

# SalamAlum

osce ACADEMY  
in Bishkek

Issue 9 | Winter 2019

OSCE ACADEMY ALUMNI MAGAZINE

*“Education is able to change lives and I believe that development of the country depends **on the education of the nation.**”*

- Nargiza Zhakypova, alumna of 2014 pg. 10



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4th Alumni Reunion, pg. 6

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Distinguished Reader,

Welcome to SalamAlum, an annual magazine about the Alumni Network of the OSCE Academy. This is already the 9th issue of SalamAlum where we share success stories of our graduates, update about the Academy’s life and new developments within the Alumni Network, which has grown to over 500 people in 2019.

First and foremost, this year was marked by the 4th Alumni Reunion, which gathered more

than 100 alumni from 9 countries, Academy’s donors, partners and experts in different fields. Two days of networking, thematic training and teambuilding linked alumni into a stronger community that believes in the power of education and shares common values. In addition, Alumni chapter meetings took place in Dushanbe, Nur-Sultan and Tashkent, bringing together graduates living in the same city, with participation of the Academy’s teaching and research faculty members.

The Academy’s graduates continue benefit from exclusive opportunities that are available thanks to our long-time partners and donors. The Norwegian Institute of International Affairs runs its One-Year Stay at NUPI Fellowship and Research Mentoring programme allowing graduates to improve their research, writing and analytical skills and professionalise in publishing and promoting their works. The Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP) provided one more alumna with the unique opportunity to receive a MAS Scholarship for Central Asia. In November the Academy prolonged its Agreement with the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and new alumna-candidate, Anastasia Griadsova, is starting her fellowship at the OSCE PA International Secretariat in the beginning of 2020. The Junior Public Officers Programme keeps attracting recent graduates and with great pleasure we witness the growing interest from the state structures we cooperate with under this programme.

There are new developments within the Academy’s activities as well. With NUPI’s support the Academy provides Research Scholarships in order to increase the research capacity and research output. The year of 2019 was also marked by the engagement of the OSCE Academy in Erasmus+ and the implementation of its first student mobility project.

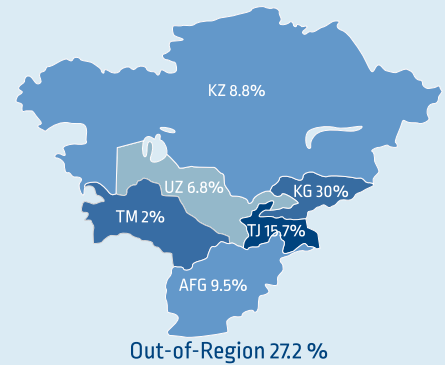
Everything mentioned above and more in this issue of SalamAlum. Enjoy your reading!

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

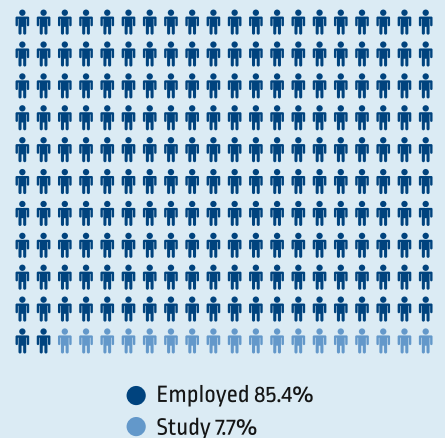
Victoria Orazova,  
Head of International Office

## Alumni Network in Numbers

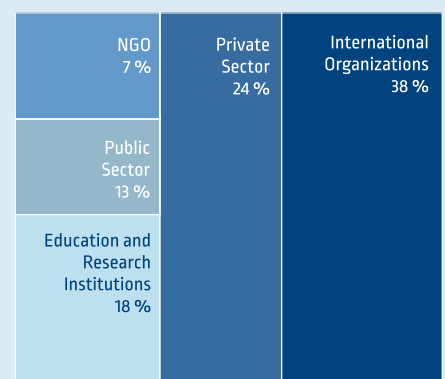
### Geography



### Employment



### Employment by Sector



The data provided illustrates the general statistics, which is based on the results of the Alumni Survey 2019 and contains information about 427 alumni.

## ACADEMY'S UPDATES

### Research

The OSCE Academy seeks continuously to strengthen its research capacity. With support provided by the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) the Academy launched its Research Scholarships programme. The aim of the Research Scholarships is to help increase the research capacity and output of the OSCE Academy. To this end the Scholarship holder is asked to propose a topic in line with the overall mission in academia and education that guide the Academy's various activities. It is furthermore desired that the Scholarship holder takes active part in ongoing projects and contribute to events at the Academy if they fall in line with the Scholarship holder's area of expertise. Currently four researchers are holders of this scholarship:



#### Dr. Chiara Pierobon

**Research Title:** Preventing Violent Extremism through Civil Society: the Role of the International Donor Community in Kyrgyzstan

Post-Doc Researcher Dr. Chiara Pierobon brings more than 10 years of research experience in the field of civil society and social movements, youth studies, and radicalization and violent extremism in Europe, Russia and Central Asia. Her PhD dissertation was explicitly focused on the instrumental use of music and social media on behalf of youth political organizations in Russia as tools to recruit new members, foster community cohesion and construct collective identities based on national and ethnic traits.

As senior researcher, she has collected extensive fieldwork experience in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, where she has investigated the engagement of the European Union (EU) with civil society. In particular, in the past years, she has conducted micro-level analyses on the work of the EU in preventing violent extremism through the "Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace" (IcSP) and in tackling push-factors of radicalization through the "European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights" (EIDHR) and the thematic program "Non-State Actors and Local Authorities in Development" (NSA/LA).



#### Dr. Asel Doolotkeldieva

**Research Topic:** Extraction for Export: Economic Model of Gold Mining and its Contestations in Kyrgyzstan

Post-Doc Researcher Dr. Asel Doolotkeldieva is an Assistant Professor at the American University in Central Asia. She obtained her PhD at the University of Exeter (UK). Her doctoral research focused on the study of political change from below: protest politics in Kyrgyzstan. Asel holds her Master's degree from Sciences Po Paris (France). Her Master thesis was focused on the study of labor migration of Central Asians in Russia.

Asel has published on the topics of social mobilization, religiosity and gender, democratization and institution-building, authoritarianism and rent-seeking of natural resources, and migration.



**Yau Tsz Yan**

**Research Topic:** Chinese Perspective of the Belt and Road Initiative in Central Asia

Junior Researcher Yau Tsz Yan is a policy researcher on China in Central Asia affairs and a graduate from the University of Hong Kong. Her latest paper with the Central Asian Policy Brief, “Making Sense of the Belt and Road Initiative in Central Asia”, proposed Chinese Foreign Policy as a necessary theoretical ground of understanding. Working to provide information and make Chinese activities in Central Asia transparent, Ms Yau is currently in the process of documenting all Belt and Road projects in Central Asia, in order to understand in what ways the Initiative generates competition and cooperation in the region. She also actively writes for media outlets such as the Diplomat to update on China in Central Asian affairs.

Prior to the Central Asian focus, Ms Yau was a Research Assistant at the Belt and Road Strategic Research Center in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia where she worked with Belt and Road actors and on issues in the South East Asian region.



**Nazik Mamedova**

**Research Topic:** Girls in STEM: Policy and Support, Mass Media Portrayal, Audience Attitudes and Mindset Change in Kyrgyzstan

Junior Researcher Nazik Mamedova has background in mass communication and political studies. She has her MA in Politics and Security at the OSCE Academy. Nazik worked at international organisations such as GIZ and OSCE and for consulting companies in Central Asia and Europe. Her research interests focus on media studies, environment, public health and education.

Her current research focuses on mass media coverage of women, working in STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) and advocacy efforts in this field.

**CADGAT Data Reviews**

In 2019 the Central Asia Data-Gathering and Analysis Team (CADGAT) produced and published 12 Data Reviews on Renewable Energy in Central Asia and on Belt and Road Initiative in Central Asia. All the underlying data of those Data Reviews was brought together in two Unified Databases.

All Data Reviews and Unified Databases in Excel are available at: <http://osce-academy.net/en/research/cadgat/>

The Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) and the OSCE Academy established the CADGAT in 2009. The purpose of CADGAT is to produce new cross-regional data on Central Asia that can be freely used by researchers, journalists, NGOs and government employees inside and outside the region.





*AGRUMIG project partners' meeting in Vienna, spring 2019*

## Horizon 2020: AGRUMIG

Since February 2019 the OSCE Academy is part of the Horizon 2020: AGRUMIG - “Leaving something behind” – Migration governance and agricultural and rural change in “home” communities: Comparative experience from Europe, Asia and Africa - project. This project is funded by the European Union’s Horizon 2020 and will last till January 2022. The project engages 11 partner countries (UK, Sri Lanka, Austria, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Italy, Morocco, Nepal, Thailand, Ethiopia, China) and studies are conducted in 7 countries (Morocco, Ethiopia, Moldova, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, Thailand and China). Kyrgyzstan’s project country team is represented by the University of Central Asia – key Research Partner, the OSCE Academy – key Policy Dialogue Partner, and Polis Asia Center - regional Policy Dialogue Partner. The OSCE Academy will act as a mediator between AGRUMIG stakeholders producing research and policy-makers in Kyrgyzstan.

## Erasmus+



The OSCE Academy submitted its first successful Erasmus+ KA 1 (Learning Mobility for Individuals) application in 2018 and received one incoming and one outgoing students’ mobility with the National University of Political Studies and Public Administration (NUPSPA) in Romania in 2019. Thus, in September 2019 our MA Programme in Politics and Security welcomed PhD student Ana-Maria Anghelescu from NUPSPA and sent MA student Mirlan Otorbaev to Bucharest in October. Later this year one teaching mobility from the OSCE Academy to Tartu University in Estonia and in reverse, received Erasmus+ funding. The Academy is planning to engage in Erasmus+ more actively and is exploring the various opportunities provided by Erasmus+ for Higher Education Institutions in Central Asia.

## ALUMNI AND ACADEMY

### 4th Alumni Reunion Brings Together over 100 Graduates of the Academy and Builds Invaluable Links between the Generations



Left to right: Dr. Alexander Wolters, Ambassador Dr. Pierre von Arx, Ms. Merete Wilhelmsen and Dr. Helge Blakkisrud

On 7-8 September 2019, the OSCE Academy in Bishkek welcomed over 100 alumni of its MA Programmes from all the Central Asian countries, including Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, as well as from the countries across the region, including Afghanistan, Russia, Macedonia and Georgia, for the 4th Alumni Reunion.

The Director of the Academy, Dr. Alexander Wolters, the Head of the OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek, Ambassador Dr. Pierre von Arx, the Senior Advisor, Section for Russia, Eurasia and Regional Cooperation of the Norwegian MFA, Ms. Merete Wilhelmsen, and Senior Researcher of the Academy's long-time partner, the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI), Dr. Helge Blakkisrud opened the event.

*"All of you add to the vibrancy and cultural diversity of the OSCE Academy community and help build international links. This is not just im-*

*portant for educational or academic reasons. When our students share the same curricula and strive for common qualifications, we build invaluable links between our younger generations that will continue to enrich and strengthen the relations between the countries of the region and contribute to the lasting co-operation for years to come,"* - highlighted Ambassador von Arx in his address to alumni.

*"Through NUPI, the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs - the leading community for research and communication about international affairs in Norway, we have supported the Academy for more than a decade. Some of you have been visiting NUPI in Oslo, and members of the academic staff from NUPI are visiting Bishkek on a regular basis. This Academy and the students contribute to the developments in a very interesting region.*



Left to right: Dr. Alexander Wolters, Ms. Indira Satarkulova, Dr. Emil Dzuraev and Dr. Pal Dunay





Alumni listen to the presentations by Academy's management

*Your work is also of value to us, who are not living here and cannot feel the daily pulse in this vibrant region.* – addressed Ms. Merete Wilhelmsen the alumni.

*“In 2019, 15 years after the Academy launched its first master’s programme, the OSCE Academy has developed into a dynamic, well-organized organisation that is now more robust and better prepared to meet tomorrow’s challenges than ever before.”* – underlined Dr. Helge Blakisrud.

Following the opening speeches, current and former management representatives of the Academy: Dr. Pal Dunay, former Director; Ms. Indira Satarkulova, Deputy Director; and Dr. Emil Dzhuraev, former Deputy Director and current Senior Lecturer discussed the current state of regional connectivity, the importance of the OSCE Academy in this regard, as well as the role of graduates in this process in the future.

The second part of the opening of the Reunion was dedicated to the achievements of the Academy’s alumni. Four graduates of the Academy – Ms. Nuria Kutnaeva, alumna of 2005, and today Director of the “Center for Electronic Interaction” under the State Committee for Information Technologies and Com-

munications of the Kyrgyz Republic; Mr. Zahidullah Jalali, alumnus of 2009, today Director General of Specialized Bodies of the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC) Arbitration Council from Afghanistan; Mr. Rashid Gabdulhakov, alumnus of 2013, PhD Candidate at the Erasmus University Rotterdam from Uzbekistan; and Ms. Nargiza Zhakypova, alumna of 2014, Co-Founder of Educational Centers IT-RUN in Kyrgyzstan, delivered inspirational speeches about their way of achieving success, the role of the Academy in their professional lives, and offered advice to

fresh graduates and newly enrolled students.

In the afternoon, the participants of the Alumni Reunion had a chance to return back to the times of their studies and attended five simultaneous workshops on different topics in the classrooms of the OSCE Academy. The sessions covered a wide range of topics, from Research Publishing and Promoting and Policy Applied Research on Human Rights and Democracy, to Project Management, and to Preventing Violent Extremism and Counter-Terrorism in Central Asia and finally Digital Economy.

Experts, who were invited specifically for this event, led each session. Professor Waleed Gumaa arrived from Latvia, within the framework of the co-operation between the OSCE Academy and the Riga Graduate School of Law; Dr. Helge Blakisrud visited from the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs; Mr. Azamat Burzhuev, Advisor to the First Vice Prime Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic and Deputy Director of the “Center for Electronic Interaction” under the State Committee for Information Technologies and Communications, Kyrgyzstan; Dr. Anna Gussarova, Director of

Alumni of 2017





Teambuilding



the Central Asia Institute for Strategic Studies, from Kazakhstan; and Prof. Dr. Anja Mihr, the Academy's DAAD Visiting Professor.

The first day of the Reunion was concluded by a formal reception that was attended by the representatives of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, the Diplomatic Corps based in Bishkek, the Heads of several universities and partner institutions of the OSCE Academy.

Dr. Wolters welcomed the alumni and the distinguished guests and highlighted that *“the achievements of the Academy are the result of the joint efforts of the Academy, the OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek, the Kyrgyz Government, and of the many donors, especially NUPI and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.”*

Ambassador Dr. Pierre von Arx took the floor and greeted the guests of the reception and underlined the importance of the high interest of government representatives, the representatives of the diplomatic corps and academics in the event.

The opening of the reception was followed by the speeches of Mr. Ulan Daniarov, Deputy Director of the Fifth Political Department of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic, Ms. Chinara Maatkerimova, Head of the Department for International Cooperation of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic,

and Ms. Merete Kristin Wilhelmsen about the OSCE Academy's niche in the education system and the role of its alumni in regional development.

Following the speeches, Dr. Wolters announced the winner of the Alumnus/a of the Year 2019 Award, who collected most votes among a total of seven nominees – Ms. Nargiza Zhakypova, alumna of 2014. She received the recognition of alumni for her contribution to the development of the IT sector in Kyrgyzstan and beyond, aiming to provide Kyrgyz citizens with the access to specialized education in the IT sphere and to receive better-paid jobs. This should contribute to decreasing the number of low-skilled labour migrants and improving and raising the level of economic development in Kyrgyzstan.

During the second day of the Alumni Reunion graduates, students and the staff of the OSCE Academy travelled to the mountains for teambuilding activities and networking. On the way to the venue, alumni participated in the #trashtagchallenge and collected garbage along the road near one of the mountain resorts.

During the teambuilding activities at eco-resort Kara-Bulak, graduates had a chance to connect with each other, extend their network and thus enhancing the relevance of the Academy's Alumni Network.



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



## Alumna of the Year 2019:

*Nargiza shares her story  
at the 4th Alumni Reunion*

## Nargiza Zhakypova

**N**argiza Zhakypova is a graduate of 2014 of the MA Programme in Economic Governance and Development from Kyrgyzstan. This year Nargiza received the Alumna of the Year 2019 Award for her professional development and achievements after the graduation from the OSCE Academy. Due to her passion, hard work and versatile personality, there is no doubt that Nargiza would succeed at any sphere and anything what she does. Today, Nargiza is one of the founders of the IT-RUN – network of schools providing education in IT to adults as well as children in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Russia and the USA.

### **Q: Dear Nargiza, what is IT-Run?**

IT-RUN – is the biggest IT Academy in Kyrgyzstan with branches in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Russia (in the US to be launched in the end of 2019).

Target audience is people aged 15

to 30, though the “oldest” student is 43 years old. Duration of studies is from 6 to 15 months depending on the programme. Our students usually already work in some other area, wish to change their profession, but unable to spend few more years at the university to gain a new profession. So we create an oppor-

tunity to obtain a new profession within a year and change the job with minimal losses. This is why 70% of students study in the evening groups. Currently we teach JavaScript, Java and Python programming languages. Students can choose whether to learn developing websites or mobile apps. UX/UI De-

sign course is to be launched soon.

We also have launched online courses Digital-nomad.online. Since we opened the first offline branch, a lot of people from various regions of Kyrgyzstan and other countries wrote us asking when we will open our branches in their places. Unfortunately, now it is impossible to open branches in all regions of Kyrgyzstan due to the absence of qualified teachers there. That is why we decided to launch the online courses on Front-End Web Development course. Also the share of online courses is growing every year. It gives a lot of advantages like saving time of travel, accessing the courses from any place - all you need is a computer with Internet. Another great plus is that now people with disadvantages can also study IT.

IT-RUN Kids is a branch of the academy aimed at children from 7 to 15. Children start with Scratch (developed by MIT) platform, where they build animations, cartoons and games. The next level is AppInventor, as the name of the programme says students learn to build their first mobile apps. The last level is HTML, CSS, JavaScript - students here build their first websites. Currently kids tend to spend a lot of time playing online games, watching YouTube - but building their own games is much more interesting. And, of course, IT programming is a profession of the future.

**Q: Why IT sphere? How did you come up with this idea?**

In 2017 me and my husband lived in Berlin, Germany. In Europe we understood that the IT area is developing very rapidly worldwide, but Kyrgyzstan was lagging behind this trend.

We started studying Java/Web/Mobile yearly programme in Tel-Ran IT Academy, an international top IT academy which is operating for more than 20 years. Studying IT was very

interesting and surprisingly easy compared to my expectations. Before graduating the academy I started working in the Localization Team of Google products. After graduating we decided to return to Kyrgyzstan and opened the first branch of IT-RUN in Bishkek in August 2018.

The development of the IT sector currently plays a great role in the development of the country's economy. Those countries with shortage in natural resources and other economic advantages should develop the IT area. The only resource needed for

this is human resources. Ukraine, for example, became now the biggest exporter of IT products in Europe. They have 185 000 developers and 4000 IT companies. According to UNIT.City, The Ukrainian export of IT services will equal \$5.4 billion in 2020 and reach \$8.4 billion in 2025. 20% of world IT giants have branches in Ukraine: Microsoft, Samsung, Huawei, etc. Ukrainian startups and companies signed 44 deals and attracted 265 mln. USD in 2017 which was the record in the world IT sector. Other countries which could be a role model are Belarus and Israel.

*Nargiza with her husband Almanbet*



**Q: Who supports you in this uneasy task?**

My main supporter and partner is my husband Narbaev Almanbet. I met him in the hardest period of

a year I will be able to visit all 200 countries within 40 years. When we were dating with my husband, I told about this dream and he promised to do his best to realize it. Now we have not only met this goal as during the

department with designers, SMMs, copywriters, video/photo-graphers; directors, etc. and we keep growing every month. Our team is relatively young, the oldest team member is 28 and each of them is different. We provide the opportunity to each of them to grow professionally. We have team members who helped to build IT-RUN from the very beginning, showed their passion to the company and now become our partners. We have colleagues and staff members who got married, have children and return back to us - we preserve their place since we value like-minded people and because we understand the importance of family.



my life, when I lost my dearest Mom from cancer. He helped me to return to normal life. We support each other in every aspects of our lives. We started together IT-RUN and a few other projects, IT-RUN is the most successful project. A lot of people keep asking whether it is hard to work together being a family. Of course, there are situations related to work when we do not agree with each other, but mostly our responsibilities are divided. I am responsible for systemizing and controlling the whole process, while Almanbet is responsible for scaling and building new partnerships. People say we complement each other, he is active and communicative, while I am a systematic and more of an academic person.

I dream to travel five new countries every year, since wish to travel all over the world. Per 5 countries

last three years we visited more than 20 countries in Europe, Asia and the USA together. We are together almost 24/7, fly to business trips and leisure travels together almost each time. I am grateful to God for such an amazing husband like Almanbet.

Our biggest goal for five years is to train 100 000 qualified IT programmers and make an impact in the development of the IT sector in the region. I think one of the main secrets of successful couples and partners is to have the same goals and realize them together.

**Q: Your branches are now open in four countries. How do you manage to run it all?**

Currently we have more than 30 team members: teachers; sales, quality office, Call-center, HR managers; finance department staff, marketing

With a growing team we introduced mechanisms that help us work efficiently. Now we have SCRUM master who holds everyday morning stand-ups and every task is controlled in Trello. Also, we have introduced CRM and 1C systems, which help to see every process in every branch online. With the help of a top overseas Audit company we have checked all the costs and optimized few lines. It is amazing how IT simplifies our lives.

As for the founders it was hard for us to delegate tasks, but there are a lot of things our team members can do better than us. I am proud of our team.

**Q: What personal and professional qualities and skills helped you to achieve what you have now?**

Education is the main thing that has changed my life tremendously. I grew up in Chet-Nura village, the Naryn region of Kyrgyzstan. This is a small village with up to 100 families living. I couldn't even speak Russian. For us it was a holiday when Mom took us to Naryn city. When I was in Bishkek for the first time, it was the happiest day in my life, the city seemed to be so big and amazing.

Mom always told me that if I want to realize my dreams, I need to study well. She worked as a teacher in the village school for about 30 years, and being a pensioner, she moved to Bishkek wishing to give better education to me and my sister. I understood how hard it was for her and thrived to justify her efforts. I graduated from high school

*the Academy gave me, every course helps me every day to do research, make presentations, write reports, run the business processes.* I am so grateful to the OSCE Academy for the continuous support even after graduation. After my academic journey I am who I am now. Now I feel a big responsibility in front of those people who believed in me and pre-

IT Academies in Karakol, Moscow and Almaty. In October 2019 we launched the Digital-nomad online project. On November 2 we had technical opening of IT-RUN Kids second branch in Bishkek. Till the end of the year we are aimed to open our branch in the USA.

In 2020 we plan to open more than



IT-RUN team

with honors and became top 5 in the school. We didn't have money to pay my English courses, but I learned it by myself in the library. I applied to AUCA, but education cost was too high for my family. Fortunately, I became a finalist of US-CAEF programme and they covered my tuition. After AUCA I applied to the OSCE Academy to earn a Master's Degree and was accepted. The Academy covered my tuition and helped financially with stipend.

I am thankful to the OSCE Academy for providing quality education for students like me, who have a passion to study, but otherwise won't be able to pay for it. *All knowledge*

sent such a great opportunity to get education. Education is able to change lives and I believe that development of the country depends on the education of the nation. I put my goal to give access to education to thousands of people and I am happy to work in the education sector.

#### **Q: What are your plans for 2020?**

2019 was a very productive year for us. In April 2019 we founded the IT-RUN Kids branch in Bishkek. In July 2019 we became member of Osh Techno Park and founded IT Park Educational Academy in Osh. In August 2019 we founded

100 franchisee branches of IT-RUN Kids in Kyrgyzstan and abroad. Currently we are at the final stage of packaging the franchise. Main focus will be put on development of Digital-nomad.online Academy, since we see a great potential of it.

We are in the 8th month of pregnancy now, that is why we are not putting too many plans forward for the new year. Though we know that having a baby is not going to be the easiest project in our life, but we are very happy and ready to the new stage of our life. Though lots of parents say that children give more motivation and energy to move forward. Let's see :)

## AROUND CENTRAL ASIA

In the previous issue of SalamAlum we got acquainted with our alumni from Kazakhstan working with the society, in conducting research and in government. This time we are moving to Tajikistan to introduce our graduates working in non-profit sector, public-private enterprise and in the research sphere. Umedakhon Pulotova, alumna of 2017, Muslimbek Buriev alumnus of 2017 and Ofarid Amidkhonov alumnus of 2013 share their professional experience in different spheres, but with one goal – development of their home-country.



### **“Every person is unique”: Working with Vulnerable to Help them Live Better**

**U**medakhon Pulotova is alumna of 2017, MA Programme in Economic Governance and Development from Tajikistan. Currently Umedakhon is working as Project Coordinator in two projects in the health-focused NGO “Ranginkamon” in Khujand, Tajikistan.

**Q: Dear Umedakhon, please tell us about “Ranginkamon”. What are its main goals and objectives?**

“Ranginkamon” is a Tajik word which means “Rainbow”. NGO “Ranginkamon” was established in 2000. The main mission of the organization is to support the inclusion of children with disabilities in the society through the revitalization of family members of these children, the establishment of rehabilitation centres, education and training of specialists, and the organization of support in order to create an inclusive society.

Since the beginning of its activities, members of Ranginkamon have implemented 25 large and partner projects worth over \$ 1,500,000. Financial support was provided by international organizations such as: UNICEF, the European Commission, the SOROS Foundation, Caritas-Germany, Save the Children, Mission East, Public Foundation



“FSDS Kyrgyzstan”, the Social Protection Agency of Tajikistan with the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Republic of Tajikistan. The main results of our activity are that now the parents are not hiding and shy of their disabled children; parents began to communicate with each other; improved attendance of children with disabilities and girls in public schools, kindergartens; Parents of Children with disabilities have their own legal organization to ensure the rights of their children and to empower other parents with disabled children; more than 300 disabled children and their parents received free classes on movement, speech and behavioral therapy; 4 inclusive schools and 4 inclusive kindergartens were opened in 4 rural areas. A memorandum of cooperation is signed between Ranginkamon and the Ministry of Health and Social Development of Tajikistan for the implementation and development of the early Intervention programme at the peripheral level with comprehensive social care and support. The programme includes five main areas of early childhood development for early intervention: medical screening and care, healthy feeding and nutrition, safe surroundings, education, social support for the family and the child. Ranginkamon is the coordinator of the Council from the beginning of its creation to today. Every year we have trainers/specialists from abroad, such as Israel, Germany, Ireland to train and teach our local specialists to new skills.

**Q: The work that Ranginkamon implements is very important. How did you become part of this organization?**

To be honest, it was unexpected. While still being in Bishkek, preparing for the defence of my master's thesis (in early December 2017), I

saw on the site of job seekers an advertisement for the vacancy “Project Coordinator” in Khujand on a partnership project with FSDS Kyrgyzstan and Bread for the World (Germany) to the project “Inclusive Society for All”. After reviewing the description of the activity, I sent my CV and cover letter. A week later the employer replied to me and assigned a Skype interview, I passed the interview. I still remember that it was the 15 of December they emailed me that interview was successful and I was hired. Everything was right away: I did defend my thesis, soon graduation ceremony, and a new job. I did not expect to be hired, because I had more experience in the banking sector, but no experience with social projects. So, I returned from the Academy on December 17, and on December 19 already went to work - As they say “from the ship immediately to the ball”.)

**Q: What are your responsibilities?**

Right now, I am working as a project coordinator within two projects “Inclusive society for disabled children. Phase 2” and “Reducing the risk of childhood disability through improving food security and early intervention in vulnerable families of B. Gafurov district of the Sugd region”. The objectives of the first project are to promote that children with disabilities in Tajikistan have equal and barrier-free access to all public services, such as health services, education, poverty reduction, cultural and religious activities, and social relations. The goal of the second project is aimed at maintaining food security of 120 vulnerable households with limited incomes, having children from 0 to 3 years of age, lagging behind in development due to malnutrition. My responsibilities are: Participation in strategic management, in the direction of the

programme, collection of data for general and overall reporting, representation, participation, design and monitoring of the programme, communication with donors and stakeholders, problem solving, current correspondence, logistics, collection of documentation and materials for approval, participation in budgeting and control over the distribution of financial resources. I was lucky that I had a chance to represent our organization in 4th Asia-Pacific Community Based Inclusive Development Congress which took place in Ulaanbaatar city, Mongolia from 1 to 4 July 2019 year.

**Q: What part of your work do you like most?**

I like every part of the project where I am working. I think that helping disabled children to develop their skills, prepare these children to enter society, to support families with disabled children to become change-makers in their own communities, helping them to join social and public programmes, and starting community level activities is the best practice what I am doing.

**Q: How did it change your values and perception of the world?**

To be honest, a lot has changed in my perception of the world and in my values. I don't know how to say it right, but working in this project with vulnerable families, children with developmental problems, I realized that each person is unique and that's his value. I think every life trifle is another lesson learned by a person, and the value of life is that the person gains life experience from it, which makes him wiser.



## *Research – the Way to Explore your Country and the World*

**M**ouslim Buriev graduated in 2017 and currently is a Research Fellow at the Centre for European Security Studies in Groningen, the Netherlands. This year Mouslim was selected to participate in the CABAR.asia School of Analytics and as one of the most active researchers received an opportunity to travel for a two-week internship to Georgia.

My trip to Georgia happened by the virtue of CABAR.Asia, a media platform that gives an opportunity to carry out research on various processes that take place in Central Asia. I started collaborating with them in last November, when I began to write articles and participate in events organised by them, including conferences and roundtables. I was pleased to hear that CABAR is providing the most active researchers with the opportunity to visit Georgia and have a short two-week

internship in the most prominent think tanks. Fortunately, I was among the selected four researchers from Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. In the end we were expected to complete a research that would connect Central Asia and the Caucasus, for which we were free to choose the organisation that would fit our research interests.

During my stay in Tbilisi, I was an intern at the Caucasus Centre for Peace, Democracy and Development (CCPDD). It was my choice as CCPDD works on minority issues in Georgia, while I was planning to compare the development of Tajikistan's ethnic policy with that of in Georgia. I have outlined the major distinctions in Georgian ethnic policy on a basic level. Tajikistan could learn a lot from these experiences and this was one of the key points of my research paper that was published after I completed the internship.

It was also interesting to see how NGOs and think tanks work in Georgia. They have very close ties with state institutions, that are

clearly perceived as among the main stakeholders of non-governmental activities in the country. It was evident that CIPDD's operations directly influence the formulation of state policies, in particular towards ethnic and religious minorities, which means a lot. Witnessing such mode of cooperation gave me insights on how insignificant the collaboration of state and NGOs in Tajikistan are and how much needs to be changed in that respect.

Along with research related activities I was honoured to participate as a speaker in panel discussion on role of civil society and mass media in decision-making process. I gave a short report dedicated to media coverage of ethnic issues in Tajikistan and discussed if there is a potential to shape state policies by raising awareness among the population. It was fruitful in terms of exchange of knowledge and networking with local Georgian activists and journalists.

It was one of the brightest impressions I had when Tbilisi was ignited in demonstrations against the Georgian authorities. It was fearsome yet astonishing as it attracted thousands of people. For me as a researcher it was extremely interesting to observe the developments and dwell into thinking on causes and consequences of public discontent and how the government was going to reconcile the situation.

I have enjoyed my stay in Georgia in many ways: Improving my research skills, getting familiar with the cooperation between the state and NGOs, talking about Tajikistan issues in front of journalists, experiencing a strong political culture and of course gazing upon beautiful architecture and tasting the amazing cuisine. It was one of the best places I have visited and I am really looking forward to returning to Georgia.

## Transforming Challenges into Opportunities for Regional Prosperity

**O**farid is a graduate of the first cohort of the MA Programme in Economic Governance and Development in 2013. Currently he is a Regional Projects Implementation Lead of Pamir Energy Company, which is the first energy company in Tajikistan. Ofarid has been working at Pamir Energy since 2015 and he shares his story about his professional development since the day of graduation of the OSCE Academy till today.



Following my graduation from the OSCE Academy in 2013, I was approached by the United Kingdom Volunteer Service Overseas in Tajikistan, which offered me an opportunity to undertake Market Research Analysis of cross-border trade between Tajikistan and Afghanistan. In many ways, this served as a continuation of my MA thesis at the OSCE Academy that focused on the socio-economic impact of cross-border engagements. In particular, I investigated two aspects of this exchange process. **1.** The rules and regulations recently incorporated into the legislation on cross-border trade aimed at fostering stronger regional economic ties. **2.** The current trends of supply and demand for food products. As a result of this study, policy recommendations were made to the national, international and local stakeholders involved in developing cross-border trade/cooperation between Tajikistan and Afghanistan. Moreover, I joined the Institute for Public Policy and Administration of

the University of Central Asia to act as Project Officer and Researcher in Tajikistan under a USAID-funded project entitled “Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) Growth for Central Asia”. In this role, I worked with a team to identify the potential sectors that can boost the economy of Tajikistan, the barriers to growth, and made policy recommendations to the stakeholders involved.

Through these experiences, I realized that Tajikistan’s economic growth can capitalize on regional integration. In particular, I found that, particularly in mountainous and rural areas, economic growth was largely dependent on the growth and security of the energy sector given that energy serves as a precondition or platform for socio-economic development across all other sectors. As such, it only made sense that my next step was in taking a position with Pamir Energy (PE), an integrated utility company in VMKB, Tajikistan, established as the first Public Private Partnership in Central Asia in 2002. Today, PE provides clean, reliable, and affordable electricity to 96% of the population of VMKB, up from only 13% in 2002, with projects underway to achieve 100% electrification. The impacts of PE have been transformative across all aspects of life in VMKB, turning a heavily-subsidized, decrepit energy facility inherited from the Soviet era into a sustainable company. In addition to the impact that the company’s services are making domestically, the surplus energy generated is exported to the communities in the border districts of Northern Afghanistan through PE’s cross-border energy programme, established in 2008.

In parallel with the expansion of PE’s services, my role has also grown. Currently, I serve as the Regional Lead for Project Implementation, overseeing the growth of energy projects in Tajikistan, Afghanistan, and also Pakistan. Through this role, I have been involved in seeing the regional transformation that occurs when energy opens doors to further development, and with a growing plate of work, I am ready to take on the challenges that have yet to come.

I was born and raised in Khorog, a town of 32,000 people located on the border between Tajikistan and Afghanistan. Throughout my life I witnessed significant challenges in the life of the communities living in the remote areas of GBAO. These challenges were mostly associated with poor socio-economic conditions of the region that resulted in poor quality of life and low standard of living. I always felt that the communities that raised me deserved better. I deeply felt connected to a larger mission to work in order to improve the quality of life for my community, which is why made the decision to return to Khorog to build my career and life. To me, my county and, more particularly, my region is a land of opportunity. Specifically, I could see its potential in playing a central role as a regional hub, connecting neighboring regions and countries. Today, my areas of work focus on regional integration, particularly in connecting with Afghanistan and Pakistan. In this way, the OSCE Academy also played a significant role in building a wide regional network for me. I continue to constantly engage with the networks I formed during my time there, both professionally and personally. The relationships that I established at the OSCE Academy and the processes of discussion and negotiation created a platform for growth that I now see reflected in all the work with which I engage, a valuable set of skills and perspectives that I intend to hone as I continue this journey.

## Junior Public Officers' Programme

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

This year the Academy signed an Agreement with the Ministry of Economy of the Kyrgyz Republic, and prolonged its Partnership with the Investment Promotion and Protection Agency of the Kyrgyz Republic. Thus, the OSCE Academy now has agreements with the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the Agency for Investment Promotion and Protection as well as the Ministry of Economy of the Kyrgyz Republic.

**In 2019 overall six alumni conducted their internships in Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan:**



### Tahmina Raoufi 2018, Afghanistan

"I learnt a lot about the functions, jobs and the nuances of being a diplomat, diplomatic missions which would contribute to my career aspirations of becoming a diplomat and working with ambassadors in the future."

### Aizhan Erisheva 2018, Kyrgyzstan

"The experience received during the JPO Programme contributed to my future development. First of all, I have a long-lasting interest in economic policy and my theses were about agricultural and industrial policy, so the received experience heightened my interest in this topic and I would like to analyze the investment policy of Kyrgyzstan. This experience helped me understand that economic governance is not only my research interest, but also the sphere of professional interest; and in the future I would like to work in that sphere. I had an opportunity to more fully understand the public sector and how it operates. Moreover, this experience gave me an opportunity to improve my research and analytical skills, and to practice my knowledge obtained at the Academy. This programme was like a springboard for becoming a professional."





### Aiperi Kashieva 2018, Kyrgyzstan

“I was an intern in the Potential Investment Development Division of the Investment Promotion and Protection Agency under the supervision of the Head of Division. Assignments given to me well suited my major in economics, and also brought me to a very new and interesting area of using economics in policy research. Through the assignment, I did not only gain a lot of knowledge but more importantly, I also had a great chance to sharpen my skills in a professional working environment. Not less

important than the overviewing the overall investment climate of the Kyrgyz Republic I have also learnt is writing structured reports and research papers that I have been assigned and practiced on various topics of concern.

Overall, this internship allowed me to harness the skill, knowledge and theoretical practice learnt in the University and to transform theory into practical real-life situations. This internship at the Investment Agency allowed me to narrow down the area at which I would like to build a career. Now, the importance and significant influence of investment flows drives me to pursue a career in this direction. Investment is one of the largest aspects of the economy, which requires state regulation. Coherent and effective investment management by the Government can lead to a country’s prosperity. So, I believe that the best working experience can be reached in the area of investment at a state institution.”



### Indira Rakymova 2018, Kazakhstan

“The JPO Programme is a great opportunity for recent graduates to explore themselves in a governmental position, and also expand their knowledge in a sphere related to diplomacy. In my example, I consider the internship at the MFA as a huge experience in starting my my career as an international relations expert. I have explored myself in the role of a public officer, and acquainted with the specifics of the work in a governmental position. Overall, I highly evaluate the opportunity to learn office ethics and study the working environment at the MFA. At least, I have studied two unknown spheres of work such as finance and diplomatic chancery. This internship helped me expand my knowledge in international relations by learning diplomacy and protocol related issues.”



### Dinmukhamed Omirali 2018, Kazakhstan

“There are many insights and benefits of the JPO Programme, and definitely, it will contribute to my future career. For instance, by the suggestions of my colleagues and supervisor I applied for the special testing for the employers of the governmental institutions, and was successful. I have certificate now. Moreover, I increased my professional network by meeting the experts of my field. The JPO Programme also let me show my potential.”

## From JPO to Serving in a Mission in Vienna: Success Story of Ahmad Munir Faruhee

**A**hmad Munir Faruhee is alumnus of 2013 of the MA Programme in Politics and Security from Afghanistan. Munir was the OSCE Academy's first Junior Public Officer (JPO) in Afghanistan, where the JPO Programme was established in 2012. Today he is a diplomat at the Embassy and the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in Vienna, Austria.

**Q: Dear Munir, please, tell us about your experience as the first JPO.**

It was an excellent experience for me. I found the opportunity to engage deeply with the practical aspects of diplomacy and world politics. Stationing at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan helped me to expose to important conferences and seminars. Being a JPO, enabled me to develop the required rapport with eminent officials of different state organs. It encouraged me to endeavor further for my capacity building. I indeed had a great experience and a wonderful time back then.

**Q: Did the JPO Programme contribute to your career in the Public Sector?**

Of course it did. I always wanted to work with the public sector, especially with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the United Nations. Therefore, I did my bachelors and master's degrees in the fields of Politics, Security and International Relations. The JPO programme provided me with a great opportunity to start my work with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and it played a key role in



my understanding of the Ministry's structure, the conduct of diplomacy, inter-departmental works, creating and strong networking. Later, at the end of my JPO programme, I participated in the entrance examination of the Ministry and with the practical work experience that I had got through the programme, I easily succeeded and has been formally recruited as an official of the Ministry.

**Q: Today you work in the Afghan mission in Austria, which represents the interest of Afghanistan not only in a foreign country, but in the largest world organization, the UN and also the OSCE. What challenges and opportunities does it provide to be a public servant?**

Every phase of life has its opportunities and challenges. Likewise, by holding a degree from such an

important academic institution, I always faced challenges to work hard. Everyone expects more from holders of such degrees. However, I have always considered those challenges, as glaring opportunities for my job. Besides, being an alumnus of this institution paved the way for my deep engagement with some of the officials at OSCE headquarters in Vienna, and holders of similar degrees at other institutions. Moreover, the knowledge acquired during my studies at the OSCE Academy, helped me to carry out my job professionally.

**Q: Where do you see yourself in five years?**

Well, based on my objectives, I envision myself as a skilled and professional diplomat in 5 years. I am committed to work hard and remove the obstacles which may pose challenges to my success in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan.



Left to right: Dr. Indra Overland, Dr. Roman Vakulchuk, CADGAT Fellow Bahtiyor Eshchanov, Javlon Juraev, Dilfuza Kurolova, Dr. Anja Mihr, Harry Roberts, Daniyar Moldokanov, Dr. Emil Joraev.

## NUPI-Research Mentoring

The Norwegian Institute for International Affairs (NUPI) supports the Alumni Network since its foundation. Numerous projects and programmes ran by NUPI aim at increasing the research potential among alumni. This Research Mentoring programme was launched in summer 2018 and engages six OSCE Academy alumni. Mentees work jointly with Mentors at NUPI and will publish one academic article in a peer-reviewed journal in 2019. After publishing their articles, Mentees will present the results of their work at international academic events.

On 12 January the first NUPI-OSCE Academy Research Mentorship Internal Workshop took place at the Academy. During the workshop, members of the alumni community presented about the current stage of their works on:

- **Farkhod Aminjonov**, “Energy Security, Political and Socio-Economic Dimensions of Hydrobalancing in Central Asia.”
- **Dilfuza Kurolova**, “Climate Change in Central Asia: Political, Economic and Social Consequences.”
- **Aiperi Otunchieva**, “Renewable Energy in the Former Soviet Union.”
- **Harry Roberts**, “Energy in the Caspian Region.”

- **Daniyar Moldokanov**, “Big Powers in Central Asia and Their Economic Influence.”

- **Javlon Juraev**, “Distribution of Renewable Energy Resources vs. Fossil Fuel Reserves across Countries.”

The presentations were followed by discussion and feedback from programme participants, Mentors and Academy faculty members Dr. Anja Mihr and Dr. Emil Dzhuraev.

This programme is coordinated by Dr. Indra Overland, Head of the Energy Programme, and Dr. Roman Vakulchuk, Senior Research Fellow, NUPI.



Left to right: Abdyrakhman Sulaimanov, Dr. Roman Vakulchuk, Talgat Ilimbek uulu and Filippa Sofia Braarud - a master intern from University of Oslo



Abdyrakhman, Talgat and Filippa exploring Norway

## One-Year-Stay at NUPI Fellowship

In 2019 two more alumni had a chance to participate in the fellowship offered by the Norwegian institute of International Affairs (NUPI): Talgat Ilimbek uulu, alumnus of 2014 of the MA Programme in Economic Governance and Development and Abdyrakhman Sulaimanov, alumnus of 2018 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 Talgat and Abdyrakhman shortly describe their experience at NUPI.

This fellowship was a valuable experience to our professional and personal development. Moreover, visiting Norway was a good opportunity to experience a new culture and meet different people in Oslo.

**Talgat:** During the fellowship we worked and learned a lot while assisting senior researchers of NUPI. As a co-author along with Indra and Roman, we published the article “The GeGaLo index: Geopolitical gains and losses after energy transition”. We also had an opportunity to participate in various seminars and conferences organized at the institute.

With the participants of the School of Civic Education seminar organized for Russian civil activists, we visited the recycling station in Oslo which is operated by one of the most advanced sorting facilities in the world utilizing near-infrared (NIR) technology to sort out resources from household residual waste.

On April 3-5, we attended the High North Conference 2019 organized by Nord University in Bodo. After the conference, we saw the spectacular Northern Lights there and had a breath-taking cruise trip from Bodo to Tromso.

**Abdyrakhman:** In that conference, we participated in scenario building contest on “Smart City 2040”- where our team won the first place, which entitled us to present three scenarios in front of many officials, business people, as well as academics.

While engaging in the research environment, we learned to analyze specific studies. For instance, I am now working on a paper about “Local protests in the gold mining sector of Kyrgyzstan”. To get deeper knowledge in that sector, we had the opportunity to attend summer school on “Natural resources for sustainable development” in Azerbaijan as well as training on “Smart transformation in the energy sector” in Romania.

We cannot be more thankful to all NUPI staff and the OSCE Academy for providing this 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 2018-2019 Mahabat Murzakanova alumna of 2008 was granted this scholarship.*

**M**y name is Mahabat Murzakanova, Alumna of 2007-2008 class. This year I applied and was accepted to the Master of Advanced Studies in International and European Security from 7 October 2019 to 29 May 2020, jointly run by the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP) and the Global Studies Institute of the University of Geneva (GSI). I will further describe my personal experience, because formal information is already available in details on the GCSP website.

This is an eight-month programme fully funded by the GCSP, what is essential for people coming from Central Asia, who cannot afford to study and live in one of the most expensive cities in the world. So, I am getting a stipend to cover my accommodation and meal expenses, and other expenses as transportation ticket and insurance.

The first day I came to the classes I was impressed by the building. It is made of glass from outside, so that during classes we can see what is happening outside, beautiful nature, sunshine and often rain. This is so unique for me coming from our region, where there are very few glass-covered transparent buildings. The same is inside all doors, walls are made of glass, what in the beginning made me feel being in an aquarium.

The second thing that strikes me are participants. All 22 participants come from 22 different states and are between the age of 30 and 50. Nevertheless, it does not create any barriers among us. Also, all these participants are 'cool' ones coming from embassies, ministries of interiors, ministries of foreign affairs, ministries of defence, and all of them speak at least 3-4-5-6 languages and share so much knowledge.

I am attending classes all the five workdays of the week between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. The classes are not formal ones as we got used to, but very informal and through gamification participants are learning a lot. Another important thing is having online class cabinet, where

all reading materials, assignments, presentations are placed that makes you to be digitally literate nowadays. Every day we have new lecturers, who are outstanding experts in their field from all over the world from all continents and every day my mind is blowing from information provided, I have really missed this multicultural environment of intellectuals after AUCA and the OSCE Academy. In total 140 different lecturers will attend our course and empower us. In the evenings there are public lectures provided at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, which I am attending, and another evening blow of my mind is taking place. Here, in Geneva our Kyrgyz Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Chingiz Aidarbe-

kov made a presentation, after which I had an opportunity to greet him personally and take a photo, then we met the former President of Mexico, Mr. Ernesto Zedillo, or Mr. Michael Ignatieff, former leader of Liberal Party of Canada and this is just the beginning...

Moreover, we were provided with several cards that allow to attend different places and events: GCSP events, lectures, UN house with an access to open sessions, Geneva University, library card that allows to get an access to any library in Switzerland. It feels like I am in an ocean and can move to any direction of endless information, knowledge and networking. I was given an opportunity to present on the PVE proj-



ect that I was implementing at the UNDP that is also another plus to my CV.

On weekends I am joining my classmates to travel around and we have already been to Lyon, France, went to different interesting places around Geneva, and during my stay I am planning to attend cities of my dream from childhood Paris, Rome and Venice, Brussels and others, basically have Eurotour. Also, I have met so many people from Central Asia, who are working here and was getting tips how to get international positions at international organi-

zations that is essential for the next step in my career.

This opportunity is very challenging that is essential for my further career development, have personal networking that widens my horizon and enriches my experience. Having worked in Kyrgyzstan for more than 12 years, having field experience I wanted to move further and get an international position either in the Central Asian region or at the headquarters of an international organization making the region better known and be responsible for projects implemented in the region.

Also, this winter for Christmas break my family will be visiting me and my presence also makes their visit easier and we plan to travel to several neighboring countries. I would be able to serve as a role model for my children, nieces and nephews, and make my parents proud of me that is very essential for me morally. I strongly recommend you to apply and use this unique opportunity to widen your frontiers, to enrich your experience and contribute to developments in the security sector.



## TRAVEL GRANT

The OSCE Academy Alumni Network, with support of the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) offers travel grants to qualified OSCE Academy alumni to support their professional and academic development. This year three alumni received Alumni Travel Grant to attend conferences, traineeship and workshops in Russia, the USA and Germany.

### Zalina Enikeeva, Alumna of 2016

I have received the Alumni Travel Grant to participate in the XX April International Academic Conference on Economic and Social Development, held on April 9-12, 2019, in Moscow, at the National Research University Higher School of Economics (HSE University). The Conference Programme Committee was chaired by Professor Evgeny Yasin, HSE University's Academic Supervisor.

The Annual April Conference features a diverse agenda concerning social and economic development in different countries, e.g. Russia, the CIS member-states, Latin America, China, Europe, the United States etc. The Conference traditionally brings together mostly Russian senior government officials, including representatives of the Presidential Executive Office, the Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation, high-level experts of the World Bank from all its units, the OECD, large national and global companies, and leading academics from many parts of the world.

I participated in two sections, the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) in the Global Economy and the special section "Next Generation Trade Policy" and creation of a future system of multilateral trade regulation for the benefit of social and economic development" with presentations dedicated to integration of the Kyrgyz Republic into the agricultural sector of the EAEU and analysis of digitalization in the banking system of all five EAEU member-states (Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Russia).

My analysis of the agricultural sector emphasized specifically non-tariff measures, such as technical regulations, sanitary and phytosanitary measures (SPS), technical barriers to trade (TBT), periodic challenges on the Kyrgyz-Kazakh borders where Kyrgyz transporters, farmers, exporters meet and other Kyrgyz-Kazakh cooperation issues. The example of the permanent ban on import and transit of Kyrgyz apples and potato on and through the territory of the Republic of Kazakhstan imposed by the government of Kazakhstan in February 2019 caused the present academic community a surprise that there is such rude violation of EAEU regulations. My presentation engendered a lively discussion of possible measures to assist Kyrgyz farmers, transporters and necessity of finding ways how to solve disputes within the Eurasian Economic Union in cases of the violation of the legislation.

During my research of digital integration in the banking system of five EAEU member-states I analyzed the current state programmes on the digital agenda, payment systems, digital channels, regulation of block chains and crypto currencies in all states, as well as cyber security. I came to the conclusion that it is too early to talk about digital integration in the banking system as all EAEU member-states are at different stages of the development of their banking system.

My presentation and conclusion caused active and interesting discussion among the attendees, and all assented to the main conclusion and agreed with the analysis.



Academics from Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia, state authorities from different countries, representatives of the Eurasian Economic Commission, the Eurasian Development Bank, the Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation, the Center of Trade Policy under the Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan and many-many others participated in these two sessions.

The most important that the general public would be informed about the current situation and Kyrgyzstan's social and economic development, existing challenges during export operations, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, non-tariff barriers etc. From the audience I met keen interest in gaining awareness of the current development of the Kyrgyz Republic.

As a positive consequence of my participation in the conference - I have been invited to be part of the research group on measurement of the EAEU integration in-depth carried out by the Institute of Trade Policy of the National Research University Higher School of Economics and be a representative of the Kyrgyz Republic in this group on a regular basis.

### **Berikbol Dukeyeu,** **Alumnus of 2015**

Currently I am a PhD candidate at the Centre for Arab and Islamic Studies (the Middle East and Central Asia) at the Australian National University.

During the one-month long research fellowship at the George Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research, I conducted research work at the Institute's Library and presented my work at a research colloquium. It is an absolutely fascinating library that stock history textbooks from more than 190 countries of the world. The GEI Library has enormously contributed to my PhD thesis, especially to the part of the cases of history production in the ex-Soviet states as well as in Asia-Pacific countries to contextualize them to Kazakhstan's history writing and production. Along with these, the Institute's research staff has provided generous feedback during the meetings and presentation at the research colloquium. I believe this research fellowship would enrich my research and benefit for further collaboration with the Institute. I am grateful to the OSCE Academy in Bishkek for this wonderful opportunity.



My PhD thesis focuses on the production and writing of the Soviet history of Kazakhstan in the post-1991 period of nation-building. The Soviet past (1917-1991) is the most controversial and contradictory period in Kazakhstan's history. During the period of Kazakhstan's independence, Soviet history has been reinvented, rewritten and shifted following nation-building dynamics of Kazakhstan since 1991. The production of official Soviet history has become part of political contestation in "nation-making" and has been challenged from the side of emerging Kazakh nationalism. Despite this dynamism of the Soviet past in Kazakhstan's nation-building, the scholarship lacks research on the issue. Thus, I carried out the project research how interpretations of the Soviet period of Kazakhstan's history have been produced in the post-1991 period. The focus of the project will be on the ways the Soviet period and its legacy have been produced, portrayed, evaluated, and analysed in state-led and in Kazakh nationalist narratives.

## Diana Mamatova, Alumna of 2009

From 10th to 13th October 2019 I participated at the Central Eurasian Studies Society (CESS) 20th Annual Conference hosted by the Central Asia Programme (CAP) and Institute for European, Russian and Eurasian Studies, part of the George Washington University's Elliott School of International Affairs, in Washington, DC. CESS is the leading North America based area studies association for the study of Central Eurasia, covering regions from the Caucasus and Turkey, through Central Asia on to the Central Eurasian regions of Russia and China. CESS is a vibrant community of scholars, professionals, institutions, and interested persons from across the globe, who share an interest in advancing the study and understanding of Central Eurasia.

This annual event was attended by over 390 delegates from different countries. I presented on "Peacebuilding and Patriarchal Norms: the Role of Women in Sustaining Peace at the Border Communities of Ferghana Valley" within the panel on MIG-02 Borders, Migration and Gender in Eurasian Spatialities. I have discussed that borders and border issues have enormous implications for peacebuilding. Peacebuilding does not need to be imposed, but rather supported by cross-border communal engagement to strengthen social cohesion. My paper focuses on the role of women in peacebuilding processes on a grassroots level between crossborder communities in Central Asia's Ferghana Valley. I argue in this paper that women play a limited role in participating in decision making when it comes to preventing, managing and resolving border incidents and conflicts. This is due to patriarchal and traditional social and behavioral norms that places men as decision-makers and women as housewives. Unequal gender identities and roles hinder the peacebuilding process on a grassroots level in cross-border communities and this as a result undermines achieving lasting stability in the region. After presenting and receiving feedback, I plan to finalize this paper and publish an article on this topic on online platform/s.

I take this opportunity to thank the OSCE Academy for supporting my travel grant to participate and present at the CESS Annual Conference at George Washington University. I definitely benefited from this participation and will proceed working on this topic.



*Diana Mamatova with Aigoul Abdoubaetova, the OSCE Academy's Head of the Research and Training Unit, at the CESS 20th Annual Conference, Washington DC.*



## Academy's Cupidon Shoots Aptly

**I**t is already difficult to imagine an issue of SalamAlum without a love story. There are no boarders when it comes to the feeling. Please welcome Aliaskar Adylov, alumnus of 2018 from Kyrgyzstan and Indira Rakymova, alumna of 2018 from Kazakhstan, who met at the OSCE, while studying at the MA Programme in Politics and Security.

### **Q: Dear Indira and Aliaskar what was your first impression about each other?**

**I:** I heard that his name pronounced as Alaska. Since then he became Alaska for me. When I first talked to him, I thought he was rude with me. Later, however, I realized that he is a very nice guy, just a bit straightforward.

**A:** I just thought she was very beautiful. But she truly impressed me with her story about her crazy trip to Cambodia. To me, it was something absolutely extraordinary, and time has proved she herself is extraordinary and special.

### **Q: How did your love story start?**

**A:** We both actively participated in our group meetings and started to talk a lot. We discovered many common interests, such as travelling and political studies.

**I:** Eventually, Alaska invited me to a special date. Our eyes were closed with veils and we enjoyed our dinner in a dark room with candles just talking to each other.

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

**I:** I appreciate his intelligence, kindness and loyalty the most. He is very generous and eager to help all people around him. He devotes all of himself to his family and friends. And he is very good at academic writing.

**A:** Her energy, passion, honesty, pureness, tenderness, unselfishness, and most of all her true love.

### **Q: How do you build your family model?**

**A:** We believe in equality and dedication to our mutual future. It is OK to disagree sometimes, but it is important to try to hear each other, un-

derstand each other's points of view. Critical thinking certainly helps!

**I:** We are a young family and usually, when I get crazy, Alaska as a wise husband tries to keep calm and stay patient. I believe we will be able to overcome all difficulties to grow stronger as a family.

### **Q: What do you wish to our students and Alumni Network?**

**A:** Let your dreams come true and your life never be boring! When you open your soul to a stranger, amazing things may happen.)))

**I:** I simply wish, don't build walls around you, be open to everyone and you will eventually find your way! I consider life as full of unforgettable adventures, and would like to wish everyone to develop, travel and never stop dreaming.

## Learning Without Walls

**L**idiya Chikalova is alumna of 2016 of the MA in Politics and Security Programme. In 2013 she initiated a learning platform designed to provide teachers with a system to create personalised learning environment called “Edulim Projects.” Lidiya actively promotes digital education in Central Asia and presents her ideas worldwide. Currently, she is working at the University of Central Asia in Bishkek, as Planning and Reporting Officer and manages Cambridge Assessment English centres in three Central Asian countries; at the same time continues to develop and promote the “Edulim Projects”.



**Q: Dear Lidiya, what is “Edulim Projects” and how did you come up with the idea to start it?**

The idea was shaped more or less during my teaching experience starting 2008, when I saw a substantial lack of resources, dialogue between teachers both new and professional, and professional support. The Central Asian region lacks constant and substantial investment in the IT infrastructure that supports digital education, as well as investment in teachers. It is cheaper to train a teacher to see a multiplied effect, rather than aim at schoolchildren. The Edulim Projects could be a beneficial project not only for Kyrgyzstan, but other developing countries where education, unfortunately, is not a priority. The region full of high school teachers should be improved and the best way is to provide with necessary materials. The Edulim Projects is a learning platform designed to provide teachers and learners with a system to create personalized learning environment adjusted to the edu-

cational system of Central Asian countries. The Edulim Projects offer a solution to reach instructors/teachers from both urban and remote areas. Given the specificity of the Central Asian educational market, we offer the following services: curriculum development and collaboration, content development, social networking and communication for teachers, media sharing presentations, handouts, visuals; lesson plan database; professional support from international instructors.

**Q: How do people, working in the education sector in our region, react to innovations you suggest?**

I have pitched the idea to many institutions in Central Asia, both international and local, yet investors would rather go after small projects that give instant short-term result, rather than see strategically the output of the project in the long run. Thus, without funding, the project implementation was postponed, yet the alternative way, MOOC courses and online consultancies for schools, which are looking for professional support from qualified trainers are offered.

All in all, innovative ideas do scare people. However, the process should be taken one step at a time and implementation of the general ideas shall be gradual.

**Q: You are part of the UNESCO Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development (MGIEP). Please tell us about this experience, how did you become part of it and what do you do within this project?**

I was one of the Coordinating Lead Authors of a Global Literature Review on Digital Textbooks and Other Digital Educational Media. I was part of a larger international expert group from almost all continents. Together we worked for nearly 10 months on producing a review of state-of-the-art technologies and their application in digital education. The whole work is focused on rethinking pedagogies and comparison of technological development and initiative from the government and the applicability of sources among 21st century learners pri-



*Lidiya at the Transforming Education Conference for Humanity TECH 2017, India*

marily on primary and secondary levels. The substantial research has been presented to several European ministers of education at UNESCO HQ. The book is planned to be released in the end of November 2019.

**Q: What is your vision for education in Central Asia within ten years?**

With limited funding coming from state budgets the situation cannot be improved in a short period. I believe the situation will remain and most of the funding will continue to come from external donors. Yet, there might be another scenario, when the governments are no longer fully responsible for developing curriculum. Then, either publishing houses or tech companies enter the market. For now, the interest mostly comes from in-

ternational publishing houses. Perhaps in ten years the market will be diversified with edtech companies.

**Q: And the last question is related to the time-management. You run and participate in several projects, participate in events (around the world) related to your field of expertise, conduct your own research all at the same time. What is the secret?**

There is really no secret. Some have better time-management skills than others. I prefer to go after projects that help me excel and improve my professional skills, which does not mean I always succeed, but it's worth the try.



## MA in Politics and Security Programme 2018-2019



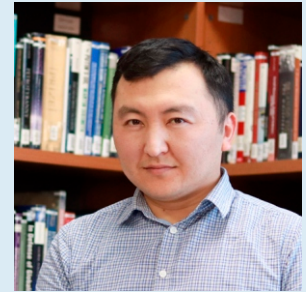
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Kyrgyzstan



**Assel Murat**  
Kazakhstan



**Bakhtibeki  
Otambekzoda**  
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**Daniar Oskonbaev**  
Kyrgyzstan



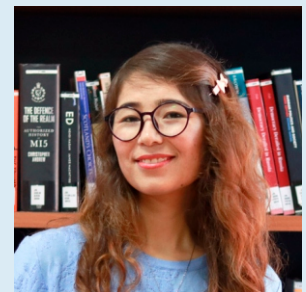
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Tajikistan



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Tajikistan



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Afghanistan



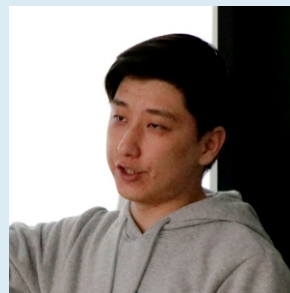
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Afghanistan



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Uzbekistan



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Kazakhstan



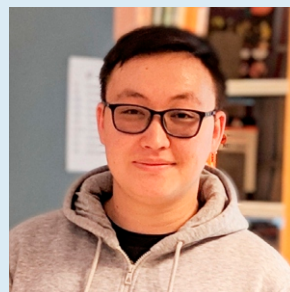
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Turkmenistan



**Mariia Liamtceva**  
Russia



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Afghanistan



**Mirlan Otorbaev**  
Kyrgyzstan



**Mirsaid Uzakov**  
Uzbekistan



**Mohammad Irfani**  
Afghanistan



**Nadezhda Tatkalov**  
Kyrgyzstan



**Parvin Hejran**  
Afghanistan



**Rabiia Dzholoman kyzy**  
Kyrgyzstan



**Rustam Muhamedov**  
Turkmenistan



**Shabnam Davlatbekova**  
Tajikistan



**Sherzod Shamiev**  
Tajikistan



**Symbat Abisheva**  
Kazakhstan



**Uulbosun Emilbekova**  
Kyrgyzstan



**Zhalgas Bolat**  
Kazakhstan



# MA in Economic Governance and Development Programme 2018-2019

WELCOME NEW ALUMNI



**Abdul Majeed Stanikzai**  
Afghanistan



**Abdulvahhobi Muminjoniyon**  
Tajikistan



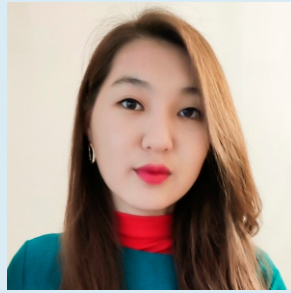
**Afsona Atobekova**  
Tajikistan



**Aidana Narbekova**  
Kyrgyzstan



**Aizuura Dzhumataeva**  
Kyrgyzstan



**Almagul Ishenbek kyzy**  
Kyrgyzstan



**Anisgul Khadimi**  
Afghanistan



**Begimai Kulukeeva**  
Kyrgyzstan



**Farrukh Saidmamadov**  
Tajikistan



**Jursun Ismail Kyzy**  
Kyrgyzstan



**Meerim Abdykalykova**  
Kyrgyzstan



**Minura Maksatbekova**  
Kyrgyzstan



**Muhammadali Eshov**  
Tajikistan



**Sakhovat Homidov**  
Tajikistan



**Saltanat Tursungazieva**  
Kyrgyzstan



**Ulanbek Djailoobaev**  
Kyrgyzstan



**Ulugbek Aslanov**  
Uzbekistan



**Wahidullah Saleh**  
Afghanistan



**Zahra Rezai**  
Afghanistan



**Zhulduz Orazayeva**  
Kazakhstan

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