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ABOUT THE PROGRAM: U.S.-Central Asia Education Foundation (U.S.-CAEF) Enterprise Student Fellowship Program is a merit- and need based undergraduate scholarship program sponsored by the U.S.-Central Asia Education Foundation and the U.S. Department of State, and administered by American Councils for International Education. The Foundation, in partnership with the American University of Central Asia in Bishkek (AUCA) & the KIMEP University in Almaty, provides educational opportunities in business and technologies for students from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan & Uzbekistan to cultivate a principled entrepreneurial environment in Central Asia that fosters the growth of free enterprise and open markets.



THE FOUNDATION IS GRATEFUL FOR SUPPORT FROM THE U.S. GOVERNMENT, ITS CITIZENS & THE CENTRAL ASIAN-AMERICAN ENTERPRISE FUND, WHICH HAVE MADE ITS OPERATION POSSIBLE.

LEADING THROUGH NEW EXPERIENCES

GRAND FINALE OF BUSINESS CASE COMPETITION

BY GAVKHARKHON MAMADZHANOVA, PRESIDENT OF KIMEP CASE CLUB



GAVKHARKHON MAMADZHANOVA, PRESIDENT OF KIMEP CASE CLUB (3RD LEFT)

The Grand Finale of Business Case Competition, organized by the KIMEP Case Club, took place on November 16. This was the first case competition in cooperation with Magnum Cash & Carry, one of the biggest retail businesses in Kazakhstan. As the current KIMEP Case Club President, I took the initiative to look for companies who are willing to cooperate and provide business cases. More than 80 students registered to participate in the first round and only 5 teams made to the Grand Finale. Among the semifinalists were representatives of three universities: KIMEP University, Kazakh British Technical University (KBTU), and Nazarbayev University (NU). The most international team comprising students from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Singapore representing KIMEP University, Alpha Consulting, became the winner of the competition.

Business Case Competitions help students implement their theoretical knowledge in practice and improve their skills. For us, the organizing committee, it was a great chance to work with representatives of Magnum Cash and Carry and establish long lasting relationships. To sum up, organizing case competition helped us improve our leadership skills, widened our professional network, and improved our problem-solving skills.

“Organizing case competitions has been a great learning journey for our team. The success of these events wouldn’t have been possible without the help of my

U.S.-CAEF peers-

Zevar Mamadjonova, Savsangul Mamadloiqova, and Abduvohidkhuja Qodirov.”



GAVKHARKHON MAMADZHANOVA
PRESIDENT OF
KIMEP CASE CLUB

LEADING THROUGH NEW EXPERIENCES

CONTINUED

INSPIRATIONAL EXPERIENCE WITH YOUTH COUNCIL C5+1

BY SARFAROZ YUNUSOV, MEMBER OF AUCA STUDENT SENATE

At the beginning of the academic year, I was chosen as a member of Youth Council C5+1 from among 150 applicants to represent Tajikistan. Thirty members of the Youth Council C5+1 representing all five countries of Central Asia became a core group for organizing and participating in a series of workshops, trainings and seminars, debate tournaments, diplomacy-aimed events and small projects in civic engagement, all in support of reinforcing trust, mutual understanding and cooperation between Central Asian (CA) youth representatives.

As a member of this program, I was able to implement different projects: International Debate Tournament, Quiz Night C5+1, Central Asian Youth Peace Talks and others. This opportunity became a great platform for improving my skills and for networking with Central Asian youth. In 2020, we are planning to conduct more projects that we will implement with the support from the US Embassy in Bishkek. Moreover, Youth Council C5+1 is giving a chance to its members to implement their own project as well, which will be funded by the US Embassy. Together with other four members, I am planning to implement the project called “Seeds of Peace”.

Furthermore, I was part of the Leadership Academy organized by Youth Council C5+1 in Chunkurchak, Kyrgyzstan. It was a three-day Leadership Academy course to learn more about proposal writing, project design, and management. During three days, we developed seven project proposals focusing on environmental, counterterrorism, human rights, free speech, border issues, and mental health issues.

Due to my involvement in Youth Council I have expanded my horizon, made a lot of international friends, implemented different projects, and finally, it really helped me develop a set of skills in different fields. I am very lucky that I was chosen as a member of Youth Council C5+1!



LEADING THROUGH NEW EXPERIENCES

CONTINUED

PROMOTING ENTREPRENEURSHIP THROUGH ENACTUS

BY ARUYEL NURBEKOVA, PRESIDENT OF ENACTUS KIMEP

After a month of intensive training, sleepless nights, dozens of daily tasks to complete, my team and I did everything possible to organize first Enactus Case Championship at KIMEP.

In September 2019, I was elected as President of Enactus KIMEP, a student organization promoting entrepreneurial projects that address the 17 UN sustainable development goals and help solve challenges in our society. In addition to our main activities, we arrange professional development events for KIMEP students. Thus, we organized a guest lecture with a well-known Kazakh entrepreneur, Ablai Yusupov, and most recently, first Enactus Case Championship. It was a very challenging project as I had to solve complex tasks such as dealing with finance and budgeting on my own for the first time. The project required good time management, multitasking, team management, leadership, communication, delegation, and negotiation skills. In the past, I heard many times about the importance of these skills; however, I had not realized that I actually had them. The experience helped me discover my new talents and strengths as well as new opportunities. I realized how I love to do something that benefits the society and enjoy meeting interesting, purposeful, and ambitious people.

FROM IDEAS TO ACTION: COFFEE SHOP “SUBMARINE”



AUCA sophomore Islambek Ashyraliev opened a coffee shop which offers sandwiches similar to Subway sandwiches in the US. While taking part in the FLEX program a few years ago, Islambek fell in love with Subway sandwiches, and ever since he had been dreaming about recreating this type of sandwiches in Kyrgyzstan. “Subway near my U.S. school was my heaven. I didn’t have to explain to workers that I don’t eat pork. I would just tell them what I want in my sandwich, and it worked perfectly well,” recalled Islambek.

With the help of his friend’s funding, Islambek was recently able to realize his dream and open a little coffee shop called “Submarine” with Subway-style sandwiches and Turkish baked potatoes. It is located inside the City Bazaar at the intersection of Mederova and Jukeeva- Pudovkina in Bishkek.

Stop by and support Islambek’s business if you happen to visit the City Bazaar in Bishkek!



ARUYEL NURBEKOVA, PRESIDENT OF ENACTUS KIMEP (3RD LEFT)

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

ENHANCING MARKETING SKILLS THROUGH EUROBAK ACADEMY

BY GAVKHARKHON MAMADZHANOVA



GAVKHARKHON (RIGHT)

I was chosen to attend the European Business Association of Kazakhstan (EUROBAK) HR and Marketing Academy, which was held from September 26 to December 5. Only 40 participants were selected from among university students in Almaty. The main goal of this project was to improve students' practical knowledge and skills in the marketing, PR, and HR spheres.

Top managers of Takeda, Deloitte, Dentons, Red Bull, JTI, SHL Kazakhstan, and other companies conducted a series of workshops for students. The sessions were designed in an interactive manner where speakers shared their own experiences in solving cases, talked about peculiarities of their professions, and at the end of each session, we had a chance to ask questions. After each session, we received home assignments to apply acquired knowledge and offer our solutions to real business cases. In addition, we were asked to solve cases in groups during the sessions which helped me get acquainted with students from other universities and improve my teamwork skills.

EUROBAK HR and Marketing Academy was a great experience which I would recommend to other U.S.-CAEF fellows who are interested in marketing, PR, or HR. Take your chance and use this opportunity to acquire practical knowledge and meet new people!

MUN NEW SILK WAY MINI CONFERENCE

BY IMRAN ALIMOV

Al-Farabi Kazakh National University (KazNU), in collaboration with Ban Ki-Moon Institute for Sustainable Development, organized New Silk Way Mini Conference in Almaty on October 31. The conference started with welcome speeches by Vlastimil Samek, a UN representative in Kazakhstan, and M. Burkitbayev, Vice-Rector of KazNU. Among the attendees were Eric Meyer, U.S. Consul General; Erlan Isakov, Head of the Representative Office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan; and Bruno Pozzi, Director of the Regional Office for Europe, UN Environment Programme.

I was one of the 60 student delegates selected to participate in the event. As delegates, we discussed the most pressing global and regional issues, including the consequences of the desiccation of the Aral Sea as well as the themes related to gender equality and women empowerment. We started with our position speech, proceeded with several unmoderated and moderated caucuses and ended with a presentation of our resolution.

Even though the event lasted for seven hours, it was so interesting that I did not notice how the time passed. Participating in such simulations can help you enhance your soft skills, learn to listen to other points of view, and practice your public speaking, delegating and persuasion skills. In addition, you learn to find a common ground with people from different backgrounds and diverse experiences. Although this was my first Model UN experience, I was honored to be chosen by other participants as an Outstanding Delegate.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

CONTINUED

FESTIVAL OF YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN KYRGYZSTAN

BY AISULU RYSPAeva

On November 19, 2019, I attended a festive event in an innovative format dedicated to youth entrepreneurship development in the Kyrgyz Republic. Five teams from different universities of our country met to share the top 5 successful enterprise development projects that truly contributed to the society and showed a significant impact. As a student studying business, I am interested in learning different concentrations of my major and entrepreneurship is the key option for me. First of all, entrepreneurship is very needed for the prosperity of my country. Entrepreneurs are pillars and guarantors of stability and sustainable development. Therefore, I was extremely motivated to meet young entrepreneurs, business leaders, government representatives, as well as students and teachers of Kyrgyzstan. It gave me a push forward to think about how I can contribute to my country and support poor regions of Kyrgyzstan.



DREAMS COME TRUE: ENACTUS AUCA



BY FARANGIS MIRZOBEKOVA

Since secondary school, I have set a list of goals for myself and I have been working to achieve them. One of my dreams was to study at AUCA. Now I am studying at AUCA, and while studying here I have achieved another goal, which was to become part of the Enactus club.

Enactus is the world's largest experiential learning platform dedicated to creating a better world while developing the next generation of entrepreneurial leaders and social innovators. The Enactus network of global business, academic and student leaders is unified by our vision—to create a better, more sustainable world.

I joined Enactus in September 2019 as a coordinator of the Teenagers in Free Enterprise (TIFE) project. TIFE was created to help high school students learn more about business using real-life case studies and mentorship. I have a team of 10 teenagers; together with them, we are working on creating our own business.

Since I am a Business Administration student, this is a good chance to practice my knowledge in real world situations and to improve my leadership and teamwork skills. Thanks to TIFE, I have met many business leaders from Kyrgyzstan, who shared their success stories and even failures with us. This is my first experience of working in the sphere of business which helped me understand that I love my major. Moreover, it is a good chance for me to explore Kyrgyzstan and become more familiar with the Kyrgyz people and culture.

INTERNSHIPS & PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

GUIDED PATHWAY TO SUCCESS

BY NAZIRAKHON KHOLTURAEVA



I recently completed a 3-month internship at KPMG Tax and Advisory LLC. During my internship, I gained a lot of valuable experience. In the beginning, I was not sure if I should apply to Big 4, and if I could manage the work at a Big4 company in addition to my studies; however, I decided to challenge myself and applied. Luckily, after a long and challenging recruitment process, I was accepted. My internship at KPMG helped me develop my knowledge in the area of finance, improve my analytical and soft skills and build a good network. Along with this story, I would like to bring into attention the importance of the **U.S.-CAEF Mentorship Program**.

Along with this story, I would like to bring into attention the importance of the U.S.-CAEF Mentorship Program. My mentor is **Jahongir Rahimov**, KIMEP'16. Since my first year at KIMEP, Jahongir has helped me improve my professional skills in finance, and motivated me with his achievements. He also helped me to get ready for the interview with KPMG, and in fact, he was my performance manager throughout my internship period. In short, I would like to encourage our fellows to find a mentor if they do not have one yet, as having a mentor who knows more than you and is more experienced than you is one of the main keys to success.

FEELING CONFIDENT WITH ALUMNI SUPPORT

BY SEVARA TADZHIBAEVA

On December 19, I joined KPMG Bishkek as a full-time intern for three months. So far, we have only had 3-day trainings, but I already feel excited! Currently, there are 5 of us from AUCA who successfully passed the application stage, tests and interviews, and this is how we started our journey in one of the Big4 companies. Auditors can help a business to come over a financial crisis and give recommendations for improvement. I want to enhance my financial knowledge, learn analytical tools for presenting complex financial data, face and learn auditor's daily routines at work, and most importantly, to be able to present solid and realistic recommendations to businesses. So far, I have been assigned to Performance Managers (PM) and have been given some tasks already to prepare for the upcoming busy months for the company. **Although everything is new and tasks are challenging sometimes, I feel confident because of familiar faces I see at KPMG – U.S.-CAEF alumni.** I believe this internship at KPMG will help me plunge into not only local, but also international business experiences. A career in finance and audit will be a great asset for me to progress in the business field, and to open my own business in the future.



INTERNSHIPS & PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

CONTINUED

INTERNSHIP AT THE STATE AGENCY OF ANTIMONOPOLY REGULATIONS

BY SEZIM ZHENISHBEKOVA



SEZIM (RIGHT)



During Fall 2019, I interned at the State Agency of Antimonopoly Regulations. Throughout the internship, I was involved in the translation of letters to international organizations, writing protocols, making presentations for official meetings, etc. In addition to daily tasks, I worked with my colleagues on the organization of the “Your Rights” project in Naryn. Together with the Naryn regional department of the State Agency and Naryn inter-district management of labor and social development, we were able to gather socially vulnerable people to share information about consumer protection. The idea of implementing a workshop in remote areas of Kyrgyzstan such



as Naryn was very well supported by my colleagues, and even one of the leading specialists Zarina Kalmuratova found time to be a guest speaker. At the workshop, we used cases that backed up all knowledge received and stimulated further interest. Surprisingly, 80% of the participants did not know anything about the work of the agency.

Consequently, participants were very excited, active and asked for additional sessions regarding consumer protection rights. A follow up article about the project “Your Rights” was posted on the official web page of the State Agency of Antimonopoly Regulation under the government of the Kyrgyz Republic and banner about consumer protection was posted in public places for citizens. As a follow up of the “Your Rights” project implemented in Naryn, on December 3, 2019, the Department of Advertising, Consumer Protection, Unfair Competition, and International Cooperation held a seminar on the topic: “Your Rights” for university students of Bishkek State University.

To sum up, by interning in the public sector, I was able to enhance my understanding of the governmental structure, and how everything works in general. I am assured that the skills and network I have gained there will greatly help when I decide to open my own entity.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

REPRESENTING CENTRAL ASIA AT BUSINESS TODAY CONFERENCE IN NYC

BY NAZIRAKHON KHOLTURAEVA

On November 24-26, I attended the 45th International Conference organized by Business Today. Business Today is a non-profit organization founded by Steve Forbes, Jonathan Perel, and Michael Mims. From a pool of about 2,000 applicants, 129 students from 38 countries were selected and, I was the only attendee from Central Asia.

During the conference, I went through a personal transition and grew as an individual. The conference speakers from JP Morgan, Wells Fargo, McKinsey, Facebook, Moody's Analytics and others inspired me so much. I learned from their experience and took valuable advice from each of them. In addition, the attendees motivated me with their deep knowledge and experience in their fields. Thanks to the conference, I had a chance to talk with top managers from the big companies mentioned above and with students from leading universities like Harvard, Stanford, MIT, Cambridge, London School of Economics, etc. In addition, along with all attendees I was mentioned in the World Street Journal for the first time in my life. In short, the conference helped me to look at things from a different perspective and it made me realize how many opportunities are out there in the world. The conference provided not only professional benefits for me but also, I had an opportunity to meet my FLEX program host family and spend Thanksgiving with them. I highly encourage all current fellows to try their chance on this incredible opportunity and learn from the best.



NAZIRAKHON (RIGHT)

A SEMESTER AT STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK IN PLATTSBURGH

BY DILNAZ IMERAMZAYEVA



This fall I received a Global UGRAD scholarship to spend a full semester at State University of New York in Plattsburgh. Plattsburgh is a rather calm and interesting city in the United States. I am fascinated by its picturesque nature. In the fall, I hiked with a group of students and admired the beauty of the forests, mountains, lakes and rivers in this area.

I have successfully completed several courses related to my major and one U.S. studies course at SUNY Plattsburgh. My classes were very useful and informative. Moreover, taking courses related to my major, Finance, helped me create my future career goals.

As part of the Global UGRAD program, I had a chance to attend the End of Program Summit in Washington, DC attended by 120 students from over 60 countries. I learned a lot about my leadership style by attending different lectures during the conference. Besides, it was exciting to meet students from different countries and share my experiences with them as well as observe their culture and experiences. Apart from my academic life, I was involved in different volunteer activities. I volunteered for the Partners in Transition Project sponsored by Champlain Valley Educational Services. As many volunteers were interested in learning about my country, Kazakhstan, I arranged several country presentations. I gained an enormous and very useful experience by attending the Project's meetings and learned a lot about American culture and traditions.

My experience with Global UGRAD was truly fascinating and diverse. I had a unique chance to create warm memories and feelings that I will never forget in my life.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

CONTINUED

NETWORK BY CONSENSUS IN CENTRAL ASIA

BY AIANA RYSBEKOVA, KAIRAT TAGAEV



AIANA (2ND LEFT) AND KAIRAT (1ST RIGHT)

Kairat Tagaev and **Aiana Rysbekova** were selected to represent Kyrgyzstan at Central Asian Model OSCE and Youth Talks held on November 5-9 in Dushanbe. This event was conducted by the Organization for Cooperation and Security in Europe (OSCE), and gathered 35 young leaders (out of 500 applicants) from Tajikistan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Kazakhstan, Afghanistan, and Turkmenistan.

The main goal of the event was to educate youth through thematic workshops on political participation, information management, negotiations, and inclusive decision-making. We had a chance to present the social projects that we did in Kyrgyzstan. Kairat presented his project on orphanages which addressed key issues related to education and upbringing of kids from orphanages in CA. Aiana's project was about establishing a democratically elected student council in her former high school.

We learned valuable lessons from the work of other participants in their countries. Their projects inspired and motivated us to bring fresh ideas and develop them in Kyrgyzstan. This opportunity helped us to open up our perspectives on the relationships between CA and neighboring countries as well as to look at problems and come to solutions by raising our voices. This is crucial for us as we hope to become future leaders and entrepreneurs of Kyrgyzstan.

During these days we learned a lot about security in CA, border management, and education in rural areas, but most importantly, we made new friends. Now, we know young people with the same worldview in each CA country who became part of the Network by Consensus. This group already comprises 500 youth from Central Asian countries. We were glad to be part of this international youth event and represent Kyrgyzstan with the other three Kyrgyz participants.

BUILDING BRIDGES OF UNDERSTANDING

BY NURMUKHAMAD TURKBAEV

An investment in knowledge quickly pays off and guarantees a long-term effect on a student's future. Education is the main tool that helps a person to advance. Thus, I am still trying to improve education in Batken through debates. Last year, my project took place in a small part of this region, Arka Zone. Arka Zone has four villages and they are located along the border of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Because of the remote location, all four villages of Arka Zone do not have NGOs or educational centers, and are unaware of the debate culture. Therefore, due to the lack of information and resources, students from this area are not able to realize their goals and plans. Luckily for me, after winning the second fund from the AUCA Student Initiative Development Program (SIDP) this fall, I organized the 2nd Inter-Regional Debate Tournament among students from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. This project enhances students' debate skills which require development of their research, persuasion, argumentation, speaking and listening skills.

Last year, there were more than twelve ethnic clashes between Tajik and Kyrgyz residents. I hope my project will help foster friendship between the two nations' youth.



COMMUNITY SERVICE & VOLUNTEERING

STREET LAW SEMINAR FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED STUDENTS

BY SAVSANGUL MAMADLOIQOVA



SAVSANGUL MAMADLOIQOVA (2ND RIGHT)

This summer, I participated in the CAFAW project and applied for a small grant. CAFAW is the Central Asian Flexibility Workshop that was created to unite FLEX alumni from Central Asian countries and help them develop community projects. So, I used this opportunity and participated in the workshop and received a \$500 grant together with another FLEX alumna, Nigina Kholova, for a project called Street Law Kazakhstan Seminar. Street Law Seminar is conducted by students of law departments in secondary schools around Kazakhstan and other countries. This seminar aims to raise awareness among school students about bullying, cyberbullying, human rights and responsibilities.

I organized a Street Law Kazakhstan seminar in boarding school #4 for visually impaired and blind students. A total of 40 students from the 6th, 7th and 8th grades attended the seminar. The reason why we chose this target audience is that we believe that this knowledge could benefit them in the future. The seminar was conducted for 2 days, and included lectures, interactive games, and coffee breaks. By the end of the project, students were able to understand their rights and responsibilities in accordance with the Universal Human Rights Declaration of the United Nations and Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Participants provided positive feedback and expressed their gratitude, which motivated me to continue organizing such projects and learn from their outcomes.

COMMUNITY SERVICE & VOLUNTEERING

CONTINUED

INTERVIEW TO NEWS.TV ABOUT “VILLAGE GIRLS” PROJECT

BY AIGUL SAPAROVA



AIGUL SAPAROVA GIVING INTERVIEW TO NEWS.TV IN BISHKEK

This year, I coordinated a social project called “Village Girl.” Village Girl’s mission is to empower girls in the rural areas of Kyrgyzstan, enable them to reach their fullest potential and inspire them to strive for their dreams. The project was initiated to start a chain of empowerment, sisterhood and girl-power culture among the village girls.

On October 12, which was the International Day of the Girl, I gave an interview about “Village Girl” to a local TV channel - News.TV. I shared about our initiative and the general idea of why we should support girls in our communities.

On November 6-9, our team of seven traveled to Kochkor village of Naryn region and conducted workshops and trainings for 14 girls. The sessions focused on nurturing

the girls’ soft skills, expanding their knowledge about gender equality, and developing their leadership potential, and critical and creative thinking abilities. We hired a professional trainer who led a special training session called “My Child Is Not Alone!” for the parents of our participants in order to develop better understanding between parents and daughters.

“Village Girl” was launched last year. In 2019, 14 former participants of the project came together to strengthen the knowledge they had received further, and 14 parents attended the adult learning training “My Child Is Not Alone!” Our team is willing to keep this initiative consistent and expand the project to other rural areas of Kyrgyzstan. I firmly believe that our consistent efforts can bring positive changes to our communities.



COMMUNITY SERVICE & VOLUNTEERING

CONTINUED

EDUMENTOR FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

BY OLGA PYKHOVA



OLGA PYKHOVA WITH EDUMENTORS (4TH LEFT, 2ND ROW)

In October 2019, I became a participant of the mentorship program called EduMentor for high school students from the regions of Kyrgyzstan. The program is initiated by the ProKG Club of Professionals. All mentors were selected from among alumni of the ProKG Leadership Program. I became a mentor for a girl from Jalal-Abad. The main outcome of this project for the mentee was developing her active listening, communication and interpersonal skills. The goal of the project is to promote participants' personal development

and to share information about educational opportunities with high schoolers. Working together with their mentors, mentees develop individual development plans. Mentors help participants develop leadership and critical thinking skills, as well as share their experiences of personal and professional development. It is important to listen to your mentee and NEVER give advice or suggestions. As a writing tutor, I also understood that all answers are inside a person, the only thing that you need to do is to listen carefully and ask the right questions.

The beauty of the project is that it is a win-win situation where mentors also learn a lot from their mentees.

Prior to this experience, the U.S.-CAEF program gave me an amazing opportunity to be a mentor for younger fellows Aiana and Dina. Definitely, there were difficulties in my position as a mentor.

However, only due to the U.S.-CAEF mentorship experience, I was able to find a common language with a new mentee easily and follow her through her personal development.

COMMUNITY SERVICE & VOLUNTEERING

CONTINUED

INTRODUCING RECYCLING ON CAMPUS

BY ZEVARKHON MAMADJONOVA, PRESIDENT OF TREE HUGGERS



This year, I became President of Tree Huggers. It is a student club founded by the U.S.-CAEF fellows of earlier cohorts that organizes ecological events and promotes a healthy way of living.

The first event that I organized was Recycling Day on November 8. The project was aimed at raising awareness among students about recycling garbage and taking care of nature. During the Recycling Day, our members collected recyclable waste. Students had to sort their garbage correctly into appropriate bins for which they received snacks and lottery tickets. At the end of the day, there was an online drawing and several winners were identified, who received hoodies with our Tree Huggers logo. Overall, students were interested in this event and took active participation.

As an organizer, I enjoyed my work; however, it was hard and I had to learn a lot of new things as it was my first event at KIMEP University. Because of this event, I started learning about tender and budget approval processes. Besides, after the budget approval, organizing the event itself was challenging but a very useful experience as I learned what organization of such events entails, who to contact, improved my marketing skills, and made new friends.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



AUCA HOSTS SCREENING OF U.S.-CAEF ALUMNUS BAKHROM TURSUNOV'S DOCUMENTARY FILM, "SUCCESSFUL STARTUPS IN SILICON VALLEY"

BY UULZHAN AITNAZAROVA AND MEERIM ZHANYBEK KYZY

Bakhrom, together with his team, won a U.S. Embassy grant and traveled to Silicon Valley in 2019 to create a documentary about up-and-coming startups there. They explored Silicon Valley from the inside, visited different startups, prestigious colleges and met inspiring people. Their resulting film, "Successful Startups in Silicon Valley," consists of eight parts and aims to motivate young people from Central Asia. Bakhrom kindly agreed to organize a screening of his movie for his U.S.-CAEF peers on January 18. On that day, U.S.-CAEF fellows had the chance to watch one of the most interesting parts of the film, ask questions and learn more about Silicon Valley, and find out more about Bakhrom's journey. After the event, Bakhrom was interviewed by the U.S.-CAEF Newsletter team.

COULD YOU PLEASE TELL US ABOUT THE U.S. EMBASSY GRANT? HOW DID YOU COME UP WITH THE IDEA TO MAKE A FILM IN SILICON VALLEY AND WHAT WAS YOUR MOTIVATION?

The U.S. Embassy in the Kyrgyz Republic accepts applications from production studios, journalists, television companies, and media labs for the Media CO-OP program every year. Finalists of Media CO-OP spend two weeks in the U.S.A. and create documentaries inspiring positive social change, especially in developing countries. My colleague Sulaiman Kuluev and I came up with the idea to make a film about successful startups in Silicon Valley and popularize the idea of starting your own startups all over Kyrgyzstan. Facebook, Uber, AirBnb, and many other successful businesses began as startups. After cooperating with the Kyrgyz National Broadcasting Corporation (KTRK), a national TV company, we applied and won the grant in 2018. KTRK agreed to transmit our films nationwide on television. In our team, Sulaiman was a narrator, I was a producer, and we worked with another experienced producer in the States, who was responsible for planning, time management, and logistics.

"I am very proud to see U.S.-CAEF alumni achieving high goals in different fields. I think Bakhrom's film is very inspirational for our fellows: we learned some tips about creating our own startups, asked questions related to our future careers, etc. What I learned from the video is that students need to be passionate about one field, but never stop learning about others."



SANZHAR ORMUKOV
AUCA SOPHOMORE



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

CONTINUED



WHAT IS THE FILM SERIES ABOUT?

The film consists of 8 parts that were agreed upon with KTRK: the first two parts are about the history of how Silicon Valley was born and what the tendencies were; the next parts explore more in-depth how to realize your idea and establish a startup, as well as various methods of getting funding, negotiating with potential investors, and developing teamwork, leadership, and entrepreneurial skills. For instance, Kickstarter is one platform that can help bring creative ideas to life through crowdsourcing. Thereafter, the series highlights successful startups such as Matrnet, which uses drones to transport blood between hospitals; and Viar Kachka, which serves as a virtual sportive gym named best startup of 2017. Even people in villages can become familiar with new tendencies in business and learn from the Silicon Valley startups by watching this series.

WHAT WERE THE MAIN INSIGHTS YOU TOOK AWAY FROM YOUR EXPERIENCE?

During our stay in Silicon Valley, we visited Facebook, Google, Singularity University,

and also interviewed professors from Stanford University. It was very interesting to talk to them. One of the ideas they suggested was building another Silicon Valley in Kyrgyzstan not by copying but using best practices that can be applied to the local realities.

Successful startups in Silicon Valley have much in common. Firstly, people work hard to turn their ideas into a reality, even working overtime or on holidays is not a barrier for them because they believe in their product. Secondly, they welcome collaboration, openness and exchanging ideas.

HOW CAN CENTRAL ASIA LEARN FROM SILICON VALLEY?

One of the engineers from Silicon Valley shared a very interesting idea with us. Usually, software engineers are mainly focused specifically on their own sphere. However, combining programming skills with other fields of knowledge can boost innovations and development. For example, as Kyrgyzstan is an agricultural country, teaching farmers tech skills would be highly efficient. With the help of tech knowledge, they could improve irrigation processes or come up with other innovations.

WHAT RESOURCES WOULD YOU RECOMMEND FOR THE FELLOWS WHO ARE INTERESTED IN STARTUPS?

- ▶ For those who are interested in startups and technology, Steve Jobs recommended watching a TV series called "Silicon Valley," a humorous and insightful show with 8 seasons.
- ▶ "21 Lessons for the 21st Century" by Yuval Noah Harari - the book is about how technologies like artificial intelligence affect our life, and provides answers to very deep questions.
- ▶ "The Start-Up of You: Adapt to the Future, Invest in Yourself, and Transform Your Career" co-authored by Reid Hoffman, founder of LinkedIn.

COULD YOU TELL US HOW YOU BECAME A PHOTO/VIDEO PROFESSIONAL?

Most people think that I am either a journalist or a software engineer; however, I graduated from the Business Administration Department, and there is a reason for this. During my NGA

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

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[New Generation Academy, a preparatory program at AUCA] year, I developed a passion for photography and videography. Even in my senior year, my thesis was about a business plan for a production studio in Kyrgyzstan. Upon graduation, my friends and I implemented this idea and launched our own production studio “Mark Twain.” Even though my main professional interests are photography and video production, my background in business has been helping me in all spheres of my life.

HOW HAS THE U.S.-CAEF PROGRAM IMPACTED YOUR LIFE?

For me, it was a life-changing opportunity to become a U.S.-CAEF scholarship recipient and graduate from one of the prestigious universities in Central Asia. The program gave me an opportunity to gain business knowledge, and discover my professional interests and strengths. It also helped me extend my network and strengthen my soft and hard skills.



WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT TODAY'S SCREENING EVENT?

First of all, thank you for organizing this event. I believe that most of the fellows became motivated to open their own startups and interested in exploring this sphere even more. Fellows showed a lot of interest and asked great questions, and we had a joyful informal discussion. I believe that one day some of them will become highly successful entrepreneurs in Central Asia.

ANY ADVICE OR RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OUR CURRENT FELLOWS?

Focus on what is important. Multitasking is good, but sometimes it is better to concentrate on one or two things and execute them in the best possible way. Do not spend too much time on social media and use your time efficiently.

I would also recommend finding a mentor and learning from him/her. It can even be a person whom you do not know personally. For example, one of my mentors is Bill Gates. I watch documentaries and read books about him. He implements so many innovative projects, especially in Africa to help the local people live better lives.

Thus, you can also find someone who would motivate you and read the books and watch the movies or TV series they recommend. His wife, Melinda Gates, is also an influential and inspiring person. Most of her projects are dedicated to women's empowerment around the world. So, your mentor can be either someone you know or a famous, influential figure that you look up to.



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

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BUSINESS BREAKFAST MEETINGS WITH ALUMNI IN ALMATY

Inspired by the overwhelming success of the business breakfast meetings held in Bishkek and organized by the U.S.-CAEF Alumni Association officers in 2019, the U.S.-CAEF graduates from KIMEP recently began hosting their own breakfast meetings in Almaty. Four breakfast meetings have been hosted so far, and special guests have consisted of U.S.-CAEF alumni who have found success in their respective careers, including **Timur Karimov** (KIMEP '17), Junior Brand Manager at Efes Kazakhstan; **Irina Abasova** (KIMEP '12), Founder of 3D printing company 'Create3D'; **Talgat Kadirov** (KIMEP '11), Chief Financial Officer at Republican Central Headquarters of Professional Militarized Emergency Services, LLP; and **Dastan Zhumagulov** (KIMEP '14), a freelance photographer and videographer whose work has appeared in Esquire, Men's Health, Harper's Bazaar, ZOLOTO, Berkin & Mika, and Yessentai Mall.

In his breakfast meeting with U.S.-CAEF fellows and alumni on January 18, **Dastan Zhumagulov**

shared with attendees how he made the decision to leave his corporate job at KazakhInstrakh in 2016 in pursuit of his true passions- videography and photography and how his business background is helping him in his career. Senior Bayan Bekbas said of the meeting,

"I really enjoyed our meeting and conversation with Dastan. I think his is a unique case which teaches us to follow your passions and dreams. Business breakfasts provide a good opportunity to acquire new interesting information and broaden your horizons."

Those who attended the breakfast meeting with **Timur Karimov** enjoyed that he shared unique insights about the marketing sphere. Prior to his current job at Efes, Timur held various positions in such organizations as Tayniy Sovetnik Ogilvy PR, KOGI Advertising Agency,



DASTAN ZHUMAGULOV



TIMUR KARIMOV (LEFT)

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

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and McCann Erickson. Over the summer, he and two colleagues entered a 48-minute film contest organized by Salem Social Media. The team found great success, and won a prize of about \$2,600.

Didorali Anoyatbekov, one of the U.S.-CAEF fellows in attendance at the breakfast meeting, found Timur's insight particularly helpful: **"Timur was able to clarify several aspects of the marketing field, and he also gave us some advice for personal growth. I found the business breakfast very productive. I am looking forward to meeting other talented speakers such as Timur."**

During the breakfast meeting with **Irina Abasova**, she spoke to attendees about her student years, her experience as President of AIESEC, and her study abroad experience in Portugal. She also detailed how she went from working with data analytics at Kaspi Bank to initiating her own startup in 3D printing.



IRINA ABASOVA (CENTER)

Attendees enjoyed hearing about the growth of Irina's business as well; in May 2019 she received \$6,000 grant from the Almaty akimat, and she now employs 15 people and uses much more sophisticated equipment than she did when she first started the company. Sophomore Zevar Mamadjonova said of the meeting, **"It was a great opportunity to ask questions about work and how to start working on our ideas. It was a motivational event and it actually gave me some ideas on what I can do right now (interning for a big company) while studying."**

Talgat Kadirov, who has been with Ernst & Young, working his way up the ladder from a member of the assurance staff in Astana in 2013 to senior audit manager in Almaty, recently began his position as CFO of his organization after being approached by headhunters, spoke to fellows about his company, which has 13 branches and about 3,000 employees. He also spoke about how to land a job with a Big 4 company and about his entrepreneurship in the field of mining and his current partnership with the Colorado School of Mines. They are currently working on developing an imaging system that helps detect oil sites. Following the meeting with Talgat, junior Mukhammadnosir Abduzhabbarov reported, **"I really liked that Talgat shared his own experience not only at Big 4 companies but also**

in entrepreneurship. I became seriously motivated and even started thinking about applying to Big 4 companies."

TALGAT KADIROV (LEFT)



BUSINESS BREAKFAST MEETINGS WILL TAKE PLACE THROUGHOUT 2020, AND THE U.S.-CAEF ALUMNI ASSOCIATION HOPES THEY WILL CONTINUE TO MAKE A POSITIVE IMPACT ON THE PROFESSIONAL GROWTH OF THE FELLOWS AND ALUMNI WHO ATTEND.

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THE POWER OF SHARING

“If you have knowledge, let others light their candles in it”

— Elizabeth Fuller

While interning at Lovelytics, a tech company in Washington, DC, **Meerim Moldaliev**, U.S.-CAEF Capstone fellow, was motivated by her supervisor to create an online bootcamp for 19 U.S.-CAEF fellows from AUCA to share her newly acquired knowledge about Tableau, a powerful and fast-growing data visualization tool used in the business intelligence industry. Knowledge of this tool is currently in high demand and its position in the business intelligence market is solid, and the trend is going upward – top companies in the world offer lucrative Tableau careers.

Meerim started the bootcamp when she was still interning in Washington, DC and finished the training in Bishkek after the program in January. By the end of the training each participant produced a final project using the tools that they had learned from Meerim. Meerim proudly displayed the dashboards created by her students on Facebook, and wrote, “Even though it was a short course and it required certain efforts and time for independent research and study, the students did an incredible job.



I personally was very proud of those who made it until the end of the last week. Congratulations to **Uuljan Aitnazarova, Shaislam Shabiev, Kairat Tagaev, Farangis Mirzobekova, Mirlan Kochkorbaev, Bibigul Arzybaeva,** and **Aiana Rysbekova!** All above would not have happened without the Capstone Program as I learned working on Tableau during my internship in Washington, DC. And I was inspired by my supervisor to make this course for others. Thanks to U.S.-CAEF for all those opportunities ... I've had throughout my university years!

All participants are immensely grateful to Meerim for equipping them with the skills which are currently in high demand in the business world. By organizing this training, Meerim has started a chain reaction of engagement. One of the participants, sophomore **Kairat Tagaev**, has already shared his knowledge with his groupmates at AUCA. This example proves once again that **great things happen when people share their knowledge, and more people become empowered and pass their knowledge to others!**

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

CONTINUED

PROMOTING FINANCIAL LITERACY IN TAJIKISTAN

BY USNIBEGIM RAHIMJONOVA, KIMEP'17, TEAM ASSISTANT,
INTERNATIONAL FINANCE CORPORATION, DUSHANBE



As a volunteer for the Economic Planning Board (EPB) supported by Ismaili Center of Dushanbe (ICD), I have contributed to the surveys of economic and financial needs of communities in Tajikistan. The surveys were conducted in August and October 2019 with the purpose of revealing the main constraints that hamper the economic well-being of the communities and businesses in Khorog, Khujand and Dushanbe. Based on the survey results, we provided recommendations to other teams of the EPB to address the needs of the communities and businessmen. As a result of these findings, we started providing trainings to help people find jobs in the future or expand their businesses and create entrepreneurs' unions. In addition, our work serves as the basis for building a network for business owners and employers and establishing connections with job seekers.

I have been involved in this project since summer 2019, mainly working on organizing trainings and collecting and analyzing data after their completion. We already conducted several workshops with speakers and experts on financial management skills, development of business plans, and economic and financial literacy. Volunteering allows me to contribute to my community in a meaningful way. It is an important part of my value system.

I believe that through volunteering we enrich not only the lives of other people, but our own lives as well because it allows us to learn about the needs of the people in your community and help them.

CLOSE UP: AIDAI TOPCHUBAEVA



After being accepted into the prestigious Mars Leadership Development Program out of a pool of over 800 candidates in 2018, Aidai (KIMEP'18) became a management trainee through the Mars Leadership Experience Program. This program consists of three 12-month placements where she learns all about marketing, sales, supply, finance, and human resources. She has now been given an international assignment for her second year, during which she will be located in Belarus with Mars' customer marketing department. In addition to this, she represents Mars at various events organized for students such as job fairs, case championships, guest lectures, and even some digital campaigns. While this all keeps her busy, she has also found time to volunteer at a local pet shelter where she helps clean and repair the shelters, feed the pets, and even assists with vaccinations.

ALUMNI UPDATES

ENTREPRENEURSHIPS

**Karimkhon Bukhadurov**

KIMEP'17, Founder of OGOZ

The company provides data analytics and bookkeeping services to businesses in Central Asia and abroad.

**Bahtiyar Jalilov**

KIMEP'14, Founder & Executive Producer of Tribalands

Bahtiyar has developed his own product, Cloud System for Entrepreneurs, and is currently negotiating with several potential investors.

**Azatbek Alibaev**

AUCA'19

After establishing his first internet service provider company in Nookat in the Osh region, Azatbek decided to extend his business to other areas of Kyrgyzstan. Currently, he is opening an office in Jalal-Abad. Next, he plans to open offices in Osh city, Kochkor-Ata, and Toktogul. In addition to managing his team, Azatbek is also responsible for the technical aspects, sales, and PR for his startup.

NEW JOBS

**Talgat Kadirov**, KIMEP'11

Chief Financial Officer,
Republican Central Headquarters
of Professional Militarized Emergency
Services, LLP.

**Aina Annageldieva**, KIMEP'12

Senior Treasury and Reporting
Specialist, Mars Kazakhstan

**Izat Osmonov**, AUCA'13

Financial Controller
Analyst, ExxonMobil,
Budapest, Hungary

**Karina Kussainova**, AUCA'14

Customer Experience
Associate, Toronto- Dominion
Bank, Toronto, Canada

**Asylgul Kenzhebayeva**, AUCA'15

After completing her MS in Operations Management from Ajou University, Suwon, South Korea in 2019, Asylgul was hired as General Manager of Advance Academy, a Bishkek-based education and career consulting company

**Adel Sultabekova**, AUCA'16

Business Analyst, Accelerate Prosperity,
Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN)

**Aigerim Almazova**, AUCA'16

Budget Analyst, International Organization for
Migration (IOM), Grand Saconnex, Switzerland

**Ilhan Yollyyev**, KIMEP'17

Business Analyst, Deloitte, Moscow, Russia

**Zuhro Qonunova**, KIMEP'18

Finance Assistant, International Alert Tajikistan

**Zhanna Kenzhebekova**, KIMEP'19

Marketing Specialist, Dobro Dent Dental
Clinic, Almaty, Kazakhstan

ALUMNI UPDATES

CONTINUED

PROMOTIONS



Tangulu Diushakhmatova, AUCA'11
Assistant Manager, Strategy and Operations
Department, KPMG Astana



Jahongir Rahimov, KIMEP'18 & Capstone'18
In recognition of his exceptional
accomplishments, Jahongir has been
promoted to Executive 3 at KPMG Almaty
skipping two levels.



Zuhro Ganjibekova, AUCA' 18
Investment Analyst and Project Manager,
Accelerate Prosperity, Dushanbe.



Bekzhan Akbayev, KIMEP'19
Financial Analyst, Philip Morris Kazakhstan



Medina Abylkasymova, AUCA'16
MA in Gender and Women Studies and
Researcher at Regional Academy on
the United Nations, Central European
University, Budapest, Hungary



Haknazar Hallygylyjov, KIMEP'19
MSc in International Management
at University of Klagenfurt, Austria, 2020-21

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



Almanbet Abylkasym uulu, AUCA'11
Almanbet won a John Smith Trust Fellowship
in 2019. The program provides exceptional
young leaders the opportunity to explore
issues of governance, social justice and the
rule of law through a month of workshops,
discussions, debates, visits and meetings
in the United Kingdom.

POST-GRADUATE STUDIES



Aigerim Toktogulova, AUCA'15
Master of International Relations,
Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry
of Foreign Affairs, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

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