

SalamAlum

OSCE ACADEMY
in Bishkek

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OSCE ACADEMY ALUMNI MAGAZINE

Helping the State
and Ordinary Citizens
through Digitalization,
by Nuria Kutnaeva, pg. 18

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Alumni and Academy:
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School, pg. 6

*“...through my work,
I aim to spotlight people,
places, and cases that are
underrepresented, misrepresented,
or simply ignored in academia”*

— Rashid Gabdulhakov, alumnus of 2013 pg. 13

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Dear Reader,

We take a great pleasure in welcoming you to our new edition of SalamAlum. We created this annual magazine with the intention of providing an overview about the Alumni Network of the OSCE Academy for the year of 2021. This is already the 11th issue of SalamAlum where we share success stories of our graduates, update about the Academy's life and new developments within the Alumni Network, which has grown to over 500 people in 2021.

Let's start with the most prominent alumni events that we were fortunate enough to host this year in an offline or hybrid format. First and foremost, this year was marked by the Alumni Conference of 2021, at which our graduates from different years had the opportunity to discuss the topic of digitalization in Central Asia. During the first day of the conference our alumni and keynote speakers from MGIMO reflected on the importance of digitalization in an era of developments and pandemic restrictions. The second day of the conference was devoted to networking, thematic workshop and teambuilding of our beautiful alumni community. The Academy also organized two online themed Alumni chapter meetings and two offline chapter meetings in Nur-Sultan and Tashkent, bringing together graduates living in the same city, with participation of the Academy's faculty and staff members.

Also, the number of our graduates receiving the greatest academic and professional opportunities grows every year thanks to our long-time partners and donors. The Norwegian Institute of International Affairs runs its One-Year-Stay-at-NUPI Fellowship and Research Mentoring programme allowing graduates to move forward their projects, composing and expository abilities and professionalize in advancing their works. The Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP) provided one more alumna with the unique opportunity to receive MAS Scholarship for Central Asia. Our alumnus from Tajikistan, Emomali Mirzoev, has started his fellowship at the OSCE PA International Secretariat in Fall 2021. This year, five graduates had the chance to gain experience in government agencies through the Junior Public Officers programme.

There are new developments within the Academy's activities as well. The year of 2021 was also marked by the implementation of the Junior Teaching Fellowship programme. In 2021, three graduates were given the opportunity to teach at Kyrgyz state universities.

Let's read in details and more interesting news further in this issue of SalamAlum. Enjoy your reading!

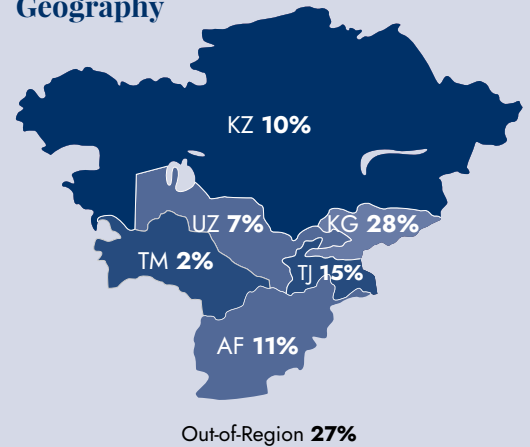
Our sincere gratitude goes to the OSCE, its participating States and especially to the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI), the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Finland and the United States, that specifically fund the alumni activities.

International Office Team

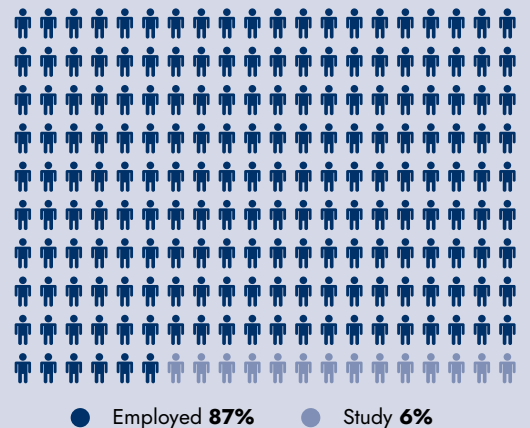
Alumni Network in Numbers

Annually, the OSCE Academy Alumni Network conducts an Alumni Survey. It identifies the current status of the MA graduates; their career and professional development and helps to keep the Alumni engaged in the Alumni Network activities.

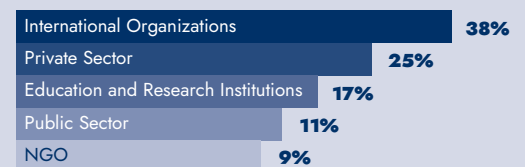
Geography



Employment



Employment by Sector



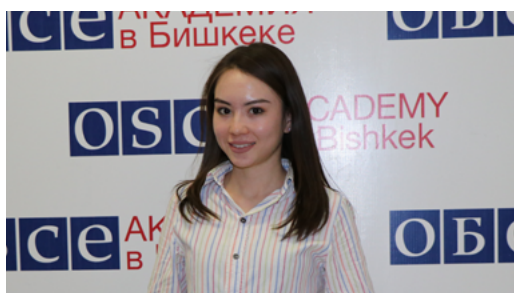
36 per cent of the alumni hold senior positions, such as Directors, CEOs, Heads of departments, Coordinators/Managers and Officers working for the Central Asian governments, international organizations, education institutions and NGOs. 15 graduates, who chose an academic path, are currently doing their PhDs.

The data provided illustrates the general statistics, which is based on the results of the Alumni Survey 2021 and contains information about 513 alumni.

ACADEMY'S UPDATES

International Office Assistant

The OSCE Academy Alumni Network welcomes its new International Office Assistant Azhar Kaltarbekova, who joined the OSCE Academy team in July 2021.



"It is a matter of joy for me as I have joined the OSCE Academy team and the Alumni Network family as Alumni Affairs assistant. I am pleased to assist such a wonderful community of the Academy's graduates and would want to help you in every possible way. I believe that the Academy is going to keep developing more academic and professional opportunities for its graduates, and expanding such a wonderful alumni family. Thank you for your cooperation and commitment!"

Research

The OSCE Academy seeks continuously to strengthen its research capacity. With support provided by the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) the Academy launched its Research Scholarships programme in 2019. Research Scholarships is a short-term fellowship that aims to offer young researchers the possibility to carry out research for seven months in a variety of disciplines related to the OSCE Academy's scope of work. The aim of the Research Scholarships is to help increase the research capacity and output of the OSCE Academy. This year three researchers are holders of this scholarship:



Dr. Rashid Gabdulhakov

Research Title: *"I saw it on the internet!" Sources, Mechanisms, and Impacts of COVID-19 Dis/misinformation on Labour Migrants from Uzbekistan*

Rashid Gabdulhakov is an Assistant Professor at the Centre for Media and Journalism Studies, University of Groningen, the Netherlands. His research focuses on digital vigilantism – citizen-led justice manifested online – as well as social media surveillance, affordances, and governance. Rashid has written a number of articles on these and other topics and co-edited an open-access book on Vigilant Audiences. Having lived, studied, and worked in five different countries, Rashid likes to describe himself as an 'academic nomad'. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Whitworth University, USA; a Master of Arts degree in Politics and Security from the OSCE Academy in Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic; and a Master of Advanced Studies degree in International and European Security from the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP) and the University of Geneva, Switzerland. Recently, Rashid received his PhD at Erasmus University Rotterdam, the Netherlands. In his spare time, Rashid enjoys painting, cooking, and blogging. You can learn more on his website: plovism.com.



Dr. Ajar Chekirova

Research Topic: *“Kyrgyz Diaspora Online: Understanding New Forms of Transnationalism, Citizenship, and Political Participation.”*

Dr. Ajar Chekirova is an Assistant Professor at Lake Forest College. She holds a PhD in political science from the University of Illinois-Chicago. Dr. Chekirova’s research interests include migration and citizenship, informal institutions, political communication and behavior. Her research has been previously sponsored by the Open Society Foundation, University of Illinois, George Washington University, and the University of San Francisco. Dr. Chekirova holds an MA degree in International Affairs from Ohio University, where she was a Fulbright Fellow. She earned her Bachelor’s degree in law from Beijing University in China.



Dr. Burulcha Sulaimanova

Research Topic: *The Impact of Job-Education Mismatch on the Earnings: Empirical Evidence from Generation and Gender Difference*

Dr. Burulcha Sulaimanova is an Assistant Professor at Kyrgyz-Turkish Manas University (Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan). She specializes in the fields of labor economics and applied economic analysis in Central Asian countries. In particular, her research interests include education-job mismatch issues in the Kyrgyz labor market, gender aspects of labor migration, infrastructure development, and its impact on Central Asian economies. She has been engaged in various types of projects as a researcher, project leader, and consultant. One of her recent projects has been on “The impact of infrastructure on trade in Central Asia”, which was supported by the Asian Development Bank Institute. Dr. Sulaimanova holds a PhD and MSc degree in Economics from the Kyrgyz-Turkish Manas University, and a Bachelor of Arts in Economics from Anadolu University, Turkey.

Faculty

The OSCE Academy recruits and invites highly qualified scholars and experts from regional and international partner institutions, western universities, and international organizations to serve as faculty members. In 2021 the OSCE Academy welcomed new Lecturers as full-time Faculty Members:



Dr. Viktoria Akchurina

Dr. Viktoria Akchurina is a Lecturer at the OSCE Academy in Bishkek. Her research focuses on state-building in Central Asia and the Middle East. She has authored several academic publications on elite formation, power and hegemony, the incomplete state, security and radicalization, and border and water management in central Eurasia. She co-edited a Special Section on ‘Power and Competing Regionalism in a Wider Europe’ in the *Journal of Europe-Asia Studies* (2018). In her previous capacity as a Researcher at TRENDS Consulting in Abu-Dhabi, she published a number of policy papers on the Belt and Road Initiative in the Middle East and conducted research on Russian foreign policy in Syria, among other projects. Previously, Viktoria worked for EXOP-Consulting in Germany, the International Women’s Media Foundation in Washington D.C., and taught at the MA program in Peace and Development at Dauphine University in Paris. Viktoria received her PhD in International Relations from the University of Trento (Italy) and her MA in Social Theory and Global Governance from Jacobs University Bremen (Germany). She is fluent in English, German, French, Russian, Italian, and is now working on her Kyrgyz and Arabic languages.



Dr. Elena Zhirukhina

Dr. Zhirukhina holds a PhD from the University of St Andrews. Prior to joining the OSCE Academy she had been a Marie Curie Fellow at the University of St Andrews, a Lecturer at the Academy of Public Administration in Kazakhstan, and a Researcher at the Institute of International Relations in Prague. She had lectured and presented her work at the Webster Vienna Private University, the University of Oxford, Columbia University, and the University of St Andrews.

Elena has a subject matter expertise in countering terrorism, transnational organized crime, border management technology and a hands-on experience in open-source intelligence, data management with geographical focus on Europe, Russia, the Caucasus, and Central Asia. She is a strong advocate of evidence-based and data-informed policy making. Elena had been a holder of fellowships and scholarships funded by the European Commission (Marie Curie Fellowship and Erasmus+), the Council of Europe, the Swiss Government, and worked on joint research projects funded by the Russian and Norwegian Governments.



Dr. Asel Doolotkeldieva

Dr. Doolotkeldieva teaches graduate courses in Political Science at the OSCE Academy. She earned her PhD from the University of Exeter (UK) in Politics and her Master's degree from Sciences Po Paris. Previously, she was a Visiting Fellow at College Mondial, FMSH (Paris, France). Her academic interests include social mobilizations, regime transition and democratization, postsocialism, and the political economy of resource extraction in Central Asia.

Erasmus +

Since 2019 the OSCE Academy is engaged in Erasmus+ KA 1 (Learning Mobility for Individuals). This year the OSCE Academy was glad to receive funding for projects and mobilities with two more universities in Germany: Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg and Philipps-Universität Marburg, and welcome its 2nd Erasmus+ exchange student from National University of Political Studies and Public Administration (NUPSPA) who arrived in Bishkek in May 2021:



David Onel, National University of Political Studies and Public Administration, Romania:

"I have been eager to begin my study mobility at the OSCE Academy in Bishkek shortly after my admission to the PhD programme, since my research is focused on Central Asia. But the pandemic delayed my departure until May 2021. Indeed, I expected to face multiple challenges in undertaking my Erasmus mobility, primarily due to the risks related to the pandemic, but also due to what I feared as language barriers given by my beginner skills in Russian. Yet, as soon as I arrived, I met very friendly people, open, and always happy to help. Besides the academic activity and the courses which I will follow during the next three months at the OSCE Academy, being in Kyrgyzstan is a valuable opportunity. I strongly believe that Kyrgyzstan can offer an enriching experience from multiple points of view. Being able to visit places with a rich historical heritage, such as the Ala-Too square, getting to know Kyrgyz culture from close, and having the chance to see the outstanding mountains here can be a once in a lifetime opportunity. I am looking forward to the next experiences in Kyrgyzstan."

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ALUMNI AND ACADEMY

Upon gradual return to the offline or hybrid format of work, the OSCE Academy was happy to welcome its alumni at its events. Despite some limitations that were still present, several activities were organized with full or partial in-person presence, that allowed the Alumni Network to recover its bonds.

Summer School “Democratic Institution Building in Central Asia – 30 Years After Independence”

From 19 till 24 July the International Alumni Summer School “Democratic Institution Building in Central Asia - 30 Years After Independence” organized for alumni and students took place in Issyk-Kul. This School was organized with the generous support of the OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek. Twenty alumni and students from Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Romania, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan spent a week together

with four experts – Prof. Dr. Anja Mihr, DAAD Associate Professor at the OSCE Academy, Radomir Djuric, Border Management and Anti-Corruption Expert, Dr. Elena Zhirukhina, Senior Lecturer at the OSCE Academy, and Uran Tursunaliyev, Program Coordinator, Public Association “Centre of Initiatives “Suyyu Bulagy”, discussing the political and societal transition and transformation processes in the OSCE region with a focus on Central Asian societies and states.

In addition to the sessions led by Trainers, alumni had an opportunity to meet two Guest Lecturers, who joined via Zoom. On 20 July Julia Johannsen, coach and consultant for intercultural communication, discussed with participants cross-cultural communication that starts with understanding oneself and one’s own culture. Through interactive exercises they discussed how culture shapes core values and defines one’s being.



Participants of the Summer School

On 23 July within the session of Dr. Elena Zhirukhina participants met Gulnaz Razdykova, the Head of the Center for Analysis and Development of Interconfessional Relations (Kazakhstan), who presented the results of work of the NGO and shared their experience in the rehabilitation and reintegration of women evacuated from areas of terrorist activity.



Prof. Dr. Anja Mihr, DAAD Associate Professor at the OSCE Academy and one of the Trainers of the Summer School, discusses transition and transformation processes in the region

During the School participants were invited to discuss and assess the process of state-building in Central Asia, the development of civil society, conditions for revolutions and social change, institutional origins of ethnic violence, as well as compared and designed potential schemes to improve the human condition in the region.



Trainers, Participants and Organizers of the Summer School

Alumni Chapter Meetings

From year to year the Academy works to improve its Alumni Networking activities and considers its graduate's feedbacks. Unfortunately, due to pandemic restrictions, we had to find a new way to organize networking events. Thus, in 2021, we have successfully tried new formats of alumni meetings and hold two online and two offline Alumni chapter meetings in different parts

of Central Asia. The first two virtual meetings were conducted by our alumnus of 2014 and former Alumni Affairs assistant, Sergey Marinin. Then we had a chance to hold two offline meetings in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan by our Senior Lecturers, Dr. Asel Doolotkeldieva and Dr. Viktoriya Akchurina, and a Graduate Education Department representative, Nazira Abakirova.

Experienced Alumni Share Their Expertise within Alumni Generations Exchange Workshop

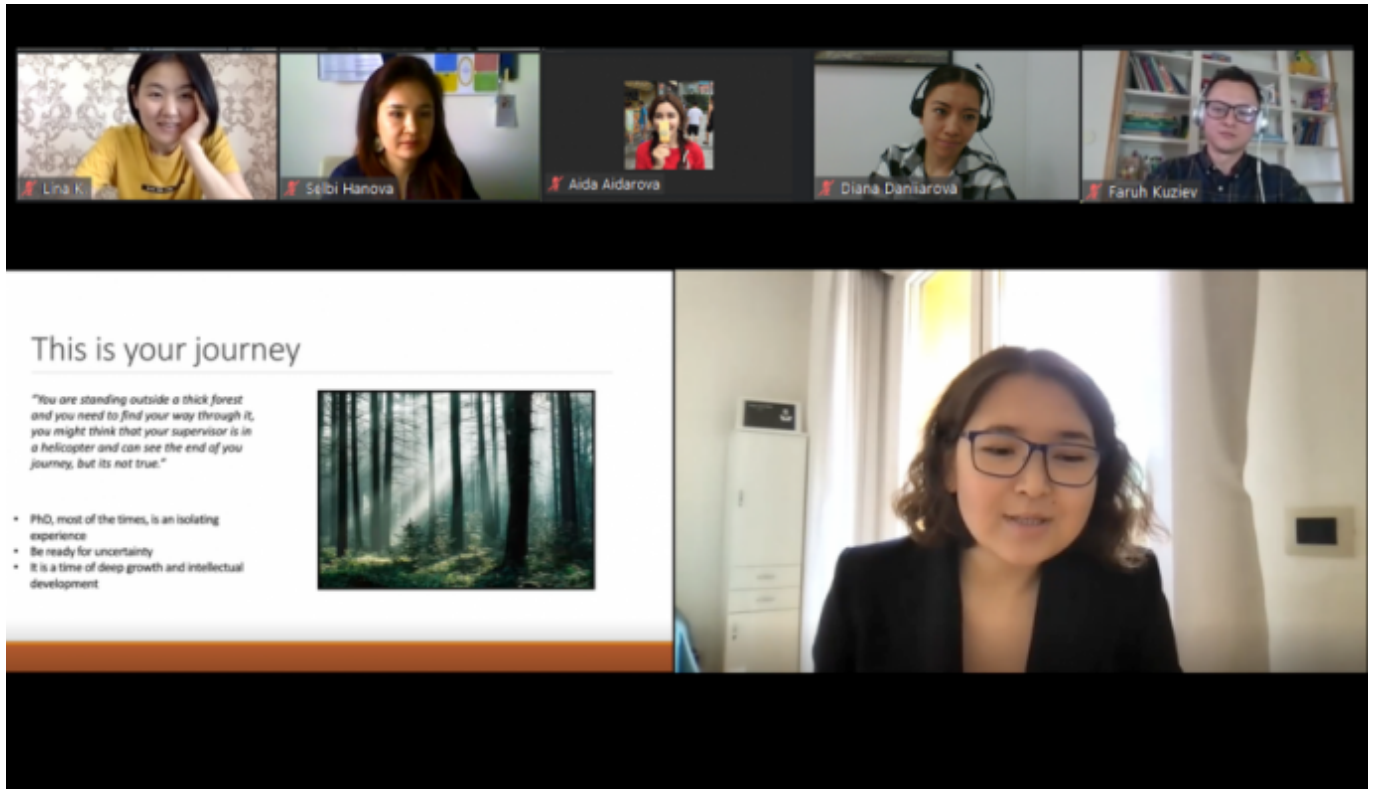
RECRUITMENT PROCESS

APPLICATION	PRE-SCREENING	WRITTEN TEST	INTERVIEW
JOB PROFILE & COVER LETTER <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IN LINE WITH TOR • SPECIFIC • PROOF READ! 	OSCE: PRE-RECORDED INTERVIEW (SONRU)	SUBSTANTIVE KNOWLEDGE	COMPETENCY BASED: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "STAR" approach • SITUATION • TASK • ACTION • RESULT
	UN: MULTIPLE CHOICE TEST (SUBSTANTIVE KNOWLEDGE)	POLITICAL AWARENESS	
		ADMIN/ LOGISTICS	
		NOTE VERBALE/ LETTER	
		TRANSLATION	SUBSTANTIVE QUESTIONS

On 29 April we held our first virtual workshop organized as part of the Alumni Generations Exchange series titled 'How to pursue a Career with International Organizations: Practical Strategies'. The e-event gathered more than 30 alumni and current students from all over Central Asia and beyond. The session featured 4 accomplished alumni who currently hold positions at various UN bodies in Europe and the OSCE Secretariat in Vienna. The Speakers shared their experiences of how to get a job with International

Organizations detailing the most effective strategies, provided a comprehensive overview of the main stages during the employment process, and answered the audience's questions which were plenty. The workshop is intended to further support recent alumni and current students in equipping them with practical and effective approaches to employment, and connect different OSCE AiB alumni cohorts by facilitating intergenerational dialogue and exchange.

'I wish I'd known this when I was a student': OSCE Academy's Alumni learn how to pursue a Doctorate Degree'



On 6 May we had our second online workshop within the Alumni Generations Exchange series. This time, four alumni who are in different stages of pursuing their PhDs talked about their experiences of how to 'survive and thrive' the PhD studentship. The event gathered more than 30 alumni and students from across the Central Asian region and other OSCE participating States. The Speakers touched upon the multitude of problems starting from the successful application tips to balancing the life/work/relationship, how to problematize the research proposal better and create an organic and genu-

ine research question, how to establish a smooth rapport with the potential and current supervisor and how not to lose interest in the research topic. Individual presentations followed by a Q&A session, where alumni and students could ask their questions and share their impressions from the workshop. The workshop is intended to further support recent alumni and current students in equipping them with practical and effective approaches to tackle the academic world in pursuing a PhD degree, and connect different alumni cohorts by facilitating intergenerational dialogue and exchange.

Alumni Chapter Meeting in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan and in Tashkent, Uzbekistan

At the end of the year, in November and December, the Academy was fortunate enough to hold offline meetings with alumni in Nur-Sultan and Tashkent. In November, the Academy gathered alumni in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan, for a meeting with Professor Asel Doolotkeldieva. In December, the alumni

met with Professor Viktoriya Akchurina and Nazira Abakirova in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. During the meetings, alumni had the opportunity to discuss important regional issues, learn more about various topics from each other, and reminisce about the good old days at the Academy.

Annual Alumni Conference

Digital Transformations in Central Asia: Current State and New Perspectives



Left to right: Dr. Alexander Wolters, Ambassador Alexey Rogov, Dr. Vladimir Morozov and Prof. Elina Sidorenko

In mid-October the OSCE Academy Alumni Network organized an offline Alumni Conference on “Digital Transformations in Central Asia: Current State and New Perspectives”. The participants of the conference, more than 30 alumni, were welcomed by Dr. Alexander Wolters, Director of the OSCE Academy, and Ambassador Alexey Rogov, Head of the OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek. The alumni came from Central Asian countries, including Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, as well as from the countries outside the region, including Finland, the UK, the Netherlands, and Estonia.

The event was opened by honorable guests from the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO) Dr. Vladimir Morozov, Vice-Rector for Human Resources, Associate Professor, and Prof. Elina Sidorenko, Director of the Center for Digital Economy and Financial Innovation. Dr. Morozov spoke about international cooperation in higher education, including MGIMO’s experience, and outlined the plans for collaboration between the OSCE Academy and MGIMO. Professor Sidorenko delivered a keynote speech on “Development of Law in the Context of Digital Transformation.”

“The OSCE Academy remains one of the leading and prominent higher education institutions providing a regional dialogue platform for experts’ intellectual exchange. Having all of you here today, also reaffirms that the Academy successfully graduates young professionals, many of who are already experts in their own field, forming a network across the wider Central Asian region and beyond. Young bright minds, like yourselves, who understand the importance of and carry liberal values, are the moving engine of the development of your countries. The latest developments in the region proved once again the crucial importance of the education and your role – as intellectuals – should not be underestimated,” that highlighted Ambassador Alexey Rogov in his address to the alumni.

The conference continued with three panels covering digitalization in the state, in the economy and in human rights and values. Moderators of the panels are experts in this field in Kyrgyzstan: Dr. Nuria Kutnaeva, Director and Founder of the Public Foundation “DigitalTechnology Foundation”, Dr. Zhyldyz Tegizbekova, Associate Professor, AlaToo International University, Kyrgyzstan; Teaching Professor, KAZGUU University, Kazakhstan; Talant Sultanov, Chair and Co-Founder, Kyrgyz Internet Society, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.



Akmaljon Abdullayev, alumnus of 2005, presents his paper



Alumni listen and discuss the presentations

The first panel of the conference was dedicated to the topic of Digitalization and the State. Three graduates of the Academy – Mr. Rustam Muhamedov, alumnus of 2019, and today Independent Researcher in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan; Mr. Danat Tumabayev, alumnus of 2017, today Senior Business Analyst at JSC “Kazakhtelecom,” Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan; Ms. Nadezhda Tatkalo, alumna of 2019, affiliated in the Institute for Strategic Analysis and Forecast at the Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, delivered inspirational presentations about the impact of digitalization on the state. The panel was moderated by the alumna of the Academy of 2005, Nuria Kutnaeva.

The second panel of the conference was devoted to the topic of Digital Transformation and Human Rights & Values. Five graduates of the Academy – Ms. Irina Grigor, alumna of 2006, and today (PhD), Postdoctoral Researcher at the Faculty of Social Sciences, Media and Communication Studies, University of Helsinki, Finland; Ms. Malika

Toqmadi, alumna of 2012, today PhD candidate, University College, London, UK; Ms. Natalia Zakharchenko, alumna of 2012, today PhD candidate, Ruhr University Bochum, Germany/Vrije University Amsterdam, the Netherlands; Dr. Rashid Gabdulhakov, alumnus of 2013, today an Assistant Professor at the Centre for Media and Journalism Studies, University of Groningen, the Netherlands; Mr. Akmaljon Abdullayev, alumnus of 2005, today PhD Candidate, University of World Economy and Diplomacy, EU Marie Curie Rise Project Researcher at TalTech, Tallinn, Estonia presented inspiring projects on the influence of Digital Transformations on Human Rights and Values. The panel was moderated by Dr. Zhyldyz Tegizbekova.

During the third panel of the Conference Mr. Daniel Dushmanov, alumnus of 2016, Communications Consultant at the Aerospace Committee of Kazakhstan, talked about the relationship between Digital Transformation and the Economy. The panel was moderated by Mr. Talant Sultanov.



The Conference participants

The first day of the Conference was concluded by a formal reception that was attended by the alumni community, and staff and faculty members of the OSCE Academy. Everyone at the dinner had a warm evening of conversations and memories.

In the meantime, Victoria Orazova announced the winner of the Alumnus/a of the Year 2021 Award, who collected most votes among a total of three nominees – Mr. Rashid

Gabdulhakov, alumnus of 2013. On 7 October 2021, Rashid successfully defended his dissertation entitled “Digital Vigilantism in Russia: Citizen-led Justice in the Context of Social Change and Social Harm” and obtained a PhD degree in Media and Communication (Cum Laude). Upon defending, Rashid became an Assistant Professor at the Centre for Media and Journalism Studies at the University of Groningen in the Netherlands (story of Rashid on p. 13).



Alumna/us of the Year Award Ceremony

During the second day of the Alumni Conference graduates, faculty and staff members of the OSCE Academy travelled to the mountains for a Workshop on “Cross-cultural Communication”, Quiz Night and networking. The first half of the day participants spent together with Cross-Cultural Communication expert Julia Johannsen, learning the basics of cross-cultural communication and discussing different concepts of culture. Following this session, the Academy’s PR Assistant,

Diana Daniyarova, prepared Quiz Night for all participants. Everyone, graduates, the faculty and the staff members, enjoyed the interesting and exciting game which covered a wide range of topics. During the teambuilding activities at eco-resort Kara-Bulak, graduates had a chance to connect with each other, extend their network and thus enhancing the relevance of the Academy’s Alumni Network. The conference was concluded with teambuilding and networking activities.



Alumni are learning Cross-Cultural Communication

ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENTS

ALUMNUS OF THE YEAR 2021 RASHID GABDULHAKOV:

“...through my work, I aim to spotlight people, places, and cases that are underrepresented, misrepresented, or simply ignored in academia”



Rashid Gabdulhakov is a graduate of 2013 of the MA Programme in Politics and Security from Uzbekistan. This year Rashid received the Alumnus of the Year 2021 Award for his professional development and achievements after the graduation from the OSCE Academy. On 7 October 2021, Rashid successfully defended his dissertation entitled “Digital Vigilantism in Russia: Citizen-led Justice in the Context of Social Change and Social Harm” and obtained a PhD degree in Media and Communication (Cum Laude). Upon defending, Rashid became an Assistant Professor at the Centre for Media and Journalism Studies at the University of Groningen in the Netherlands.

Q: Rashid, this year you received the award of *Alumnus of the Year*, what does that mean to you? And what role has the OSCE Academy played in your life?

The OSCE Academy has a very special place in my heart. Of course, I met Natasha [ed: *Rashid's wife Natasha is also alumna of the OSCE Academy*] here, I made some life-long friends and gained so much knowledge. Sometimes I sound like a broken record, but I do not get tired of repeating that the OSCE Academy is the best and most effective project of the Organization. The reason I say this, is that it offers a unique forum for people to come together, learn and coproduce knowledge. I am also endlessly happy about the fact that I stay connected with the new generations of the Academy's students. As soon as I started my PhD project in the Netherlands, I contacted the Academy's administration and proposed to introduce a cybersecurity module as something that is crucial, yet often neglected in security studies. It has been a true blessing to be able to teach this course and inspire students to look beyond the traditional and 'hard' security in the ever-evolving world. One important point to add here is that any institution is nothing without the great people that faithfully and tirelessly work towards its success. In this regard, the strong alumni network of the Academy is a major success factor.

Q: Everyone recently congratulated you on your new title of *Doctor of Philosophy*, please tell us about your dissertation work. Why and how did you come up with the topic of "*Digital Vigilantism in Russia*"?

I did not come up with it, I was lucky enough to be supervised by the mastermind behind this



Rashid and his wife Natalia Zakharchenko (alumna of 2012) with Dr. Alexander Wolters, Director of the OSCE Academy, at the Academy's reunion

project – Dr. Daniel Trottier. In 2016 I was actively looking for a PhD position and considered the 'usual suspects' of Germany and the UK, when suddenly I came across an ad for a position in the Netherlands. I was reading through the description and began to have shivers of excitement as this was exactly what I wanted to study – citizen-led justice manifested online in Russia. Now I had to make sure that the other side is as interested in me as I was interested in the project. After several online interviews and an in-person meeting in Rotterdam, I got the position. This is another thing I say on repeat, but it is ultimately true – I enjoyed every single day of my PhD. I got to focus on the topic I am passionate about and research it for four years. In the meantime, I also had the chance to teach and develop as an educator. I would highly recommend the Netherlands as a destination for PhD. I will be happy to tell anyone interested more over (virtual) coffee.

Back to the research itself, vigilantism is a grossly under-researched phenomenon. In the basic understanding, it is an act where citizens replace police forces and become the judge, the jury, and executioner. However, there is more nuance to this in the sense of citizen reaction to perceived breaching of legal vs moral boundaries by other citizens. Things get even more complex in the online domain. When something is shared across

social media platforms, people tend to react instantly without any proper investigation of the situation at hand. Targets can get exposed for things they said, a Tweet from a decade ago, or their political views. Sometimes it is just enough to be who you are, as hate groups target people for their skin colour, sexual orientation, nationality, etc. This exposure can damage a person's reputation and can lead to physical retaliation. However, collective citizen-led justice pursuit can also have a positive side to it. Think about the anti-corruption campaigns and global movements such as #MeToo, and #BlackLivesMatter, for instance. It is a complicated phenomenon which cannot be framed as fundamentally good or bad.

Q: As a young boy in *Namangan City, Uzbekistan*, could you imagine yourself being *Assistant Professor teaching at the University of Groningen*, and receiving a *PhD in the Netherlands*?

Funny enough, growing up, I was certain that I would never teach, as everyone in my family is an educator and I witnessed all the challenges of this profession. Yet I also saw the rewarding side. My father

is a university professor and after fifty years of teaching, he is still working; he cannot live without his true passion. Now I completely understand why. I absolutely love teaching and don't ever feel like I am 'going to work'. I wake up and I get to do what I love the most, and, in doing so, I can pay my bills – a wonderful combination, albeit cliché sounding.

This journey, however, was filled with challenges and self-discovery. When I was a bachelor student in the United States, majoring in political science, I was hoping to create change in the world, but had no idea how I could do it. During my master's studies at the OSCE Academy, I discovered the value of research in informing the decision-making process, but struggled to find a way of connecting the two. My second master's degree at the University of Geneva and the Geneva Centre for Security Policy has offered me the exposure to world-level decision-makers, while sealing my appreciation for scientific inquiries. I gained competence to produce knowledge. Now I needed to find a proper setting to conduct research and teach. I enjoy being in academia, but I am also conscious of its numerous problems such as gender, ethnic, national, economic, political and other inequalities and biases. I share these concerns with students and colleagues. Only together and through open and honest forum we can strive for making academia a better place.

Q: Another recent important event in your life is the birth of your son! Could you please tell us about your experience being a father, a professor and working on your PhD dissertation during the pandemic lockdown?

Having a child is an experience that fundamentally transforms you. First of all, it made me appreciate my parents even more. They raised five children; I really cannot imagine how they did this heroic deed. Moreover, you recon-



sider your priorities. Before our son Arthur-Daniel came into our lives, I could spend 12 hours at work on a given day, then work some more at home and work on the weekend. I do not do this anymore. I cherish the precious time we spend together and balance work and life. Luckily, in the Netherlands work-life balance is something that is respected and encouraged, although not always realistic in academia due to the job demands. In the final year of my PhD trajectory, I obviously had to write a lot and had quite a heavy teaching load. One of the hardest periods was winter 2021, as we were recovering from COVID, it was dark and gloomy outside, there was curfew across the Netherlands and it felt like we were just in complete isolation. In this respect, hugging Arthur, seeing his smile and observing his development had a healing effect. Nothing else matters in the world, really.

Q: What are your aspirations for the future?

As I like to state in my CV, "through my work, I aim to spotlight people, places, and cases that are underrepresented, misrepresented, or simply ignored in academia". What I plan on doing in the future builds largely on what has been done in the last five years. I enjoy teaching and aim to continue striving to be the best educator I can be. Knowledge valorization is important to me and I will keep de-

living tailored courses for aspiring scholars and civil society leaders in Central Asia. Furthermore, I believe it is my duty to continue including the region in the current scientific inquiries and debates in the domain of media and communication. As part of the de-Westernisation curriculum, I bring in cases and examples from Central Asia in the courses I teach here in the Netherlands. I would like to produce more empirical research covering the region and while doing so, I hope to connect with local scholars and co-produce knowledge.

Q: Finally, what would you like to advise to our graduating class? Any professional tips?

Perhaps, I will not be very original, but these five steps have worked for me. I think they are applicable to different domains; be it career or personal life. First, I would suggest finding your own way, without blindly following anyone's advice, like this one here, otherwise you will have no ownership of your decisions. Second, find your true passion and pursue it, do not settle for anything less, then you will be happy. Third, aim high but start small. Every small step has value. Fourth, never stop learning. The world is in constant flux and we must continuously adapt. Finally, do not be afraid to fail. Learn from your mistakes and keep going.

Furthering Academic Development: PhD Candidates

It's great to see the accomplishments of our graduates in different aspects of their professional and personal parts of life. Inspired by recent PhD Defense of the Alumnus of the Year 2021 - Rashid Gabdulhakov, we decided to write about our alumni who are currently pursuing PhDs in the UK and Hungary. Galina Khegay, alumna of 2016 and Nosirkhon Qodirov, alumnus of 2020, share their academic experience at different universities, but with one goal – pursuing a PhD.

Galina Khegay is alumna of 2016, MA Programme in Politics and Security from Uzbekistan. Currently Galina is working on her PhD project at the London School of Economics and Political Science, UK.

“In September 2021 I started my PhD studies at the London School of Economics and Political Science. I was honored to receive an LSE PhD Studentship which covers annual tuition fees and provides a maintenance stipend for 4 years to pursue my research. I joined the Department of Anthropology, home of the most prominent figures in the field, where I am working on my own project on uncertainty and social navigation among migrants.

Upon graduation, I was given the opportunity to be a visiting research fellow at NUPI. This provided me with an intellectually stimulating and rewarding environment and inspired me to continue on my previous work on ethnic migrants in South Korea. In 2018, I returned to the field and embarked on a five-month ethnography of labor in Korean factories. In 2019, I received a scholarship to study Social Anthropology at the Central European University and for my MA thesis, I built on the findings of my field research where I focused

on the intersection of migration, labor, and precarity.

I chose to study anthropology because of its power to surface the narratives that change human lives. It is a field of academia where my personal experience matters and shapes my approach to it in a unique way. There was no hesitation when choosing PhD programs, as I wanted to continue growing within the discipline, and after several rejection and acceptance letters, I chose the LSE.

From my graduation at the OSCE Academy in 2016 and the day I accepted the PhD Admission Offer from the LSE there was a research fellowship at NUPI, 5-month field research in low-skilled jobs in South Korea, a second MA degree from CEU, and multiple rejection letters from universities. It seems like a long journey, but in all those years I had powerful support from people I met at the Academy, be it for networking, access to literature, getting reference letters, or moral support from my supervisor and the incredible staff who are always cheering for us alumni. That makes me realize that the academic journey doesn't have to be a solo experience, and I am forever grateful to my OSCE Academy family for always being there for me.”



Nosirkhon Qodirov is alumnus of 2020, MA Programme in Politics and Security from Tajikistan. Currently Nosirkhon is working on his PhD project in the Doctoral School of Law and Political Sciences at the University of Szeged, Hungary.

This year, I started my PhD degree in the Doctoral School of Law and Political Sciences at the University of Szeged, Hungary. Currently, I am working on my project, which investigates the role of the EU in Central Asian politics. Szeged is a beautiful and small city in the heart of East-central Europe. Szeged is home to cheerful architecture and a lively student atmosphere. The city is also known as the “city of sunshine”, which always reminds me of Bishkek.

It was one of the toughest decisions I have ever had to make because I had a job offer and a PhD scholarship simultaneously. Prior to beginning my MA degree at the OSCE Academy, I had not considered pursuing a PhD degree. It wasn't on my agenda, but throughout my time at the OSCE Academy, I discovered that I enjoy conducting research and that this is a career path that appeals to me. Most significantly, I am pursuing a PhD to learn how to conduct research in-

dependently in preparation for a job as a research project manager in industry or academia.

Also, I was privileged to conduct my internship in the Eurasian Studies Department of Middle East Technical University with the Academy's support upon graduation from the OSCE Academy. During the internship period, I gained valuable research experience and became much more interested in entering academia, so I decided to start this way. Back in the Academy, we used to extensively discuss Central Asian politics thematically and comparatively in classes, which in turn inspired me to conduct extensive research on the region. Furthermore, during the whole application process for PhD, I was in touch with my fellow colleagues from the Academy and Academy's alumni who were already pursuing a PhD degree here in Hungary. So, the strong network I was able to form as a result of my time at the Academy, as well as the advice and guidance I received from them throughout the process, was really beneficial to me. Now, I can wholeheartedly and confidently state that the Academy was at the center of this turning point in my life.



ALUMNI INITIATIVES

Every year as we read the news from the lives of our academy graduates, we marvel at the extent of their accomplishments. In this part we want to share the stories of three of our beautiful alumnae who have contributed so much to the development and well-being of their homeland and other countries in need. Nuria Kutnaeva, alumna of 2005, Alimana Zhanmukanova, alumna of 2020, and Anahita Saymidinova, alumna of 2012 shared their amazing initiatives.

Helping the State and Ordinary Citizens through Digitalization



Nuria Kutnaeva is alumna of 2005, MA Programme in Politics and Security from Kyrgyzstan. Director and Founder of the Public Foundation "Digital Technology". Nuria introduced the electronic interoperability system "Tunduk" in the Kyrgyz Republic.

Q: *Dear Nuria, you are famous within our Alumni Network for your direct contribution and development of "Electronic interoperability center "Tunduk". What motivated you to move from security issues to the e-governance sphere?*

After graduating from the OSCE Academy and then several years later after defending my PhD thesis at the Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University on the topic of security, I was invited to work in the secretariat of the Security Council of the Kyrgyz Republic in the direction of preventing corruption in government agencies.

Working directly with ordinary public servants and high officials of state agencies, and analyzing legislation I had the opportunity to study deeper the reasons of corruption in public agencies. It turned out that corruption risks are connected not only with small salaries of civil servants, but also with corruption mechanisms already laid down in the legislation. Furthermore, since there was

weak automation in state agencies, it was easy to forge paper documents, signing everything retroactively. Or another example: in order to get paper documents, citizens are forced to go to different agencies, where everything depends on the goodwill of an official. It was painful to see how our citizens – pensioners, the poor, young mothers or entrepreneurs – are forced to go through all the circles of hell, obtaining paper documents!

When I was invited to help implementing such a digital state platform, which connects the information systems of government agencies with each other, I agreed beyond a shadow of a doubt.

In 2018 we started from scratch the state enterprise "Center for Electronic Interaction "Tunduk", under the Ministry for Digital Development of the Kyrgyz Republic, where I worked as the director (2018-2021). We introduced the interoperability system "Tunduk" to combat corruption, make people's life easier and improve the efficiency of public administration in Kyrgyzstan.

Q: *Please tell us about the project and how you came to realize you wanted to build the project?*

I believe we made it possible to build a fundament for the digital transformation in Kyrgyzstan. For three years (2018-2021) the team of our enterprise implemented the "Tunduk" system, which was transferred to Kyrgyzstan by Estonia back in 2016.

By 2021, state agencies and commercial organizations exchange information with each other about citizens in paperless digital form (from zero transactions in 2018 to 150 mln transactions in 2021). This meant excluding necessity to inquire paper documents from ordinary citizens from state agencies.

Additionally, in 2020, we modernized the state portal of electronic services (portal.tunduk.kg) and introduced the digital ID (unified system of identification). Now every citizen can enter this portal, go through identification and receive more than 100 e-services on the portal. In 2021 the team introduced the mobile application Tunduk, with digital documents in it.

Besides, together with the team of IT-lawyers we suggested some changes in digital legislation. All these steps led to the fact that Kyrgyzstan received the award from the most digitally developed state – Estonia, and also achieved improvement of the UN E-government ratings.

Q: What challenges have you faced before achieving progress in e-governance in Kyrgyzstan?

The state policy fully supports implementing e-government. At the same time there were officials who, under various pretexts, delayed the processes we needed, because they were not very interested in introducing electronic forms of interaction with citizens. Nevertheless, we tried to move forward, notwithstanding the latent resistance and lack of understanding of some officials.

There was also the personal challenge – I had to learn many new things. After work, in the evenings I studied online

several data privacy, digital transformation, and cybersecurity courses. What I am very proud is that after several months of very intense studies I received international certification in cybersecurity: Global Information Assurance Certification (GIAC) Security Leadership.

Q: This has become a rather traditional question by now – what role did the OSCE Academy play in your professional or perhaps even personal life?

Our graduation class was the first one to graduate from the OSCE Academy. It was very responsible to be the graduate of the institution, which already at that time had such a high reputation and impressively high image in the country and abroad.

We became good friends with our course-mates. Interesting lectures with professional lecturers from all over the world had a deep impact on our further career. With some professors we still keep in touch. Besides, the knowledge I obtained from the OSCE Academy I tried to pass further during my academic career at different universities in Kyrgyzstan.

Q: What are your aspirations for the future?

I believe in our progressive, smart, initiative, and courageous youth. I met a lot of people who had studied abroad and returned to the country and are still working in the civil service and contribute their efforts to the society and state.

Q: Finally, what would you like to advise to our graduating class? Any professional tips?

Recently, I was asked to be a volunteer-mentor for girls in STEM for 5 months for 17 schoolgirls of schools from suburbs in Bishkek (“zhilmassivs” and “novostroi-kas”) – in the framework of the joint project of the UNICEF and the foundation “Initiative of Roza Otunbaeva”.

The goal is to show different directions in the IT field to these 14-17-year-old girls. I compiled a weekly program for 5 months and personally teach them computer and leadership skills with a co-trainer starting from the simplest ones (MS Office applications), resume writing, online self-study platforms, to more complex like cybersecurity, cyberbullying resistance, financial literacy and other issues. We want to show to these girls that the field of IT is not an area restricted only for men. Girls can and should learn information technologies, too.

Since this is a completely unpaid, volunteer project, I do this in my free time from the main work. I call this my service to society – to transfer those knowledge and skills for free.

I am sure that smart young leaders from the OSCE Academy also implement many such initiatives. That is how we can make a difference in the society.

I advise graduates whatever happens to stick to their principles, not to give up and try to make a difference for the sake of the society and further development of our states, for the better future of our parents and children.

Educated Youth – Bright Future of the Country

***Alimana Zhanmukanova** is alumna of 2020, MA Programme in Politics and Security from Kazakhstan. Alimana initiated the project Discussion School RISE to study and discuss essential issues of Kazakhstan.*

Discussion School RISE - platform that united 24 young people from the North Kazakhstan region to study, discuss, and debate crucial issues of the Kazakhstani society. Lectures of distinguished experts and practitioners contributed to the participants' better comprehension of the covered topics and encouraged them to immerse into new ways of thinking and problem-solving. Every participant was challenged to reflect his/her own vision and solutions to the central topics of the school through collaboration with other participants and extensive discussions while working in teams under the supervision of curators. At the end of each day four teams were brought to competitive debating to exercise public speaking and critical thinking, while also gaining deeper understanding of the topics. Along that, participants' experience at the school was enriched by providing soft skills on social projects drafting, implementation and fundraising, to the facilitation of long-lasting impact by encouraging them to take the initiative to contribute to the betterment of their communities. This year's school covered the following topics - Disinformation, Feminism, Human Rights and Mental Health.



Providing a Chance for Better Future

***Anahita Saymidinova** is alumna of 2012, MA Programme in Politics and Security from Tajikistan. Anahita helped to rescue 167 people from Afghanistan via the Tajik-Afghan border while Taliban forces took control of Afghanistan's capital city Kabul in summer 2021. Below Anahita shares with us her unique experience:*

“On 30 August 2021 I got a phone call from the Israeli humanitarian NGO, the IsraAID. Yotam Polizer, the CEO asked me to support their secret evacuation operation from Afghanistan. They had a list of more than hundred vulnerable people mostly women and girls and their families. But the situation was intense as these people were at risk. We had to act immediately. And I joined them without any doubts.

On 2 September, with a lot of behind-the-scenes talks with high-level officials of Tajikistan, we managed to open the border and to rescue 41 people mostly girls and a 4 months old baby. Most of them were cyclists from Afghanistan. I welcomed them at the bridge. One of these girls was so young and so scared. When she cried, I hugged and told her: “now this nightmare is over”. We travelled to Abu Dhabi and they were placed at the special so-called Humanitarian City. When their papers are ready, they will travel to Canada as a final destination.

We had harder time with the second group. The Taliban didn't allow them to cross the Tajik-Afghan border. However, we managed to order an airplane from Mazari Sharif to Dushanbe. Policewomen, female judges, journalist and activists were among the 125 people. The government of Albania has agreed to receive them before they will go to the US or Canada.

I feel sorry for all these people who experienced such a huge trauma. It will have a long-term effect on their lives. But this successful rescue mission makes me happy because we gave them new hope to find a safe homeland.”



ALUMNI NETWORKING

Researching Civil Society and the Covid-19 Governance Crisis in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan

It's great to see our graduates in a friendly team, but it's even better when they work together to develop exciting projects. Now, Sergey Marinin, alumnus of 2014 from Kazakhstan, Muslimbek Buriev, alumnus of 2017 from Tajikistan, and Azizjon Berdykulov, alumnus of 2013 from Tajikistan, tell us how they came together to work on a research project in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.



Q: Please tell us what the project is about.

Our research project was about identifying and categorizing the dynamics of civil society organizations' (CSOs) activities during the COVID-19 pandemic in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. We assessed the roles CSOs assumed to assist the local populations throughout the crisis. The key purpose was to analyze and provide recommendations on how local governments and international organizations can integrate strategies of non-state crisis-driven activism into their policies.



The link to the final publication:
<http://iep-berlin.de/en/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/07/EN-Civil-Society-COVID-19-in-Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan.pdf>

Q: How did you come all together to work on the project?

It was synergy. We have known each other since 2013, me and Aziz. Muslimbek came a bit later, but we all felt it was a special bond. So,

working together turned out to be fun and productive. Sergey and Muslimbek have worked before in the framework of the CABAR.asia's School of Analytics. Muslimbek was one of the editors at the time, supervising a new cohort of experts, of which Sergey was a part. Aziz helped Sergey during his studies at the Academy back in 2014 too. Muslimbek and Aziz are members of the Dushanbe Intellectual Games Club, and knew each other before.

Q: Why particularly this topic interested you?

We came across the Eurasia Lab fellowship against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic. Each of us noticed the flaws of state response in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan and the whole situation could be described as a of a crisis governance. At the same time, it was evident that civil society and independent volunteer groups started to step out as a force virtually replacing the state. Drawing on that we decided to take a deeper look into such phenomena and the Eurasia Lab was the perfect opportunity to take part in and publish our findings. In the broader context, civil society is often disregarded, especially in Tajikistan,

as toothless and unreliable. Highlighting the achievements of NGOs or individual activists within our research was one the key goals that we set for ourselves. We perceived our project as a statement championing the integral part civil society plays today in Central Asia's socio-political reality. Hoping to shape the public and state opinion towards civil society, we dwelled further into that topic and presented our project on various platforms.

Q: What were the turning points in your life that led you to continue your academic/professional career and where is the place of the OSCE Academy in it?

The OSCE Academy played a crucial role in shaping our career aspirations and navigating our research interests. Even after graduation the Academy provided multiple opportunities for professional and academic growth through calls for policy briefs, online events, training and workshops. This helped us not only to stay in touch with each other but also with the current Central Asian research agenda.

Alumni in Eurasia Lab and Fellowship Program at the Institut für Europäische Politik (IEP)

Svetlana Dzardanova and Niginakhon Uralova

Our two alumnae, Svetlana Dzardanova, alumna of 2009 from Turkmenistan, and Niginakhon Uralova, alumna of 2018 from Uzbekistan, came together to work on the project Pandemics of COVID-19 and gender-based violence in Central Asia, being fellows of the Eurasia Lab and the Fellowship Program at the Institut für Europäische Politik (IEP).

With the project Pandemics of COVID-19 and gender-based violence in Central Asia we aim to assess the efforts of the state, local civil society, and international actors in Central Asia in addressing violence against women during the Covid-19 pandemic, focusing specifically on two countries, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. It will look at good practices, lessons learned, and obstacles encountered by the responsible actors that prevented them from responding more effectively. The research will offer a better understanding of the efforts and role of the state and non-state actors during the Covid-19 pandemic. It will furthermore contribute to better designing policies and practices for the prevention of gender-based violence in Central Asia.



Apart from producing policy relevant recommendations, we see a great opportunity in the program to publish and present results of our work in regional languages both in written and other available formats as oftentimes original knowledge produced and shared in English and Russian does not reach its main target audience – the locals, especially those in charge of policy and decision-making. We are excited to share our findings and recommendations.

Rustam Muhamedov

Now our graduate Rustam Mukhamedov, alumnus of 2019 from Turkmenistan, will talk about his fellowship at the Institut für Europäische Politik (IEP).



This Fall, I had the privilege of being a fellow of the Eurasia Lab and Fellowship Program at the Institut für Europäische Politik (IEP). This program provides a fantastic platform for advancing research projects on sociopolitical developments in Central Asia and integrating into the network of researchers, practitioners, and activists working on Eurasia. I could not value more the perfect blend of academic guidance and freedom and the highly-qualified and devoted team of professionals who assisted me in this challenging and exhilarating endeavor. My research focused on the expanding Turkmen online activism, namely its strategies, capabilities, organizational and institutional evolution, and potential for laying the foundation for prospective democratic transformation in Turkmenistan. I am immensely grateful to this program as it significantly contributed to my professional development, sharpening my analytical and research skills and advancing my academic and professional prospects.

ALUMNI OPPORTUNITIES

Junior Public Officers' Programme

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

In 2021 overall five alumni conducted their internships at State Agencies of Afghanistan and Kyrgyzstan:



Akai Omurbek uulu, alumnus of 2020 from Kyrgyzstan

The Ministry of Economy and Finance of the Kyrgyz Republic

“One of the main contributions of the JPO Programme is that it helped me sneak a glance into the inner workings of the governmental machine – a sort of a “black box” for outsiders which too often become either an object of ridicule or a coveted starting ground for someone’s career. I’ve experienced the formal and informal aspects of how this machine actually operates. Additionally, the focus on investment related to the responsibilities of my department helped me better understand international investment law, the topic of arbitration and how sovereignty can be imagined in different contexts. I’ve had many “Oh now I get it” moments when I could tie the ongoing experiences with the theoretical knowledge provided by the Academy.”



Siam Mohammad Tamim, alumnus of 2020 from Afghanistan

The Institute of Diplomacy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

“The experiences which I have gained through the JPO program will help me to start my professional career in the public sector of Afghanistan specifically in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is one of the top ministries of Afghanistan, therefore, having experience of working in the Ministry is considered significant and valuable. It could definitely help us when starting our career in the public sector. If there will be a possibility to continue my career in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan. I will definitely continue my career within the Ministry.”



Almagul Ishenbek kyzy, alumna of 2019 from Kyrgyzstan

The Ministry of Economy and Finance of the Kyrgyz Republic

"...I think that my efforts during the internship at the Ministry of Economy and Finance of the Kyrgyz Republic have already brought the first results. I was accepted for the OSCE-UNODA Scholarship for Peace and Security training programme during it... I really enjoyed working in the Ministry of Economy and Finance of the Kyrgyz Republic. If the opportunity arises after my studies, I will be happy to work there. I would like to thank the OSCE Academy in Bishkek and all the other sponsors of the Junior Public Officers' Programme for such a great chance. Thank you very much!"



Taieb Rajab, alumnus of 2020 from Afghanistan

The Institute of Diplomacy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

"During those three months, I learned about the structure of the foreign ministry, its missions abroad, and the role the ministry plays in Afghanistan's politics, especially its foreign policy. The lectures and seminars held at the IOD were other opportunities that I had the privilege to attend and learn about Afghanistan's bilateral economic and political relations with its neighbors, regional countries and its strategic allies. Moreover, this programme widened my network of friends and colleagues. I met experienced lecturers who shared their academic experiences of studying for a PhD abroad. Since I am determined to continue my education, their insights deepened my understanding and knowledge on taking steps toward further education."



Zhannat Kozhomgeldieva, alumna of 2020 from Kyrgyzstan

The Investment Promotion and Protection Agency of the Kyrgyz Republic

"As for me, it was very important to get experience in the public sector. Taking part in the official meetings and conferences I have met many people, leaders, colleagues that have shared their experience with me. Moreover, I got to know the idea of how the governmental structure works, how ministries communicate with each other and what steps need to be completed in order to solve different problems. Experience in the ministry has given me tools and knowledge in research and writing. I have gained experience in writing official letters. Moreover, there are many industries that require having an experience in the public sector."

Junior Teaching Fellowship

Universities across Central Asia are faced with the challenging job to provide quality education. The OSCE Academy in Bishkek being at the forefront of academic and research excellence in the region, however, receives a declining number of high-quality applications from some of the region's key countries. To bridge this gap by combining the Academy's graduates' potential and knowledge and delegating them to teach a course at local universities, the Academy could not only empower regional student communities, but also help prepare stronger applications for the admission period.

Capitalizing on the successful experience with the Junior Public Officers Programme and utilizing various best practices the OSCE Academy has launched in 2021 a new alumni-supporting initiative "Teach for Central Asia" that aims to target regional universities and send Academy graduates to teach selected disciplines (relevant to the Academy's curriculum, e.g. Academic Writing, International Relations, Economics etc.). The programme is intended to further grow and foster the Academy's intellectual input into the region, and empower the Academy's alumni network by giving the opportunity to become the agents of change in their communities.

The following alumni have successfully started the JTF Programme in Fall 2021:



Gulbadam Madanbekova

Gulbadam Madanbekova is alumna of 2018, MA Programme in Politics and Security from Kyrgyzstan. Gulbadam is teaching an 'Academic Writing and Critical Reading' course at the Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic.

"The Junior Teaching Fellow programme is a great opportunity to share my knowledge with students and to start tutoring. While teaching Academic Writing at the Diplomatic Academy I have met young women and men, who are motivated to apply for international schools, to do research, and to participate in different educational and cultural exchange programs. However, those young people were not comfortable with writing essays, motivational letters, and research papers. They have been very interested and committed in the learning process. This programme has made these young people to open a new world of English academic writing. For me this programme has proven that while I share my knowledge with others, I hone my own skills. I am happy to be useful for other young people to build their confidence in writing and make them believe in their abilities to write and achieve new endeavors. Indeed, sharing is caring."



Chyngyz Israilov

Chyngyz Israilov is alumnus of 2017, MA Programme in Politics and Security from Kyrgyzstan. Chyngyz is teaching a 'Contemporary Conflicts and their Resolution' course at Osh State University.

"In the week of 8–12 November, I as a JTF Programme Fellow held midterm examinations for "International Relations" graduate bachelor students as part of teaching course "Contemporary Conflicts and Resolution" at Osh State University. As per the Syllabus, from September to November I delivered lectures covering such topics as theory of conflict studies, approaches to understanding the notions of social conflicts, peace and violence. Along with lectures, my students performed workshop sessions by submitting thematic presentations and brief essays. Within my scientific-research work, my article "On the issues of collective security in the post-soviet area" has been published in a journal of the National Academy of Science of the Kyrgyz Republic. On 23 October, in Bishkek, I had an opportunity to deliver a keynote on the article during a scientific conference with the participation representatives of academia as well as relevant practitioners. Further, in accordance with academic work, I will be supervising theses of two graduates of international relations bachelors."



Lidiya Chikalova

Lidiya Chikalova is class of 2016, MA in Politics and Security. Lidiya is teaching 'Academic Writing in English' at Bishkek Humanities University.

"JTF is an innovative approach for state universities to benefit from seasoned experts from various fields. One of such universities was Bishkek Humanities University, European Civilisations Faculty where I taught an Academic Writing class to third-year students, who are interested in boosting analytical writing skills. Students who managed to complete the elective course gained valuable and one-of-a-kind experience offered at BHU premises for the first time. I was personally glad to see how interested and engaged students were during the learning process. I hope that my efforts would benefit all students and help them pave their way through a successful future."

'I learned the basics of academic writing, drafting an argumentative essay, reviewing literature, working with citations. I gained a lot of useful information that I can apply in my studies now and in the near future. I especially liked that we learned not only about the formal ways of writing, but also the trends and how to write with style and engage the audience,' said course participant, Karina Budaichieva.

International Internships

The COVID-19 pandemic has not bypassed the internship opportunities for our alumni in 2020. Due to the pandemic restrictions, internship opportunities for 2020 graduates have been limited. It was decided to reallocate funds for student internships to 2021. The Academy announced International Internship Programme only for 2020 graduates of both MA Programmes. Thus, the Academy selected five graduates to sponsor their internships:



***Nosirkhon Qodirov** is alumnus of 2020, MA Programme in Politics and Security from Tajikistan. Nosirkhon completed his internship at the Department of International Relations, Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey*

"The Middle East Technical University is also a pioneer in Eurasian studies in Turkey with having a Eurasian Studies Department and a graduate programme in Eurasia studies. I was the first intern from the OSCE Academy in METU and conducted my internship in the Department of Eurasia Studies with the support of the OSCE Academy's Alumni Grants.

... From the process of having an internship at METU, the most useful thing was becoming familiar with Turkey's academic environment and meeting with Turkish researchers working on Central Asia. Overall, the internship at METU was very beneficial for my academic

qualification and was the first strong step to start my PhD journey. The internship process helped me to define my PhD topic and write a proposal for it. As a result, I got a scholarship and started my studies for a PhD degree. My internship experience will be helpful in my PhD research. Last but not least, the internship at METU helped me know more about research institutes studying Central Asia in Turkey and get in touch with them."



Alimana Zhanmukanova is alumna of 2020, MA Programme in Politics and Security from Kazakhstan. Alimana has her internship with the International Labour Organization (ILO) in Tbilisi, Georgia.

"After graduating from the OSCE Academy, I received an amazing opportunity to deepen my knowledge about the region and gain professional skills by interning at the International Organization for Migration (IOM) United Nations Agency. The Academy generously supported my professional aspirations and my travel to Tbilisi, Georgia, where I could get first-hand work experience in the IOM UN environment. During my internship I focused on Labour Migration and Human Development in the Central Asian Region and the Russian Federation, worked on projects connected to diaspora mapping and engagement, migrant's integration and remittances. I see this internship as an important step towards my dream of devoting my life to humanitarian work and I am grateful to the Academy for this opportunity"



Tinatin Osmonova is alumna of 2020, MA Programme in Economic Governance and Development from Kyrgyzstan. Tinatin completed her internship at the LEYA Lab for Natural Language Processing.

"As the OSCE Academy supported me to continue studying at the MITx Micromasters Program in Statistics and Data Science, I wished to consolidate learning through practical application. Thus, searched for the appropriate internship opportunities. Luckily, I was selected by the team of the LEYA Lab for Natural Language Processing to contribute to the research project dedicated to comparative research of knowledge representation in progressive and conservative media. LEYA is an international research laboratory located in St. Petersburg, Russia. It is committed to innovative fundamental research of machine learning systems for text representation, comprehension, and generation. The Laboratory's work is based on multidisciplinary research in fields like linguistics, information theory, theory of dynamic systems, game theory, complexity, and data science. My work experience with LEYA

challenged me to self-study a lot. My primary role within the project was the generation of hypotheses for testing. In addition, I tried to learn how to test those research questions by applying quantitative data analysis techniques.

Again, many thanks to the OSCE Academy for providing me such amazing opportunities to keep growing professionally."



Ismoil Sadullozoda is alumnus of 2020, MA Programme in Politics and Security from Tajikistan. Ismoil is having his internship at the European Center for Minority Issues (ECMI), Flensburg, Germany.

"Interning at the European Center for Minority Issues (ECMI) was an impressive opportunity to enhance the knowledge and skills earned at the OSCE Academy and gain insight into the process of work of the leading think tank in the field of minority issues. I was interning at the Justice and Governance research cluster where I deepened my understanding of the international and regional human rights protection mechanisms. The result of detailed inquiry of the protection of national minorities' rights was a valuable experience necessary for my future academic undertakings. Being part of the brilliant ECMI team, even for a short time, has been fulfilling and worthwhile because the supportive environment of its friendly international team encourages excellence and promotes creativity."



Shokirjon Shokirov is alumnus of 2020, MA Programme in Politics and Security from Tajikistan. Shokirjon currently is an intern at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP).

“I am delighted to have an opportunity to conduct research as a visiting researcher at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP). Currently, I am working on various research projects related to Central Asia within the research division of Eastern Europe and Eurasia. This opportunity allows me to put academic knowledge gained at the OSCE Academy into practice, enhance research skills and establish a network in German academic circles. I believe that the fellowship at SWP is an excellent preparation for my future PhD degree. I am very grateful for this future-oriented opportunity to gain practical experience in one of the leading European think tanks and build my career.”

Research Fellowship at the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly International Secretariat

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly International Secretariat regularly engages eight or nine graduate students of political science, law and international relations from universities in OSCE countries as Research Fellows. Starting from 2017, one position of a Research Fellow every year is granted to OSCE Academy graduate (under the MoU signed on 10 August 2016). This year our alumnus, Emomali Mirzoev '20, had the privilege to start his fellowship at the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

“After successfully completing my Master’s in Politics & Security at the OSCE Academy in Bishkek in 2019/20, I was invited to work as a Research Assistant at the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly’s Vienna Office in September 2021. As soon as I arrived, I found interesting assignments to work on. A big part of it is attending OSCE meetings, such as the weekly Permanent Council, informal working group meetings, bilaterals and some ad-hoc events in the three dimensions of the OSCE. I chose to follow the politico-military dimension, because it seemed closest to my background, even though assignments are not as clear-cut in practice. The horrific events in Afghanistan coincided with the start of my assistantship. I was asked to provide weekly updates on the developments in Afghanistan and their implications for the Central Asian region. This was both an interesting and responsible task for me because the updates are meant to eventually feed into various background and policy documents of the OSCE PA.

Moreover, my arrival couldn’t have been timelier given that the Autumn Session of the OSCE PA, in part dedicated to Afghanistan, and the end of the year negotiations ahead of the annual Ministerial Council in December – this year in Stockholm, are held in this period. These negotiations are the crux of multi-lateral diplomacy and they illustrate how consequential and thus challenging the adoption of consensus decisions can be.

Last, I was lucky to support the OSCE PA’s election observation mission (EOM) to the Jogorku Kenesh elections in Kyrgyzstan on 28 November 2021. From communications support and elections-related news updates all the way to actual deployment and observation in polling stations across the country, this is perhaps the most important and rewarding experience I have had in my early career. For these opportunities, I am grateful to the one and only – the OSCE Academy in Bishkek!”



One-Year-Stay at NUPI Fellowship



In 2021 two more alumni had a chance to continue their fellowships offered by the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI): Galina Kolodzinskaia, alumna of 2017 of the MA Programme in Politics and Security and Aidai Isataeva, alumna of 2018 of the MA Programme in Economic Governance and Development. Galina and Aidai's fellowships have been extended for one more academic year due to their excellent academic performance and also due to pandemic restrictions. This Fellowship is exclusively targeted at the alumni of the OSCE Academy. 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 continued study/research by deepening their practical and academic experience. Here Galina and Aidai shortly describe their second-year experience at NUPI.

The Fellowship at NUPI is considered as a one-year add-on to the MA from the OSCE Academy in Bishkek. It appears, however, that few OSCE students and alumni are informed about the fabulous opportunities this fellowship grants. As opposed to the education process at the Academy which logically is focused more on theoretical and descriptive knowledge, the NUPI fellowship is al-

most entirely oriented on the acquisition of practical skills such as digital literacy, problem-solving, and critical thinking that many employers would ask about at job interviews. In addition, working at NUPI presents a wonderful opportunity to dive into a multi-cultural work environment, that too in Scandinavia, an experience that will look good not only on paper but also in daily life interactions. And, finally, the lucrative opportunity to get published in leading peer-reviewed journals is a wonderful start-up for one's academic career with potential of admission to the world's leading universities--if one plays one's cards right. All in all, life in Norway itself is a very pleasant experience, it is reinforced by close contact with top-notch scholars at NUPI and other organizations in Oslo. Without a degree of hesitation, we recommend applying for the NUPI Fellowship for anyone authentically interested in the post-modern world of research and academia.

MAS at the Geneva Centre for Security Policy

Every 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 2021 Aikerim Motukeeva was accepted to enhance her knowledge in security studies.

Aikerim Motukeeva is alumna of 2015, MA Programme in Economic Governance and Development from Kyrgyzstan

Being an alumna of the MA programme in Economic Governance and Development, I was selected for the Master of Advanced Studies (MAS) in International and European Security (2021 – 2022) organized by the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP) and the Global Studies Institute (GSI) of the University of Geneva. This is a fast-paced intensive programme for mid-career professionals who wish to further their knowledge and skills in the area of international security. A special emphasis is made on the development of leadership skills and strategic thinking, the essence of which is taught within the Leadership in International Security Course offered by GCSP professionals and the Geneva Leadership Alliance. This year we have 24 participants from all continents and various professional backgrounds (from academia, military, consultancy, diplomatic service, international organizations and research institutions).





The Graduate Institute, Geneva

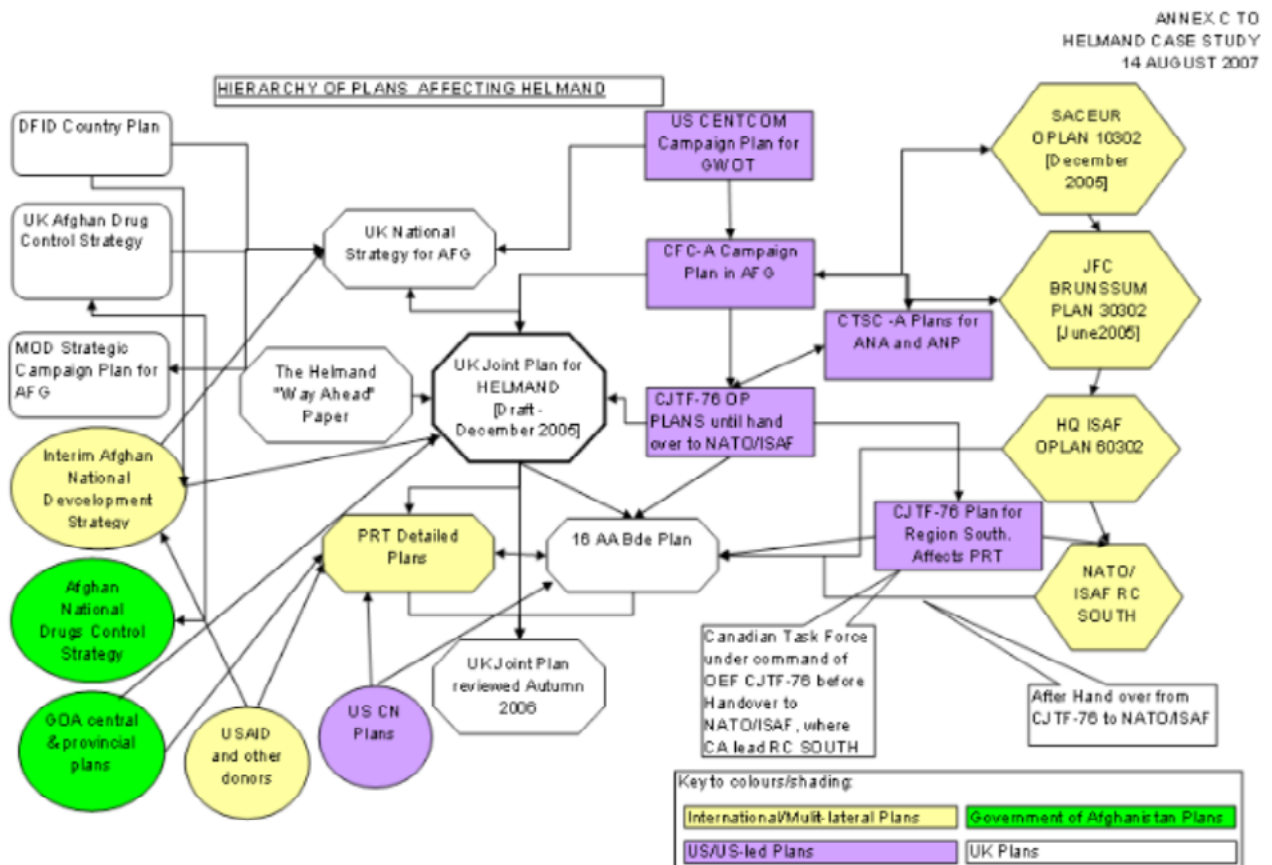
The programme consists of both theoretical aspects of lecture material and thesis writing; and a practical component during which the participants have an opportunity to put the learnt theories and concepts to practice within the framework of project work. It is remarkable that the whole programme is tailored in such a way as to make it easier for the participants to take away the practical aspects that could be immediately implemented in their work places once they return to their respective organizations.

Apart from the invaluable knowledge, the course presents a great opportunity to network with a wide range of professionals, including GCSP staff, visiting experts, faculty of the University of Geneva and, of course, other participants in the course. It is an excellent opportunity to further your knowledge, gain new skills, but also form new friendships. The exposure to new cultures changes your mindset about the core concepts in international security, while collaborating with people of varying professional backgrounds sometimes changes the way you choose to approach your work. We learn from each other as much as we learn from our professors, and sometimes some of the most valuable insights take place during informal talks in the coffee break rooms.

It is worth mentioning that notwithstanding the persistent challenge of Covid-19, the GCSP managed to successfully integrate digital tools, like Zoom, Miro and Padlet, into the learning process. It made the program accessible to those members of the group who do not have an opportunity to be physically in Geneva.

For the rest of the group, the strict protocol of presence on the GCSP premises is managed in the way that everyone has an opportunity to socialize in a safe manner. 2021 marks the first year the GCSP adopted such hybrid approach of learning, and, personally, I can say that it adds flexibility to the process while ensuring safety during these challenging times.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to thank the OSCE Academy for giving a chance to participate in this journey. Special thanks for Victoria Orazova and Sergey Marinin for the support throughout the process, as well as MAS alumni Galina Kolodzinskaia and Mahabat Murzakanova for providing the practical tips of survival in Geneva. I feel ever grateful for being part of this community and I believe that our strong ties make us more resilient.



The Central Asia–Azerbaijan Fellowship Program (CAAFP)

The George Washington University – Elliott School of International Affairs’ Central Asia Program (CAP) opened its Central Asia and Azerbaijan Fellowship to alumni from the OSCE Academy, as part of a new partnership between CAP and the Academy. The theme selected for the fall 2021 fellowship is: "Societal Engagement with Cultural, Educational, Environmental, and Gender-Related Issues."

The Central Asia–Azerbaijan Fellowship Program (CAAFP) is intended for young professionals – scholars, government officials, public policy experts, and social activists – who seek to enhance their research and analytical skills and become public policy leaders. The fellowship is available to individuals from Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan. The fellowship program provides a platform for the exchange of ideas and builds lasting intellectual networks among the wider Central Asian and Azerbaijani and U.S. scholarly and policy communities.

CAAFP fellows participate in a tailor-made program that has been adapted to the pandemic conditions. They follow a weekly online class, Theories of Social Sciences applied to Central Asian Studies, that present the main social science theories applied to today’s Central Asia. It aims at helping the fellows to access a state-of-the-art knowledge on social science theories that matter for understanding Central Asia today: political regimes, authoritarianism, democratization, populism, nationalism, identity politics, memory studies, and social mobilization and activism. The class includes 3 readings a week, a PPT lecture, and a reading-based discussion.

The Fellows also work on their own research paper and are able to consult regularly with CAP staff. Their final paper will be submitted for publication to the CAP online series. Fellows are also given the opportunity of following some writing classes with CAP Senior Editor in charge of the Central Asia Analytical Network, and with journalists from The Diplomat, to prepare short, op-ed style publications for these two outlets.

Depending on the course of the pandemic situation the most successful Fellows will receive an opportunity to spend one month at the George Washington University – Elliott School of International Affairs starting in early 2022.

Two of our alumni have shared their experiences:



Niginakhon Uralova

Alumna of 2018, MA Programme in Politics and Security from Uzbekistan

"It is unfortunate that we had the CAAFP Fellowship Program online, but I am still grateful for the opportunity to learn, build a network, and grow further. Throughout the program we acquired knowledge from security to social issues and improved our skills in policy analysis and analytical writing. I especially thank my mentor Dr. Aisalkyn Botoeva for her guidance on my work that examines the shortage of teachers at public schools in Uzbekistan. I also extend my appreciation to all scholars of the Central Asian region and beyond who took time and effort to have broad and meaningful discussions with us on various topics within the fellowship."



Waris Ahmad Faizi

Alumnus of 2020, MA Programme in Economic Governance and Development from Afghanistan

"The CAAFP Fellowship Program provided me with an excellent opportunity to get acquainted with Central Asian studies and knowledge from a variety of political and socio-economic viewpoints. Likewise, it provided excellent guidance on how to write for journals and other publications. My research topic during the fellowship was "Impact of CASA-1000 power project on political-economic development and regional integration of Afghanistan, South Asia, and Central Asia; Future of CASA-1000 in the context of the new Afghanistan".

The following alumni were also selected for the Fall 2021 fellowship:



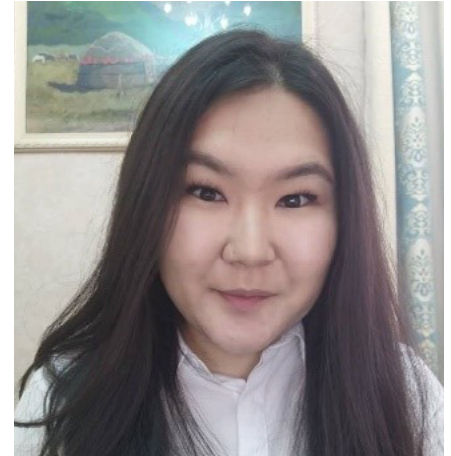
Albina Yun

*Alumna of 2015,
MA Programme in Politics
and Security from Uzbekistan*



Tansaya Khajikhan

*Alumna of 2020,
MA Programme in Economic
Governance and Development
from Mongolia*



Aizhan Erisheva

*Alumna of 2018,
MA Programme in Economic
Governance and Development
from Kyrgyzstan.*



Kasiet Ysmanova

*Alumna of 2017,
MA Programme in Politics
and Security from Kyrgyzstan*



Javeed Ahwar

*Alumnus of 2011,
MA Programme in Politics and
Security from Afghanistan*



Andrei Shvarev

*Student of 2020-2021,
MA Programme in Politics
and Security from Russia*

Alumni Grant

The OSCE Academy Alumni Network, with support of the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) offers travel grants to qualified OSCE Academy alumni to support their professional and academic development. This year two alumni received Alumni Travel Grant to attend MIT Micromasters in Statistics and Data Science Programme and to develop and present a research project at the Alumni Conference 2021.



Tinatin Osmonova is alumna of 2020 from Kyrgyzstan

“Economics is a social science which is heavily based on mathematical concepts. Modern economic research methods are comprised on both quantitative and qualitative parts. Quantitative economic reasoning becomes viable with the help of statistical techniques and modern software applications. Thus, I wanted to obtain new technical skills to be able to work on interesting research projects that might arise at the junction of economics and computer science. Thanks to the support of the OSCE Academy I had a chance to participate in the MITx Micromasters Program in Statistics and Data Science, where I learned new data analysis techniques and advanced my knowledge in probability theory and fundamentals of statistics. I found these courses challenging and valuable additions to my Master’s degree in Economics.”



Natalia Zakharchenko is alumna of 2012 from Kyrgyzstan

“The provided opportunity opened prospects to deepen the research with new data and materials, including through the follow-up and analysis of recent legislative initiatives and amendments, such as on the law on personal information, collection of latest discourses on privacy in local media, as well as further interviews and discussions with experts in the field. COVID-19 has exacerbated privacy in various aspects worldwide, and capturing some of the recent dynamics from the region was crucial in building a comprehensive and nuanced picture of the state of privacy in Central Asia.

I was delighted to participate in the Alumni Conference 2021 “Digital Transformations in Central Asia: Current State and New Perspectives” on 16-17 October 2021. The research presented there delved into the exploration of digital policies in Kyrgyzstan, with a specific focus on privacy. I was honored to deliver the presentation together with my better academic half – Malika Toqmadi – who scrutinized the issue in the context of Kazakhstan. The research was supported by a grant from the

Foundation Open Society Institute in cooperation with the Eurasia Program of the Open Society Foundations, and involved two fieldworks in the countries mentioned in 2019 – 2020. With the attempt to conceptualize privacy beyond its Western-centric perspectives, we have reached out to various stakeholders: from civil society activists to lawyers, from IT specialists to policy-makers. Some of our most remarkable responses we received during focus-group discussions (FGDs) with every day-users of digital technologies. The research was informed by cultural, political and historical contexts of the two states. Among our main conclusions was the fact that privacy is yet to be formed as a value, and that the risks of its infringement by the state – either due to negligence or securitization – remain high against the dissimilar political background of the states studied.”



ALUMNI RELATIONS

The Academy not only opens the door to a successful future for graduates, but also to a happy life. Let's read the stories of graduates who met their soulmates at the academy. Please welcome Rustam Muhamedov, alumnus of 2019 from Turkmenistan and Assel Murat, alumna of 2019 from Kazakhstan, who met at the OSCE, while studying at the MA Programme in Politics and Security.

Love Story: Love Knows no Borders

Q: *Please tell us how you met each other?*

R: At the very beginning of our studies, we did not talk that much. Assel did impress me though during the first lecture already when she started citing the Montevideo convention. It was one of the German classes, however, when we talked to each other for the first time. We had a verbal practice exercise, kind of similar to the speed dating format. She asked me what was my name, and since I did not properly understand the question I replied "Danke", which made her laugh turning my face red. She did not shy away from teasing me with this whole "Danke" thing ever since, and it was the beginning of a very beautiful story.

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

R: Truth be told, we started dating near the end of our studies. Certainly, studying in one class at the Academy is what brought us closer to each other and made us very close friends by then as we spent a lot of time together preparing for classes and exams, writing papers, helping and sort of mentoring each other. We also shared a lot of great memories with our other friends from the class when we traveled around Kyrgyzstan and the region together, which was an unforgettable experience.

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

R: Our family model is built on equality and mutual respect. We both are aspiring professionals, which means that often we are overburdened with work-related duties and projects. Thus, we always try to be flexible when it comes to household chores and ready to help each other and do them together. This makes it not only efficient and time-saving but also a more enjoyable experience. We certainly invest a lot of effort in making our home a very cozy place for us to cherish.

Q: *What do you appreciate most in each other?*

R: It is impossible to single out certain personality traits as everything about her is perfect to me. I admire her for her sense of humor, especially when she plays jokes on me. She is very intelligent and wise, kind and loyal. She always believes in me and supports me in all my endeavors, often more than I do believe in myself. This is what drives me forward; I do not think that I would have achieved what I did professionally if it was not for her support and help. She is certainly a ray of sunshine in my life.

A: I immensely appreciate Rustam's kindness, intelligence, and life values. He is a just person, a great listener, and

an entertaining conversationalist. He always supports me and this makes me feel safe and secure, and confident of our future. It makes me very happy that I can always find comfort in his arms.

Q: *What are your plans (professional or academic) for the coming year?*

R: As of now, I am looking forward to boosting my researcher profile further, completing current research projects, and eventually applying for a PhD degree in Political Science.

A: I would like to continue working for an international organization, enhancing my professional traits further.

Q: *What would be your wishes to our alumni?*

First of all, in these turbulent times, we wish our alumni, their families, and loved ones to stay healthy and safe. Believe in yourself and your dreams, and, of course, remember that great things await those who work hard to achieve them. Stay in touch with other alumni and support each other as the OSCE Academy is not only a great place to gain new knowledge but also a fascinating web of highly qualified professionals; so, take advantage of it and contribute too. Open yourself up to the world and new exciting experiences and adventures. And, of course, we wish them to find their true love the same way we did.



WELCOME NEW ALUMNI

MA Programme in Politics and Security 2020-2021



Alexandra Taskaeva
Russia



Alisher Norov
Tajikistan



Andrei Shvarev
Russia



Azamat Alagoz uulu
Kyrgyzstan



Aziza Abdukarimova
Kyrgyzstan



Fardin Jamal
Afghanistan



Firdavs Mavlyanov
Tajikistan



Mariyam Mukhamadiyeva
Kazakhstan



Matin Hakimyar
Afghanistan



Mohirakhoni Husnidinzoda
Tajikistan



Ryan Schweitzer
USA



Saboor Stanikzai
Afghanistan



Sanat Ryskulova
Kyrgyzstan



Seiilkhan Tokbolat
Kazakhstan



Shohrukh Vosiev
Tajikistan



Symbat Toksombaeva
Kyrgyzstan



Tokzhan Atenbekova
Kazakhstan



Zarlisht Sarmast
Afghanistan



Zhibek Zhorokulova
Kyrgyzstan

MA Programme in Economic Governance and Development 2020-2021



Aidanek Duishobai kzy
Kyrgyzstan



Akmaral Azhimamatova
Kyrgyzstan



Amrullah Haleemi
Afghanistan



Atefa Bahr
Afghanistan



Dana Sailaukhanova
Kazakhstan



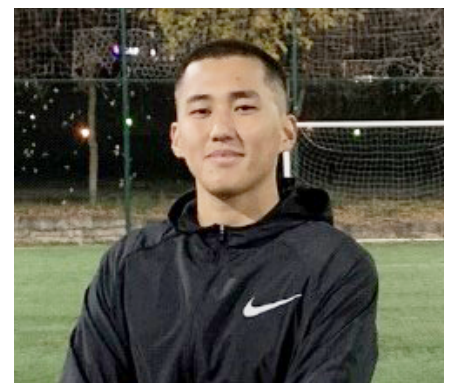
Daniyar Ashirov
Kyrgyzstan



Diydor Berdiklichev
Uzbekistan



Elina Kanaeva
Kyrgyzstan



Erzhan Zhyrgalbek uulu
Kyrgyzstan



Gavkharkhon Mamadzhanova
Tajikistan



Jawad Taheri
Afghanistan



Maisam Amiry
Afghanistan



Rakhnaza Kozhogulova
Kyrgyzstan



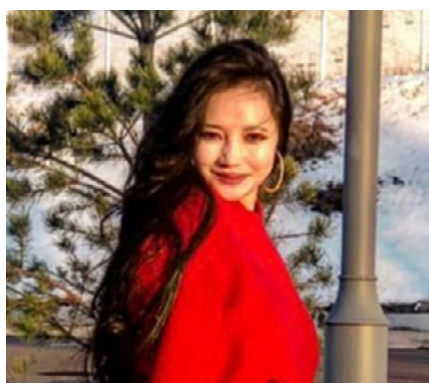
Sanobar Rajabova
Uzbekistan



Shazia Karimi
Afghanistan



Suhrob Muhamadjonov
Tajikistan



Tumentsetseg Yadamsuren
Mongolia



Zhumagul Akunova
Kyrgyzstan



Trainers, Participants and Organizers of the International Alumni Summer School
"Democratic Institution Building in Central Asia – 30 Years After Independence"

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