

# SalamAlum

OSCE ACADEMY  
in Bishkek

ALUMNI MAGAZINE

Issue 13 | Winter 2023

*“I believe that digitalization of public administration will ensure transparency, reduce corruption and speed up all processes. Our goal is daily assistance to Kyrgyzstanis through digital services.”*

— **Nuria Kutnaeva**,  
alumna of 2005, *pg. 14*

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**Joint Expert / Alumni Conference**  
on Comprehensive Security  
and Sustainable Development,  
*pg. 6*

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Thrilling success story:  
**Nuria Kutnaeva**, alumna of 2005,  
is **appointed Minister**  
**of Digital Development**  
of the Kyrgyz Republic,  
*pg. 14*

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OSCE Academy updates:  
**Third MA programme**  
in Human Rights  
and Sustainability (MAHRS),  
*pg. 4*

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# Contents

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>Welcome Note .....</b>   | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>Alumni Network in Numbers.....</b>   | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>Academy's Updates.....</b>   | <b>4</b>  |
| New Master of Liberal Arts and Sciences with specialization<br>in Human Rights and Sustainability Programme (MAHRS) ..... | 4         |
| Student Exchange of 2023 .....  | 5         |
| <b>Alumni and Academy.....</b>  | <b>6</b>  |
| Joint Expert/Alumni Conference<br>‘Central Asia: Comprehensive Security and Sustainable Development’ .....                | 6         |
| Alumni Training: The Role of the Security Sector in Stability and Peace in the Region.....                                | 9         |
| International Spring School on Human Security and Good Governance Conducted in Tashkent.....                              | 9         |
| Alumni Chapter Meetings.....  | 11        |
| <b>Alumni Achievements .....</b>  | <b>14</b> |
| Alumna of the Year 2023: Nuria Kutnaeva .....   | 14        |
| Alumni Success Stories: Celebrating Academic Excellence.....  | 16        |
| Jyldyz Abdylidaeva .....  | 16        |
| Ryan Michael Schweitzer.....  | 17        |
| Ahmad Javeed.....   | 18        |
| Natalia Zakharchenko .....  | 20        |
| <b>Alumni Initiatives .....</b>   | <b>22</b> |
| Alumni Success Stories: Introducing Developments in Lives of Local Communities.....                                       | 22        |
| Yermek Abilgazyiyev .....   | 22        |
| Wasal Naser Faqiryar .....  | 23        |
| Ahmad Javeed.....   | 24        |
| From Passion to Profession: Wonderful Jeweler – Malika Juraeva .....  | 25        |
| <b>Alumni Opportunities .....</b>   | <b>28</b> |
| Junior Public Officers Programme .....  | 28        |
| Junior Teaching Fellowship .....  | 30        |
| One-Year-Stay at NUPI Fellowship.....   | 33        |
| MAS at the Geneva Centre for Security Policy.....   | 36        |
| Research Fellowship at the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.....   | 37        |
| Alumni Grant .....  | 38        |
| <b>Class of 2023-2024.....</b>  | <b>40</b> |
| MA Programme in Politics and Security.....  | 40        |
| MA Programme in Economic Governance and Development .....   | 41        |

# Welcome Note



Dear Reader,

With great pleasure and enthusiasm, we welcome you to the 13th edition of SalamAlum. As we gather the latest updates and achievements of the OSCE Academy and alumni to share with our ever-growing community of readers, we are thrilled to announce that the OSCE Academy alumni family has expanded to an impressive 619 graduates in February this year.

In the spirit of progress and collaboration, we are pleased to share the significant accomplishments made by the Academy and its alumni community over the year 2023. A major event was the Annual Alumni Conference, which brought together intellectuals and enthusiasts, this year focusing on Comprehensive Security and Sustainable Development. What made this event more special was the joint organization of the conference by the International Department and the Research and Training Unit, which facilitated a dynamic exchange of ideas not only among alumni but also among outside experts coming from different parts of the world. The Joint Expert/Alumni Conference was held on 4-5 November and featured three

thought-provoking panels, exploring the critical issues of gender, youth, and climate change. It was a platform for our alumni to engage deeply with these pressing topics, contributing valuable insights and perspectives.

In line with our commitment to lifelong learning, this year the Academy with the support of the OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek and in cooperation with the Global Campus of Human Rights in Venice, successfully held its Alumni Spring School "Human Security and Good Governance" in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. The School provided a unique opportunity for our alumni to delve into contemporary issues and broaden their intellectual horizons.

This year was also marked by a significant milestone for the OSCE Academy together with the Global Campus - the opening of the third Master's Programme in Human Rights and Sustainability. We are proud to share that 13 new students have joined this groundbreaking Programme, further enriching our academic community and contributing to the discourse on human rights in the Central Asian region.

Also, the number of our graduates receiving the greatest academic and professional opportunities grows every year thanks to the support of our long-time partners and donors. Thus, The Norwegian Institute of International Affairs runs its One-Year-Stay-at-NUPI Fellowship allowing graduates to move forward with their projects, composing and expository abilities and professionalize in advancing their works. The Geneva Centre for Security Policy provided one more alumnus

with the unique opportunity to receive a MAS Scholarship for Central Asia. Our alumnus of 2021, Andrei Shvarev, has started his fellowship at the OSCE PA International Secretariat in the Fall of 2023. This year, four graduates had a chance to gain experience in government agencies through the Academy's Junior Public Officers Programme. The other four graduates were given an opportunity to teach at various universities in the region through the Junior Teaching Fellowship Programme.

Dear readers, as we leaf through the pages of this magazine, we invite you to immerse yourself in the stories of success, innovation, and growth that define the OSCE Academy. Our donors continue supporting the Academy's activities and we hope that our annual progress will further invigorate their confidence and generous investments.

Dear graduates, your Alma Mater is flourishing, and we are eager to celebrate the achievements of our vibrant alumni community.

Thank you for remaining engaged and supportive. Here's to another year of shared accomplishments and continued excellence.

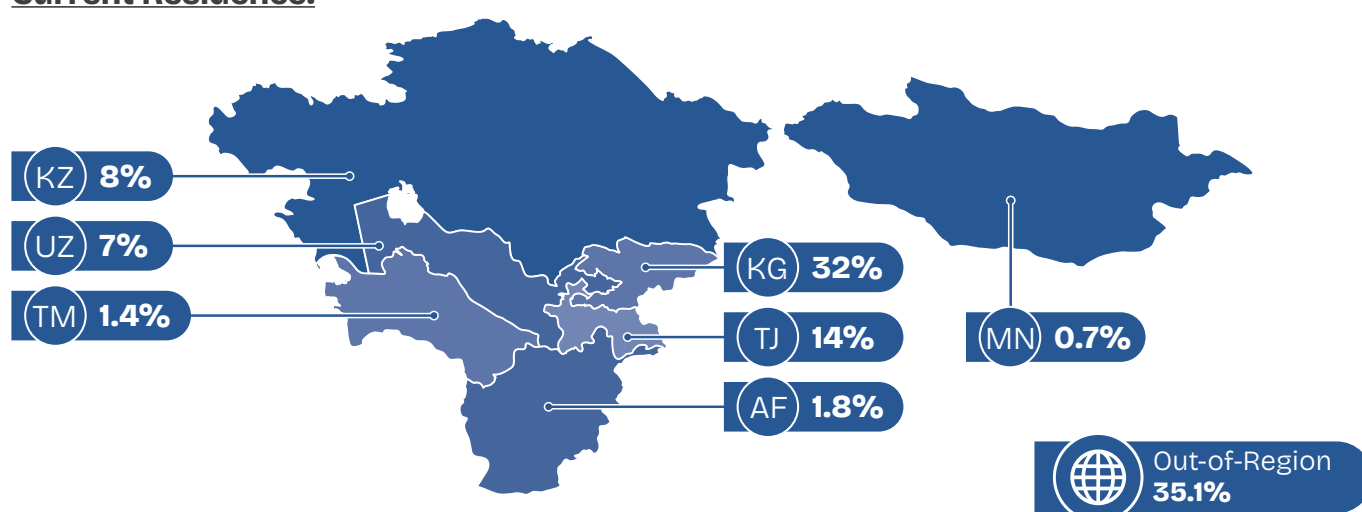
*Our sincere gratitude goes to the OSCE, its participating States and especially to the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI), and the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Finland, Poland, and Switzerland that specifically fund the alumni activities.*

*International Department Team*

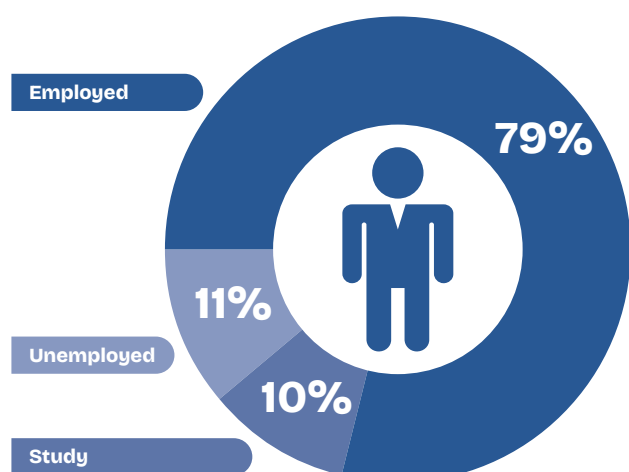
# Alumni Network in Numbers

The OSCE Academy carries out an **Alumni Survey** once a year. It provides information about the current state of MA graduates' careers and professional development and keeps them involved in Alumni Network events.

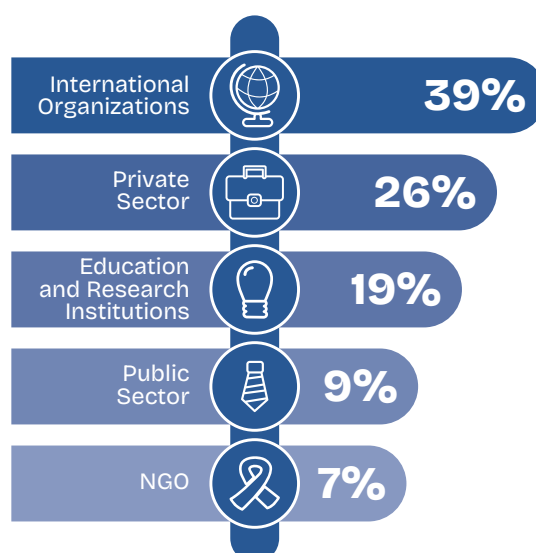
## Current Residence:



## Employment:



## Employment by Sectors:



According to the survey, **almost 73 per cent (54% women, 46% men)** of the Alumni (those who originally come from Central Asia, Afghanistan and Mongolia) live and work in Central Asia, Afghanistan and Mongolia. Of the total number of alumni **64.9 per cent** are residing in the wider Central Asian region. Of those, who are currently out of the region, **7 per cent** are continuing their academic career (including Ph.D. candidates. **30 per cent (51% women, 49 % men)** of the alumni hold senior positions, such as Directors, CEOs, Heads of Departments, Managers/Coordinators and Officers working for Central Asian Governments, International Organizations, education institutions and NGOs. **23 graduates (57% women, 43% men)**, who chose to continue academic development, are currently doing their Ph.Ds.

# Academy's Updates

## New Master of Liberal Arts and Sciences with specialization in Human Rights and Sustainability Programme (MAHRS)



We are thrilled to announce one of the OSCE Academy's most significant initiatives in 2023! This year, the OSCE Academy established a third Master's degree Programme in the field of "Human Rights and Sustainability". MAHRS is designed for young scholars and professionals aiming to study International Human Rights Law, Good Governance and Sustainability Principles, Norms and Standards with a focus on Central Asia. The Programme aims at students with a strong work ethic who wish to broaden their education in the areas of human rights, sustainability, political science, security studies, international relations, conflict prevention, international development studies and good governance. The Programme is co-financed by the European Union and the OSCE Academy in Bishkek and implemented in cooperation with the Global Campus of Human Rights in Venice. The Global Campus, based in Venice, is the

biggest academic network educating the next generation of professionals in the field of Human Rights. It consists of about 100 universities around the world and has regional headquarters in Argentina, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Lebanon, South Africa, and Thailand. MAHRS is designed as a transdisciplinary MA Programme, bridging international law, social sciences, and humanities. It includes internships for students in International Organizations, Think Tanks, and Civil society organizations (CSOs), Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) with a related focus on their work. It aims to train and empower young scholars, professionals and graduate students to work and be active in the spheres of public administration, CSOs, and IGOs. As of September 2023, 13 students have already started their journey in the MAHRS Programme. We wish them good luck with their academic and professional endeavors!



## Student Exchange of 2023

This year the OSCE Academy was pleased to host Antoine Andre, a student from Sciences Po, the Institute of Political Studies in Toulouse, for a four-month research internship starting in late January. During his stay, Antoine supported the research project of Prof. Dr. Anja Mihr, the DAAD Associate Professor at the OSCE Academy, attended several courses of the MA Programme in Politics and Security, and participated in the International Spring School 2023 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

Here Antoine shared with us his experience at the Academy:

*"My 4-month internship at the OSCE Academy provided me with an initial understanding of the socio-political challenges in Central Asia. Through the work, I conducted during my internship with Prof. Dr. Anja Mihr, the courses I attended as part of the Politics and Security Master's Programme, and the regular exchanges with fellow students, I gained a wealth of knowledge. The Academy's environment served as a perfect platform for me to develop an interest in and begin to comprehend the region. I encountered knowledgeable professors, supportive students, and attentive friends. Whether it is for an internship or pursuing an academic programme, I wholeheartedly recommend the OSCE Academy. I would like to express my gratitude to everyone who facilitated my studies in Bishkek and assisted me in my daily life."*



# Alumni and Academy

## Joint Expert / Alumni Conference "Central Asia: Comprehensive Security and Sustainable Development"



Dr. Indira Satarkulova and Ambassador Alexey Rogov

On 4-5 November 2023, a Joint Expert/Alumni Conference on "Central Asia: Comprehensive Security and Sustainable Development" was held at the OSCE Academy. The conference was co-organized by the OSCE Academy and the University of Siena, Italy.

Dr. Indira Satarkulova, Acting Director of the OSCE Academy, opened the event and welcomed the experts, participants, guests and partners of the conference, highlighting the importance of discussing the topics of gender, youth and climate change in the region today and expressing words of gratitude to the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, the Academy's long-time donor, esteemed member of the Board of Trustees and funder of the conference. H.E. Ambassador Alexey Rogov, Head of the OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek, Chair of the Academy's Board of Trustees, recognized the work of the OSCE Academy as an excellent platform for an academic dialogue and educational institution and highlighted the success of its graduates as a measure of the Academy's success.

The first day of the conference focused on gender, youth, and climate change in Central Asia. The keynote speech was delivered by Dr. Aksana Ismailbekova, Postdoctoral research fellow at Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient, Crossroads Asia Department, on the topic of "Daughters as Ojiza: Daughter's Marriage, Security and Care among Uzbeks in Southern Kyrgyzstan." Following the keynote speech, the panel featured the presentations of Murodjon Khalikov, the Academy's alumnus of 2016, Chief Specialist, Department for Strategic Analysis and Development of Social Protection Policy at the National Agency for Social Protection under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan; Zuleikha Makhmudova, Co-founder of FemAgora; Assel Mussagaliyeva-Tang, alumna of 2005, Founder of Edtech; Makhmudjon Utkurov, Project Manager, National Erasmus+ Office in Uzbekistan. Speakers discussed topics such as: climate resilience and adaptive social protection in Uzbekistan, the role of local women peacebuilders in the Ferghana Valley conflict, the digital divide in Central Asia, and gender projects. The panel was moderated by Aichurek Kur-





Participants listen and discuss the presentations

manbekova, the Academy's alumna of 2014, Liaison and Reporting Advisor, United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq. Furthermore, Dimitrios Symeonidis, Head of Unit at the Conference Infrastructure and Innovation at the European Parliament; Kanatbek Abdiev, Program Officer at the PeaceNexus Foundation; Saodat Umarova, Assistant Professor at the University of World Economy and Diplomacy; and Begim Zhanuzakova, Climate Change Programme Coordinator at UNISON GROUP, shared their views on the role of youth civil society and the energy transition in Central Asia, the implementation of peacebuilding projects, foreign trade for sustainable development, youth and global processes. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Erman Akilli, Department of International Relations, Faculty of Economics and Adminis-

trative Sciences at Ankara Haci Bayram Veli University and Chief Editor of the OSCE Academy, moderated this discussion. Kasiet Ysmanova, Director of Central Asia Barometer, presented survey findings conducted by the Central Asia Barometer on opinions on Climate Change and Ecological Issues in Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. Dr. Aijan Sharshenova, a Director at Crossroads Central Asia, moderated a third panel on climate change in Central Asia. Dr. Erman Akilli, Diyorjon Keldiyorov, Chief Specialist at the Department for International Cooperation and Foreign Investment Attraction, and Mira Dzhakshylykova, Sustainability Coordinator at the American University of Central Asia, discussed power struggles on frozen frontiers, the mining sector nexus, and blue paradiplomacy.



Participants present their papers



The Conference participants

At the end of the first day of the Conference, Dr. Indira Satarkulova announced the Alumnus/a of the Year 2023 Award – Nuria Kutnaeva, the Academy’s alumna of 2005. Nuria Kutnaeva’s remarkable achievements and dedication to the Academy have made her one of the most prominent graduates among our alumni community. This year, Nuria reached new milestones in her career by being appointed to the post of Minister of Digital Development of the Kyrgyz Republic.

The programme of the second day included discussions on Central Asia and international stakeholders. Akmaljon Abdullayev, the Academy’s alumnus of 2005, a Ph.D. candidate at the University of World Economy and Diplomacy and Farrukh Khakimov, Head of the Department at Development Strategy Center, along with Ibrahim Mammadov, a Research Fellow at Caucasian Center for International Relations and Strategic Studies (QAFSAM), explored various perspectives on the OSCE Human Dimension, dynamics of regional development, and trilateral platforms in the context of increasing Central Asia-EU trade. Dr. Fabio Indeo, a Researcher at the University of Siena, moderated the discussion.

Within the conference, a round table discussion on “The OSCE and the EU in the Reshaped



Alumna of the Year Award Ceremony

Central Asia Geopolitical Scenario” took place. Dr. Fabio Indeo along with Colin McCullough, Senior Planning and Co-ordination Officer at the OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek, brought up international organizations’ cooperation, with a particular focus on the role of the OSCE and the EU in Central Asia and the current geopolitical developments in the region.

The Conference was generously funded by the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs – the OSCE Academy’s distinguished donor, partner and member of the Academy’s Board of Trustees.

## Alumni Training

### The Role of the Security Sector in Stability and Peace in the Region



From 16 to 21 July 2023, fourteen OSCE Academy students and alumni from Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan came together to learn about contemporary security sector governance and reform (SSG/R) concepts, taking the opportunity to think critically, to use different approaches, and to evaluate “when, where, and why” to apply SSG/R tools in the Central Asian context – including in light of the situation in Afghanistan. The holistic nature of security sector governance and reform (SSG/R), the transformations experienced by different countries, and the efforts still required to further improve security sector governance in Central Asia were discussed at an OSCE workshop, held at the picturesque Issyk-Kul lake.

During the five-day workshop, participants deepened their theoretical and practical knowledge of human security, good governance, and human rights – with a focus on

both people-centred and state-centred security. They also enhanced their knowledge of the links between security and justice as well as of the importance of gender and inclusivity in SSG/R processes. The event provided students and alumni with the opportunity to develop their professional and academic skills, together with their peers.

This summer school workshop was organized jointly by the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre, the OSCE Academy in Bishkek, and the Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF), with the support of the OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek. It was funded by the OSCE Extra-budgetary project: “Support, capacity-building and awareness-raising for Security Sector Governance and Reform within the OSCE: Phase III”, with financial contributions from Germany and Finland as well as in-kind support from DCAF.

## International Spring School on Human Security and Good Governance Conducted in Tashkent

On 16-20 April 2023, the five-day International Spring School on “Human Rights & Good Governance for Security in Central Asia,” organized by the OSCE Academy in Bishkek in co-operation with the OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek and the Global Campus of Human Rights in Venice with the support of the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan, was held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. The school brought together 20 graduates and students of the OSCE Academy and the University of

## 10 Alumni and Academy

World Economy and Diplomacy in Tashkent. The participants representing France, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, discussed such topical issues as: human rights, security and good governance in Central Asia.



**Left to right:** Sergey Sizov, Acting Head of Mission, OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan; Alexander Eliseev, Head of Politico-Military Department, OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek; Prof. Dr. Manfred Nowak, Secretary General of the Global Campus, Prof. Dr. Anja Mihr, one of the Trainers of the Spring School.

During the opening, Prof. Dr. Anja Mihr, DAAD Associate Professor, OSCE Academy in Bishkek & Center on Governance through Human Rights, Berlin and programme Chair of the Spring School, emphasized that “The human rights and good governance principles are mutually reinforcing themselves and fundamental for the security, safety, and the wellbeing of people in Central Asia.”

The Head of the Politico-Military Department of the OSCE Programme Office Alexander Eliseev underlined the importance “to promote youth leaders as change makers

who are capable of incredible things ... and continue being inspired to acquire new knowledge and skills looking for progress, self-empowerment and growth”.

Sergei Sizov, the Acting Head of Mission, OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan, welcomed the participants and experts in Tashkent and highlighted that “human rights and freedoms, democratic values are about respect and acceptance of differing opinions, and the willingness to speak openly and seeking compromise through dialogue...”



Participants of the Spring School

The group of experts from the Global Campus of Human Rights in Venice – Prof. Dr. Manfred Nowak, Secretary General, Prof. Dr. George Ulrich, Academic Director of the Global Campus, and Imke Steinmann, Lecturer at the Global Campus, Nadia Yakhlaf-Lallemand, Head of Human Dimension, OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan, and Dilfuza Kurolova, Human Rights Lawyer and also an alumna of the OSCE Academy, as well as Prof. Dr. Anja Mihr, have covered a range of the UN treaties that were ratified by Central Asian states, International Human Rights Law (IHRL) framework, Good Governance Principles, and Democratic Institution-building for security and securitization in Central Asia, and the OSCE

comprehensive approach to human security. The participants, therefore, first discussed and elaborated to what extent Central Asian countries have contributed and complied with good governance and human rights fulfilment and the challenges these countries face ahead. Secondly, they looked more specifically at how the implementation and application of treaties have improved security and securitization among and within the countries of the region.

*The Organizers express special gratitude to the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan for providing support in the organization of the Spring School in Tashkent.*



Trainers, Participants and Organizers of the Spring School

## Alumni Chapter Meetings

In Spring and Fall 2023, the OSCE Academy organized Alumni chapter meetings in Austria, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.

On 16 April more than 30 alumni gathered in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. The meeting was combined with the official Opening of the Spring School on Human Rights and Good Governance for Security in Central Asia, which took place in Tashkent from 16 to 20 April. This occasion provided an amazing opportunity to bring together alumni residing in Tashkent, participants who came from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and France and experts from the

Global Campus of Human Rights in Venice, the OSCE Academy, the OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek, and the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan.

On 23 of May the Academy's alumni in Astana gathered to meet each other and were joined by Cholpon Osmonalieva and Aigerim Egemberdiyeva from the Graduate Education Department of the OSCE Academy and Dr. Baurzhan Rakhmetov, the Academy's Visiting Lecturer.

On 25 May, 13 alumni currently residing and working in Vienna, Austria met Dr. Indira Satarkulova, Acting Di-

## 12 Alumni and Academy

rector of the OSCE Academy, accompanied by Victoria Orazova, Head of the International Department, and the distinguished guests - Ambassador Alexey Rogov, accompanied by colleagues from the OSCE Programme Office, Kristin Hoeltge and Seraina Peterson from the Conflict Prevention Centre Central Asia Desk, OSCE Secretariat, and Rasmiya Kasimova, Deputy Director for Human Resources, OSCE Secretariat. During the meeting, the alumni were briefed about the latest developments at the OSCE Academy and new activities that were launched, as well as had a chance to meet their fellows from different years and expand their network.

The second Alumni Chapter Meeting in Vienna was held on 14 November. The event brought together 15 alumni and students for a meeting with Dr. Indira Satarkulova, H.E. Ambassador Alexey Rogov, Seraina Peterson, Dr. Indra Overland, Head of the Research Group on Climate and Energy at the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, and Elisabeth Librekt Olsen, Senior Advisor in the Research Group on Climate and Energy at the Norwegian Institute. The Alumni Chapter Meeting served as a platform for alumni from different years and students to network, share experiences, and discuss accomplishments since their time at the OSCE Academy.



Tashkent, Uzbekistan



Astana, Kazakhstan



Vienna, Austria (May)



Vienna, Austria (November)

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# Alumni Achievements

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We are honoured to announce

*Nuria Kutnaeva*

as the Alumna of the Year of 2023.



*"I believe that digitalization of public administration will ensure transparency, reduce corruption and speed up all processes. Our goal is daily assistance to Kyrgyzstanis through digital services."*







Nuria received her Master's degree in the Politics and Security Programme in 2005 and is a graduate from Kyrgyzstan of the first cohort of the OSCE Academy Master's students. Nuria Kutnaeva's remarkable achievements and dedication to the Academy have made her one of the most prominent graduates among our alumni community, and she is an example of that spirit of excellence that we cherish.

This year, Nuria reached new milestones in her career by being appointed to the post of the Kyrgyz Minister of Digital Development. We congratulate Nuria sincerely on behalf of the entire team of the OSCE Academy! Her accomplishments have not only made her a source of pride for the OSCE Academy but also a source of inspiration for our current students and fellow alumni.

Nuria's commitment to her Alma Mater extends far beyond her professional accomplishments. Her active involvement in the Academy's life continues to make a profound impact. For example, at the beginning of this year, being the Director of the State Personal Data Protection Agency at that time, Nuria initiated cooperation between the OSCE Academy and the Agency. On 23 January 2023, the Academy signed an Agreement with the Agency allowing its graduates to intern at the Agency within the Junior Public Officers Programme. Within this Programme, up to two alumni of the Academy from Kyrgyzstan undergo a three-month internship,

gaining work experience and applying their knowledge in practice.

The results of this partnership have been nothing short of exceptional. We are pleased to share that one of our newest graduates, Guldanika Osmonova, had the opportunity to complete this internship and, in turn, shared with her a kind and appreciative review of her experience with the Agency. This is one of the examples of Nuria's invaluable contribution to the professional development of recent graduates of the Academy.

Nuria's inputs are not limited to the above-mentioned contributions either. For example, Nuria has previously conducted trainings for graduates and students of the OSCE Academy on the topic of digitalization.

Nuria's commitment to her Alma Mater serves as an exemplary model of alumni engagement and the potential for our graduates to shape the future. Her achievements inspire our current students and remind us all of the boundless opportunities that await our alumni.

As one of the first and most active graduates of the OSCE Academy, Nuria exemplifies the very essence of our Academy's mission. Her journey from our hallowed halls to the Ministry of Digital Development is a testament to the transformative power of education and the unwavering spirit of our alumni.



Taking the oath before the Jogorku Kenesh of the Kyrgyz Republic

*Congratulations, dear Nuria, on being named the Alumna of the Year.  
Your journey inspires us, and your commitment to the OSCE Academy fills us with pride.  
We look forward to celebrating your achievements and continued contributions to the OSCE Academy family.*

## Alumni Success Stories: Celebrating Academic Excellence

In this edition of our annual alumni magazine, we take immense honor in introducing the remarkable academic journeys of four outstanding graduates who have emerged as shining examples of intellectual professionalism and commitment to knowledge. In these success stories, we witness the diverse paths of our alumni, each contributing to knowledge and progress. As we celebrate these achievements, we invite you to join us in recognizing the resilience, passion, and intellectual energy that define our alumni community:

### Jyldyz Abdylidaeva is an alumna of the 2017, MA Programme in Politics and Security from Kyrgyzstan:

Jyldyz has been chosen as a prestigious CHEVENING Awardee for the 2023-2024 academic year. Currently, Jyldyz is pursuing her second Master's degree in Gender and Development at the University of Sussex, Institute of Development Studies which has been ranked the world's FIRST over the last 7 years:

"My name is Jyldyz Abdylidaeva, and I am a 2017 graduate of the OSCE Academy's MA Programme in Politics and Security. I'd like to thank the OSCE Academy for being an important part of my professional growth and shaping who I am today.

During my maternity leave, and after analyzing existing development tendencies and job market competitiveness, I resolved to apply for a Master's degree and became very eager to join development projects led by international organizations in my country.

I was aiming to have the privilege of being selected for the OSCE Academy's MA Programmes, which, while based in Kyrgyzstan, offer an excellent quality of education and study conditions. When my first attempt was unsuccessful, I was ready to take start a job but not to give up on my dream of applying to the Academy. By happy coincidence, I had joined the Academy's staff by the time I was successfully accepted into the MA in Politics and Security Programme. I recall the Director of the OSCE Academy congratulating me, saying, "We always have people graduating from the Academy and joining our team but this is the first time we have a staff member leaving us to become a student of the Academy."

The 16-month intensive curriculum, diverse student body from various backgrounds, and fascinating teaching staff made my study experience unforgettable. Studying alongside classmates, who were all incredibly intelligent, compassionate, diverse, and like-minded individuals with amazing life experiences of their own, as well as getting chosen for the international internship in Oslo, Norway, made my years at the Academy even more thrilling. My



interest in writing my MA thesis on gender issues was also sparked by my studies at the OSCE Academy. All of these opportunities have made a significant contribution to my personal development and future professional path.

After graduating from the Academy, I worked on a number of development projects with civil society institutions and local governments throughout the country—all with a focus on governance, public service and the objective of furthering female empowerment and gender equality in Kyrgyzstan. Having worked in the field of gender equality for the past five years, I was at a place in my professional life where I felt drawn to pursue additional specialized education in the field of gender and development studies. This led me seeking to undertake a Master's degree in the UK, through the prestigious Chevening Scholarship scheme, in

order to combine my hands-on professional experience on the ground with deeper theoretical knowledge of gender and development studies. My intention was to enhance my capabilities as a gender expert and, most importantly, be able to influence Kyrgyzstan's local and national policies on female empowerment and gender equality.

And today, I can proudly say that I am a 2023-2024 Chevening Scholar, pursuing an MA degree at the best university in the world for development studies. For the seventh consecutive year, the University of Sussex and the Institute for Development Studies were placed #1 in the world for development studies by the QS University Rankings (including 2023), placing Sussex above Harvard and Oxford. Moreover, Gender and Development Studies is one of Sussex's longest-running MA programmes. While sitting in the IDS classrooms listening to outstanding professors, I realize that the story behind this success stems from my initial passionate desire to study at the OSCE Academy in Bishkek, and consequently the Academy will always hold a special place in my heart.

All my knowledge, networks, and further work will be dedicated to ensuring that Kyrgyzstan, as a member of the international community, fulfills its commitments in relation to advancing gender equality and women's empowerment for the sake of the country's prosperity and a better future for all Kyrgyzstanis. I also hope to eventually



transmit my expertise to younger generations of Central Asians eager to make a difference in their communities, through teaching at university level in Kyrgyzstan.”

### Ryan Michael Schweitzer is an alumnus of the 2021, MA Programme in Politics and Security from the USA:

*In 2023, Ryan was accepted into Harvard University for the Master's degree programme in Islamic Studies. At Harvard, Ryan focuses on Islam and Identity in Central Asia, particularly how Islam is shaping modern culture and nationhood in the region. Working on his second Master's degree at Harvard University, Ryan exemplifies the pursuit of scholarly excellence:*



**Q:** Please tell us about the topic of your research and why you decided to choose this particular field of study.

**A:** During my international travels, and also while at home in America, I realized the growing importance of Islam. In my previous experiences in Uzbekistan, during my Fulbright and Master's thesis fieldwork, I became very close to a lot of Uzbek citizens. To each of them, Islam meant something different and was practiced in various ways. This “lived” experience is what ignited my desire to learn more about Islam and its varied practices and applications in social and political contexts. Broadly speaking, in my previous coursework at Columbia University and at the OSCE Academy, religion was never a topic that I fully appreciated or explored. The more I learned about



politics and the ways identities are constructed, I realized I needed to have a solid understanding of religion—in the case of Central Asia, I needed to gain an academic perspective on Islam. Therefore, I applied to Harvard University’s Islamic Studies program. At Harvard, for the next two years, I will study how political and social identities interact with and are impacted by Islam, specifically in Central Asia. While at Harvard, I will not only explore in-depth theological scholarship, I will also advance my local language skills, including Turkish, Turkmen, and Uzbek.

**Q: Did your studies at the Academy play a role in choosing this program?**

A: My time at the OSCE Academy is something I will always cherish, and in my coursework at Harvard, this experience is something I always reflect on. I believe the

**Ahmad Javeed is an alumnus of the 2011, MA Programme in Politics and Security from Afghanistan:**

*Javeed has successfully completed his Ph.D. in Eurasian Studies at Nazarbayev University and got hired by his Alma Mater as a Postdoctoral Fellow. Javeed's journey symbolizes the balanced relationship between academic excellence and professional accomplishment:*

“In 2019, I got admitted to the Ph.D. in Eurasian Studies program at Nazarbayev University in Astana, Kazakhstan. The program was fully funded by the (German) Volkswagen Foundation and co-supervised by Humboldt University in Berlin. During the Ph.D. program, I travelled to Berlin for a three-month fellowship hosted by Humboldt University. There,

OSCE Academy truly helped prepare me for my studies at Harvard because the coursework challenged me to think critically, especially from a non-Western perspective. My advice for other OSCE Academy graduates who may also want to study at Harvard University is to focus on your writing skills and to really find a topic that you are passionate about. One of the most important parts of a Harvard application is the personal essay, which will ask you to identify a particular course of study and WHY the applicant wants to pursue it. This “why” could be for any reason, but it should come from the heart. The best applications are those that have a particular purpose and demonstrate to the admission committee a commitment to rigorously and thoroughly study the proposed topic.

**Q: What are your future plans after receiving your degree from Harvard?**

A: Harvard is a great place to study about Central Asia because of its resources through the Davis Center, a center for Eurasia and Russian studies. In addition, when students want to pursue a topic that is not normally offered at Harvard, like Uzbek, the University strives to make it a possibility. For example, I now get to take one-on-one advanced Uzbek courses. It has been an amazing experience thus far! After leaving Harvard, I plan to pursue diplomatic work with the U.S. Department of State or international affairs work with the U.S. Department of Justice. At the end of the day, I am passionate about helping to advance the rights and protections of at-risk groups around the globe, and I believe by pursuing Islamic studies, I will be more effective at creating localized solutions for complex societal issues.

**Q: What advice would you give to our future graduates and what tips would you give to those who are going to apply to Harvard?**

A: I am always available to help those applying to Harvard or to any American university. I consider my classmates at the OSCE Academy some of the most interesting and talented individuals I have ever met and I know we all have the ability to change our communities.

I carried out a part of my library research. At the same time, I got accepted into George Washington University's Central Asia-Azerbaijan Fellowship program.

During the second half of the Ph.D. program, I travelled to Tajikistan to do archival research for a month and was able to present my research findings at the Central Eurasian Studies Society (CESS) Conference at Indiana University in the USA. I wrote my Ph.D. on the modern history of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Afghanistan. The research also taught me how similar and connected we were and that we need to be critical of ultranationalism and emphasize our shared heritage.

After graduating from the OSCE Academy in 2011, I obtained two Master's degrees; in Human Rights from Leiden University in 2015 and Cultural Anthropology from Utrecht University in 2018. Then, I taught as a tutor at the University of Amsterdam for a semester. Throughout the process, I participated in many activities and conferences hosted by the OSCE Academy in Bishkek. I am very grateful to the OSCE Academy for their constant support of the alumni community. I have always been able to get letters of recommendation and support. My experience of studying at the OSCE Academy was great, and I cherish that memory, the kindness of the OSCE Academy's employees, and the hospitality of Kyrgyzstanis. Central Asia is my home and my soul is at peace in each part of this region."



## 20 Alumni Achievements

### Natalia Zakharchenko is an alumna of the 2012, MA Programme in Politics and Security from Kyrgyzstan:

*Natalia studied accountability in social protection with a focus on Sub-Saharan Africa. She is affiliated with the Law Faculty at Vrije University Amsterdam, and the Institute of Development Research and Development Policy at Ruhr-University Bochum:*

**Q: Please tell us about your dissertation work. Why and how did you come up with the topic?**

A: My dissertation work delves into the critical realm of accountability in human rights, with a specific focus on socio-economic rights and social security. The inception of this research topic was not a result of my independent choice, but rather an engagement with a project designed by my supervisor, Prof. Dr. Markus Kaltenborn. I joined the ADAPTED Doctorate, a consortium involving various European and African universities, development organizations, and think tanks, attracted by the prospect of working on a project that is not only interdisciplinary but also addresses contemporary challenges in the field of human rights. Being part of a collaborative initiative brings about a diversity of perspectives, experiences, and expertise that add depth to the research, making it a comprehensive exploration of accountability issues within the context of human rights. The interdisciplinary approach ensures a holistic understanding of the complexities surrounding accountability, and I am enthusiastic about contributing to the advancement of knowledge in this area.

**Q: What role has the OSCE Academy played in your Ph.D. journey?**

A: The OSCE Academy has played a pivotal role in shaping my Ph.D. journey in multiple ways. The Academy's extensive coverage of diverse topics has significantly broadened my academic horizons, providing me with a versatile skill-set that has proven invaluable in my pursuit of a doctorate. Beyond the academic opportunities, the OSCE Academy has been instrumental in fostering critical thinking skills and promoting independence in my research endeavors. The Academy's approach to education encourages students to view studying as a puzzle directly influencing our lives and the lives of the communities, we live in. This mindset has not only deepened my appreciation for academic inquiry but has also instilled in me a passion for unraveling complex issues. One of the most significant contributions of the OSCE Academy to my Ph.D. journey is the cultivation of lifelong friendships. The bonds formed with fellow students have transcended the academic realm, providing a supportive network that has been crucial in navigating the challenges of doctoral research. Without these friends, the journey would not be as enriching, and their support has been a constant source of inspiration.

**Q: Please share with us some professional tips on applying to a Ph.D. program.**



A: Certainly, applying to a Ph.D. program is a significant undertaking, and I've gathered some professional tips based on my own experience:

1. *Establish Accountability Partnerships:* Seek out like-minded individuals who share your academic aspirations. Having a supportive application buddy, such as my colleague Malika Toqmadi, was invaluable. We kept each other accountable, shared insights, and provided emotional support throughout the application process.

2. *Commit to Each Application:* Treat each application as a unique opportunity and a full-time job. Invest time in researching the programs, understanding the faculty, and tailoring your application to each institution. Attention to detail is crucial, from crafting a compelling statement of purpose to ensuring all documents are well-prepared. Patience is key; allocate time judiciously to avoid rushing through the process.

3. *Diversify Your Applications:* Don't limit yourself to a single application. Cast a wide net and apply to multiple programs that align with your interests. Rejections are part of the process; perseverance is key. I personally applied to around 15 projects in six months, receiving invitations from four and experiencing 11 rejections. This strategy increases your chances of finding the right fit.

4. *Prioritize Your Criteria:* Consider what is most important to you in a Ph.D. program. Whether it's the university's reputation, the specific project, or even the location, identify your priorities. Recognize that this decision will shape the next several years of your life, so choose wisely. Understanding what truly matters to you will guide your choices and lead to a more fulfilling experience.

**Q: What are your aspirations for the future?**

A: Currently, my primary aspiration revolves around the completion and success of my ongoing Ph.D. project, of course. Looking beyond the immediate future, my overarching goal is to continue finding joy and happiness in my work while understanding its broader significance. The pursuit of meaning in what I do is a driving force, and I am open to various avenues through which this aspiration might be realized, be it academia, international organizations, or anything else.

**Q: What would you like to advise our graduating class?**

A: Reflecting on my own journey, if I were to offer advice to the graduating class, my perspective has evolved over the years. A decade ago, I might have emphasized the mantra

of "work hard, play hard." However, with the wisdom gained through experience (read – getting old), my advice now centers on authenticity, passion, and holistic well-being. First and foremost, pursue what you are truly passionate about. Find work that not only aligns with your skills but also brings you genuine joy and satisfaction. The professional journey is a significant part of life, and finding meaning in what you do can make a profound difference. Simultaneously, prioritize your physical and mental health. In the pursuit of your goals, it's crucial to maintain a balance that fosters well-being. Taking care of yourself is not only essential for your personal fulfillment but also enhances your capacity to excel professionally. Building meaningful friendships and networks is another invaluable piece of advice. The relationships you cultivate can provide support, inspiration, and opportunities. Surround yourself with people who uplift and challenge you, creating a strong foundation for personal and professional growth. Remember to maintain a healthy life-work balance. While ambition is commendable, it's equally important to nurture a life outside of work. Cherish moments with family, engage in hobbies, and take time for self-reflection. Life is a balance, and finding harmony between your professional and personal pursuits contributes to a more fulfilling existence. Lastly, savor and appreciate the present moment. Life is a unique and precious gift, and there's no second one. Embrace the journey, celebrate your achievements, and relish the experiences along the way. In the end, it's not just about reaching destinations but enjoying the path you've chosen.

Congratulations on your graduation, and may your future be filled with passion, purpose, and profound happiness!



# Alumni Initiatives

## Alumni Success Stories: Introducing Developments in Lives of Local Communities

In this section of the SalamAlum, we are delighted to share the remarkable contributions of three distinguished graduates who have made meaningful impacts on certain sections of society in their home countries. These motivational stories demonstrate the OSCE Academy's dedication to cherishing people who actively engage in shaping a better world. As we delve into these alumni initiatives, we invite you to join us in celebrating the achievements of our graduates who have not only succeeded in their respective fields but have also taken the responsibility of creating positive change:

### Yermek Abilgazyev is an alumnus of the 2015, MA Programme in Politics and Security from Kazakhstan:

*Our first success story is penned by Yermek Abilgazyev, an esteemed alumnus who, as part of USAID, has dedicated himself to advancing economic development and prosperity in Central Asia. Yermek's journey reflects the spirit of global citizenship and the transformative power of education:*

"As an OSCE Academy alumnus, I am honored to share my journey and accomplishments that have taken me from the hallowed halls of academia to a key role in USAID's Trade Central Asia (TCA) activity. My story is a testament to the transformative power of education, passion, and dedication.

After graduating from the OSCE Academy, I began a professional journey that would lead me to an exciting role at TCA. Here, I was presented with a unique opportunity to make a significant impact on the Central Asian trade landscape through the Trade Promotion Service Providers (TPSP) program.

TPSP was designed as a groundbreaking initiative, similar to the EBRD's BAS program, but with a specific focus on export development in Central Asia. The program was a lifeline for regional companies, providing them with access to key advisory services such as marketing, B2B match-making, and certification preparation (a full list can be found here - <https://catradeforum.org/ru/tpsp-program/>). What made TPSP special was its affordability and convenience – Central Asian companies that wanted to start exporting had to pay only a fraction of the total cost of the consulting services they requested, with USAID's generous support covering the rest. This means that companies do not have to wait for the long reimbursement process.

My journey with TPSP began from the ground up. I researched extensively about similar programs around the world, investigating their methods and analyzing the



necessary forms and processes. With this knowledge, I created key documents for TPSP, including application forms such as the Expression of Interest, which needed to be completed by both exporters/SMEs and consultants. I also drafted a contract initiation form for exporters that included a scope of work for the consultant. The Tripartite Contract, a linchpin of the TPSP, underwent rigorous



review and refinement to ensure that it was legally sound in the diverse Central Asian landscape.

A critical success was the creation of the TPSP website, developed in collaboration with a local IT firm. This online platform became an invaluable resource hub containing comprehensive information on supported consulting services, requirements, and all necessary forms. It was designed with accessibility and transparency in mind, making it user-friendly for potential participants.

To effectively promote TPSP, I visited all Central Asian countries to introduce this transformative support mechanism to local exporters and consultants. TPSP also promoted cross-border linkages between consultants and exporters in various Central Asian countries to promote regional cooperation and trade.

The culmination of these efforts was the successful launch of TPSP, and I had the privilege of overseeing the first contract signing in Kazakhstan. Witnessing the tangible impact of this initiative on Central Asian businesses and consultants was a very gratifying experience.

My journey continues but with a new chapter. I have taken on a new role in a different department and passed the torch of the TPSP to a capable colleague who is committed to its growth and success.

My story, from the OSCE Academy to the TCA, is a testament to the transformative power of education and the ongoing commitment of organizations like the OSCE Academy and USAID to advance economic development and prosperity in Central Asia. I remain very grateful for the opportunities I have been afforded, and I will work to continue to advance the region's development in the years to come."

### **Wasal Naser Faqiryar is an alumnus of the 2020, MA Programme in Politics and Security from Afghanistan:**

*Wasal Naser Faqiryar is an alumnus whose collaborative efforts with a team of OSCE Academy alumni have resulted in a detailed article exploring the fluctuation of education in Afghanistan since 2001. His dedication to illuminating the obstacles and prospects within the education sector serves as a testament to the resilience of our alumni in addressing intricate social issues:*

"In a groundbreaking initiative led by the Rumi Organization for Research, a team of OSCE Academy alumni collaborated to produce a detailed article that delves into the evolving landscape of education in Afghanistan since 2001, extending its insights up to 2023. This timely research comes against the backdrop of the alarming setbacks in the Afghan educational system since the Taliban's return to power. The study stands out for its thorough examination of educational dynamics in Afghanistan, both during the Islamic Republic era and under the renewed rule of the Taliban. It marks the first such investigation posts the collapse of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, focusing particularly on the Taliban's attempts to modify the educational curriculum in their second rule and the potential implications of such changes on nation-building and future Afghan generations.

This research paper navigates through four critical areas to trace and understand the educational journey in Afghanistan from post-2001 to the spring of 2023. It begins by setting the scene with an overview of both formal and informal educational structures within the country. Following this, the paper scrutinizes the educational advancements and hurdles faced during the post-Bonn interim governance and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, right up until the not-so-recent Taliban's return to power. A particularly poignant section of the study is devoted to the education of women and girls under the Tal-



iban's current rule, highlighting the dire consequences of the Taliban's restrictive educational policies. This segment includes vital statistics from the 12th-grade cohort of 2022 and the entire cohort of secondary school girls from 2023, who have been facing educational deprivation.

The final aspect of the research turns its focus to ideological narrowing and the emergence of a new Taliban-driven approach to nation-building, critically analyzing the Taliban's intent to infuse the educational curriculum with their fundamentalist interpretation of Islamic teachings.



Overall, the study provides an overview of education during the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and crucial insights into the prospective nature of a Taliban-led educational framework and its far-reaching consequences, making it an essential read for those interested in the ongoing transformation of Afghanistan's educational landscape and its impact on the country's future.”

The study can be downloaded here:  
<https://rumi.academy/10101010101.pdf>



**Ahmad Javeed is an alumnus of the 2011, MA Programme in Politics and Security from Afghanistan:**

*Lastly, we delve into the inspiring story of Ahmad Javeed, an enterprising alumnus who conceived the idea of an online fellowship to address the educational gaps in Afghanistan. Javeed's initiative seeks to empower youth by providing them with learning opportunities that have become increasingly scarce in the region. Through innovative solutions, Javeed is shaping the educational narrative for a generation of Afghan youth:*

“As someone born, raised and primarily educated in Afghanistan, this was always on my mind to do something for my people. After graduating from the OSCE Academy in 2011, I went back to Afghanistan. There, I joined the German Friedrich Ebert Foundation as a project coordinator and I had around twenty young talents under my traineeship then. The motto of that program stuck with me, which was “Young leaders should serve young losers”. While the word loser has a negative connotation, the idea was that as an educated youth from a war-torn country, one’s primary responsibility is to help other youths who had fewer opportunities. I turned into a passionate blogger, writing on different social and political themes such as justice, discrimination and human rights in years 2013 to

2015. I thought that was the only way to serve marginalized youth groups. During my fieldwork in Hamburg in 2017, the study of Afghanistани diaspora organizations changed my idea of activism and I realized that the best way to serve them is mentoring youth groups and equipping them with tools of critical thinking and writing. I found the Trans-Afghanistan Research and Education Center in 2019 in the Netherlands to channel my efforts through this institute. Due to a shortage of funding, the institute could not flourish instantly and I also began my Ph.D. which reduced my attention to this cause.

The return of the Taliban in 2021 forced me to act differently. Suddenly the entire country was sucked into this world ruled by a close-minded and fanatic tribal group called the Taliban. I believe that generations studying in public schools under the Taliban are in danger of being brainwashed. I came up with the idea of this online fellowship to help youth learn things which are no longer possible to learn in Afghanistan. I mainly target those youngsters who are not familiar with foreign languages and have fewer opportunities to learn. Fellows admitted for the year 2023-24 have access to reading materials and recorded



lectures before weekly seminars. We meet once a week for two to three hours. I listen to them discussing academic texts on history, religion, and culture. I read their papers and gave them one-on-one feedback. For now, I have 25 fellows selected from 49 applicants from across Afghanistan and two fellows from Tajikistan and Iran. The number of female and male students is almost equal. I hope that I can expand this fellowship into an online academy in the future. Of course, it is for free, and it is my way of paying back to my people and country. The idea is to do a similar program for marginalized groups in the region.”



# From Passion to Profession: *Wonderful Jeweler — Malika Juraeva*

Malika Juraeva  
is an alumna  
of the 2016,  
MA Programme  
in Politics and Security  
from Tajikistan

*In this part of the SalamAlum, we bring you a unique and compelling story that is different from the traditional stories of academic achievement. Meet Malika Juraeva, an outstanding alumna of our Academy whose journey is an inspiring testament to the transformative power of pursuing one's passion. The interview with Malika stands out from the rest as she takes us on a mesmerizing journey from amateur to professional master. Malika's story delves through the delicate intricacies of jewelry making, revealing a world where creativity, dedication and craftsmanship converge.*



**Q: Dear Malika, please tell us about yourself and how you came up with the idea to start jewelry-making.**

A: I graduated from the OSCE Academy in 2016 with a focus on Politics and Security. During my studies, I developed a passion for human rights and migration. However, upon graduation, I pursued a career in the humanitarian sector and worked for a few years at the ICRC Mission in Dushanbe, Tajikistan as an Information Management Officer/Administrative Assistant. I reached a point in my work where I felt the need for something more and different, and the stress was high. I decided that starting something new and completely different would be the best course of action. I had a wide range of interests and a particular passion for design and fashion, which allowed me to feel fulfilled and empowered in my pursuits. Being able to create things from scratch and have total independence has always been a priority for me. As it was a completely unknown field for me, I sought out the guidance of Dilmurod Sharipov, a renowned jeweler in Tajikistan, and have spent the last 2.5 years honing my craft in his studio. Thanks to his teachings, I have become skilled in the art of exclusively handcrafted jewelry and now have my own small brand "Ailema Exclusive Jewelry" where customers can always find pieces made out of pure silver and gold.

**Q: Do you have a certain style of designing jewelry?**

A: If you're talking about the style in terms of how it will turn out in the end, then no. I enjoy creating things that are both modern and related to antiques, so I'm up for mixing different cultures and styles. When I'm making jewelry, I consider the individuals who will wear it; I want them to be able to pass it down to their kids and wear it with both national and European attire.

In terms of style, which refers to working practices, my main rule is to never repeat!

Even though some requested it, none of my works were duplicated. One item for one individual alone. While sketches are not used in the creation of 85% of my works, they are usually created immediately after they have been composed using natural stones, gems, cubic zirconia, etc.

**Q: Please tell us about your favorite jewelry experience.**

A: Preparing for the Bukhara Festival was one of the nicest and most unforgettable events I encountered. I worked tirelessly for a few days because I didn't have enough time to finish multiple large projects. I cut the lapis lazuli by hand and worked with a lot of new materials for this project. I was pleased with myself for being able to complete a large set in a day that had been perfectly constructed in weeks. Even though I didn't win anything at the festival, I still gained recognition for these works and first place as an International Designer in a jewelry design competition in South Korea, which taught me the basic principle: your hard work will be rewarded.

**Q: What are your future plans and aspirations?**

A: Naturally, my goal is to get more recognition for my brand both within and outside of Central Asia, so I'm working hard to create, promote, and take part in various events. I've always wanted to create a place where people can come in, wear whatever they want, talk, and have a nice time, but I also know that it will take more time to hire staff and take care of organizational issues and that will cut down the amount of time I can have to create pieces. I also want to stay in the humanitarian field, so I need to strike a compromise. As a result, I'm currently moving slowly in the direction of my objectives. In any case, I would be proud to see as many individuals wearing Ailema's jewelry as possible.



# Alumni Opportunities

## Junior Public Officers (JPO) Programme

*In support of the professional integration of alumni in the public service, starting from 2010 the OSCE Academy has run a Junior Public Officers Programme. This Programme provides an opportunity to the OSCE Academy's graduates from Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan to intern at the Ministry of Economy and Commerce of the Kyrgyz Republic, the National Agency for Investments under the President of the Kyrgyz Republic, the Ministry of Digital Development of the Kyrgyz Republic, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan.*

*In 2023 overall four alumni conducted their internships in Kyrgyzstan:*

### **Guldanika Osmonova, an alumna of 2023 from Kyrgyzstan. Ministry of Digital Development of the Kyrgyz Republic**



"This internship served as a turning point for my growth, precisely because I was able to overcome the difficulties that arose along the way. Many insights also came to me during the internship. Let's start with the positive aspects. I enjoyed working with the team that I had the opportunity to collaborate with. I witnessed how an organization with a small workforce can accomplish extensive work through clear leadership, professionalism, and internal cohesion among individuals. During my internship, I was able to determine my future life plans. I realized that engaging in purely routine and technical work quickly leads to burnout, and it is important for me to see how the steps I take impact society and how my actions contribute on a global scale. Overall, I am grateful to the Agency and its employees and I wish them nothing but the best and continued success."

**Aidanek Dushobai kyzy, an alumna of 2021 from Kyrgyzstan.  
National Agency for Investments under the President of the Kyrgyz Republic**

"Thanks to the JPO Programme, I had a chance to be a part of the Investment Attraction team in the National Investment Agency under the President of the Kyrgyz Republic. Throughout my internship, I had opportunities to assist in organizing business forums and meetings, to improve my analytical skills, and to gain expertise in corresponding with other government bodies. Apart from experience, gained during this internship, I also met wonderful people, and real professionals, who are passionate about their work. I once again thank the OSCE Academy for providing such great opportunities for their alumni."



**Nadezhda Tatkalo, an alumna of 2019 from Kyrgyzstan.  
Ministry of Economy and Commerce of the Kyrgyz Republic**



"The internship at the Ministry of Economy and Commerce of the Kyrgyz Republic was an amazing experience for me providing an opportunity to be introduced to the system of the state agency's functioning from the inside. On the one hand, I have learnt the intricacies of decision-making, on the other hand, I have expanded my knowledge in the sphere of trade and economic relations of the Kyrgyz Republic with different states of near and far abroad from the perspective of practical cooperation, including harmonization of documents prepared for signing. Altogether, the gained knowledge thus has changed my approach to assessing the functional effectiveness of state agencies in general in terms of importance to consider not only its final results which can be rather modest from the standpoint of socio-economic impacts and effect on the state but also the process of overcoming all external and internal coordination procedures, which ultimately represents a great breakthrough."

## 30 Alumni Opportunities

Asel Kuvatova, an alumna of 2020 from Kyrgyzstan.

National Agency for Investments under the President of the Kyrgyz Republic



"Through the JPO Programme, I had the opportunity to undergo an internship at the National Investment Agency under the President of the Kyrgyz Republic. During my internship, I gained an in-depth understanding of the principles of work and the structure of government agencies in Kyrgyzstan, as well as practical experience in the area of regional development and export promotion by the government. The internship reinforced the knowledge gained during my studies at the OSCE Academy in Bishkek."

## Junior Teaching Fellowship (JTF) Programme

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

*"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 alumni network by giving them the opportunity to become the agents of change in their communities.*

*Four OSCE Academy alumni have successfully started the JTF Programme in Fall 2023. Below you can read a bit about their current programme experience:*

### Akmaljon Abdullayev

*Akmaljon Abdullayev is an alumnus of 2005, MA Programme in Politics and Security from Uzbekistan. Akmaljon is teaching the 'Theory of International Relations' course at the University of World Economy and Diplomacy, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.*

*"The JTF Programme of the OSCE Academy in Bishkek has further strengthened my commitment to teaching at the University of World Economy and Diplomacy (UWED). The JTF Programme deepened my engagement with students and fostered*





the knowledge obtained from the Academy within the framework of the class Theory of International Relations. The OSCE Academy has equipped me with deep theoretical knowledge back in 2004-2005. We had an interdisciplinary curriculum in areas of politics, comprehensive security, and international relations based on international standards of teaching. The Programme enabled me to apply major theories and concepts of political science, international relations, and security studies that have been very useful while teaching at the UWED. While studying at the Academy I didn't realize that the Programme was aimed to expand my professional opportunities by improving my competency necessary for my future career. Today, I have been using skills and competencies while teaching students in Uzbekistan. Particularly, my knowledge and skills obtained from the joint training of the Academy and the Austrian Study Center for Peace and Conflict Resolu-

tion have been critical during the seminars of the module entitled "War Theory and Specifics of Conflicts in World Politics". Together with students of the UWED, we have attempted to theoretically transform current and emerging conflicts in Central Asia. Students have been exposed to Johan Galtung's theory of Conflict Transformation and have now a better understanding of concepts such as Human Basic Needs, promoting peace, and conflict resolution. We had role plays during seminars and groups implemented theory into action by facilitating informal dialogue processes, providing consultations for conflict parties, supporting official peace negotiation processes, as well as engaging in direct mediation with conflict parties. Indeed, the JTF Programme of the OSCE AiB has been an excellent opportunity for me and supported my ambition of furthering the combination of academia and project implementation in Uzbekistan."

## Esentur Bektursun uulu

*Esentur Bektursun uulu is an alumnus of the 2023, MA Programme in Politics and Security from Kyrgyzstan. Esentur is teaching the 'International Negotiations and Commercial Diplomacy' course at the International University of Kyrgyzstan in Bishkek.*

"Starting my fellowship in the JTF Programme became an immensely rewarding chapter in my life.

Teaching the course "Commercial Diplomacy", I had the unique chance to guide students through the complex world where business meets government policy. We explored how countries negotiate trade and how these agreements affect people's lives and the economy. Our classroom became a dynamic place where students stepped into the shoes of negotiators and policymakers, debating and crafting strategies that they might one day use to shape the future.

Beyond academic enrichment, this Programme allowed me to refine my skills in teaching and leadership. Each lecture was not just a session of knowledge dissemination but an exercise in effective communication, adaptability, and mentorship. The ex-



perience has improved my ability to simplify complex concepts and foster an inclusive environment where every student's voice can be heard.

A significant aspect of my fellowship was the insight gained into the lives of youth. Learning about their challenges and ambitions brought richness to our conversations, underscoring the notion that education is deeply rooted in the exchange of ideas and collective experiences. Additionally, observing the educational processes at the state university provided a fascinating perspective on the current educational system. Finally, the gratifying moments often occurred during informal interactions with students after class, where discussions continued and bonds were strengthened.

I am profoundly grateful to the OSCE Academy for entrusting me with this role and for fostering an environment where both teacher and student growth is paramount. The unwavering support from the Academy has been pivotal in my personal and professional growth."

### Mohammad Tamim Siam



*Mohammad Tamim Siam is an alumnus of the 2020, MA Programme in Economic Governance and Development from Afghanistan. Mohammad is teaching the 'Microeconomics' course at the Kyrgyz Economic University, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.*

“The JTF Programme is a prestigious one-semester fellowship that offers recent graduates the chance to teach undergraduate courses and engage in research at a renowned university in Central Asia. I experienced great excitement upon being admitted into the JTF Programme. I have been tasked with instructing Microeconomics at the Kyrgyz Economic University, which is regarded as one of the premier universities in Kyrgyzstan. Initially, I experienced anxiety, but I promptly recognized that I possessed a substantial amount of knowledge and skills to impart to my students. I have strong enthusiasm for microeconomics and am keen to impart my expertise to others.

I rapidly discovered that teaching encompasses more than simply delivering lessons. Additionally, it involves fostering connections with students and facil-

itating their acquisition of knowledge and personal development. I dedicated numerous hours outside of class engaging in individualized sessions with students to provide assistance with their assignments and address any inquiries they had. The experience I had with JTF was quite gratifying. I thoroughly enjoyed instructing my students, and I was astounded by their intellect and commitment. I gained substantial knowledge from my peers at Kyrgyz Economic University. The lecturers were highly experienced and knowledgeable, consistently offering their assistance and providing valuable feedback on my teaching.

The experience I gained from participating in the JTF has had a significant influence on my future professional trajectory. This opportunity has allowed me to get significant teaching experience, carry out research, and establish connections with other experts in my field. Additionally, it has facilitated the cultivation of the necessary abilities and self-assurance required for me to excel as a professor. I appreciate the chance to have taken part in the JTF Programme. It has served as a crucial foundation for a prosperous career in academia.”

### Zhannat Kozhomgeldieva

*Zhannat Kozhomgeldieva is an alumna of the 2020, MA Programme in Economic Governance and Development from Kyrgyzstan. Zhannat is teaching the 'Regional Economics of Central Asia and Regulation of the Energy Sector' course at the Kyrgyz National University, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.*

“My name is Zhannat Kozhomgeldieva. I am a proud alumna of the OSCE Academy, Economic Governance and Development Programme. This year, I was the finalist of the JTF Programme and had an opportunity to teach regional economics to the students of the Kyrgyz National Uni-



versity, International Relations Department. I have always been passionate about obtaining teaching experience. The JTF Programme has given me a great opportunity to share my knowledge and gain experience. You learn things from a new perspective, and teaching significantly increases your knowledge in the field you are teaching.

My responsibilities include creating curriculum, delivering lectures, conducting seminars and providing academic support to the students. I teach 6 groups, each of which has 27-30 students. Sometimes it gets challenging to deliver lectures to 3 groups at once, however manageable. Sharing knowledge and concepts with the students and observing the outcomes is what enhances the job's allure.

I consistently endeavour to instill the cultivation of critical thinking in my students. I was always passionate

about making the learning process engaging and relatable. During my lectures, students are not merely passive recipients of information; rather, the classes are invariably conducted in an interactive manner. We consistently engage in active dialogue related to regional economics.

In conclusion, my time as a Junior Teaching Fellow at the Kyrgyz National University served as a pivotal moment in my career. It allowed me to blend my passion for teaching, research, and international relations. My story is a testament to the invaluable experience and great opportunities provided by the OSCE Academy.

I would like to express my gratitude to the Academy of providing such an opportunity that allowed me to impart knowledge, share my insights, and contribute to the academic growth of the students."

## One-Year-Stay at NUPI Fellowship

*In 2023 two more alumni had a chance to participate in the fellowship offered by the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI): Gavkharkhon Mamadzhanova, alumna of 2021 of the MA Programme in Economic Governance and Development and Dastan Bekmuratov, alumnus of 2023 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 Gavkharkhon and Dastan describe their experience at NUPI.*



Alumni and Students at NUPI together with H.E. Ambassador John Mikal Kvistad, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Norway to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan



Alumni and Students together with the Dr. Helge Blakkisrud

### Gavkharkhon Mamadzhanova

“I discovered the One-Year-Stay at NUPI fellowship during my studies at the OSCE Academy. However, my deep involvement in energy-related research has taken root during my internship at the International Tax and Investment Center in Washington D.C., specifically within the Energy, Growth, and Security Program. My profound interest in this field compelled me to apply for the NUPI fellowship, aiming to amplify my research skills and broaden my understanding of the energy sector.

My year-long tenure at NUPI exceeded my expectations. I was fortunate to witness the post-COVID return to normal practice, enabling me to attend numerous in-person seminars and workshops, led by eminent scholars at NUPI and beyond. This period also facilitated networking opportunities and enduring connec-



tions. Additionally, alongside fellow NUPI colleagues, I contributed to the IRENA report on "Geopolitics of the Energy Transition: Critical Materials" and engaged in other IRENA projects that are to be published soon.

As a fellow, I was also given a unique opportunity to complete an online course on Data Analysis for Social Scientists from MIT, a valuable experience that enhanced my data analysis skills and provided insights into various econometric models' implications for addressing prevalent social issues. Esteemed economists like Esther Duflo (2019 Nobel Prize winner in Economics) and Sara Fisher Ellison guided this learning journey.

Moreover, I was selected to participate in the 2023 Global Village on the Move leadership program, organized by Lehigh University, Iacocca Institute, and the American Councils for International Education. This immersive experience involved collaborating virtually and later in person with young leaders worldwide, focusing on Sustainable Development Goals. It was an ideal platform to exchange knowledge and solutions for global climate-related challenges.

The One-Year-Stay at NUPI fellowship extends beyond professional pursuits, offering an opportunity to embrace the Norwegian culture, traditions, and explore the breathtaking natural beauty of the country. My time

here provided opportunities to explore Norwegian cities like Bergen, Flåm, and Arendal, and indulge in stunning fjord cruises through Sognefjord and Aurlandsfjord. Describing the beauty of Norwegian nature is challenging; it's an experience that transcends words, demanding personal immersion.

In conclusion, my fellowship at the NUPI has been an unforgettable research-intensive experience under the guidance of field experts that significantly contributed to my academic as well as career pursuits. The success of my fellowship is owed to the immense support and guidance of our supervisor, Dr. Indra Øverland, and the Senior Researchers of the Climate and Energy group members: Dr. Roman Vakulchuk, Dr. Ida Dokk Smith, Dr. Tatjana Stanekovic, and Dr. Kacper Szulecki. Furthermore, I express my heartfelt appreciation to Elisabeth Librekt Olsen, Senior Advisor at NUPI, for her unwavering support throughout the Programme, especially in handling documents, navigating visa procedures, and providing overall care. Lastly, I am sincerely grateful to Dastan Bekmuratov for his friendship and support throughout the year.”

## Dastan Bekmuratov



Spending a two-month internship at NUPI helped me to successfully complete my MA thesis, providing me with a great working environment surrounded by experienced researchers of the Climate and Energy research group. After such positive impressions, I wanted to prolong my stay at this institution, and this fellowship Programme was my next step.

My year-long stay as a visiting research fellow exceeded all my expectations. The projects we worked on are relevant and made me work on them joyfully and enthusiastically. I was able to contribute to the IRENA report on "Geopolitics of the Energy Transition: Critical Materials," which was published in 2023. Moreover, I participated in organizing a study tour for a high-profile delegation from the ASEAN region. During this week-long tour, I visited renewable energy facilities such as wind farms, hydropower stations, and carbon capture and storage in western Norway. This tour enriched my theoretical knowledge with practical experience.

Another opportunity at NUPI is that you have enough time for self-development and personal interests. I participated in a summer school on "Energy Technology, Policy and Politics" jointly organized by the Energy Science Center and the Institute of Science, Technology and Policy of ETH Zurich in Switzerland. All expenses were covered by NUPI.

Thanks to my colleagues, my fellowship has been very productive, and I gained priceless experience in conducting academic research. Especially, I would like to thank our supervisor, Dr. Indra Øverland, for his guidance and sincere support at work and in my adaptation to local life. Special thanks to Elisabeth Librekt Olsen, Senior Advisor at NUPI, whose administrative support was very helpful. Finally, I am sincerely grateful to Gavkharkhon Mamadzhanova for her friendship and support throughout the year and to the OSCE Academy for this great opportunity.”

## MAS at the Geneva Centre for Security Policy

Every year one of the graduates of the OSCE Academy receives a European Scholarship for Central Asia to study at the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP) and the Global Studies Institute (GSI) of the University of Geneva. In 2023 Sherzod Shamiev, alumnus of 2019 of the MA Programme in Politics and Security was accepted to enhance his knowledge in security studies.



“The Master of Advanced Studies in International Security at the GCSP and the GSI of Geneva University is truly a transformative experience for me. The Programme provides a comprehensive understanding of theoretical underpinnings, and current global trends, and serves as a laboratory for experimentation, and self-reflection on your previous experience. It is not only an academic pursuit but also practically oriented sessions and field visits with a focus on leadership development, and various analytical tools that can be used in international security policy. Particularly, I have been building my capacity in technical and adaptive approaches, which widened my toolkit to generate innovative ideas and policy responses. Having several years of experience is very important in order to fully grasp and reflect on previous works and decisions.

Being in Geneva, a hub of international diplomacy offers many opportunities to join program-related and external events, which can help you build your international network. The multicultural setting of the course, with professionals from 21 countries in the class exposes you to many different perspectives and experiences. It is a great opportunity to build friendships and connections over the 8 months. This environment has allowed me to consider other perspectives, and to understand the evolving nature of security challenges better.

I am grateful to the OSCE Academy and the GCSP for this amazing opportunity to learn and grow. A degree from the OSCE Academy has jumpstarted my career, and I am sure that the experience received at the GCSP will further propel my career and contribute to positive impact and decisions.”

## Research Fellowship at the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly International Secretariat

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly International Secretariat regularly engages eight or nine graduate students of political science, law and international relations from universities in OSCE participating states as Research Fellows. Starting from 2017, one position of a Research Fellow every year is granted to the OSCE Academy graduates (under the MoU signed on 10 August 2016). This year Andrei Shvarev, our alumnus of 2021 of the MA Programme in Politics and Security, had the privilege to start his fellowship at the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly International Secretariat. Andrei Shvarev joined the OSCE PA in Copenhagen as a Research Assistant in October 2023 to diversify his international experience following the successful 1.5-year term with the Central Asia Desk and Security Sector Governance project at the OSCE Secretariat’s Conflict Prevention Centre in Vienna. In his new role, Andrei is conducting background research and policy analysis on topics relevant to the activities of the OSCE PA, supporting the work of Special Representatives on Central Asia, Migration, and Mediterranean Affairs and the relevant Committees, drafting briefing reports, speeches, statements, and talking points, and supporting the election observation missions, official visits, meetings, and special projects carried out by the International Secretariat.

“As I am relatively new to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, it is rather premature to speak of the ‘success story’ per se. However, I am happy to share some of my enriching experiences with the OSCE Secretariat. During my time at the Conflict Prevention Centre (Policy Support Service), I was an integral part of the response teams to several crises that evolved in the region of my responsibility producing comprehensive reports that included situation analysis and pol-



icy advice for OSCE senior management, including the Secretary General and the Chairperson-in-Office, and engaged daily with the delegations of the respective countries. Part of the OSCE’s response framework to the developments in Afghanistan since August 2021 is a ‘Response to the situation in Afghanistan’ Repository programme, which consists of 28 projects, mostly placed within the Central Asian resilience-building context and falling under a similar mandate. I was directly involved in the preparation and administrative set-up of this repository and coordinated its work.

## 38 Alumni Opportunities

In addition to my duties, I developed two projects in close cooperation with the Programmatic Unit and CPC management. One of the most memorable and at the same time intense experiences happened to me in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, where I supported the organization of a high-level international conference on border security and counter-terrorism, a joint (and largely successful!) effort by the Tajik government, the OSCE, the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism & the European Union. I am truly privileged to have been part of several amazing teams within the Organisation, well equipped with the knowledge obtained at the OSCE Academy and during my past appointments with the Russian Red Cross Society, the Ministry of Agriculture of Russian Federation, the International Political Science Association, and others.”

### Alumni Grant

*The OSCE Academy Alumni Network, with the support of the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, offers travel grants to qualified OSCE Academy alumni to support their professional and academic development. This year Mirgül Ishenbek kyzy received an Alumni Travel Grant to fulfil her academic and professional accomplishments.*

#### **Mirgül Ishenbek kyzy is an alumna of 2023, MA Programme in Politics and Security from Kyrgyzstan.**

“In June 2023, with the support of the OSCE Academy in Bishkek I had the incredible opportunity to attend the 17th Summer School on Migrants, Human Rights, and Democracy organized by the University of Palermo, Italy. The provided grant covered the costs of my flight, which was a significant and invaluable support that made this enriching experience possible.

The Summer School’s enriching program aimed to delve into the lives of displaced individuals in the Euro-Mediterranean area, with a special focus on refugees and forced migrants at the EU borders, as well as the challenges of human trafficking and modern slavery. The Summer School’s thematic focus directly aligned with my responsibilities as an employee of a Child Protection NGO. The lectures and discussions on vulnerability assessment of refugees and forced migrants provided me with an in-depth understanding of the factors that make certain populations, including children, more vulnerable during migration. This knowledge will undoubtedly enhance my ability to design targeted and effective child protection programs, ensuring the safety and well-being of migrant children in need.

The Summer School incorporated real-life experiences shared by refugees, displaced individuals, and NGO representatives. The unaccompanied minors’ forced migration stories had a profound impact on me. I am well aware of the challenges and vulnerabilities faced by minors in forced migration situations. However, hearing these stories directly from the affected minors provided a stark reminder of the harsh realities they endure. The courage and resilience displayed by these young individuals in the face of adversity left a lasting impression on me and reinforced the urgency of our work to protect and support such vulnerable populations. These stories will undoubt-





edly shape my approach to supporting and advocating for the rights of migrant children, as I now have a deeper appreciation for the complexities they endure.

One of the most rewarding aspects of the Summer School was the opportunity to create valuable connections with other participants. Of particular significance was the chance to network with representatives from migration authorities and NGOs in Dubai, a region with a significant number of labor migrants from Kyrgyzstan. Building these connections holds the potential for future collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and joint initiatives to better support Kyrgyz migrant young adults in Dubai.

In addition to the enriching academic experiences, the Summer School provided me with the opportunity to embark on my first-ever trip to Italy. The Summer School

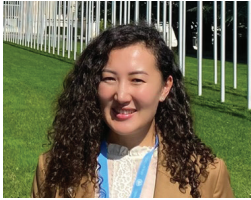
was held in Palermo, Sicily, and I thoroughly enjoyed my time in this beautiful and culturally rich city. The evenings in Palermo were filled with lively conversations and cultural exchanges, and I cherished the chance to learn from others' perspectives and share my own insights as an NGO employee and an early career scholar.

The experience of attending the Summer School in Palermo has left a lasting impression on me, not only professionally but personally as well. The warmth and hospitality of the University of Palermo personnel and the people of Sicily as a whole, along with the rich cultural tapestry, made my first trip to Italy truly unforgettable. I am immensely grateful to the OSCE Academy and the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs for making this experience possible and providing me with the chance to explore a new country while gaining valuable knowledge in my field."



# Class of 2022-2024

## MA Programme in Politics and Security



**Aizhamal  
Dzhanibekova**

Kyrgyzstan



**Almazbek  
Duishebaev**

Kyrgyzstan



**Anis  
Alibakhshov**

Tajikistan



**Baurzhan  
Kuangyshev**

Kazakhstan



**Bilguun  
Terbish**

Mongolia



**Burenjargal  
Nyamaa**

Mongolia



**Cholpon  
Isaeva**

Kyrgyzstan



**Ikramidin  
Zhakypaliev**

Kyrgyzstan



**Jamshid  
Aramov**

Uzbekistan



**Katsiaryna  
Vinnikava**

Belarus



**Khumorbibi  
Valdoshova**

Tajikistan



**Latofat  
Garibshozoda**

Tajikistan



**Madzhid  
Khamidov**

Tajikistan



**Miras  
Makitov**

Kazakhstan



**Nizoramo  
Pallaeva**

Tajikistan



**Olimbek  
Azimbekov**

Uzbekistan



**Seitek  
Arkabaev**

Kyrgyzstan



**Sergey  
Tyan**

Kazakhstan



**Yasin  
Khamosh**

Afghanistan



**Yevgeniy  
Lapin**

Russia



**Zokhidzhon  
Madrakhimov**

Kyrgyzstan

## MA Programme in Economic Governance and Development



**Abbosbek  
Kochkarov**  
Kyrgyzstan



**Altynai  
Tolenova**  
Kyrgyzstan



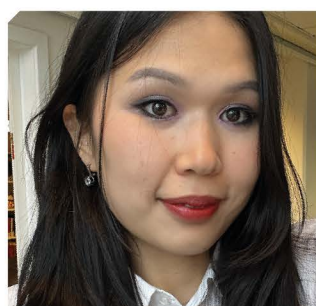
**Baqir  
Khawari**  
Afghanistan



**Bekzat  
Toktobekov**  
Kyrgyzstan



**Bermet  
Dzhunusalieva**  
Kyrgyzstan



**Bibigul  
Arzybaeva**  
Kyrgyzstan



**Ferdows  
Hamidi**  
Afghanistan



**Gulnoza  
Nematova**  
Tajikistan



**Khurshid  
Khalimov**  
Uzbekistan



**Madina  
Nazaralieva**  
Tajikistan



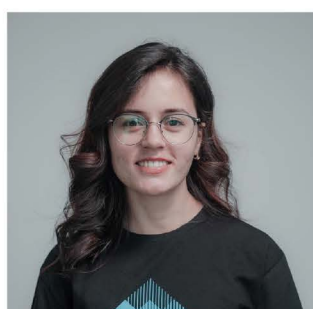
**Mahtob  
Gulayozova**  
Tajikistan



**Nomin  
Batsukh**  
Mongolia



**Nurzhan  
Baetova**  
Kyrgyzstan



**Yosamin  
Maramova**  
Tajikistan



**Zharkynai  
Sazbakova**  
Kyrgyzstan

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