

Civil Servants and Academics Tackle Development Issues on the Economy and Natural Resource Management



Learners from Afghanistan and Tajikistan gathered at the UCA campus in Naryn to share their experiences and discuss topics related to development issues being faced in Afghanistan and Tajikistan and how they are working to address them.

Fifty-five representatives from the academic community and government from Afghanistan and cross border regions of Tajikistan met to participate in two programmes in Kyrgyzstan as part of the University of Central Asia's Graduate School of Development (GSD), which has developed two unique programmes tailored to respond to critical issues in

these countries – economic development and natural resources management.

The Executive Masters in Economic Policy (EMEP) Programme of the GSD's Institute of Public Policy and Administration (IPPA), aims to equip civil servants with sound theoretical

knowledge and tools of economic management and policy-making required to tackle issues faced by developing economies. Currently 30 civil servants from the Afghan Ministry of Finance and three representatives of the Aga Khan Foundation Afghanistan are enrolled in the second cycle of the programme.

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Master Plan Development Workshop Held in Naryn

UCA held a workshop on town master-plan development, as part of the University's Town Development project, from July 19-21 in Naryn (Kyrgyzstan). The introductory course helped enhance the awareness, knowledge and skills associated with master plan development exercises of relevant stakeholders, and created an enabling environment for town development, aligned with modern urban planning. It also informed local decision makers about modern approaches in urban development focusing on master



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Dr. Madina Junusova (standing left), Research Fellow of UCA's Institute of Public Policy and Administration led the training at the Naryn campus.

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Civil Servants and Academics Tackle Development Issues

The School has also developed a three-week post-graduate Certificate Programme in Natural Resources Management (CPNRM) through UCA's Mountain Societies Research Institute (MSRI). Twenty faculty members and researchers of Badakhshan University, Bamyan University, Khorog State University and Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) in Afghanistan are being trained on five integrated topics, covering the most pressing natural resource issues in Afghanistan and Tajikistan: Concepts of sustainability and sustainable land management; Integrated Agricultural Management and Food Systems; Livelihoods in rural mountain communities;

Natural Hazards and disaster risk reduction; and Climate Change. In addition to the training, the learners will also take the knowledge gained back to their home universities and work to integrate their learnings into the curriculum.

Both educational programmes are part of the on-going project 'Pathways to Innovation: Strengthening Mathematics, Science, and Economic Policy Capacity in Afghanistan and Central Asia', funded by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Canada, and the Aga Khan Foundation Canada.

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Master Plan Development Workshop

planning tools, and offered valuable insights, approaches and experiences of economic, social and environmental constituents. The workshop format included interactive presentations, group work, and discussions on how to come up with a workable town development vision and plan.

"The support of the Aga Khan Development Network and the University of Central Asia is significant in all aspects of development of our Oblast," noted Kasen Azizov, Deputy Governor of Naryn, at the opening ceremony. "This workshop is another example of the fruitful collaboration between the Naryn Oblast Government and UCA, and we hope all participants will benefit, and help support in the development of the Naryn master plan."

During the workshop, participants developed practical skills by producing sketches for the development of a park near UCA's campus. They also participated in a park clean-up and made recommendations to local residents on how to help keep the area clean.

Twenty-nine participants attended the capacity building workshop including representatives from the Naryn municipality and Chief Architect's office, State Institute of Urban Planning and Architecture, Kyrgyzstan Association



Alym Abdraimov (left), Chairman of the Union of Architects of the Kyrgyz Republic, receiving a certificate from Emilbek Alymkulov (right), Mayor of Naryn.

of Architects, State Committee for Architecture and Construction in Kyrgyzstan, as well as representatives from the Khorog municipality and Chief Architect office of Khorog and GBAO, the State Institute of Urban Planning and Architecture of Tajikistan affiliation "Shahrofar".

The course was delivered by Dr. Madina Junusova, Research Fellow of UCA's Institute of Public Policy and Administration (IPPA). The training was organised in conjunction with

UCA's IPPA as part of the University Town Development project, in the framework of a memorandum of understanding between the Aga Khan Development Network and the Naryn Municipality for the development of Naryn's Master plan.

Concluding the training, Emilbek Alymkulov, Mayor of Naryn, presented certificates to the participants. On behalf of the Association of Architects of Kyrgyzstan, two books were also handed over to the library of UCA.

Good to Know!

In 2018, during an event celebrating Naryn's 150th anniversary, UCA pledged to contribute 50% (4.5 million Kyrgyz soms) towards the cost of developing the town's Master plan.

Second Summer School on Learning Landscapes Kicks Off at UCA

The Mountain Societies Research Institute (MSRI) of UCA and the German Research Centre for Geosciences (GFZ) began its Second Summer School on "Learning Landscapes through Environmental Research and Monitoring" on July 3rd at UCA for 22 undergraduate and master's students from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. It is organised by UCA and GFZ as a part of the Paleoclimate, Environmental Change and Social Interaction in Central Asia (PALESCA) project, funded by the German Federal Ministry for Education and Research (BMBF).



Over nine days, Research Fellows and experts of MSRI, GFZ, University of Amsterdam, Naryn State University, Central-Asian Institute for Applied Geosciences, Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University, KyrgyzHydroromet and CAMP Alatoo Public Foundation introduced students to geology, natural resources management, paleoclimatology, geomorphology, dendrochronology, wildlife studies, and socio-economic aspects of mountain regions development.

"We offer an intensive, yet exciting programme aimed at enabling students interested in environmental sciences to enhance their knowledge and expertise in scientific research," said Dr. Lira Sagynbekova, MSRI Research Fellow. "Participants had an opportunity to attend various lectures and laboratory exercises, and also experience fieldwork to get acquainted with scientific methodology covering a wide spectrum of research techniques."

Summer School participants represented 10 universities, including Sabrina Muzafari who is studying Earth and Environmental Sciences at UCA in Khorog, Tajikistan. "I am excited about learning from researchers about their work and projects. There are engineers, biologist, oil-engineers, and representatives from different sectors. Each of us looks at the questions and problems from a different angle which creates very interesting discussions."

Professional Development Sessions Boost Teacher Skills in Khorog

UCA's Education Improvement Programme (EIP) conducted a teacher professional development workshop at UCA's Khorog campus for 20 English teachers from Aga Khan Foundation supported schools in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast from July 22-31. It focused on further developing

teachers language skills, and enhancing their ability to teach the English language. The content and methodology for the workshop was developed by EIP staff, Jamal Papieva and Gulmira Orynbayeva, and sessions were led by SPCE and EIP staff.

"We learnt lots of techniques, approaches and methods of teaching, and found out that although the majority of us are experienced teachers, there is still a lot to learn about developing the speaking, listening, writing, and reading skills of our students," said Garibmamadov Mastali, English teacher at School #17 in the Rushan district. Bakhtibekova Meh-rangez, English teacher at Khorog Presidential School added that the workshop also gave them an opportunity to understand that it is never too late to learn.

Specially designed evening activities had participants conversing with Albina Bhimani, Native English speaker and volunteer from the United States, to improve their listening and speaking skills, as well as produce resources to facilitate teaching and learning in their schools. Following the training, participants will implement all learnt knowledge and skills in teaching English in their schools, and will receive additional support and coaching to ensure improved student learning outcomes.



UCA and Naryn State University Sign Agreement on Teacher Development

UCA's Education Improvement Programme (EIP) and the S. Naamatov Naryn State University signed an agreement to collaborate on professional development and teacher education programmes.

As part of the agreement, UCA will support the development of NSU's pre- and in-service teacher education programmes, NSU will deliver professional development programmes for teachers from EIP partner schools, including providing follow-up support and teacher coaching, and the institutions will also jointly engage in education research. In June, EIP signed a similar agreement with Osh State University.



Bernadette Dean (left), Head of UCA's Education Improvement Programme, signed the agreement with Dr. Siyaev Tashtanbek Monoldorovich, Rector of S. Naamatov Naryn State University.

Experts Explore Issues and Solutions for Cultural Heritage Development

UCA's School of Arts and Sciences in collaboration with the Open Society Institute Assistance Foundation in Tajikistan organised an academic seminar on Cultural Heritage and Sustainable Development at UCA's Khorog campus on July 26-27. The seminar aimed at discussing the values of the tangible and intangible forms of the rich cultural heritage of Tajikistan, and their link and use for sustainable development in the country.

Presentations discussed the challenges of maintaining museums and unprotected cultural sites, reviewed the Tajik film industry, the role of endangered Pamir languages in preserving and transmitting heritage, the study of handicrafts, and explored the link between cultural heritage and developing local economies, tourism, and handicraft in various parts of Tajikistan.

"The seminar provided participants with a lot of practical advice on specific problems linking cultural heritage and development," said Professor Ramazon Nazariyev, from the Tajik Pedagogical State University. "The presenters brought vivid and visual examples from a wide range of sources, promoting many productive discussions."

Over 20 participants from different regions of Tajikistan included researchers and practitioners from Tajik Pedagogical State University, Institute of Humanities, Institute of History and Archaeology, M. S. Andreev Museum of Ethnography of the Tajik Academy of Sciences, Khorog State University, Zerafshan and Pamirs Eco-Cultural Tourism Associations, and Editors and Journalists of the parliamentary newspaper of Sadoi Mardum and a BBC project.

Keynote presentations were delivered by Professor Ramazon Nazariyev from the Tajik Pedagogical State University and Dr. Chorshanbe Ghoibnazarov from UCA's Cultural Heritage and Humanities Unit (CHHU), and covered specific cultural features of the Tajik people, as well as research and publications of UCA's CHHU. Representative of the World Bank, and Aga Khan Foundation (Tajikistan) also made presentations about the initiatives of their organisations in promoting cultural heritage.

Yodgor Faizov, Governor of the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast, addressed seminar participants about linking academic studies on cultural heritage to development, which is in line with Tajikistan's priority areas for 2019 as the "Year of Rural Development, Tourism and Folk Crafts."

Overall the participants highlighted the important role of the seminar in defining future cooperation between the UCA and other institutions in Tajikistan. The seminar was organised by Dr. Sultonbek Aksakolov, History Faculty Member at UCA, and Dr. Diana Pauna, Dean of UCA's School of Arts and Sciences, in cooperation with Dr. Nazarkhudo Dastambuev, Director of the Programs of Education, Art and Social Activism of the Open Society Institute Assistance Foundation Tajikistan.



US Ambassador Visits UCA's Khorog Campus



The Ambassador of the United States to Tajikistan, John Mark Pommersheim (standing right), visited the UCA Khorog campus on July 27. Ambassador Pommersheim toured the university campus, and was introduced to the UCA's mission, and academic programmes by Dr. Diana Pauna, Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences. During his visit he also had an opportunity to address and interact with participants of the academic research seminar on Cultural Heritage and Sustainable Development and teachers from a Professional Development Workshop for English Teachers facilitated by UCA's Education Improvement Programme (pictured).

The US Ambassador was pleased to see the opportunities offered to young adults from the mountain regions and UCA's outreach activities. He stressed the importance of studying the rich cultural and historical heritage of the Tajik nation, and presented UCA with a Tajik language book by Frederick Starr.

UCA Wins Thrilling AKDN Football Tournament



UCA's staff and football team celebrate their win at the AKDN football tournament. From L to R: Prof. Dr. S. Sohail H. Naqvi, Iskender Isanov, Kazybek Kuikeev, Dr. Shamsh Kassim-Lakha, Tynchtykbek Makerov, Nurbek Bogachiev, Aitbek Imankulov, Ulanbek Sadybakasov, Melis Asankadyrov, Kumarbek Aliev, Askarsho Muibshoev, Janybek Toktor uulu, Asuan Suiundukov, Argen Aiylych uulu.

UCA's football team claimed victory at the Aga Khan Development Network's (AKDN) Football Tournament on July 6th. Over 200 staff and friends of AKDN agencies attended the tournament held in Bishkek.

Six teams comprising staff from different AKDN agencies competed for the Champion's Cup including UCA, the Kyrgyz Investment and Credit Bank (KICB), First MicroFinance Company, Ustatshakirt, Jubilee Insurance, and the Aga Khan Foundation. UCA won the final game in a thrilling match, beating KICB 2-1. Salamat Jumadilov from Ustatshakirt, and Bektur Inkerbekov from KICB won the Best Player and Best Striker awards.

Fifth Summer Upgrading Camp Held in Naryn and Khorog



This year 130 Grade 9 and 10 students from Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan participated in UCA's three-week Summer Upgrading Camp in Naryn (Kyrgyzstan) and Khorog (Tajikistan) from July 1-19.

Designed to upgrade students' English, math, and science skills, the Camp sessions followed a rigorous schedule

combining academics with other learning opportunities. Students received 50 hours of English, 32 hours of mathematics and 12 hours of science lessons, using curricula developed by North American educational experts and adapted to fit the needs of Central Asian students. Students were also engaged in extra-curricular activities such as morning exercise, sports, team building events,

mental obstacle course, debates, talent shows, bonfires, movie night, games night, and writing business grant proposals. At the closing ceremony in Khorog, Government representatives from the education sector highlighted the importance of education in Central Asia, and how UCA is successfully pursuing its aim to provide students with a high-quality education.



UCA Student Wins Best Speaker Award at Republican Debate Tournament

The Aga Khan Humanities Project (AKHP) Debate Club of UCA organised a Republican Debate Tournament dedicated to the 7th Anniversary of the first English debate club in Tajikistan, and World Day against Trafficking in Persons, on July 29-30 in Dushanbe.

UCA student, Mirzonabot Mirzonabotov won the Best Speaker Award at the tournament competing against 40 debaters from across Tajikistan. Two teams from UCA's Khorog campus competed, and the UCA Pride Team, represented by Saif ur Rehman and Parvina Sultonmamadova, won second place in the competition.

The tournament aimed to build cooperation between debaters from Tajikistan, and it was held jointly with the United



Participants of AKHP's Republican Debate Tournament in Dushanbe.

Nations International Organization for Migration and the United States Agency for International Development.

Building Capacity of IT Instructors in Kyrgyzstan

UCA's School of Professional and Continuing Education (SPCE) held a graduation ceremony on July 19th in Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan) for 50 Information Technology Instructors from 26 secondary schools in Naryn and Osh Oblasts, who completed the International Computer Driving Licence (ICDL) training programme delivered by UCA. The ICDL training enables instructors to teach the ICDL programme to Grade 6-9 students, covering four modules of the advanced computer literacy qualification, including Computer Basics, and Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint.

"Your work as teachers touches the lives of many young people, and will open doors for lifelong learning and development," said Prof. Dr. S. Sohail H. Naqvi, Rector of UCA, congratulating the graduates. "Through this training programme, UCA aims to contribute to the education of teachers, as well as support the government of Kyrgyzstan in its digital initiatives."

The ICDL training programme was implemented with the support of UCA as an official operator of ICDL in Central Asia, and was conducted under the "Demilgeluu Jashtar" project, funded by the United States Agency for International

Development. As part of this project, 50 schools will be selected for implementing ICDL programme and 10 ICDL test centres will be created throughout Kyrgyzstan, reaching 100 IT teachers, and 27,000 students. Currently, 11 schools from the Naryn region are implementing ICDL programmes and two testing centres have been opened. Over the last 1.5 years, over 4,000 students from these schools have already been trained and 67 teachers have received ICDL training certificates.

The "Demilgeluu Jashtar" project is aimed at increasing economic employment and civic engagement of young people in the Kyrgyz Republic. The project is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and is implemented by the Mountain Societies Development Support Programme for Kyrgyzstan, the University of Central Asia, Association of Social Entrepreneurs, International Educational Debate Association in Central Asia, and Accelerate Prosperity.



SPCE in Kazakhstan Trains State Agency Staff



A training on the “Development of Communicative Competencies and Conflict Resolution” was held on July 23-30 by UCA’s SPCE in Kazakhstan, for state agency staff who are engaged in tourism including customs officers, airport staff, as well as migration, road, and tourist police. It was held in Taldykorgan, Ucharala (Alakol Rayon), and Jarkent (“Khorgos” International Centre of Boundary Cooperation) regions of Kazakhstan, and aimed at developing communicative competencies and develop conflict resolution skills.

SPCE Students Upgrade their Computer Skills



Sixteen students from UCA’s School of Professional and Continuing Education learning centre in Ishkashim (Afghanistan) graduated from SPCE’s International Computer Driving Licence programme, an advanced computer literacy course, on July 28th.

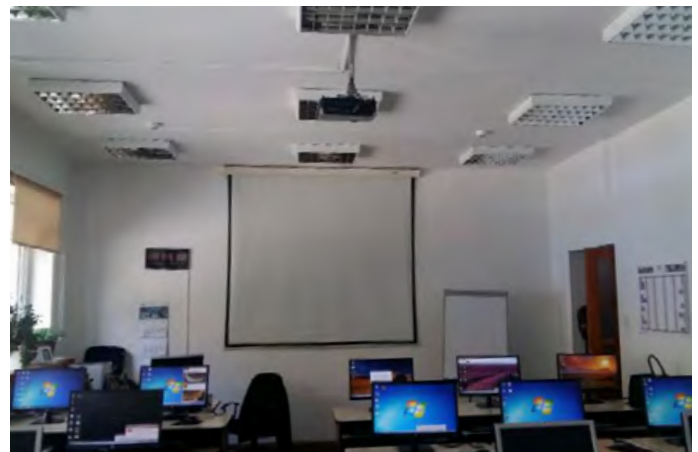
Participants completed over 300 academic hours, covering computer and online essentials, as well as topics including word processing, spreadsheets, databases, and presentations.

Entrepreneurship Programme in Afghanistan in Full Swing



UCA’s SPCE is conducting an entrepreneurship programme for women in the Badakhshan, Takhar, Kunduz and Bamyán provinces of Afghanistan. On July 19th, students in the Badakhshan province visited a women’s dairy production business, a handicraft shop, as well as the Pamir’s women Trader Organisation. They conducted market research and took interviews with business owners to learn from their experiences, and develop a short study about the market. The programme is organised as part of the Community-led Economic Stability Project (ACES), supported by the Government of the Netherlands and the Aga Khan Foundation Afghanistan, and implemented by UCA’s SPCE.

New Agreement Upgrades SPCE’s Computer Lab



UCA’s School of Professional and Continuing Education has signed an agreement with the Pamir Innovation Hub (PIH) and Worldwide Education Fund (WEF) of the Dallas Foundation in the United States, for WEF to provide over \$32,000 in grants to support SPCE’s Computer labs.

This includes a donation of 21 high speed computers to SPCE in Khorog, and is aimed at improving the scope and efficiency of SPCE’s computer labs and expanding teaching opportunities to SPCE students. The computer lab will also be used for teaching Emerging Technology courses by certified teachers trained through a WEF scholarship programme.



SPCE Offers English Courses for Journalists

UCA's School of Professional and Continuing Education in Dushanbe conducted outdoor English classes for journalists at the resort area of Guli Mayda in Varzob (Tajikistan). It was held in July and led by SPCE instructors Bakhtiyor Davlatmurodov and Nigina Bakhtibekova. The English for Journalists programme is funded by the United States Embassy in Dushanbe.

Publications



Mountain Societies Research Institute Annual Report 2018

UCA's Mountain Societies Research Institute (MSRI) Annual Report for 2018 is now available online. In 2018, MSRI planned the relocation of its main office to UCA's campus in Khorog (Tajikistan) in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast. MSRI is engaging in new research activities in Tajikistan and in northeast Afghanistan, as well as supporting the Earth and Environmental Sciences Programme at UCA.

Read more about these and other exciting projects in MSRI's 2018 Annual Report: <http://bit.ly/MSRI-AR-18>.



Long-Term Evidence-Based Migration Policy for Kyrgyzstan

UCA's Institute of Public Policy and Administration and the United Nations in Kyrgyzstan have released a new policy brief, developed as an output from the Development Dialogue in March 2019 on "Comprehensive Long-Term Evidence-Based Migration Policy for the Kyrgyz Republic". It gives a short overview of the current situation and trends in migration policy and presents a set of recommendations for developing a comprehensive long-term evidence-based migration policy for the Kyrgyz Republic.

Read the brief in [English](#), [Russian](#), or [Kyrgyz](#).

UCA Students Intern at Rural Support Programmes in Pakistan



As part of the UCA's Cooperative Education Programme, three UCA undergraduate students, Arslan Younas (left in photo), Faheem Ashraf (right in photo) and Safdar Jan (2nd from right) worked as Research Interns at the Rural Support Programmes Network (RSPN) in Pakistan in June 2019.

They conducted field visits to the Union Council (UC) Kotehra in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan, where one of the 10 Rural Support Programmes (RSPs), Ghazi Barotha Taraqiati Idara (GBTI), is working towards the betterment of people's livelihoods and social lives.

The field visit was aimed at better understanding the impacts of GBTI's interventions in Kotehra on people's mindsets, the way they live their lives,

and insight into how these interventions have changed the socio-economic system. By interviewing local communities and interacting with GBTI officials, the interns compiled a detailed report that showcases GBTI's interventions and positive impacts in Kotehra. Read the full report: <http://www.rspn.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/GBTIs-Interventions-in-UC-Kotehra.pdf>

"Working with RSPN and GBTI was a true eye-opener for me, as I learnt about an entire network of Rural Support Programmes that target the socio-economic upliftment of rural communities. It was a great experience to work closely with organisations that are working for rural development in my home country on such a impressive scale," said Arslan Younas.

Announcements

UCA Scholarship Opportunities at Cambridge University

UCA's Central Asian Faculty Development Programme (CA FDP) in partnership with Cambridge Trust is pleased to announce scholarship opportunities for doctoral study at the University of Cambridge, United Kingdom. CAFDP offers support to Central Asian scholars who wish to pursue doctoral studies by providing them financial assistance and opportunities at international affiliate universities for advanced study and research. Learn more about the doctoral scholarship programme at an [upcoming information session](#), or on UCA's website for more on past and current fellows: <http://bit.ly/CAFDP>.



International Conference on Digital Transformation in Central Asia



UCA and High Technology Park (HTP) of the Kyrgyz Republic will host a joint conference 'Digital Transformation in Central Asia', to be held in Bishkek from October 4th to 6th 2019.

This will be an annual event and is aimed at providing IT leaders the opportunity to connect with 100+ Chief Information Officers within Central Asia and abroad to collaborate and solve technology problems together. The Conference will offer practical sessions, internationally known speakers and presenters, and workshops focusing on the AI, Internet of Things, Cyber Security, Governance and technology innovation and digitisation. The Conference is open to Chief Information Officers, Chief Data Officers, and IT leaders. To register, or for further information on the ticket cost, conference speakers and 3-day programme, visit: <http://dtca.kg>.

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