova, alumna of the OSCE Academy MA in Politics and Security 2013 from Tajikistan received this well-deserved title.

Currently Uguloy is working as a Monitoring Officer/Human Dimension Officer for OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine. In a brief time, she was promoted to Human Dimension Officer in the Mission, where she monitors and reports on security situations with a particular focus on human rights and the rule of law.

Since 2011 the OSCE Academy Alumni Network selects one graduate a year to receive this Award for professional/academic achievements and contribution to the Network development. The nomination and voting is done solely by alumni.

Uguloy is the first female Monitor selected by Tajikistan who works in the field in the Eastern Ukraine. She is practitioner but tries to combine practice with academia. She served as Research Fellow at NATO Defense College in Rome and subsequently was invited as a visiting lecturer on Central Asia to the College twice.

In 2018, her monograph “Central Asia and NATO against the backdrop of Geopolitical Realities” was published by NATO Defense College.

In 2017, she co-authored a paper with Dr. Payam Foroughi titled, “Helsinki's Counterintuitive Effect? OSCE/ODIHR's Election Observation Missions and Solidification of Virtual Democracy in Post-Communist Central Asia” was also published. Uguloy is dedicated to human rights and rule of law, and meanwhile she is active promoter of education for girls.

Uguloy is an online coach and consultant for work for people who want to start career in an international environment.. In April 2018 she delivered talk to sixty students of a local school in her native town, Istaravshan to encourage them to continue their studies. All listed above make Uguloy a role-model for many young females in the region.

Philosophy Distilled

Academy alumni regularly publish in international and regional journals, policy paper series, and books. Javlon Juraev, 2017 from Uzbekistan is one of them. What attracted attention to his publication is that he is among very few, who wrote books on philosophy in national language. Here Javlon shares with us what provoked him to do such a tremendous work.

During my undergraduate studies in economics, I was, so to say, studying myself. I believe everyone at that age seek answers to age-old philosophical questions such as “Why are we here?” or “How should we live?” My quest took me through Nietzsche, Freud, Castaneda, Tolle and many other thinkers. One thing was surprising: these authors were unavailable in Uzbek language. More than that, there was not a meaningful book on personal development in Uzbek, for Uzbeks. This domain was overwhelmed by religious literature with dogmatic overtone.

My first book was a response to this scarcity. I never had in mind that it will be the first in a series. I titled it “Seven Steps towards Selfness” (in Uzbek “O'zlik sari yetti qadam”) – a symbolic name for a book, which had seven chapters named after days of the week. The book turned out to be a strange mixture of philosophy, practical psychology, sociology, and anthropology. Yet, I tried to deliver complicated concepts in a simple, popular language.

It was accepted well. The response to the first book induced ideas for the second, which in turn underlined the necessity of the third. If I published the first book in 2011, by 2017 there were five books in the series.

The first book, I can say, was a collection of definitions of basic principles. The second explored the concepts of relative and absolute truths (yes, in plural). The third book tried to explain what the purpose of life is and how one should always find their own. The fourth book tried to show that life is not binary, not black and white – that good and evil often overlap. And the last book describes a person as a political animal and what that definition entails.



The books are published online. Based on the feedback I am still receiving I would say they are quite popular. I am working on the sixth book now. It is expected to be about a person as an economic animal. Well, let us see how it goes.



Alumni Meetings

From year to year the Academy works to improve its Alumni Network activities and takes into account its graduate's feedback. Thus, in 2018, we have successfully tried new formats of thematic events and merged our regular Alumni Conference with the Annual Security Conference, resulting in one larger and diverse event.

Workshop “Gender Issues in Central Asia”



Working in groups



Dilovar Kabulova and Farzona Khashimova, Independent Experts from Uzbekistan.



Medet Suleimen, 2013, comments on one of the presentations.



Dinara Aytkulova, Director of the Women's Democratic Club, Kyrgyzstan

On 15-16 February OSCE Academy held a workshop dedicated to “Gender Issues in Central Asia” for its alumni and external guests in Russian language. The two-day workshop brought about forty participants together with the aim of identifying contemporary problems related to gender issues in politics and security, in the economic sphere, and in the social and legal fields in the region. At the end of the conference, alumni and other participants developed recommendations for authorities, NGOs, and other stakeholders. The sessions were moderated by: Ms. Dilovar Kabulova and Ms Farzona Khashimova, Independent Experts from Uzbekistan and Ms. Dinara Aytkulova, Director of the Women's Democratic Club, Kyrgyzstan.

Eleven alumni from Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan covered topics such as women in politics and security; cooperation between the International Organizations and State Agencies to provide

women rights and more opportunities; gender norms in puberty education; domestic violence; women influence on economic development; gender problems in agriculture and water recourse management and many others. A further outcome of the workshop was a summarizing account, which a selected participant summarized and commented on the discussion as rapporteur and drew further conclusions for future discussions. This report is published under an Academy Papers Series and is available at: <http://osce-academy.net/en/research/sumrep/>

Conference “Brain Drain or Brain Gain? Education, Migration and Development in Central Asia”

On 5 June, the European Alumni Chapter held its first meeting organized by the OSCE Academy and the OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek. The gathering was held at the OSCE Secretariat in Vienna, Austria. Nine alumni residing in Europe attended the conference on “Brain Drain or Brain Gain? Education, Migration and Development in Central Asia.” A primary aim of the event was to facilitate exchange between OSCE delegations and Academy graduates, and acquaint all participating States and Partners for Co-operation with the Academy project.

The conference was opened by Ambassador Dr. Pierre von Arx, Chairperson of the Board of Trustees of the OSCE Academy and Head of the OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek, followed by welcoming messages from Luca Fratini, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Italian Chairmanship, and Dr. Indra Overland, Head of



Luca Fratini, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Italian Chairmanship at the opening of the conference



Jafar Usmanov, 2005; Reina Artur kyzy, 2013; Bobur Nazarmuhamedov, 2011.

the Energy Programme of the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs. Dr. Alexander Wolters, Director of the OSCE Academy, introduced into the conference topic and moderated the first panel.

Presentations by the alumni were divided into two sections describing the personal experiences of alumni mobility and the phenomenon's implications on the Central Asian region. The presenters discussed the issue of brain drain and skilled labour migration from Central Asian countries to the West, as well as to Russia and to Japan. They explored possibilities to turn brain drain into a brain gain, and identified and discussed the causes that force bright minds and skilled workers to leave their home countries in Central Asia.

The presentations and discussions of the event are summarized in a publication within the *Academy Paper Series*: <http://osce-academy.net/en/research/sumrep/>



Ambassador Dr. Pierre von Arx, Head of the OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek and Dr. Alexander Wolters, Director of the OSCE Academy in Bishkek



Dr. Indra Overland, Head of the Energy Programme of the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs



Irina Khaldarova, 2006; Daniyar Kussainov, 2014; Aiperi Otunchieva, 2012.

Conference “Central Asian Security: Factors of Fragility, Sources of Resilience”

Keynote Speaker Dr. Flemming Hansen, presenting "Security Challenges Across the Domain Spectrum"



On 11-13 October the OSCE Academy has hosted its Annual Regional Security/Alumni Conference “Central Asian Security: Factors of Fragility, Sources of Resilience”. More than thirty-five experts and researchers, including alumni of the Academy, from Central Asia, Afghanistan, Europe, USA, and India, discussed themes like Central Asian Regional Integration, Regional Implications of Peace and Insecurity in Afghanistan, Security Among, Across and By States; The Belt and Road Initiative Between Kabul and Kiyev; Energy Cooperation and (In-) Security; Resilience and Fragility Below the State, Religion, Secularism and the State in Central Asia and others.

The Conference was opened by Director Dr. Alexander Wolters and Ambassador Dr. Pierre von Arx, Head of the OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek, who also delivered a speech on security issues in the region. The welcoming addresses were followed by a Keynote Lecture by Dr. Flemming Hansen on

"Security Challenges Across the Domain Spectrum".

This year the conference format was extended to additional public events in Russian and English languages on the third day. They included a Public Lecture “Afghanistan and Central Asia in a Glance (from Policy to Practice)” by Dr. Moheb Spinghar, Director of the Institute of Diplomacy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, and two simultaneous workshops: one on “Cyber Security: How to Protect Yourself in Cyber-space” co-led by Dr. Anna Gusarova, Director of the Central Asia Institute for Strategic Studies, Kazakhstan and Erlan Bakiev, Head of the Department on Countering Extremism and Illegal Migration, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Kyrgyzstan, and another on “System of Restrictions and Bans on Public Servants: Goals, Types, Comparative Analysis” led by Jaroslav Strelchenok, an International Anti-Corruption Expert, Latvia.



Participants of the Annual Regional Security/Alumni Conference “Central Asian Security: Factors of Fragility, Sources of Resilience”

Junior Public Officers Programme

In support of alumni professional integration in public service, beginning from 2010 the Academy has run a Junior Public Officers' (JPO) Programme. JPO Programme provides an opportunity to the OSCE Academy graduates from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Afghanistan to intern at the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and other State Agencies of the country of their respective citizenship.

The purpose of the Programme is to give alumni of the Academy valuable work experience in the public service of their home countries and thus to contribute with it to shape their future career choices.



In this year the Academy prolonged its Agreement with the Institute of Diplomacy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan, during the visit of its Director, Dr. Moheb Spinghar to the Academy in October. *The OSCE Academy has agreements with the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan and Kazakhstan, and with the Investment Promotion and Protection Agency of the Kyrgyz Republic.*

Dr. Moheb Spinghar, Director of the Institute of Diplomacy, MFA of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and Dr. Alexander Wolters

In 2018 overall five alumni conducted their internships in Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan:



Naqibullah Ahmadi 2017, Afghanistan

"I am very happy with the decision of joining Ministry of Foreign affairs as an intern through the Junior Public Officer program supported by the OSCE Academy.

Beside carrying out various administration and technical tasks but I also attended seminars, trainings and Political Diplomacy classes at the Diplomacy Institute. The institute arranges various classes (Diplomatic and political training courses along with language courses) for their employees in order to build up their capacities."



Romal Sulimankhil 2017, Afghanistan

"Because of JPO programme I was able to gain required experience about governmental administrations roles, structures, and particularly about the diplomatic

relations and diplomacy. As I am very interested to work in diplomatic and foreign affairs of Afghan government, therefore, the experience and knowledge I have obtained will help me to pass the National exam which is required for the entering to work in ministry of foreign affairs. The JPO programme is significant path for newly graduated students to obtain required experience and hence their capability and capacity for future work in State agencies and non-governmental organization."



**Medina Abylkasymova 2017
from Kyrgyzstan**

“The internship opportunity was a good place for networking. I have met many successful businessmen and entrepreneurs who can be good connections for my future career.”



**Alina Abylkasymova 2014
from Kyrgyzstan**

“Experience received during JPO Programme has taught me how to build strong relationships with representatives of local administrations (akimiat), ministries, international organizations and business area. In addition, I learnt the issues of

domestic entrepreneurs and the role of government in the process of solving those problems. Internship helped me to see how the relationship between private and public bodies are built.”



**Danat Tumabaev 2017 from
Kazakhstan**

“The JPO Programme launched by OSCE Academy in Bishkek gives an opportunity to experience being a governmental servant. During the programme, graduates will understand how government

runs projects, communicates between other governmental agencies, and makes future connections. Being a JPO at MFA taught me invaluable lessons in the communication with top officials. And, despite our failings, we still deserve respect. Never let anyone put you down. Personally, I suggest that perspective graduates apply for the program.

By taking this opportunity, I would like to express my respect to the OSCE Academy in Bishkek and gratitude for the chance to participate at JPO Program.”

Research mentoring and One-Year Stay at NUPI Fellowship

Norwegian Institute for International Affairs (NUPI) has supported the Alumni Network since its foundation. Numerous projects and programmes run by NUPI are aimed at increasing the research potential for alumni.

In 2018, in addition to a well-established One-Year-Stay at NUPI research fellowship and 'History writing and nation-building in Central Asia' project, jointly with the OSCE Academy, NUPI launched the Research Mentoring programme. And, six graduates of the OSCE Academy were selected for the Research Mentoring programme. Mentorees work jointly with mentors at NUPI and will publish one academic article in a peer-reviewed journal in 2019.

After publishing their articles, Mentorees will present the results of their work at international academic events. This programme is under the coordination of Dr. Indra Overland, Head of the Energy Programme, and Dr. Roman Vakulchuk, Senior Research Fellow, NUPI.

The selected alumni and their preliminary topics are:

Dilfuza Kurolova 2015, Uzbekistan: *"Climate Change in Central Asia: Political, Economic and Social Consequences"*

Aiperi Otunchieva 2012, Kyrgyzstan: *"Renewable Energy in the Former Soviet Union"*

Farkhod Aminjonov 2009, Uzbekistan: *"Energy Security, Political and Socio-Economic Dimensions of Hydro-balancing in Central Asia"*

Daniyar Moldokanov 2013, Kazakhstan: *"Big Powers in Central Asia: Economic Dimension"*

Harry Roberts 2016 from the UK: *"Energy in the Caspian Region"*

This year's One-Year Stay at NUPI fellows are **Daniyar Kussainov** 2014 from Kazakhstan and **Javlon Juraev** 2017 from Uzbekistan. This stay is an add-on to the MA degree from the OSCE Academy, and the purpose is to further prepare the two successful applicants for work in international affairs or study at PhD level by deepening their practical and academic experience.



"I'm grateful for the opportunity to be a part of the NUPI. It helped me to better understand my current situation in terms of professional and academic development. Beside of that, living in Oslo has definitely taught me to cherish the moments we are having and not to take them for granted" – Daniyar Kussainov.



"My stay in Norway and fellowship at NUPI was a great chance to experience Europe. This year was very productive in terms of establishing new contacts. And this was a big step in my academic career" – Javlon Juraev

MAS at the Geneva Centre for Security Policy

Each year one of the graduates of the OSCE Academy receives a European Scholarship for Central Asia to study at the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP) and the Global Studies Institute (GSI) of the University of Geneva. In 2017-2018 an exception was made and two alumni were accepted to study security studies: **Nurbek Bekmurzaev**, 2014 and **Nuraida Abdykapar kyzy**, 2013:



"We enjoyed every single day of the eight month spent studying in the MAS/LISC program. Being the youngest participants of the program, we benefited immensely from this opportunity by expanding our knowledge of security challenges beyond Central Asia and developing professional skills. The learning experience was particularly rich and combined lectures delivered by leading experts and practitioners from all over the world and our fellow classmates, who shared their knowledge and experiences with the class. In addition, we received valuable mentorship on strengthening our leadership skills throughout the program. We are grateful to the OSCE Academy for this opportunity" – Nurbek and Nuraida.



The European Scholarship for Central Asia for 2018-2019 was received by Galina Kolodzinskaia 2017:

The GCSP Master of Advanced Studies (MAS) in International and European Security, which is offered by the GCSP and the GSI of the University of Geneva, became a wonderful opportunity for me to advance my practical skills-set. After the graduation from OSCE Academy and obtaining a plethora of top-level academic knowledge, I realized that I wanted to focus on the enrichment of my professional competencies such as effective leadership, cross-cultural communications, and crisis management. Thus, when I read the GCSP informational sheet, I immediately decided to apply for this program because it was exactly what I was looking for.

The Master of Advanced Studies (MAS) is jointly run by the GCSP and the Global Studies Institute (GSI) (University of Geneva).

The MAS attracts participants who serve in the broad area of security policy, be it in government, military, private sector or international institutions and agencies engaged in security-related policy planning and decision-making.
<https://www.gcsp.ch/Courses/Master-of-Advanced-Studies-in-International-and-European-Security-2018-2019>



In my first meeting with my group mates, I was amazed at the outstanding cultural diversity. Although I had had a broad experience of inter-cultural communications in the past, I could not imagine that cultural differences and perceptions could be so different and from time to time very contradic-

tory. In the beginning, it caused me very much confusion. For instance, when we were given a task to resolve within our small discussion groups -we observed that every individual understood the assignment differently.

And of course, it took some time for us to learn each other's cultural language. But once we did it, we began to see the world through the lenses of people from absolutely different backgrounds and life circumstances. This approach completely transformed my mindset and even led to a paradigm shift not only in terms of my professional attitude but even personal relations.

This educational process is also very innovative and creative. The GCSP involves the top-notch practitioners and scholars to demonstrate the implementation of the most improbable and creative ideas into practice related to strategical thinking, policy-making, governance, and leadership. No doubt, the GCSP has already exceeded all my initial expectations from this executive Master Programme and I am looking forward to more discoveries.



order of serving tea, placing of guests. It is not rocket science :)

Q: What is the ideal family model of twenty-first century for you?

Azis: After giving a lot thought about family model, I believe, the traditional model of family is the most stable and harmonious in the long run. Not all traditions are equally valuable but there is a reason why they survived for millennia. I want to be a good husband and father and that's the most important thing for me.

Shahlo: I do not have a certain model in my mind. Family is a space that you create, which is filled with laughter, warm hugs, common hobbies, tasty food, healthy children - you name it. It is very cozy and energetic space. Building that space is demanding - time, resources, dedication, compromises.

Q: Did you compete in the class during discussions and presentations?

Azis: I believe, both of us were very open-minded, so we tried to understand and carefully assess ideas and arguments of each other.

Shahlo: I am always proud of him during his presentations.

Q: Do you build future plans? Where do you see yourself in 5-10 years?

Azis: It may sound cheesy but I want to make a difference. We have a lot of grave problems in our society. I will be happy to take part in solving one of these major problems.

Shahlo: I want to work in the project, which will unite Central Asian people with various backgrounds, create the common platform. We have a lot to share!

Welcome new alumni-family: Shakhlo Alavova (Tajikistan) and Azis Isa (Kyrgyzstan), graduates of the MA Programme in Politics and Security of 2017. We wholeheartedly congratulate them and share here their Love Story.

Q: Dear Shakhlo and Azis, please, tell us how did it all start? Who was the first one to make a first step?

Azis: The moment I saw her, I felt she was a very special person whom I was very curious to get to know better. She seemed unapproachable while very friendly at the same time. Once I pulled all my confidence and asked her for a lunch at Dolce Vita cafe. There we talked about many things but I was impressed with her wittiness and sense of humor. I have to admit, she made me laugh more times than I made her laugh.

Shahlo: Oh, September 2016 was wonderful. I met a lot of people, who overwhelmed me with their backgrounds, experience, knowledge, ambitions. But Azis was the one, whom I could not approach, he seemed to be very mysterious, very dangerous to me. I was very determined not to engage into relations, as I was going to come back to Tajikistan. My parents are very strict and traditional. Azis invited our group mates several times to Ala-Archa, restaurants. And I was also invited. However, I felt that I should not meet Azis this close, I knew that something will go wrong :) But you know, feelings are unstoppable. I enjoyed listening to his intelligent answers during the lectures, I liked the color of his eyes, his hairstyle, and voice. Gradually, think-

ing about Azis and not recognizing this fact, pretending that I do not notice Azis became my hobby. It turned out, that I am bad in pretending. He invited me to share lunch with him. I was curious, I said «Yes».

Q: What human quality you value in each other the most?

Azis: I value her open-mindedness and energy. She has a lot of positive bright energy which invigorates everyone around her. I love her singing.

Shahlo: If I have to speak of only one quality it would be his responsibility. He is the most reliable person I know.

Q: You come from different countries and even though it is the same region, some traditions might be different. Does it create any obstacles or opens news opportunities for you?

Shahlo: We are very similar. My parents were frightened, that I will not manage to adapt to new environment. But then, they saw that the region is the same. There are some differences in traditions though. But I am very flexible about traditions: I know Russian, Tajik traditions. Now Kyrgyz as well. It is interesting to discover new customs that my husband was grown up with. We do not follow all of them, but there are some very important rules - the

From All Over the World

There are 19 countries represented in the OSCE Academy Alumni Network. People, who live outside of Central Asia region and those living outside of CIS region often do not know where Kyrgyzstan is located. Therefore, in this issue we collected short interviews from our alumni who came to Bishkek from far-abroad to learn how and why they have chosen the OSCE Academy in Bishkek and what were the most memorable moments of their stay.



MATHEW NAUMANN,
2005, Scotland

Why did you choose the OSCE Academy? Have you heard about Kyrgyzstan before?

I chose to join the pilot course at the OSCE Academy in 2004 because a friend thought I might like to teach there. I had lived in Bishkek for a year in 1998/99, as a volunteer with a local NGO, and wrote my undergraduate dissertation about Kyrgyzstan. I had learned about the country in 1996, when volunteering in an international college in England, where an academic from Kyrgyzstan was based when doing research on Christian-Muslim relations.

What was the most exotic thing you tried in Kyrgyzstan?

After my first year in Kyrgyzstan, I explained to people back home in Scotland that, from my perspective, the Chuy Valley was quite European, the Fergana Valley was much more Asian, but the mountains of Kyrgyzstan were like another world altogether. One of the most exotic things might have been walking in the mountains above Issyk Kul with family, to be invited into a

yurt to eat freshly-baked bread with kaymak. Another might have been visiting forty-four Dungan households in Kochkor at Eid: in every house someone would recite a prayer, we would drink tea and then put sweets in our pockets to take home to the family: we needed big pockets. Also, meeting a older Dutchman in Bishkek from a village in Talas where his ancestors had arrived in the nineteenth century, where the community had been cut off from the Netherlands for hundreds of years but had preserved their language and culture.

What is the brightest memory of your life in Kyrgyzstan and at the OSCE Academy in particular?

A friend I made at the OSCE Academy introduced me to a friend of hers a few months later. Then I married her friend, and after several more years in Bishkek and two children were born. We moved back Scotland. But my brightest memory specifically of the OSCE Academy is having a friend who was as enthusiastic as me about going to eat lagmon or monti in a little along the road, and the smile on his face when I suggested lunch. Also, we had several interesting guests at the Academy, including Chingiz Aitmatov and (I think) President Akaev.

PIOTR WYZIŃSKI, 2007, Poland

Why did you choose the OSCE Academy? Have you heard about Kyrgyzstan before?

I was planning a career in the OSCE and chosen the Academy to gain knowledge on the region and an inside view into the Organization. No, it was my first experience with KG.

What was the most exotic thing you tried in Kyrgyzstan?

Koumiss, bozo, and jarma.

What is the brightest memory of your life in Kyrgyzstan and at the OSCE Academy in particular?

Students organized two-three days summer stay at the Issyk-Kul lake. Excellent time, wonderful team building, and delicious together prepared food (above all Dastanbui's plov!

LENE WETTELAND,
2007, Norway



Why did you choose the OSCE Academy? Have you heard about Kyrgyzstan before?

I chose the OSCE Academy because I wanted to obtain an MA in political science, learn about Central Asia, improve my Russian and English language skills, see nation building

and political science in practice, get to know the region and people who live there, but also not study at a completely Russian language and methodology institution with little possibility for discussion and analysis. I also assumed I would be working in the civil society/human rights/international organization sphere, and saw that the Academy could offer all of that.

What was the most exotic thing you tried in Kyrgyzstan?

The most exotic thing in Kyrgyzstan I don't know... Maybe kurut, which I am still not a fan of, unlike most other food and drinks. I sometimes get deep craving for plov or lagmon, but never for kurut. Another exotic experience was playing tennis with the local boys next to Tash Rabat, feeling exhausted from the height after few minutes while they were running around unaffected.

What is the brightest memory of your life in Kyrgyzstan and at the OSCE Academy in particular?

This is a tough question, there are too many fond memories... We had great gatherings in our flat in Dzhal or by Issyk Kul, I had many trips to different parts of Kyrgyzstan, from Osh to Tash Rabat, Karakol and a lot of other places, it is hard to choose.

MALGORZATA BYCZIK,
2009, Poland



Why did you choose the OSCE Academy? Have you heard about Kyrgyzstan before?

I did know Kyrgyzstan before I arrived to OSCE Academy. I was here before as an anthropology student on a short research program, and later spend eight months on a scholarship at one of state universities. But, I knew Kyrgyzstan quite well by the time I arrived at OSCE Academy.

What was the most exotic thing you tried in Kyrgyzstan?

Goat lungs filled with milked and served in milk and brain soup. Issyk Kul specialty that few heard of:) It is actually hard to say what is exotic in Kyrgyzstan. This country sounds so much as a home, that few things feel exotic to me by now.

What is the brightest memory of your life in Kyrgyzstan and at the OSCE Academy in particular?

It is probably the most difficult to answer. Each time I came back to Kyrgyzstan this country reveals to me its different places and secrets. From the time of my studies at the OSCE Academy I remember mostly lovely friendship between the students and the ways we managed to create a big family, full of exchange, joy, sometimes conflicts, but all in a respectful and learning environment. It was a great adventure to learn from each other and grow together. And when talking of Kyrgyzstan: sitting under the Almond tree during the sunsets at the Jalalabad hills overlooking Ferghana valley and the Pamir mountains, My first trips to Tajikistan inspired by friends from OSCE Academy, Traveling through susamyr over night, sometimes once a week!, Swimming in Toktogul lake, and 1000 of other lovely memories.

IVANA VUCHKOVA,
2016, Macedonia



Why did you choose the OSCE Academy? Have you heard about Kyrgyzstan before?

I always understood education as a process that should first and foremost impact yourself in deepening your knowledge, broadening your horizons and constantly questioning your convictions in order to help you improve yourself at best. The OSCE Academy in Bishkek with its unique and ambitious MA Programme in Economic Governance and Development looked as an impeccable choice, which undeniably surpassed the expectations. With variety of topics of crucial importance for addressing current global trends and challenges, this Programme was creative up to the level where it brings the world in one place, functioning as an academic family.

What was the most exotic thing you tried in Kyrgyzstan?

From all the things I got to try during my stay in Kyrgyzstan, to single out only one is a more challenging question than most of the examinations I did during my studies at the Academy. Kyrgyzstan as the other Central Asian countries has a tremendous part of unexplored beauties. For me personally, love at first sight occurred when seeing the mountains. Defi-

nately the most exotic thing was hiking the Konorchek Canyon during winter time (or as I call it “Fairy-tale Canyon”).

What is the brightest memory of your life in Kyrgyzstan and at the OSCE Academy in particular?

The brightest living memory of my life in Kyrgyzstan would always be the friendships. Today when I go there, I feel home. Studying within a small academic community was more than enjoyable and enriched me with learning, understanding and living completely different cultures. My first Nowruz celebration was exactly at the OSCE Academy with my classmates from Central Asia, Afghanistan and beyond, as well as students from St. Andrews University coming from Western European countries: one could imagine how enjoyable that was! Not to forget, preparing and performing a dancing show for the “Graduation Ceremony” was probably more than a life spectacle! The saddest point of the Ceremony was saying “Goodbye”, which thanks to the great Alumni Network and Policy of the OSCE Academy, turned out only into “See you soon

AARON JOSHUA PINTO,
2017, Canada



Why did you choose the OSCE Academy? Have you heard about Kyrgyzstan before?

Whether at Harvard or in a rural hostel outside of Novosibirsk, I've always believed learning can happen anywhere - you just need the right mentors to help push the envelope and challenge your inhibitions. I first learned about the OSCE Academy after participating in a youth leadership program launched under the Swiss-Serbian consecutive OSCE Chairmanship from 2014-2015. It was through this valuable program that I befriended two former OSCE Academy students, one from Kyrgyzstan and the other from Uzbekistan, who introduced me to the Academy and helped place Central Asia in a global context. The more I learned from them, the more I was drawn in as the region and institution represented an opportunity for me to take the off-beaten path, which was what I had long yearned.

Looking back at my Master's experience, the Academy did not fail to deliver. Kyrgyzstan, with its natural charm, history and its relative openness, was the perfect place to explore something new. And the Academy, with its rigorous programming and the full scholarship it provides, was the ideal regional institution to pursue higher learning, greater mutual understanding, and critical thinking. I loved every moment.

What was the most exotic thing you tried in Kyrgyzstan?

The favourite dishes of the Turkic nomads were also some of my personal favourites: kuurdak with yak meat, beshbarmak, and kumis, or fermented mare's milk (so delicious!!). And, albeit conventional, I do crave

my hearty bowl of Dungan ashlan-fuu, lagman-style pulled noodles, and a simple, warm pelmeni soup with just a dollop of sour cream.

What is the brightest memory of your life in Kyrgyzstan and at the OSCE Academy in particular?

At the OSCE Academy, I greatly valued the intimate class size, the astute professors, and the atmosphere of high quality learning and friendship. Through my classmates, in particular, I was able to discover a whole new region, language and history, which, for a long time, was a world apart, literally and figuratively. I can never forget the many laughs and engrossing tales from friends which took me on potent mental journeys from Turkmenistan to Afghanistan to Tajikistan, and everywhere in between. My classmates have given me such a deep and profound appreciation of Central Asia, and further nudged me to explore more of our world's great hidden regions.

From my time in Kyrgyzstan, I will treasure a vast gamma of moments like late night study (read: cram) sessions at McDoners, Adriano or Odnoklassniki; long-winded, "politically incorrect" conversations about religion and world politics with my roommates; after-class ping pong battles and dinners at Manas University; runs at Ataturk Park and strolls at Ala-Too Square; rope swinging at Arkan Tokoi; hiking in Ala Archa; road tripping to Tokmok, Issyk-Kul and Osh; skiing from a mountain summit in Karakol: the list is truly endless. Kyrgyzstan - with all of its hidden gems - was a real, beautiful adventure, and, in a very large part, I have my classmates, my friends, to thank for this inimitable experience.

Alumni Hobbies

Our alumni are talented not only in academic terms. They are also great singers, dancers, poets, artists, sportsmen and list can go on and on. Here seven of our alumni and students share their hobbies and talents, showing how diverse their interests are.



KATE DANIS, 2014, Kyrgyzstan

I didn't think of myself making any kind of art before. I believe to start something new you have to leave all behind. That's how it happened: I moved to a different country, became a mother, my priorities changed. By lucky coincidence I attended a local painting master-class. And then another one. And I liked it. And now a year later I'm creating on my own in my home-based studio. I enjoy a lot brightening other people's lives through sharing my creations with them. @katedanisart



RASHID GABDULHAKOV, 2013, Uzbekistan

I paint since childhood. My father (a university professor whose hobby is also painting) showed me the basics and as a kid I used to stretch my own canvas, prime it, and paint. Playing with colors is a relaxing, therapeutic, and rewarding process. You get to construct your own vision of the world and fill a blank surface with substance. Combining art with science is very practical. Art keeps you aware of the larger picture, it reminds you to step back and reflect.

ASSEL MUSSAGALIEVA,
2005, Kazakhstan

I started the SUP practice on weekends about a year ago. First six weeks you are super scared and keep falling. Later, you realize that can overcome moving speedboats and big waves, rain showers and changing wind direction. What a great outdoor sports! It helps you relax and recharge, and most importantly, enjoy the beauty of the ocean and the nature around.

Doctors in the south of France proved mental and physic health benefits of SUP. It is now evidence-based medicine! So, join us on the wave one day.



GALINA KHEGAY, 2016, Uzbekistan

I have always been a fan of science-fiction, so my interest in block chain technology seems logical. After ignoring Bitcoin for a year and a half I finally decided to find out what was the matter with it and why there was so much noise around it. After three-week intensive research (not the type we used to do at Academy) when a deadline was lurking, I realized I have a new hobby: reading tech-news and white papers of new projects on the block chain. I'm also a member of crypto-community in Tashkent and sometimes facilitate discussions on the topic. The photo is from a panel discussion on the new presidential decree about welcoming block chain technology to Uzbekistan.



Photo credits: Spot.uz website https://www.spot.uz/ru/2018/07/06/block-cain-gz/?utm_source=push&utm_medium=facebook



RANO ABUTROBOVA, 2014, Tajikistan

Dancing is my passion. When I am tired, I go dancing and fill alive. It makes me feel like I can fly. I can say dancing is a meditation for me. There is a saying, what describes what dancing to me, is: " the dance, of all the arts, is the one that most influence the soul. Dancing is divine in its nature and is the gift of God". When I am dancing, I feel my soul :)

Regarding the research interest, I am specialized in the Disaster Risk Reduction, especially with the focus on natural disasters. If the students find this topic interesting for them, I would be glad to make a 1 hour presentation/discussion on this topic.



GULAIKHAN KUBAEVA,
2014, Kazakhstan

I think one of the most rewarding and healthiest hobbies one may indulge in is connection to nature and hiking at least once a week. Balancing it with a good company of friends or family is even priceless. I acquired this habit back in Bishkek while studying at the OSCE Academy. Studying in Kyrgyzstan and not going to nature would be a mistake. With my dear and fun classmates, we used to go at least to Ala-Archa and at most used to join the Kyrgyz Trekking Union for longer adventures and downhill skiing. When your work is intellectual and involves constant sitting in front of a computer and reading, trekking becomes necessity. Moreover, I have read that “nature therapy” is a contemporary tool to cure mental diseases without other medical interventions. Therefore, instead of late “bar” outings, I prefer going to hike on Saturdays: it provides more access to vitamin D, increases physical activities and simply feels as the rightest thing to do. Another upside I noticed is that hiking in nature improves my sleeping patterns. So go hiking, folks.



SATTOR FAKEROV , 2018, Tajikistan

I started doing this kind of work (3d origami) when I was twenty-two years old during facilitating time in a camp. I've learned it in a camp and as I am good in drawing, painting working with colours, I could improve it. Till starting my MA in OSCE ACADEMY, my hobby was my small business. During study in academy I couldn't find free time for doing 3d origami, but I did other things with papers in academy.

Yes, I really like it, and I enjoy it. It decreases stress and motivate me to use different ideas for creating new things. Moreover, my hobby helps me to find new friends not only in my country but in the other part of the world.

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ABDUL RAHMAN YASA
AFGHANISTAN



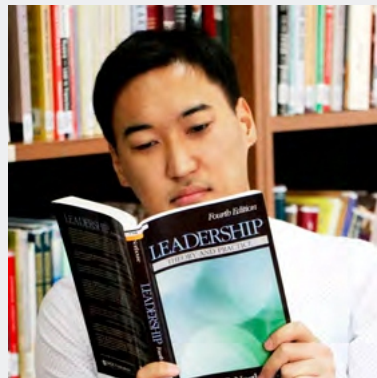
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TAJIKISTAN



ABDYKAR SULTANOV
KYRGYZSTAN



ABDYRAKHMAN SULAIMANOV
KYRGYZSTAN



ALIASKAR ADYLOV
KYRGYZSTAN



AMIRBEK SAIDBEKOV
TAJIKISTAN



DINMUKHAMED OMIRALI
KAZAKHSTAN



GULBADAM MADANBEKOVA
KYRGYZSTAN



INDIRA RAKYMOVA
KAZAKHSTAN



LASHA KANTELASHVILI
GEORGIA



MASSOUD ADRAKSH
AFGHANISTAN



MALIKA ABDULBAKIEVA
KYRGYZSTAN



MEERIM MAMYRBEKOVA
KYRGYZSTAN



**MUHAMMADKARIM
POCHOKALONOV**
TAJIKISTAN



NAVID IBRAHIMI
AFGHANISTAN



NIGINAKHON URALOVA
UZBEKISTAN



NIKKADAM NAZAROV
TAJIKISTAN



SAYED HUSSAIN ANOSH
AFGHANISTAN



SHAFQAT SHONASIMOV
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AIZHAN ERISHEVA
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AFGHANISTAN



NAWEEN KAREEM
AFGHANISTAN



SANZHAR SULAIMANOV
KYRGYZSTAN



SATTOR FAKEROV
TAJKISTAN



SHUKRILLO ABDUQAYUMOV
TAJKISTAN



ULUGBEK ATAEV
UZBEKISTAN

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