



“The convening power of *the Academy* — to *bring* select people *together*, and *push* them *collectively* even further to be able to *think differently* about the world — because *the world needs different thinking* — this is the *true power* of this institution.”

— Aaron Joshua Pinto, alumnus of 2017, p. 15

## 5TH ALUMNI REUNION

dedicated to the 20 Years Anniversary of the OSCE Academy, p. 5

## ALUMNI OPPORTUNITIES

New Success Stories, p. 22

## ALUMNI RELATIONS

Love Story, p. 33

WELCOME NOTE.....	2
<i>Alumni Network in Numbers</i> .....	2
ACADEMY'S UPDATES .....	3
<i>20 Years Anniversary of the OSCE Academy</i> .....	3
<i>Bachelor of Arts Programme in Economics</i> .....	3
<i>Student Exchange</i> .....	3
<i>Erasmus+</i> .....	4
<i>Jean Monnet Module Grant</i> .....	4
ALUMNI AND ACADEMY .....	5
<i>5th Alumni Reunion and the 20 Years Anniversary of the OSCE Academy</i> .....	5
<i>Alumni Trainings</i> .....	9
Development Policy in Practice Workshop.....	9
Good Governance and Security Sector Reform Training .....	10
<i>Summer School "Human Security in Central Asia: Sustainable Development Securitization and Human Rights"</i> .....	10
<i>Alumni Chapter Meetings</i> .....	12
<i>Afghan Alumni Support</i> .....	13
ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENTS .....	14
<i>Aaron Joshua Pinto</i> .....	14
<i>Alexandra Taskaeva</i> .....	16
<i>Ivana Vuchkova</i> .....	17
ALUMNI INITIATIVES.....	19
<i>Zarlasht Sarmast</i> .....	19
<i>Shamsuddin Amin</i> .....	20
ALUMNI OPPORTUNITIES.....	22
<i>Junior Public Officers' Programme</i> .....	22
<i>Junior Teaching Fellowship</i> .....	23
<i>International Junior Professional Officers Programme</i> .....	25
<i>One-Year-Stay at NUPI Fellowship</i> .....	26
<i>MAS at the Geneva Centre for Security Policy</i> .....	29
<i>The Central Asia-Azerbaijan Fellowship Program (CAAFP)</i> .....	30
<i>Alumni Grant</i> .....	31
ALUMNI RELATIONS .....	33
<i>Love Story</i> .....	33
WELCOME NEW ALUMNI .....	35
<i>MA Programme in Economic Governance and Development 2022-2023</i> .....	35
<i>MA Programme in Politics and Security 2022-2023</i> .....	36





Dear Reader,

Welcome to the newest edition of SalamAlum dedicated to the 20 Years Anniversary of the OSCE Academy. Let's take a glimpse into a stream of important events of the Academy and some of the wonderful accomplishments of our graduates for the year of 2022. This is already the 12th issue of SalamAlum where you can get involved into the newest developments and steps of the OSCE Academy and its Alumni Network, which has grown to 594 people in 2022.

This year the OSCE Academy was delighted to celebrate a number of achievements which makes it an inspirational academic institution. This summer the OSCE Academy did fantastic job holding the 5th Alumni Reunion gathering more than 110 alumni, joined by the Academy's donors, partners and experts to celebrate the 20 Years Anniversary of the Academy. During the two days of the Reunion our graduates got involved into academic and teambuilding activities developing the cohesion and importance of the alumni community spirit. In addition, the Academy is also stepping on a new way to support regional education through the launch of the new Bachelor of Arts Programme in Economics. This year 13 undergraduate students from all over the region got accepted to study Economics. Last but not least, Alumni chapter meetings took place in offline format this year in Astana and Tashkent, bringing together graduates living in the same city to have round table discussions with experts in particular fields, with the participation of the Academy's staff members.

In addition, as a result of our long-lasting partners and donors, a growing number of our graduates each year benefit from the best academic and professional opportunities. The Norwegian Institute of International Affairs offers graduates the opportunity to advance their projects, develop their writing and expository skills, and become more professional in the advancement of their works through its One-Year-Stay-at-NUPI Fellowship. The Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP) provided one more alumnus with the unique opportunity to receive MAS Scholarship for Central Asia. Through the Junior Public Officers Programme, three graduates this year had the opportunity to get experience in governmental agencies. Moreover, this year four graduates were given the opportunity to teach at various universities in the region through the Junior Teaching Fellowship Programme. The International Junior Professionals programme's establishment was another notable event of 2022, allowing alumni, interested in building their careers in international organizations, have three-months long internship in the selected host organization.

Let's move further to read everything mentioned above in details and more in this issue of SalamAlum. Enjoy your reading!

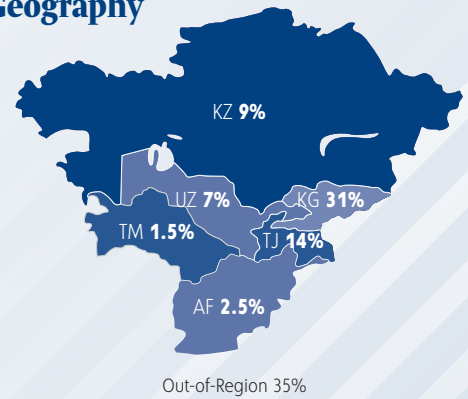
*Our sincere gratitude goes to the OSCE, its participating States and especially to the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI), the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Finland, Italy, Poland, Switzerland, and the United States, that specifically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

International Office Team

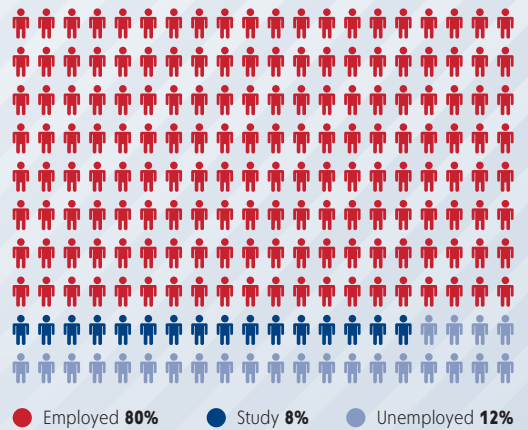
## Alumni Network in Numbers

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.

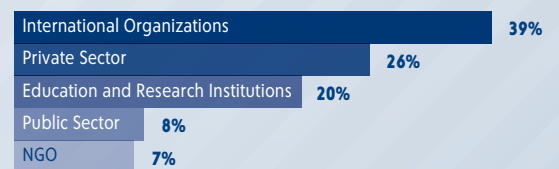
### Geography



### Employment



### Employment by Sector



Our latest Survey revealed that 65 per cent of the Alumni live and work in the wider Central Asia region. Such a decrease is a result of the August 2021 development in Afghanistan, which forced many Afghan alumni to flee. This also affected the general employment statistics: 31 per cent of employed alumni hold senior positions, such as Directors, CEOs, Heads of departments, Managers and Officers working for the Central Asian governments, international organizations, education institutions and NGOs. 20 alumni who chose an academic path, are currently doing their Ph.D.

The Alumni Survey 2022 was carried out in March 2022 and contains the information about 553 alumni.

# ACADEMY'S UPDATES

## 20 Years Anniversary

2022 marks 20 years since the establishment of the OSCE Academy in 2002. Since its foundation the OSCE Academy has evolved into a truly inspirational academic institution. Students come from all over Central Asia and beyond to enhance their education and careers, leading experts are doing their research projects that pushes boundaries in ways that weren't back in 2002. Let's take a look at the following achievements to celebrate the unique contribution and academic heritage of the OSCE Academy:



## Bachelor of Arts Programme in Economics

The OSCE Academy has launched an undergraduate BA programme in Economics this year. The new programme was launched in support of talented youth of the region to receive an exclusive opportunity to study Economics in English. The programme aims at developing knowledge in economic growth and development, global financial crisis and consequences, efficient use of natural resources, international organizations and their effect on the global economy, governmental regulation of the national economy.

The programme seeks to create opportunities for students to consider the world economy as a global economic system, and study actors and factors. Students will have a solid knowledge on how to interact with different actors and manage affecting factors. Upon completion, students may pursue a career in international organizations, international businesses, etc. Moreover, the programme introduces students to the real world through the internships, guest lecturers, company visits, Academy alumni meetups and others.

This year 13 undergraduate students from all over the region got accepted to receive free education in Economics, additionally receiving monthly scholarships.

## Student Exchange of 2022

This year the OSCE Academy welcomed Pelle Paulus Smits, an exchange student from the European School of Political and Social Sciences Université Catholique de Lille, France, within the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2019. Pelle joined the group of MA students of Politics and Security of the Academy for the Spring semester.



"I am enjoying every second of my stay in Kyrgyzstan! I love to be at the OSCE Academy, surrounded by amazing fellow students, to attend classes I could never have opted for back in France, like 'Central Asia & the Middle East', which makes this semester abroad exceptionally worthwhile. Apart from the lively atmosphere of Bishkek, I have had the opportunity to go horseback riding, take a swim in

lake Issyk-Kul hike in Ala-Archa, and visit neighboring Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. The combination of traveling and studying at the OSCE Academy allows me to widen my understanding of this beautiful region."



## Erasmus+

Since 2019 the OSCE Academy is engaged in Erasmus + KA1 (Learning Mobility for Individuals). This year the OSCE Academy welcomed its 3rd Erasmus+ exchange student Juho Kääriäinen. MA student in Contemporary Asian and Middle East Studies, University of Tartu, Estonia:



"I spent several memorable months at the OSCE Academy in Bishkek and in Kyrgyzstan in general during the summer of 2022. Both the country and the academy staff treated me very kindly. Kyrgyzstan is becoming the place to learn Russian language, ride horses and to study a more secular form of Islam. I wish to extend special gratitude to the academy staff, who spared no effort in helping foreign students and made themselves available for academic discussions outside office hours. During my time in the country, I forged relationships with the local staff and academia. I hope these relationships will last for a long time."

## Jean Monnet Module Grant

One more milestone of this year is the Jean Monnet Module grant received for a three-year project on European Climate Policy to be run by Dr. Rahat Sabyrbekov, Postdoctoral Research Fellow, and supported by Dr. Clara Portela, Visiting Faculty from the University of Valencia in Spain. The project aims to develop a module on European Climate Politics at the OSCE Academy in Bishkek. It brings advanced European expertise to Central Asia, where the impact of climate change is significant and where national governments have initiated joint regional action to address it. The aim of the newly developed module is to advance European regional climate policy expertise to inform local stakeholders and policy-makers. It will do this through the core course, divided into two parts, and with a series of activities aimed at the wider policy community. The project will foster dialogue between different stakeholders through workshops, including policymakers, NGOs, and academia. This knowledge-sharing will support the improvement of regional climate policies, the development of new educational programmes, research initiatives and the raising of public awareness. The project will use the long-standing network of the OSCE Academy within Central Asia and beyond. This is the first Jean Monnet Module grant received in Kyrgyzstan!



Jean Monnet Module  
EUCP  
(European Climate Policy)



# ALUMNI AND ACADEMY

## *5th Alumni Reunion dedicated to the 20 Years Anniversary of the OSCE Academy*



On 3-4 September we celebrated our 20th Anniversary and welcomed back over 100 graduates of the MA Programmes to the 5th Alumni Reunion. Along with the alumni, current students, lecturers, staff, representatives of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, the Diplomatic Corps based in Bishkek, and Heads of several Universities and partner institutions attended various activities conducted within the Celebration and the Alumni Reunion.

Dr. Alexander Wolters, Director of the OSCE Academy; Amb. Alexey Rogov, Head of the OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek, Mr. Rasul Abazbek uulu, Deputy Minister of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic; Ms. Tuula Yrjölä, Director of the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre and Deputy Head of the OSCE Secretariat; Dr. Roman Vakulchuk, Senior Researcher at the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI), opened the event.

Dr. Wolters expressed his gratitude to the OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek, the Kyrgyz Government, and the many donors, especially NUPI and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Furthermore, the Director of the Academy provided an overview of the activities of the OSCE Academy over the past 20 years and plans to expand its MA Programmes, as well as the establishment of a new PhD Programme.

In his speech, Mr. Rasul Abazbek uulu, Deputy Minister of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic, highlighted *"...on behalf of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic, I would*

*like to emphasize how glad and proud we are that the OSCE Academy - such a truly unique institution - is located in our Republic".* Mr. Rasul Abazbek uulu also underlined that the Ministry of Education and Science is ready to further support the Academy.

Following the opening speeches, the former management of the OSCE Academy discussed the development of the Academy throughout the years in a panel session "OSCE Academy: 20 years of Enlightenment". Dr. Tim Epkenhans, Dr. Maxim Ryabkov, Dr. Pal Dunay, and Ms. Violetta Yan shared the main challenges the Academy faced and the results it achieved during their leadership.

The opening part of the event also included a panel discussion on "Central Asia and 30 years of Change: Towards new Norms and Values" by experts from Central Asian countries. Prof. Dr. Alisher Faizullaev, Independent Scholar and Author, Dr. Saniia Toktogazieva, Associate Professor of Law at AUCA, Mr. Daniyar Kosnazarov, Head of Marketing and Communications KPMG in Central Asia, and Dr. Diana Digol, Political Officer UNOCT Uzbekistan, delivered a review of 30 years of the Independence of Central Asian countries.

The next session was dedicated to the success stories of graduates of the OSCE Academy. Anahita Saymidinova '2012, Freelance Researcher and Journalist, Tajikistan; Aaron Joshua Pinto '2017, Government of Ontario's Trade and Investment Representative, Canada; Galina Khegay '2016, PhD Student, London School of





Left to right: Dr. Alexander Wolters, Ambassador Alexey Rogov, Mr. Rasul Abazbek uulu and Dr. Roman Vakulchuk

Economics and Political Science, Uzbekistan; Rustam Muhamedov '2019, Independent Researcher, Turkmenistan, and Ivana Vuchkova '2016, Programme Coordinator, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Skopje Office, North Macedonia conveyed inspiring stories of achieving their accomplishments and the role of the OSCE Academy in this journey.



Alumni and Guests Listen to the Success Stories of their Fellows



In the afternoon, graduates returned to their classrooms to participate in simultaneous workshops. Dr. Roman Vakulchuk, NUPI, and Kasiet Ysmanova, Central Asia Barometer, led a workshop on “Leadership in Science: A Thousand or One Step from an Idea to a Publication”, Dr. Nuria Kutnaeva, Personal Data Protection Agency of the Kyrgyz Republic, - on “Digitization: Protection of Personal Data”, Dr. Rahat Sabrbekov, OSCE Academy, - on “Climate Change in Central Asia”, and Prof. Dr. Alisher Faizullaev led the workshop on “Negotiation Skills”.

A formal reception concluded the first day of the Reunion dedicated to the 20th Anniversary of the Academy.

Amb. Alexey Rogov, Head of the OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek, highlighted that it is very symbolic to celebrate this year the 30

Year Anniversary of the Kyrgyz Republic joining the OSCE and the 20th Anniversary of the establishment of the OSCE Academy. *“We look optimistically into the future of the institution, considering the successful launch of its Bachelor’s Programme (BA) in Economics this year, in addition to the expansion of MA Programmes and the development of PhD Programme in upcoming years”.*

Ms. Begayim Nurlan, First Secretary, Department of International Organizations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic, noted the high-quality postgraduate education at the Academy and underlined *“... for us the OSCE Academy has become a model of cooperation of youth representatives of various countries and nationalities inhabiting the OSCE space”.*



Alumni at the Reception

Ms. Maria Raczyńska, Special Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office on Youth and Security, also expressed support for the Academy and stressed its importance in uniting the Central Asian region. Ms. Merete Wilhelmsen, Senior Adviser of Section for Russia, Eurasia and Regional Cooperation, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, addressed the graduates, students, lecturers, staff and distinguished guests online and highlighted that Norway is a proud supporter of the activities of the Academy. *“The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in close cooperation with the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs has supported the Academy since the*

*beginning. Our key motivation is to unlock the potential of young people by contributing to high-quality education.”*

The reception was concluded by announcement of the Alumna/nus of the Year Award. Anahita Saymidinova, alumna of 2012, collected most votes among a total of six nominees. Anahita is a freelance journalist living in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. She is very dedicated to humanitarian work and helped to evacuate more than 100 vulnerable people mostly women and children from Afghanistan last year.





Awarding Alumna of the Year Certificate

During the second day of the Alumni Reunion graduates, students and the staff of the OSCE Academy traveled to the mountains for team-building activities and networking. 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.



Teambuilding





Alumni during the teambuilding activities at eco-resort Kara-Bulak

## *Alumni Trainings*

### **Development Policy in Practice Workshop at the OSCE Academy**



On 3-5 June the "Development Policy in Practice: Major Global Trends and their Relevance for Central Asia" workshop has been organized for students and graduates of the OSCE Academy and AUCA. The event was initiated and led by David Rinnert, Development Counsellor, British Embassy Bishkek / Regional Deputy Development Director. The workshop covered the latest global evidence and practice across key issues in international development, including Governance, Economic Development, Peace Building, and Climate Change. Participants had an opportunity to

discuss the "why", "what" and the "how" of development policy in practice with a Trainer, bringing both academic and practical experience, as well as to reflect on how global trends are applied in programmes and policy in Kyrgyzstan and Central Asia. Thus, the workshop equipped students and graduates with insights into how the global thinking on development policy and programming is evolving, what this means for Kyrgyzstan and the wider region, and how we can bring about change through designing and implementing effective policies and programmes.



## Alumni and Students Share their Knowledge in Good Governance and Security Sector Reform



On 29-30 October, the OSCE Academy hosted a workshop on "Good Governance and Security Sector Reform in Central Asia," with the participation of 20 students and alumni of the OSCE Academy from Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The workshop was organized and led within the framework of the Extra-Budgetary Project "Support, capacity-building and awareness-raising for Security Sector Governance and Reform (SSG/R) within the OSCE: Phase II" of the OSCE Secretariat Conflict Prevention Centre's Operations Service and with the support of the Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA), the Swedish government agency for peace, security and development, and the OSCE Academy in Bishkek. The workshop was opened by Dr. Indira Satarkulova, Deputy Director of the Academy.

Over two days, together with five experts - Professor Laura Cleary, Director of Oakwood International Security, Fallckolm Cuenca, Se-

nior Desk officer at the FBA, Fanny Wessner, Desk Officer for Security Sector Reform at FBA, Jovan Pavlovic, from the Security Cooperation Department of the OSCE Mission to Serbia, and Francesco Mapelli, Project Assistant within the SSG/R Team of the OSCE CPC - participants explored the topic of Security Sector Governance and Reform (SSG/R), delved into the ways the OSCE promotes effective security sector governance in line with OSCE principles and commitments, and examined security sector governance in Central Asia. In particular, participants discussed with the trainers of the workshop the main security sector actors involved in security provision, management and oversight in the context of Central Asia; the importance of addressing the different security needs of women, men, girls and boys for stability and peace in their region; and the relationship between good governance principles and integrity of the security sector.

## Summer School "Human Security in Central Asia: Sustainable Development Securitization and Human Rights"

On 25 July the six-day International Summer School on "Human Security in Central Asia: Sustainable Development Securitization and Human Rights," organized by the OSCE Academy in Bishkek with support of the OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek and the Global Campus of Human Rights in Venice was launched at the picturesque Issyk-Kul lake, Kyrgyzstan. The participants of the school were 20 graduates and students of the OSCE Academy coming from Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan, and

Uzbekistan, who were thriving to improve their knowledge in human security and human rights in the Central Asian region.

*"We believe that enhancement of young leaders' knowledge about democratic governance, human rights, and regional security will contribute to ensuring a sustainable development and prosperity in the Central Asia countries,"* - underlined Alexander Eliseev, Head of the Politico-Military Department, OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek, in his opening remarks.





Participants of the Summer School

Dr. Alexander Wolters, Director of the OSCE Academy highlighted that the Academy shares the concern about the increasing securitization of sustainable development strategies in Central Asia. With climate change putting livelihoods in the region at greater risk, sustainable development is becoming the key path to a better future for all: *“With our Summer School we pay attention to the importance of human rights as integral parts of any sustainable development and we equip our students and young professionals with means to analyze and promote Human Rights standards in Central Asia.”*

The groups of experts, coming from the OSCE Academy, the Global Campus of Human Rights in Venice, and the OSCE, covered the UN treaties that are ratified by Central Asian states, including children’s rights, women’s rights, cultural and religious rights, as well as civil and political, and economic rights; the OSCE comprehensive approach to security; human rights approach in

the context of counter-terrorism. There was a particular emphasis on the linkage between human security, personal safety, and human rights (securitization), when it comes to food, health and work, migration, and children and women’s rights. Furthermore, it linked human security with the level of compliance of governments and CSOs with the Sustainable Development Goals in Central Asia.



Trainers, Participants and Organizers of the Summer School visit cultural center Ruh-Ordo



### Alumni Chapter Meetings in Astana and Tashkent

This spring the Academy visited and brought together our graduates in two cities of the region, Astana and Tashkent. The Academy decided to combine organizing useful and pleasant round table meetings led by experts' talks along with dinners for graduates. On 4 April we held the first alumni chapter meeting in Astana, Kazakhstan. The round table was attended by a special guest, Kamila Kovyazina, a Sociology Researcher with 10-year experience of working for a number of research institutes in Kazakhstan. The meeting has also brought together alumni with the Academy staff members: Nazira Abakirova

and Azhar Kaltarbekova. During the meeting, graduates from different years, as well as in different academic and professional careers had a chance to learn more about each other and reminisce about the good old days at the Academy. Alumni also shared their professional experiences after graduation from the OSCE Academy: some of the alumni shared that they are in the process of obtaining a PhD, while others continue their careers in the public sector as a result of participating in Junior Public Officers programme and a certain number of alumni develop in international organizations and NGOs.



Alumni Chapter Meeting in Astana, Kazakhstan

On 5 April, an Alumni Chapter meeting was held for alumni residing in Tashkent. Alumni had an opportunity to meet Dr. John Jinkner, Director of Operations, and Dr. Thomas Kleiner, Director of International Relations from Webster University in Tashkent - the Academy's Partner in Uzbekistan. Dr. Jinkner and Dr. Kleiner shared their professional backgrounds with graduates, at the same time providing hints on how to achieve the goals and succeed, as well as the importance

of cooperation and dialogue. During the meeting with the Professors also discussed with alumni the prospects for the development of the Central Asian region and the importance of higher education in this process. The meeting was followed by a networking dinner, where graduates of different years and the Academy's staff members, Victoria Orazova and Jazgul Bolot kyzy had a chance to get to know each other and the invited guests and discuss ideas for future collaboration.



Alumni Chapter Meeting in Tashkent, Uzbekistan



## Afghan Alumni Support

Following the August 2021 events in Afghanistan the OSCE Academy started searching for opportunities to support its students and alumni from Afghanistan. Several of our partner institutions have established special fellowships to support Afghan scholars. Global Campus of Human Rights in Venice and the George Eckert Institute in Leibniz were able to support three alumni, who now continue building their academic careers in a safe environment:



### Rajab Taieb

*Research Associate and PhD student at GEI*

“I joined the Leibniz Institute for Educational Media | Georg Eckert Institute (GEI) in June 2022 as a Research Associate and a PhD student. I work in a research project on gender discourse in Afghanistan. The specific concentration of the project is on school textbooks and novels published between 2001 and 2021. The project is an attempt to understand how gender is constructed in these two types of media and what are the limits of swayable in gender discourse in Afghanistan.”



### Abdul Rahman Yasa

*Student fellow at Ruhr Universität Bochum*

“Cannot think of how I have ended up in Germany, but the experience was excellent as I was directly hosted by the Global Campus of Human Rights at Ruhr Universität Bochum (RUB). Wonderful was the scholarship provided me with great opportunity to not only well-integrate into the society, but also learn a new language and make new friends. Important of all, I joined and took classes in international humanitarian actions provided by the Institute for International Law of Peace and Armed Conflict of RUB in Germany where I built a network of amazing like-minded folks. Further was the chance to attend advocacy programmes, including the UN Human Rights Council’s 51st session where I managed to advocate for the fundamental rights of millions of Afghans being violated in Afghanistan. Of course, these all would not have been possible without sincere support of the OSCE Academy in Bishkek, the Global Campus of Human Rights and RUB. I would also like to express my appreciation to Victoria Orazova from the OSCE Academy for her kind messages and support.”



# ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENTS

*Without breaking our tradition, we would like to share with you the success stories of our graduates in this section. Every year we keep receiving more and more outstanding news of our alumni's accomplishments. And now let's read the career success stories of our graduates who were able to pave a successful path in the public sector and receive a unique opportunity to get employed at the American University in Kuwait.*

## Aaron Joshua Pinto

*Let's start with the story of our alumnus Aaron Pinto, Politics and Security '2017, who has managed to pursue a remarkable career in the public sector. Back in 2016 Aaron came from across Canada to gain unique knowledge and experience at the OSCE Academy:*

My name is Aaron Pinto from Canada - a 2017 graduate of the Politics and Security programme of the OSCE Academy. Now, yes, me - a random, if not the only Canadian, who decided to study thousands of miles away from the comforts of home at the OSCE Academy here in Central Asia. I am a person primarily driven by curiosity, who decided to take a chance on this region.

Truthfully, the OSCE Academy was never on my radar, let alone Central Asia. But it came to me after some happy stumbling. Stumbling into two of our great alumna Elvira and Dilfuza while I was in Serbia, who took the time to share their academic experiences - it got me hooked and the rest is history.

At the Academy it was eye-opening to witness, debate and discuss political, economic, societal, and religious developments in this region. The Academy afforded me many opportunities - I attended conferences, trainings and was offered an OSCE internship. Somehow along the way, best thesis and cum laude were in my cards... but this was definitely not in my game plan ... Since then, I was able to travel to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, and spend time in Russia. I've even continued to participate in broader OSCE programs.

My curiosity and my desire to understand the region just snowballed over time ... and to come to think of it, it all came about through happy stumbling.



Photo that does not require any caption



Fast forward, after graduation, I was lucky to work for my provincial government at the Consulate General of Canada in New York. I started as a Commercial Assistant, grew to a Commercial Officer, and became a Trade Commissioner for the federal government. I received an outstanding achievement award. As of this year, I've been appointed a Canadian diplomat being able to serve my country as the Government of Ontario's official Trade and Investment Representative in New York and the Northeastern United States. I practice commercial diplomacy every day; advising and assisting businesses to set up shop in Canada, support Canadian companies develop business networks in the US, and encourage the commercialization of cross-border research and development. Going from contributing to a team as a youth to leading a team as a young person all within a span of four years. It's been daunting but thrilling.

Now let me back track a little – way back when, there were some who looked at me funny and probably thought I was a weird person when I told them I was studying in Kyrgyzstan – “you know it's one of the stans, right Aaron?”

But amidst questioning and some perplexity, I, like many of you, took the plunge. How many people tell you: you shouldn't do this or couldn't do that, or to avoid the strange or unfamiliar?

Well, my recent life has been very much about embracing difference; about taking the path less beaten.

As someone new to Central Asia, the Academy's Master's program was the opportunity of a lifetime to do just that. It pushed me to take on stuff that thrust me into areas where I was not proficient or comfortable. It allowed me to come to terms with things some may find weird or unable to fully grasp. But the Academy allowed me – and I hope for all of us – to challenge our assumptions, to think outside the box, thrust out of our comfort zones, to critically assess our world – re-

spect different approaches. And the best way to do this is to surround oneself with diverse and passionate people – and what more could I have asked for at the OSCE Academy.

You are your environment. People change everything. The Academy and the students allow a paradigm shift to happen. To go from: “how could I possibly do this?” to “how could I possibly not?”

When you meet the Academy's students, a switch goes on in your head. It ripples across your whole world, and without even trying, your standards go from here to here. This was the OSCE Academy to me. This is the OSCE Academy.

In my reminiscing over the past few days, there's one thought that keeps recurring in my mind: the world needs more of the OSCE Academy. Where students from different nationalities come together to push the academic envelope, to embrace a culture of conversation across boundaries and of critical thinking, to indulge in a massive lesson in perspective. Now I know this Academy is targeted for Central Asian students, and not necessarily meant for me, but I strongly believe we also need more Europeans and North Americans to engage this part of the world – and what better vehicle than the Academy.

For me, being a newbie to the region, studying at the Academy in Kyrgyzstan was a paradigm shift. And like many of you, it impacted me directly and indirectly. Faculty members who taught me to think different, see differently or write differently.

Sometimes the Academy impacted in intangible ways: the way we move through this world, the way we think and interpret about the goings-on in the world, the way we are or will raise our kids and posterity.

I veered into a professional area a bit different from my degree, but I've left the Academy with way more than what I could ask for:

- A more critical mindset
- A deeper appreciation of humanity; where nothing in the world is ever completely wrong
- A greater ambition
- An openness to the world around me
- A network of friends spanning throughout Central Asia and beyond.

And the latter is so key.

This summer, Professor Indra Overland organized a meeting in New York City and around the table, I was amazed and humbled meeting our alum: An Afghan who fled for safety to New York and is now working with Pfizer, a lawyer at the World Bank turned software developer, a Kyrgyz alum working for Kyrgyzstan's Permanent Mission to the UN. You guys are working for non-profits, IGOs, ministries, businesses, educational institutions, you name it. You are ambitious go-getters – changemakers, ground breakers, culture shapers. We animate the OSCE Academy in the world. Being out there; demonstrating our talent, our ideas, our know-how, our passion. We can continue to inspire possibility.

The convening power of the Academy – to bring select people together, and push them collectively even further to be able to think differently about the world – because the world needs different thinking – this is the true power of this institution.

Day by day, it's less about fancy university or college buildings – with education being increasingly democratized, it's much more about being globally minded and having international networks ... and we have a really special one right here.

That's it. That's why I love being around this whole group of people and sharing the best of our Academy. Because this is the group of people that inspires possibility. There is so much power right here.



## Alexandra Taskaeva

*Further, our newest graduate, Alexandra Taskaeva, Politics and Security '2021, will talk about how, after graduating from the Academy, she continued to work in leading organizations around the world and worked her way up to job in Kuwait she is passionate about:*

I remember it was a huge change for me to come to study at the OSCE Academy as it was a completely different environment from the university I used to study at before. Though I struggled for a little while with getting acquainted with the new environment, I am so thankful to have this experience in my life.

After graduating from the programme of Politics & Security at the OSCE Academy, I started my career journey through a lot of internships trying to find the field I want to devote my life. Having started from an internship that was necessary for graduation from the Academy that was at the China and Central Asia Studies Centre at KIMEP University in Kazakhstan, I was sure that I would continue working on research. Following internships at the Association for Diplomatic Training and Studies in Washington D.C. and the Centre for Policy Research in New Delhi only accentuated this idea. However, an accidental application for a position of a DHR Intern at the Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Office of UNFPA proved my plans wrong. I had never considered the HR field as a potential career for myself until I took that role and ended up enjoying all the HR processes.

I decided to challenge myself to grow personally and professionally when I got an internship offer from the UNFPA, EECARO. When I started my internship, the office that I was working for experienced a lot of problems due to the small number of people in the team and the conflict in Ukraine. I was passionate about performing more tasks than were initially announced. From interview processes to the management of the regional learning budget, I had the chance to show myself working hard and accepting all the challenges that occurred to help me do my best and achieve all the goals. There was a lot I had learned about HR, but I also had the chance to use the tools and resources learned from the OSCE Academy as well as the strong work ethic obtained from there so that I knew I could trust myself, my abilities, and my aptitude.



Currently, I am very much enjoying my career path. I am now in the process of moving to Kuwait as I got an offer for the position of HR Officer from one of the American universities there. My favorite aspects of the HR field include interacting with and meeting a lot of inspiring people and seeing my efforts pay off and problems being solved in real-time. A collaborative environment also reminds me of my time at the OSCE Academy: people share and learn from each other including their mistakes and constantly develop themselves.

Without the OSCE Academy, I don't think I would have had the skills and knowledge to be successful as this experience is directly

connected to the achievements I have got now. I think everything goes back to where that foundation came from that shaped me into who I am now. Also, I am thankful for the people I have met there as some of them taught me to be strong and never give up and others taught me to be kind and sympathetic toward others. I had the chance to help some of my classmates with job opportunities and pieces of advice when I had the chance to. In addition, some of my classmates helped me a lot in different aspects. I want to wish all the students to be helpful to each other and never give up. Consider all the opportunities that are provided to you as you never know where you are going to end up after your graduation. Good luck and enjoy the OSCE Academy!



## Ivana Vuchkova

*And now our alumna from North Macedonia, Ivana Vuchkova, Economic Governance and Development '2016, who has immense experience working in international developmental organizations, will speak about the importance of the OSCE Academy and the OSCE as a whole:*



Peace and security, sustainable economic growth and development and good governance are essential to the progress and prosperity of all countries, including the wide OSCE region. As sine qua non of human rights and justice for all, they are reflected in the international and multidisciplinary design of the programmes offered by the OSCE Academy: MA in Politics and Security and MA in Economic Governance and Development. Facilitated by a team of international and local professionals, these programmes offer quality education opportunity to young professionals from Central Asia and other OSCE Participating States that makes it a unique OSCE educational project in the region and beyond. Celebrating the 20 Year Anniversary this year is only one milestone, alongside the numerous inspirational success stories and missions carried out by its students, both through their work in research and policy development, and the OSCE Academy's projects. Being one of them it is both a privilege and a responsibility to promote the values, goals and principles of my Alma Mater, the place where learning is not only a process of solving problems, but also a process that leads to change. The quality of the interdisciplinary courses is not only guaranteed by the great professors

and available learning infrastructure, but also thanks to the different perspectives brought by the dynamic of the classes themselves. In addition to the joint research tasks that we delivered day to day, the continuous exchange of our first-hand experiences from different parts of the world gave us a strong understanding that peace and sustainable development mean a different thing to a different country. Me worrying about the EU integration of my country, North Macedonia, at a time when my UK classmate was grieving about their withdrawal, was nothing close to the challenges of Afghanistan. With that environment, the Academy made us all able to look beyond our own challenges, and beyond today, in order to be equally committed towards sustainable and lasting peace and security in the wide OSCE region, regardless of where we come from.

However, peace and security in the OSCE region have been shaken at their very core with the 'special military operation' of the Russian Federation against Ukraine that started on February 24th this year. In addition to the already existing distrust and lack of commitment by Participating States to uphold the Helsinki and Paris principles, the ongoing stand-off

has brought many questions about the future of the OSCE. Think tankers and research institutes are already inspecting potential scenarios for "saving the organization" that is undergoing a serious existential crisis while fostering a discussion about its future. While conclusions and recommendations highlight the strategic sense of keeping the OSCE alive, some side discussions may open grounds for doubts in its work and activities, especially in regions with vaguer presence of the Organization. Hence, it is high time to promote all valuable activities of the OSCE and its field missions through their direct and indirect impact on peace, security, and development. The long list of success stories of students that started twenty years ago at the OSCE Academy in Bishkek make only a small, and yet, very important part of them. Because, as much as we know quality education as a right, it is still a privilege for many, especially in less developed regions. Thanks to the OSCE Academy and thanks to the OSCE many of us have entered the world of opportunities with a joint vision: to make opportunities equally accessible to all, both through achieving sustainable development and ensuring peace and security. And that is more than a reason for keeping the Organization alive!





Our vision was also present in Perspectives 20-30, a programme that the OSCE launched 3 years ago, and where many of us as alumni took part, including myself. As members of the Core Group of Experts, we had a task to identify the primary challenges in the OSCE wide region, and demand action through the Organization’s work. Alongside the conventional approaches to both emerging and perennial challenges, we singled out energy and environment as a result of climate change as a rising non-conventional security threat that require immediate action. As a first step, considering the importance of the issue, we suggested decoupling the environment from the economic dimension into a

new, separate format within the OSCE framework. We believed that elevating environmental issues to a higher level within the OSCE’s security agenda with the necessary institutional support and strengthening cooperation in terms of energy would enable effective prevention mechanisms and cooperation in case of crisis. Considering the ongoing energy crisis as a result of the ongoing war in Ukraine, and the devastating environmental catastrophes that the world has faced in the last few years, the importance of our demand has been confirmed. The work did not stop here, and we continued to promote the programme through high-level discussions and forums facilitated

by the OSCE. The programme continued as well, now in cooperation with the OSCE Academy, as we also defined quality education as a catalyst for change, that has the unmatched power to transform, advance and unify societies and individuals. We see the OSCE Academy not only as a unique educational project of the OSCE, but as a catalyst of change in achieving sustainable development and ensuring lasting peace and security that should follow suit in many other OSCE regions.

Our message is one: keep the OSCE alive! Cheers to 20 years OSCE Academy and to many more years to come!



# ALUMNI INITIATIVES

*In addition to building a career, our graduates are involved in working and volunteering to benefit and help others. Now you are going to read the stories of two of our alumni from Afghanistan who have made an invaluable contribution to the development of agriculture and farming in Afghanistan and to supporting youth development of their homeland.*

## Zarlasht Sarmast

*Zarlasht Sarmast, alumna of 2021 and Shamsuddin Amin, alumnus of 2020 shared their amazing initiatives.*

*Being a young girl from Afghanistan herself, Zarlasht did a great job helping students from Afghanistan during the political regime change events in Afghanistan last year. Now Zarlasht is still doing her volunteering activities, working with the psycho-emotional well-being of students from Afghanistan, setting up two student clubs:*

I am currently working for OSUN as a Program Coordinator for the Global Engagement Fellows program. I am the Director and CEO of the project “Afghanistan Politics on the Verge of Transformation.” Recently I finished my first MA in Politics and Security at the OSCE Academy in Bishkek and I am currently doing my second Master’s Degree in applied Psychology at AUCA.

During the 2021 evacuations of AUCA, AUAF and OSCE students, I was one of the key members in the evacuation process. I was in touch with every single student in Afghanistan making sure they have all the required documents they needed to leave Afghanistan and make it safely to Bishkek. This is while I was working a full-time job as a coordinator for the Open Society University Network and had to write my MA thesis which I also managed to successfully submit.

In 2022 I co-authored a book about the evacuated students from Afghanistan “A journey from Kabul to Bishkek”. The book highlights the horrific journey which Afghan students took in order to reach safety. The book also focuses on telling stories of those who made it possible. The book is distributed across the OSUN network. After this book was published, it got the attention of the US embassy in Bishkek and I was invited to a meeting with Ambassador Donald Lu.

In June 2022, I was invited to read the speech of Hillary Clinton to the graduating class of 2022 at AUCA.



I am currently leading the organization of an international conference for Afghan students which will take place on the 22 and 23 of August 2022, supported by the U.S. Government. There are seven institutions involved and I am leading the organizing committee. The Afghan student’s conference is a convening of Afghan student leaders from 7 institutions across OSUN that is focused on supporting Afghan students across the world. With this conference I aim to connect students across the network to strengthen their sense of community and provide resources to support students through creative problem solving and peer support.

Coming from Afghanistan, I noticed the trauma and stress among my peers and I recently created two clubs to gather Afghan students to promote the culture of unity and help decrease stress at least to some extent. These clubs are supported by the AUCA and titled 1- Movie Club and 2- Meditation club and I organize a session every week.



The book  
“A journey  
from Kabul  
to Bishkek”



AUCA  
Graduation  
Ceremony  
2022





## Shamsuddin Amin

*Shamsuddin Amin is alumnus of 2020, MA Programme in Politics and Security. Shamsuddin developed an impeccable agricultural and farming project that helped many of his fellow countrymen:*

My name is Shamsuddin Amin, I am an OSCE Academy alumnus of 2020 majoring in Politics and Security. After the completion of my studies, I returned to Afghanistan to serve my homeland, and work towards its betterment. I began my career as a lecturer of Law and Political Science at the Al-Taqwa Institute of Higher Education where I was teaching courses on Political Economy and Contemporary Global Political Issues. Due to the COVID-19 lockdown measures, we moved to online format, and continued teaching until May 2021. At the same time, I served as regional project manager with the Future Generations Afghanistan in Eastern Afghanistan. In there, I championed for and successfully received funding for projects that aimed to economically uplift and empower women, refugees, and farming communities in rural Laghman and Kunar provinces.

Having spent a good deal of time implementing various projects, I figured out a fundamental problem and deficit in humanitarian and developmental projects being implemented, specifically in the sphere of economic and agricultural development. Most of these projects were being implemented on an outdated, flawed, and fraudulent system—established in late 2001 under the National Solidarity Program (NSP)—that not only led to inefficiency, and failure to meet project objectives; but also made these projects susceptible to corruption. As a solution, in February 2021, I began working on

a new concept that not only would address the above-mentioned issues, but would help better integrate, modernize, and promote development in rural communities. In this vein, I undertook a fundamental task to seek support from various funding agencies to implement and bring the concept into reality. The concept relied on already established practices in community development and was coupled with a localized version of the concept of unions. To test the effectiveness of the concept, we requested the World Food Programme through a comprehensive proposal seeking a seed capital of USD 325,000 to implement a test version of the project across four districts in Laghman and Kunar Provinces. The project aimed to establish farmers and women unions in the targeted communities. And to provide them specialized support in terms of technical and microfinance and business expertise and knowledge through localized and easy to understand measures. These were complemented by agricultural machinery and input in terms of certified wheat seed and fertilizers.

The fundamental reason I had for farmers' unionization at the time was that when farmers are unionized and work closely with each other, their ability to tackle problems and challenges in terms of human resources increase, hence, they can better deploy, utilize, and integrate the available resources to tackle challenges. I developed a strategy that helped in establishing three primary types of farmers unions at the local, at the district, and at the provincial level, for better access, proper management of resources and on-time management of crisis that farmers face.







Although, Afghanistan has a localist society, and mostly farming is referred or accepted practice for men, however, women also take part in the farming activities at various levels. However, their participation at livestock activities is more noticeable. As we were targeting farming households, I aimed to integrate women as direct beneficiaries of the project to further support their activities in the society and to economically empower them. Thus, the project aimed to unionize 1,000 women headed households and to work with them by providing them technical support, expertise, and tools to increase their economic output and to empower women led microbusinesses. We provided selected support to women in terms of purchasing livestock, establishing kitchen gardens, and helping them overall in establishing and leading microbusinesses.

At the same time, with the help of our committed team at Future Generations Afghanistan, and the financial support of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), we secured an emergency funding to provide financial support to 3,000 farmers and vulnerable households in rural Laghman. This project with a budget of USD 200,000 was implemented under the already

existent NSP structures. The project not only served as a direct assistance to communities that were ravished by the heightening insurgency and war against the Taliban, but also served a crucial aim to comparatively assess and study the effectiveness of the project activities across the targeted communities. It re-affirmed my findings of the inefficiencies of the system, and convinced the local departments of Economy, and Department of Agriculture as to the effectiveness of the alternative concept of unionization.

To conclude, from May through the end of August 2021, we were able to establish, register and unionize 18 farmer's unions and 18 women economic empowerment groups under these unions that integrated 4,600 households across Laghman and Kunar Provinces, with all its members having been formally registered with the government, their biometrics taken and have received initial trainings on unions, microbusiness management, market linkage and pre-harvest agriculture technical trainings. The project's initial phase ended in May 2022, and having assessed its success, the project was renewed with additional funding of over USD 500,000 to be implemented across four other districts in the two provinces.



# ALUMNI OPPORTUNITIES

## *Junior Public Officers Programme (JPO)*

*In support of the professional integration of alumni in the public service, starting from 2010 the OSCE Academy has run a Junior Public Officers Programme. The JPO Programme provides an opportunity to the OSCE Academy's graduates from Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan to intern at the Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Investments and Ministry of Foreign Affairs.*

*In 2022 overall three alumni conducted their internships in Kyrgyzstan:*



### **Kunduz Tashmatova, alumna of 2020 from Kyrgyzstan**

***Ministry of Economy and Commerce of the Kyrgyz Republic***

"The JPO programme was no doubt an excellent opportunity for me to strengthen my professional background in public service and administration and a great platform to apply in practice the knowledge of economic governance and development I received at the OSCE Academy in Bishkek. In particular, while interning at the Ministry of Economy and Commerce of the Kyrgyz Republic, I learned how macroeconomic analysis is conducted at the national level. Moreover, the knowledge of WTO law acquired during the IRTA course was especially helpful in drafting Lists of Commitments of the Kyrgyz Republic to the draft Agreement on Free Trade in Services, Establishment, Operation and Investment of the CIS member States. Moreover, I could build professional networks with the Ministry's representatives, where my internship supervisor Mr. N. Shamshiev, an Honored Economist of the Kyrgyz Republic, advised me to continue my professional career at the Ministry. Overall, the JPO programme enabled me to think globally about my future professional career and identify its next direction for growth."



### **Zhumagul Akunova, alumna of 2021 from Kyrgyzstan**

***Ministry of Economy and Commerce of the Kyrgyz Republic***

"It is my first time to work in a governmental organization. I do consider JPO as one of the most interesting cases for governmental organization experience. First, it is about the tight deadlines for the completion of duties, another is a lot of tasks from the various specters of the economy. I was assigned to the Sector of evaluation activities under the Ministry of Economy of the Kyrgyz Republic. However, I was also involved in the activities of Financial Market and Exchange Platforms Sector. This involved me in the activities of the two sectors of the economy. The most interesting experience for me was Promotion of the draft resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Kyrgyz Republic in order to implement the provisions of the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic "On Auditing Activities". This activity helped me to fully understand how legislation is adopted in the Kyrgyz Republic and the full chain of the process. Another thing is the familiarity of this process showed me to work with official documentation.

I do appreciate this opportunity to be involved in the Regulator's work. Such an opportunity gave me full understanding of the governmental organization. Besides of that I got to know many nice people, who helped me to enhance my professionalism."





## Daniyar Ashirov, alumnaus of 2021 from Kyrgyzstan

### Ministry of Investments of the Kyrgyz Republic

“Overall, the Junior Officer Programme was beneficial to me not only professionally, but also personally, as I was able to improve my “soft” and “hard” skills. For example, it was a great experience to understand the system and the workings of government institutions. In addition, writing analytical papers gave me the opportunity to use the theoretical knowledge of economics in practice. After all, there are business projects, and an accurate assessment of the effectiveness of these business projects in the region is required. It was possible to learn evaluate projects with a different approach.

By carrying out different tasks, it was possible to learn absolutely new things. I am sure that I will try to use in my career all the experience that I got during the JPO. The first element I would like to highlight is the knowledge of writing formal letters. At the beginning it was difficult, and it took a long time. However, I was able to master writing formal documents. I am well aware that writing official letters is always necessary. I hope that I will use it in my next jobs. Other important things are preparing analytical papers and writing protocols. I think that analytical writing and prepare meeting protocols are known to be necessary in every workplace.

## Junior Teaching Fellowship (JTF)

Universities across Central Asia are faced with the challenging job to provide quality education. The OSCE Academy in Bishkek (OSCE AiB) 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.

“Teach for Central Asia” 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 alumnaus network by giving the opportunity to become the agents of change in their communities.

Four OSCE Academy alumnaus have successfully started the JTF Programme in Fall 2022. Some of them shared their experience:



## Aliaskar Adylov

Aliaskar Adylov is alumnaus of 2018, MA Programme in Politics and Security from Kyrgyzstan. Aliaskar is teaching the ‘Green Economy’ course at the International University of Kyrgyzstan.

“The concept of Green Economy, which promotes the fusion of the human pursuit of economic development with greater attention to the environment (reducing the carbon footprint of the economy, improving its energy and resource efficiency) and building a more equitable society, has been quite new for Kyrgyzstan. Nevertheless, the country has great potential to become one of the cleanest in the world. Over 80% of its electricity is produced from renewable sources (hydropower), and its carbon footprint of about two tons of CO<sub>2</sub> per capita. It



is already in line with the global climate change goals. Yet, the consumption of coal in Kyrgyzstan has been growing, and the country is facing numerous environmental challenges, such as the degradation of pastures and inefficient water management. To raise awareness of the problems and opportunities Kyrgyzstan has, this course is currently being developed the GIZ Project on Green Economy in Kyrgyzstan. Being an employee of this Project, and being actively engaged in its development and promotion, I am grateful to the OSCE Academy for the opportunity to not only try teaching for the first time but also to test the course under development with actual students who can also provide valuable feedback to further improve the course.”

**Tumentsetseg Yadamsuren**

*Tumentsetseg Yadamsuren is alumna of 2021, MA Programme in Economic Governance and Development from Mongolia. Tumentsetseg is teaching the 'Principles of Macroeconomics' course at the International University of Ulaanbaatar.*

“I am very grateful for the opportunity to reinforce my academic knowledge, as well as develop and learn teaching methods through the JTF programme. The academy’s support for the successful completion of the programme is very important to us since we are new teachers. For me, teaching macroeconomics starting from the fundamental principles enabled me to understand the subject in-depth and enhanced my interest in pursuing my further academic career. I feel privileged to have this great opportunity not only to develop my teaching experience, but also to improve the soft skills such as public speaking, presentation, adaptability, leadership and more. Our OSCE Academy offers its alumni a variety of supports, which is a benefit not seen often in Mongolia, or offered by other foreign institutes. With the aid of the JTF programme, I believe we could inform and encourage our students more about the possibility of studying abroad and explore further opportunities, especially those who are eager to pursue and expand their academic career but not able due to financial troubles.”



**Diydor Berdiklichev**

*Diydor Berdiklichev is alumnus of 2021, MA Programme in Economic Governance and Development from Uzbekistan. Diydor is teaching the 'Introduction to Econometrics' course at Tashkent State University of Economics.*

“With the help of the Junior Teaching Fellowship programme by OSCE Academy in Bishkek I was able to get involved in teaching Introduction to Econometrics class at Tashkent State University of Economics as a teaching assistant. Teaching is challenging, but rewarding. Einstein said, “If you can’t explain it simply, you do not understand it well enough”. Teaching econometrics made me learn more and sometimes eventually understand certain concepts deeper while preparing for the class. Moreover, being in the classroom not as a student is really hard

work, for which I want to express my gratitude to all my teachers, especially professors of the OSCE AiB. At the same time, I could feel a sense of fulfillment every time when I finished the lesson, when students thanked me for the class and when I could give something useful to the students. I discovered a new world of opportunities for myself as a researcher and I think I will surely continue teaching for some time.”



## ***International Junior Professional Officer Programme (IJPO)***

In 2022 the OSCE Academy launched its International Junior Professional Officer Programme for alumni who wish to build up their career in International Organizations. Under the IJPO graduates can undergo three-month internship at the OSCE (Secretariat or one of the Field Missions) or find their own placement at the international organization/institution worldwide. This year, the programme supported graduates from Afghanistan due to the recent political events that happened in the country. Thus, the Academy selected five graduates to sponsor their internships: Fardin Jamal (Politics and Security '21), Masiam Amiry (Economic Governance and Development '21), Fatima Framarz (Politics and Security '19) Abdul Matin Hakimyar (Politics and Security '21), and Amrullah Haleemi (Economic Governance and Development '21). Below you can read some of the IJPO impressions of our alumni:



### **Fardin Jamal**

***completed his internship at the CRISP - Crisis Simulation for Peace e. V, Berlin, Germany***

“The internship has been advantageous to me in every intellectual, professional, and academic dimension. I obtained a deeper grasp of a wide range of themes that are all relevant and significant to the modern day, as well as real-life challenges connected to climate change, human rights, democracy, and peace in diverse civilizations around the world.

My enthusiasm regarding the simulation games stems from the fact that they provide a new and innovative means of dealing with academic, social, and political challenges. Because of the emphasis on this method in the CRISP, I was able to understand the various steps of designing and developing simulation games, such as writing scenarios, identifying stakeholders, developing role profiles, and adapting the scenarios and role profiles to varied and relevant topics.

One of the most essential duties done throughout the internship was the use of social science research skills to identify gaps in various elements of people's life and the creation of various projects to address them. Participating in this activity I believe it was incredibly effective and significant.

Overall, it was a success in terms of acquiring the abilities required to perform well in a professional setting. Finally, it is crucial to add that completing the internship in Berlin, Germany allowed me to learn more about the country's culture and the nation, which was also intellectually rewarding.”



### **Masiam Amiry**

***completed his internship at BK Dairy Farms, Islamabad, Pakistan***

“I have been employed as a junior international public officer in the finance division of the BK firm in Islamabad, Pakistan. I had to deal with a variety of entities during this IJPO programme, one of which was the taxation department. It can be challenging to comprehend tax regulations when working in the financial department of a different country wherein modifications to the budget, salary, and other financial operations are required in accordance with the tax code. I was able to learn a lot while participating in the IJPO program, not only from the job I performed but also from my supervisor's instructions and expertise. I would advise my fellow OSCE alums to look for employment with an international organization; even if it is a very small job, you will gain a lot of knowledge from it. Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to the OSCE Academy for giving its graduates this chance.”





**Fatima Framarz**

*completed her internship at the University of Central Asia, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan*

“Studying at and graduating from the OSCE Academy in Bishkek inspired me to shift my career from journalism to academic research as I realized that a researcher needs to look through every topic much more profoundly to produce a written piece. Despite working as a researcher with the Afghanistan Center for Military Research and Monitoring, I had always dreamed of working in an academic environment. Following the regime change in Afghanistan, I lost my job as a journalist and researcher and resettled in Bishkek as a student again. For a specific period, I had this understanding that my dream of having a job experience in an academic sphere would never come true. Fortunately, the Academy’s IJPO proved this wrong. Currently, I work as a research fellow with the Graduate School of Development (GSD) at the University of Central Asia (UCA). In this capacity, I conduct a research project on the Right to Access Education, focusing on Afghan girls’ right to education under Taliban rule.

The experience I have been receiving during this programme will enrich my capacity to contribute as an academic researcher in the future as I work in a friendly and flexible environment under the supervision of highly experienced academics, learn new research skills, and get connected to academics and scholars. I owe all this to the OSCE Academy in Bishkek.”

**One-Year-Stay at NUPI Fellowship**

*In 2022 two more alumni had a chance to participate in the fellowship offered by the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI): Tinatin Osmonova, alumna of 2020 of the MA Programme in Economic Governance and Development and Ismoil Sadullozoda, alumnus of 2020 of the MA Programme in Politics and Security. 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 Tinatin and Ismoil shortly describe their experience at NUPI.*



Alumni together with the OSCE Secretary General Helga Maria Schmid, Director of NUPI Dr. Ulf Sverdrup, and Head of the Research group on Climate and Energy at NUPI, Dr. Indra Overland.





My Norwegian story has been active since 2016. I had studied at the Public University of Life Sciences (NMBU) before I joined the OSCE Academy. At that time (2016-2018), I did not have a clear career vision. Thus, I filled all my free time with uncountable extracurricular activities and adventurous trips across Europe. Notwithstanding, I did not plan to stay in Norway, so I safely returned home (Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan) to think about what to do next with my further career. In Bishkek, I joined the OSCE Academy and renewed my academic journey. After I completed my studies at the OSCE AiB, I was planning to continue my internship at the OSCE Secretariat. However, never-ending lockdowns and travel restrictions did not allow me to relocate to Vienna.

I believe that everything happens for a reason and life surprises you when you least expect it. This way, I found opportunities to learn new skills and practice them in St. Petersburg. My new discoveries and desire to improve my applied research skills pushed me to apply for the NUPI Fellowship. I ended up being selected and unexpectedly for myself returned back to Norway. I cannot explain in words what I felt when I visited the places where I used to live. Coincidentally, the Fellowship started exactly on my birthday and became my special birthday gift. Here I want to thank previous fellows Aidai Isataeva and Galina Kolodzinskaia for their super warm welcome. I also thank Elisabeth Librekt Olsen, Senior Advisor at NUPI, for her excellent work in bringing me to Oslo. She brilliantly coordinated every step of my visa application process. Hence, I was extremely lucky to be granted a Norwegian residence permit in just 3 days. Shortly, after the joyful start, I dived into a busy and dynamic working life. My primary job tasks were assigned by Dr. Indra Øverland, Head of the Research Group on Climate and Energy. I usually worked under the direct supervision and support of top-notch expert Professor Øverland. Therefore, I am beyond grateful to him for being my mentor and involving me in various projects, plenty of professional events, and large-scale research activities. In addition, I frequently assisted Dr. Ida Dokk Smith, who later suggested that I contribute to an article. Thus, I thank Dr. Ida Dokk Smith for mutually beneficial cooperation. I am also grateful to Dr. Tatjana Stankovic and Dr. Roman Vakulchuk for reviewing my research proposals and providing me with valuable feedback. I thank Dr. Helge Blakkisrud for inviting me to political workshops and cultural exchange meet-ups with the University of Oslo (UiO) students. Ismoil Sadullozoda's

great role in my transformation should be also highlighted. Being a friendly and calm person, he taught me to be less rebellious. In general, I enjoyed working with the whole Climate and Energy Group. Every person on the team is talented and unique.

Besides NUPI activities, I tried to spend my spare time smartly. As it was mentioned above, I visited many places in Europe during my first Norwegian experience. Accordingly, I decided to travel less during my second mission to Norway. Instead of traveling and having fun at local bars, I started testing the abilities of my brain just for my own amusement. To be more precise, I analyzed and compared the economic conditions of developed countries and Kyrgyzstan. My main motive was to reveal the areas where I can get new knowledge and work experience that later might serve as innovative solutions to Kyrgyzstan's economic problems. Based on the data I collected and analyzed, I designed a structured bucket list with 88 achievable goals that would make me a valuable specialist in the global labor market. Consequently, the strategic planning helped me get several job-offers just a couple of weeks after my applications had been submitted. Unfortunately, I did not accept the offers due to certain reasons. However, I am proud to announce that 68 out of 88 activities from my bucket list have been successfully marked as "DONE". Moreover, I am excited to realize that I managed to sell my ideas and skills in Norway, where on average people with immigrant backgrounds get their first white-collar jobs within 9 months of active job hunting. Hehe, thanks to myself for being me :) This is it. In conclusion, I express my sincere gratitude to NUPI and the OSCE Academy for providing me with amazing opportunities to grow professionally!

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 almost 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.



I had a tie with NUPI from the start of my Master's degree at the OSCE Academy. My master thesis supervisor was a NUPI researcher, and I was later admitted to a graduate internship at NUPI. Due to the Coronavirus lockdown, I did my internship online which was not less rewarding in gaining insights from experienced researchers in this think-tank. This experience was a prime inspiration for me to apply for a one-year fellowship.

The news of my acceptance reached me in Germany where I was involved in a post-graduate internship also organized as part of a wider cooperation initiative between NUPI and the OSCE Academy. Delving into a grand scholarly environment started on our first day of fellowship as members of a new research group on Climate and Energy and with more in-person attendance since the Coronavirus lockdown in Norway started being lifted. NUPI proved a fascinating opportunity to be part of the genuine research process and enhance academic skills and knowledge by participating in workshops, conferences, and seminars where influential scholars and politicians are invited regularly. I participated in several international NUPI conferences with heads of state, politicians, and leading experts in academic fields. Working with first-class researchers and learning from the assistance in substantial research work gives an important experience crucial for future career both in academia and industry. Being part of the Climate and Energy research group, I was fortunate to receive this experience also by working with Dr. Helge Blakkisrud from the Russia, Asia and International Trade research group whose working ethics and personal qualities by no means could be overemphasized!

Moreover, as a part of this programme, fellows have a chance to pursue attendance in international academic events abroad. My participation in a summer school on “National Minorities in Border Regions” in Basque Country, Spain was funded by NUPI which was an amazing experience of learning and exploring Southern Europe and a good opportunity to present the material I am preparing for an academic article.

None less thrilling is life in Norway beyond NUPI's academic activities. The breathtaking Nordic scenery of Norwegian fjords, numerous museums, libraries, and architectural expressions yield an abundant pool of excitement for adventure-seeking explorers. Besides busy seasons, the work at NUPI is very flexible in terms of scheduling, thus I had plenty of time to explore Oslo and surrounding locations. To sum up, I had an amazing and unforgettable fellowship that laid a milestone for my further career making me better qualified to pursue academic excellence with application to doctoral studies. Of course, none of this would be possible without constant support and supervision by the excellent people both at the OSCE Academy and NUPI to whom I am immensely grateful. Especially I thank Indra Øverland, Helge Blakkisrud, Elisabeth Librekt Olsen, Roman Vakulchuk, Tatjana Stankovic, Kacper Szulecki, and Ida Dokk Smith for their guidance, advice, and challenges for improvement. Last but not least, I thank Tinatin Osmonova for her friendship and companionship throughout this unforgettable year!



## European Scholarship at the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP)

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 2022 Sergey Marinin was accepted to enhance his knowledge in security studies.



Left to right: Director of The Bulan Institute for Peace Innovations Cholpon Orozbekova, Azamdzhon Salohov and Sergey Marinin

Another issue of SalamAlum, and yet another story from me. This time life brought me to study international security at the Geneva Centre for Security Policy, at the heart of the global city of Geneva, one of the UN headquarters. The decision to apply for the programme took work - I wanted to be a part of this 8-months advanced graduate course for a long time, even before working at the Academy. However, I was unsure, if I was a great fit and felt I needed to be more professionally ready for this significant endeavour.

Being here now, I think the time spent in the 'real world' was well spent. Theoretical premises are great; academic experience and understanding of the multifaceted security phenomena are essential. Dealing with security issues in the field is vital to grasp what you will study at one of the world's finest schools. The teaching staff of the GSCP makes my student life more stimulating.

GCSP is giving me more understanding of how intricate various international and European security domains are. We are immersed in

a constant debate about the current global trends and looking into the future, too, having access to top security professionals in Geneva and beyond. The nature of the course is intense yet very practically oriented, so we, as graduates, could go out in the world and change it on our levels of reach. I suggest those who are now considering applying to this programme gain more practical experience first to be ready to benefit the most from the curriculum and the networking the GCSP provides.

I am forever thankful to the OSCE Academy for all the constant support it has given me over the eight years since I graduated. Having been its student and a staff member, and a beneficiary of all the fantastic opportunities the Academy provides us, I am indebted to the institution's management and extremely grateful to the donors, NUPI and the OSCE participating states, for sustaining this forward-thinking institution of higher learning.



## The Central Asia-Azerbaijan Fellowship Program (CAAFP)

In 2021 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 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. Last year, eight of our alumni participated in a tailor-made programme 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. As the most successful fellow, Albina Yun, received an opportunity to spend one month at the George Washington University – Elliott School of International Affairs starting in June 2022. Albina is alumna of 2015, MA Programme in Politics and Security from Uzbekistan.



Here Albina shares her one-month experience at George Washington University:

In October – November 2021, I became one of the fellows at the Central Asia Program – Azerbaijan Fellowship Program (CAAFP), organized by the Elliott School of International Affairs, George Washington University. At the time, I was working at the 139 Documentary Center in Tashkent, a cultural platform for artists, activists, and researchers, and I was very much involved in its grassroots engagement. When, I saw the theme selected for the 2021 fellow-

ship, which was "Societal Engagement with Cultural, Educational, Environmental, and Gender-Related Issues", I was instantly hooked by the topic. My educational and work experience and interactions with local teachers, artists, activists, feminists, researchers, and wider communities (like Mahalla) fostered my critique of Western mainstream research trends on Central Asia, such as an excessive focus on state and regime discourse. While I do not completely negate the value of mainstream research, overemphasis on such issues neglects local people and the complex dynamics, and considerably limits epistemology on and in the Central Asian region. The CAAFP was one of the very few programs, which overcame the mainstream prejudice, and instead, encouraged various diverse perspectives.

Within the two months the CAP fellowship provided me with a unique opportunity to interact and learn from one of the most well-known scholars, and most importantly to network with local Central Asian researchers and activists. In addition, through the fellowship, I seized the opportunity for publishing and wrote for three different platforms – Voices on Central Asia, Central Asian Analytical Network, and the CAP online series. Furthermore, via the CAP, with the financial support of the OSCE Academy, I received the privilege to visit the George Washington University in Washington, DC, USA. It was my first visit to the USA, and my stay there was certainly a remarkable point in my life and academic career. I would like to sincerely thank Dr. Marlene Laurelle and Ms. Aitolkyn Kourmanova for their guidance and support in my research. I would like to note that, it is crucial to encourage and give an authorial voice to local activists and researchers. The CAAFP and the OSCE Academy are doing a great job in this endeavor, and I am grateful to be a part of both programmes.



## 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 three OSCE Academy alumni received Alumni Travel Grant to fulfil their academic and professional accomplishments.



### **Gulnoza Akhmedova is alumna of 2019,**

#### ***MA Programme in Politics and Security from Uzbekistan***

“I am grateful to the OSCE Academy for providing such opportunities to its Alumni through the travel grant. This year I was able to participate in the CAPPS program (Central Asian Program on Pedagogies of Solidarity) on “Families and traditions in transition” organized jointly by the American University in Central Asia and Boston University on August 8-21, 2022. This insightful programme focused on how sexuality and gender equality have been impacted by conversations around traditional morals and emancipation. The programme included a series of workshops, group discussions and participatory observations of target communities in Kyrgyzstan. I witnessed how the values of modernity, tradition and religion coexisted and debated for space in the state of transition from the past. I found it interesting that communities create a sense of belonging and belonging is a human need.

Another feature of the CEDAR program is that the school seeks to build a space for shared belonging and coexistence for participants with different backgrounds and substantive differences—in values, histories, life circumstances, beliefs, worldviews, and economic statuses. This is particularly important in a polarizing world when different ideological and religious divisions are leading to racism, xenophobia and violence. I am going to share this experience and knowledge with students at Webster University.”



### **Kodir Kuliev is alumnaus of 2014,**

#### ***MA Programme in Economic Governance and Development from Uzbekistan***

"Providing someone an opportunity for career growth is an honored, generous, and applauding deed. I once again received such an opportunity from the OSCE Academy. I was privileged to secure the OSCE Academy Travel Grant to do professional training in Business, Human Rights, and Anti-Corruption at my other alma mater - the UN-backed International Anti-Corruption Academy (IACA).

Lasted for one month, 9 hours per week, the course was a convenient and enriching space for learning and sharing experiences with outstanding experts like Andy Spalding (course leader), Paulina Murillo Nevarez of Ecuador, and Fernanda Nan of Uruguay, and many others. During this intensive training and cross-country debating, I thoroughly explored the intersection of anti-bribery compliance and human rights due diligence. The course first covered the essentials of international anti-bribery compliance with law and practice, enhanced by synchronous live debates and case studies. It then dug into the closely related but distinct phenomenon of corporate human rights due diligence, looking at international corporate human rights laws and leading human rights due diligence standards.

As an anti-corruption expert, I consult several organizations and sometimes get outsourced by foreign companies. Therefore, the practical knowledge about the intricacies of international anti-bribery law, anti-corruption compliance best practices, and corporate human rights due diligence I have gained from this training will make my service more effective and cutting-edge. Also, learning the United Nations Guiding Principles (UNGP) on Business and Human Rights and understanding how the UNGPs have translated into various (national) corporate human rights laws empowered me for my future anti-corruption work in Uzbekistan.

Another good news is that I have recently been selected for the Leif J. Sverdrup Global Teaching Fellowship to teach an Interdisciplinary Perspective on Anti-corruption course at the Leiden Campus in the Netherlands next year. This course perfectly complements my short tour of duty in Europe."



### **Diydor Berdiklichev is alumnaus of 2021,**

#### ***MA Programme in Economic Governance and Development from Uzbekistan***

"Economics is driven by data. Today data is everywhere, but acquiring, analyzing and understanding them to solve socio-economic issues is not an easy task. I attended an online course from MIT Micromasters in Data Economics Development Program in "Data Analysis for Social Scientists" with the help of an Alumni Travel Grant by OSCE AiB. The course was taught by MIT professors: Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences, Esther Duflo and Senior Lecturer in the MIT Economics Department, Sara Fisher Ellison. The course covered topics starting from fundamentals of probability theory and statistics to techniques in modern data analysis: estimation, regression and econometrics, prediction, experimental design, randomized control trials (and A/B testing), machine learning, and data visualization. The course was extremely demanding and interesting. It was very relevant and useful for my daily job at the Institute of Forecasting and Macroeconomic Research as a research associate at poverty reduction and wellbeing."



# ALUMNI RELATIONS

## Love Story

*In keeping with our tradition, in this part of SalamAlum we would like to welcome another charming couple of our graduates. Please welcome Nurbek Bekmurzaev, alumnus of 2014 from Kyrgyzstan and Tansaya Khajikhan, alumna of 2020 from Mongolia:*



**Q: Dear Tansaya and Nurbek, how did your story start?**

**Nurbek:** We met at the Alumni Reunion in September 2019. I first saw Tansaya at the dinner reception and spent the whole evening thinking about how cute she was. On the second day of the reunion, when we went to Kara-Bulak, I summoned all my courage and talked to her. We started talking and made plans to hang out. That is how I remember the start of our story. We started dating shortly afterwards and got married 3 years later.

**Tansaya:** Yes, I agree with this recollection. What first brought us together was our common interest in traveling. Our trips brought us closer to each other in the beginning of our relationship. You can learn a lot about someone when you travel together.

**Q: What was the first thing that made you fall in love with each other?**

**Nurbek:** Her smile, definitely. It disarmed me completely. I get so much joy seeing her smile, and it can easily change my mood whenever I am feeling down.

**Tansaya:** His authenticity, the way he looked at me, and his wisdom.

**Q: Please tell us about your family life, how you assign household duties between each other and is it challenging to balance family life and academic work?**

**Nurbek:** We don't have any strict rules about household chores. At least not at this point of our married life. The main deciding factors in who does what around the house for us are kindness and fairness. In practice it translates into trying to ease up each other's loads, whilst being fair and not getting complacent with the other person doing everything. Also, we distribute chores depending on our schedules and preferences. For example, I enjoy cooking a lot, so I cook often at home.

I suppose it is challenging to balance personal life and work whether you are married or not. So it comes down to being lucky enough to have a life partner who supports you and helps to deal with this balance better. And I am happy to say that we have each other in this regard. It is great to have someone to walk beside you through the ups and downs of life.

**Tansaya:** I try to keep balance in everything. Since our relationship is based on love, mutual understanding, and togetherness, we try to help each other and share household chores no matter what.

**Q: What are your future professional and academic aspirations?**

**Nurbek:** To be honest, I thought that by age 30 I would answer this question with more ease. But that is not the case now. I recently switched career lanes and started focusing more on research and writing because that is something I enjoy a lot. In this regard, I contribute regularly to think tanks and news organizations, such as the Jamestown Foundation, Eurasianet, and CabarAsia. I hope to carry on and expand this endeavor and produce accurate analysis to help make sense of political and security developments in Central Asia. I also plan to take up teaching soon, but there is nothing definite to share at this point.

Having shared all these plans, I have to confess that some days I catch myself wanting to be a professional chef, run my own beekeeping farm, or write a fictional book about life of Central Asian people

in the Soviet Union. As you can see, I allow myself quite a bit of day-dreaming. I read an article that it is good for your mental health.

**Tansaya:** I would like to advance my skills in data science and become a data scientist. I am working as a data analyst now and trying to achieve my goal step by step. Other than that, I want to devote my time to writing quantitative papers and producing quality articles.

**Q: What do you wish for our students and alumni community?**

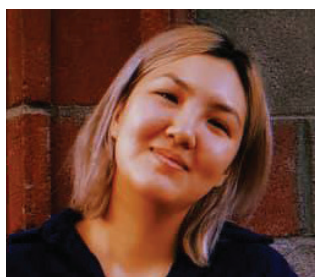
**Nurbek:** A good health, most importantly, because that is the foundation for everything else in life. And courage to take risks and step outside their comfort zone. And for those who are still single, a good fortune in finding their soulmates.

**Tansaya:** Success in all endeavors, happiness, and love.



# WELCOME NEW ALUMNI

## *MA Programme in Economic Governance and Development*



**Aida Abdyltaeva**

*Kyrgyzstan*



**Aliia Asangazieva**

*Kyrgyzstan*



**Atai Almanbetov**

*Kyrgyzstan*



**Elena Kostuchenko**

*Belarus*



**Irfanullah Shinwari**

*Afghanistan*



**Karimeh Gholami**

*Afghanistan*



**Kobra Soltani**

*Afghanistan*



**Kunduz Syidalieva**

*Kyrgyzstan*



**Munib Sahebzada**

*Afghanistan*



**Nargis Sarwari**

*Afghanistan*

## *MA Programme in Politics and Security*



**Ainagul Amatbekova**

*Kyrgyzstan*



**Akylai Otkulbek kyzy**

*Kyrgyzstan*



**Batyr Berdiyev**

*Turkmenistan*



**Behruz Nuriddinov**

*Tajikistan*



**Dastan Bekmuratov**

*Kyrgyzstan*



**Guldanika Osmonova**

*Kyrgyzstan*



**Gulmira Tussupbekova**

*Kyrgyzstan*



**Huseyni Shozhang**

*Tajikistan*



**Jumadurdy Potjimov**

*Turkmenistan*



**Kamila Haidari**

*Afghanistan*



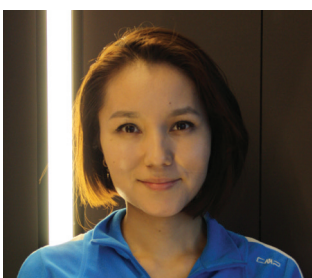
**Kanai Alybaev**

*Kyrgyzstan*



**Malika Belekbaeva**

*Kyrgyzstan*



**Meerim Nurbekova**

*Kyrgyzstan*



**Mirgul Ishenbek kyzy**

*Kyrgyzstan*



**Nuriddin Odilov**

*Uzbekistan*



**Zuhra Rakhmatullaeva**

*Uzbekistan*



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