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CELEBRATION OF LANDMARK YEAR

INNA TSOI, AUCA VALEDICTORIAN 2017

GRADUATION 2017

Graduation 2017 was a landmark year. It marked the tenth anniversary of the U.S.-CAEF operations and celebrated the seventh class of fellows to receive a university education through the Enterprise Fellowship Program. For a decade, U.S.-CAEF has been providing outstanding students who face financial challenges the unique opportunity to complete undergraduate degrees in business and economics at two of Central Asia's most respected universities, gain invaluable professional experience through internships in the region and in the U.S., and join a dynamic network of over 200 U.S.-CAEF alumni who today are among Central Asia's most promising entrepreneurs, business leaders, economists, and financial analysts.

In keeping with traditions established by previous cohorts, the 2017 graduating class upheld the high standards of the U.S.-CAEF program, completing their studies at KIMEP and AUCA with impressive results. Of thirty-three senior fellows, ten (or 30%) graduated with honors: **Shahnoz Jonmamadova, Zhamilia Klycheva, Asel Kaldybaeva, Gulnaza Khalmanbetova, Zarrinakhon Mulloboeva, Samatbek Osmonov, Azim Tilekov, Inna Tsoi, Jamshedi Umarzoda, and Alexey Yan.**

Inna Tsoi became the first U.S.-CAEF fellow to graduate with a perfect GPA. As the highest-ranking graduate, Inna was named valedictorian by the AUCA administration this year.

During the commencement ceremonies and receptions in Almaty and Bishkek, AUCA and KIMEP University officials honored U.S.-CAEF for its outstanding contributions to the development of Central Asia. In Almaty, **Raushan Kanayeva**, Director of the Corporate Development Department, acknowledged the important role of U.S.-CAEF in providing Central Asian youth with life-changing opportunities over the past 10 years, and announced the decision of the KIMEP administration to rename the university's major hall after U.S.-CAEF, in recognition of the 10-year anniversary of the program and as a sign of deep appreciation of the cooperation between KIMEP and U.S.-CAEF since 2007. In addition, after the official commencement events, KIMEP fellows and guests took part in a tree planting ceremony on the premises of the university. The idea was proposed by **Aidai Topchubaeva**, a rising senior from Kyrgyzstan.

10 (OR 30%) GRADUATED
WITH HONORS

NETWORK OF OVER 200
U.S.-CAEF ALUMNI

HIGHEST-RANKING AUCA
GRADUATE: INNA TSOI

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

U.S.-Central Asia Education Foundation (U.S.-CAEF) Enterprise Student Fellowships is an undergraduate business education scholarship program for academically gifted students sponsored by the U.S.-Central Asia Education Foundation (The Foundation) & 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 other activities 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 STEVEN F. SHEA EXCELLENCE AWARDS

GRADUATION 2017

During the graduation receptions, U.S.-CAEF Directors announced recipients of the Steven F. Shea Excellence Awards for graduating seniors and alumni. The Award was established by the U.S.-CAEF Board in May 2015 to commemorate Mr. Steven F. Shea, a founding director of U.S.-CAEF and its first President. **Stephen Weinroth** and **Mary Ginsberg** presented awards to the outstanding alumni and graduating fellows in recognition of their significant academic and professional achievements, service to the community, and active commitment to the economic growth of Central Asia. Two graduating fellows, one from each partner university, received the top honor of \$1,000 and a plaque of recognition. From among the alumni, one individual from AUCA and one from KIMEP were selected to receive the top honor of \$1,000 and a plaque of recognition. In addition, four honorable mention candidates, two from each university, were also selected to receive a certificate of recognition and a monetary grant of U.S. \$250.

AUCA SENIOR AWARD WINNER



**Samatbek
Osmonov**
AUCA

Samatbek graduated from the School of Entrepreneurship and Business Administration of AUCA summa cum laude. During his spring 2015 semester abroad, he earned the highest GPA (4.33 of 4.50) among all exchange students at Linton School of Global Business, Hannam University, South Korea.

Samatbek became a finalist in Start-up Weekend Kyrgyzstan, KPMG and PwC case competitions in 2016. These experiences became the foundation for the first AUCA Case Club, which Samatbek co-founded with other U.S.-CAEF fellows in June, 2016.

Samatbek's work experience includes an internship at "Ideagrad," research investment activity for a startup incubator; and conducting financial analysis at Mol Bulak, a microcredit company where he has markedly improved efficiency and productivity among more than 100 employees. In addition, Samatbek was a member of the AUCA debate club, Future Leaders of the World, Green Campus, the Unity Fund and Kelechek.

ALUMNI HONORABLE MENTION



Ignat Kim
AUCA, CLASS OF 2014
CO-FOUNDER & MANAGING
DIRECTOR | EXCHANGE STUDIO

Ignat started his professional career as a Specialist for the Monitoring and Analysis Unit at Manas International Airport in May 2014. In less than a year, he was promoted to Financial Director of the same department. Despite this success, Ignat decided to pursue his entrepreneurial dreams and left Manas in summer 2016 to co-found an educational center, Exchange Studio, in Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic. Currently, the center has three full-time and three part-time employees, and about 40 students. Exchange Studio provides not only a wide range of educational programs, it also helps local youth develop their potential and important qualities that will enable them face life's challenges and achieve success. Ignat also continues to support the Unity Fund, an AUCA charitable organization that he co-founded back in 2010 in response to the tragic events caused by ethnic clashes in his native Osh.



Izat Osmonov
AUCA, CLASS OF 2013
INTERNAL AUDITOR, FINCA
ENTREPRENEUR

As FINCA's internal auditor, **Izat** conducts risk-oriented audits of corporate procedures aimed at increasing the efficiency of companies' performances. Apart from his employment with FINCA, Izat is involved in the development of two start-ups: one related to an online ticketing system, and the second – to the supply of impor-



KIMEP SENIOR AWARD WINNER

ZARRINAKHON MULLOBOEVA (RIGHT)

**Zarrinakhon
(Zarrina)
Mulloboeva**
KIMEP UNIVERSITY

Zarrina, a Finance major, graduated from KIMEP magna cum laude. Zarrina is the founder of two university clubs-- Tree Huggers, an environmental club, and Half the Sky, an association for women in business at KIMEP. Zarrina was also managing editor of The KIMEP Times, which has been recognized as best corporate magazine in Kazakhstan for three consecutive years. In addition, Zarrina was a member of the KIMEP Honor Society, a prize winner of the MARS Case Competition and the CFA Institute Research Challenge, and a winner of the Debate Championship in Almaty in 2015. In 2016, Zarrina interned in the Corporate Finance Department of Bank Center Credit. Last summer, Zarrina organized a conference for young women and interned in the financial division of Imon International, a microcredit company in her native Khujand.

AUCA ALUMNI AWARD WINNER



**Khurshedmo
Jonmamadova**

AUCA, CLASS OF 2013
FOUNDER & MANAGER,
MASITA LLC
SUPPLY SUPERVISOR,
DOCTOR'S WITHOUT
BOARDERS

Upon her graduation from AUCA in 2013, **Khurshedmo** opened a bakery in her native Khorog called Masita LLC. With support from several foundation grants, Khurshedmo was able to expand her business to include nine employees. Masita is now the first private bakery in Khorog, providing a wide variety of freshly baked products. Masita also provides baked goods to the organizers of the annual cultural festival, 'Roof of the World,' and donates clothes and toys to local orphanages. Khurshedmo believes that these activities help cultivate social responsibility among her employees.

Impressively, Khurshedmo is now able to successfully manage her business remotely from Dushanbe where she currently works at Doctors without Borders (MSF-Holland) as supply supervisor for the Dushanbe Tuberculosis Project.



ALUMNI HONORABLE MENTION

ted materials for local confectionaries. In addition, last summer, Izat volunteered to be part of the organizing committee for a 4-day international conference called "Better Understanding for a Better World" (BUBW), held for the first time in Bishkek. One hundred participants from all over the world attended BUBW to discuss such vital topics as sectarian tensions, civic engagement, and the danger of extremism and radicalism. Izat played a major role in the success of the conference.

Throughout these years after his graduation from AUCA, Izat has been actively involved in the U.S.-CAEF alumni events and provided support to our alumni.



Aziz Yuldashev
KIMEP, CLASS OF 1988
IMPORT CONTRACTS
ADMINISTRATOR, COCA-COLA
BOTTLERS UZBEKISTAN

Aziz started his career as an administrator for a joint sewage systems improvement project funded by the Islamic Development Bank and Tashkent Municipality in 2012. In November 2013, Aziz joined Coca-Cola Bottlers Uzbekistan Ltd as an import contracts administrator. In June 2014, Aziz was promoted to Executive Assistant to the General Director of the company.

In 2016, Aziz became Public Affairs Coordinator. In this role, he was actively engaged in the joint Coca-Cola and UNDP water project in Uzbekistan. Aziz was also in charge of the sponsorship agreement between Coca Cola and the National Olympic Committee. In addition, Aziz has initiated a tour program for university students, which allows Uzbek youth to learn first-hand about the work of the company and employment opportunities with Coca-Cola. Aziz is one of the founders of the U.S.-CAEF Alumni Association. In 2012-14, he served as Vice-President for Membership and Outreach.



KIMEP ALUMNI AWARD WINNER

YULIA BALIYEVA

Yulia Baliyeva

KIMEP, CLASS OF 2013
FOUNDER & GENERAL
DIRECTOR, EURO
CONNECTION

As a mother of two children struggling to find adequate pediatric care, **Yuliya** felt a great need for quality medical services in Kazakhstan. This realization prompted her to carry out market research, which identified major problems in the healthcare system and inspired her to create Euro Connection in 2015, a clinical laboratory for the detection, diagnosis and treatment of disease.

As General Director of the company that she created two years ago, Yuliya now manages institutional relations as well as the accounting, marketing, and legal departments. She plans to open two more offices and eventually expand her business to the treatment sector.

Yuliya's company has developed a rewards program for loyal customers. It supports charitable giving by organizing free dinners for people in need during holidays, and it provides 50% discounts to veterans, pensioners and patients with HIV and diabetes.

HONORABLE MENTION



Yerassyl Toleugazinov

KIMEP CLASS OF 2016
CO-FOUNDER
KAZGOSGROUP LLP

A recent graduate of KIMEP University, Yerassyl has used his outstanding skills as an entrepreneur to launch a new business venture to recruit drivers for Yandex. His company, KazGosGroup LLP recruited over 500 new drivers in just two months and has now expanded to Astana. Despite the many challenges of managing a start-up, Yerassyl has also been highly engaged in community activities, including the Uni project, which is sponsored by the U.S. Consulate General in Almaty and provides a portable, open-air reading room for children.

U.S.-CAEF TREE-PLANTING CEREMONY IN ALMATY, KAZAKHSTAN



RAUSHAN KANAYEVA & ALIM DOSTIYAROVA (KIMEP)



ENHANCING LEARNING THROUGH INTERNSHIPS



REGIONAL INTERNSHIPS IN TAJIKISTAN

Launched last summer, the U.S.-CAEF regional internship program for sophomores in Dushanbe once again proved to be a great success.

Nilufar Umarova
MARKETING INTERN, JYSK
(A SCANDINAVIAN RETAIL CHAIN)

"Already from my first day, I have been involved in the project aimed at increasing sales at JYSK stores in Dushanbe and Kurgan-Tube in the summer. My supervisor, Jovita Bakhtovarkhonov, and I have been working on a business plan. In addition, I was involved in some community outreach projects. I helped organize an event for children on June 1, the Children's Day in Tajikistan, and distributed water bottles and fruit to people during the month of Ramadan."



Somon Mavlonazarov
ACCOUNTING INTERN
SHIEVER (AUCHAN)
TAJIKISTAN

"From the very first day I entered the real business world. Both excited and worried, I felt the true responsibilities of my job: many serious transactions and payments depended on me. First, it was a bit stressful, to be honest, but now I feel comfortable, because my colleagues are extremely friendly and helpful. The company is multinational. My supervisor, Fabien, is a French accountant with 25 years of experience. She has an ability to inspire people to do their best. To sum up, I highly recommend Auchan for the regional internship program. Interns can get a real taste of business here."

GOVERNMENT INTERNSHIPS

NILUFAR UMAROVA (RIGHT)



**Takhmina
Zakirova**

INTERN AT MINISTRY
OF ECONOMY OF
KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

"Productive, extremely useful, and rich – this is how I found a three-month internship at the Ministry of Economy of Kyrgyz Republic. I interned in the ministry's Investment Policy and Free Economic Zones Department. I assisted with finalizing and preparing documents for ratification of investment agreements with several countries and helped with the "Doing Business" project to prepare reports, compile statistics and communicate with responsible people for the project.

As a result, I learned how to correctly write and work with official documentation. It was interesting to learn how the process of accepting a bill or investment agreement goes, what kind of approval it needs, and from which departments and ministries. Moreover, I got acquainted with work ethics in a governmental organization. It surely differs from experiences I had had at my previous internship organizations. I enhanced my communication skills and was able to adjust to the workings of the ministry. I would like to mention positive personal relationships with my colleagues as my other accomplishment. They were extremely kind and helpful. I felt happy and privileged when I was offered to intern in the department next year. Now I feel more confident about what I would like to do in the future, and I am grateful for the professional and personal growth I had the chance to gain."



**Azatbek
Ismailov**

INTERN AT
ANTIMONOPOLY
AGENCY

"During my internship at Antimonopoly Agency I acquired essential knowledge and experience, which will be helpful in my future career as a financial analyst.

From the first day, my supervisor and colleagues treated me as an equal employee and gave me challenging tasks. My internship in the public sector has deepened my knowledge in governmental regulations regarding enterprises. Now I know what common mistakes companies make. I will try to avoid them in the future. In addition, I have developed my soft skills due to interaction with citizens and company representatives, which helped me develop confidence in handling formal conversations. My colleagues and supervisor are bright and open-minded people. I shared my career plans with them and they gave their feedback, which was crucial for me.

These three months of interning in the public sector totally changed my perception about civil service jobs. Being inside this system, I noticed that there are people who care about the prosperity and development of the country. In addition, I liked my job. It gave me a feeling that I am improving a little part of Kyrgyzstan. Now, I have a huge desire to work for government."



Nurbakhsh Sartib

MARKETING INTERN
COCA-COLA ICECEK (CCI)

"My CCI colleagues are very united, international and young, and I like this the best. Many are KIMEP graduates. I highly recommend to all future interns to choose CCI because it is the best place to apply all marketing theories in practice."

FELLOWS FARE WELL IN BUSINESS COMPETITIONS



CIMA COMPETITION IN KAZAKHSTAN

ALISHER MURTAZAEV, ZULFIYA URUNOVA, KAMILA BEKBAGANBETOVA & JAHONGIR RAHIMOV

Four U.S.-CAEF fellows-- **Jahongir Rahimov**, **Kamila Bekbaganbetova**, **Zulfija Urunova**, and **Alisher Murtazaev**- created a group called Genesis to participate in the CIMA Business Challenge Kazakhstan, a case championship organized by the Astana International Finance Center on April 29.

Jahongir: "The contest was announced in early March. The case was about oil and gas industry. As we had limited knowledge in the area, we decided to set aside several hours per week to learn about the sphere. After several sleepless nights, we sent out our report. We were afraid that we wouldn't be able to pass this stage, as there were other strong teams mentored by professors. We were so thrilled when we found out that we became one of the four teams to advance to the final stage.

We were the first to present our case at the championship. We had to wait for 3 hours for other teams to do their presentations. During the breaks, we had a chance to make meaningful connections with financial and audit

experts, start ups, people with 30+ years of work experience who became leaders in their spheres of work.

Finally, the jury announced that we were winners of the 2017 CIMA case championship in Kazakhstan. Along with the precious gifts from the CIMA representatives, we received admission to training events led by the leading international companies in Kazakhstan such as Mars, EY Academy of Business, PwC Academy, and Astana International Finance Center.

CIMA (Chartered Institute of Management Accountants) is the world's leading, and largest, professional body of management accountants."



P&G CEO CHALLENGE

JAHONGIR RAHIMOV & ALISHER MURTAZAEV

KIMEP fellows, **Alisher Murtazaev** and **Jahongir Rahimov**, became finalists of the Proctor & Gamble (P&G) CEO Challenge, Eastern Europe held in Moscow on May 25-26, 2017.

Jahongir: "The competition included three parts: an individual IQ test, online Gillette case study and reasoning test held at the P&G office in Almaty. More than 500 students from Kazakhstan, Russia, and Ukraine individually applied to participate in the challenge, but only 24 managed to solve the case and move to the next round. In Moscow, we had to work in teams and present our projects to the jury. Also, we had an opportunity to join lectures by the P&G experts. Despite working with each other for the first time, all participants demonstrated excellent teamwork, analytical and public speaking skills, and a deep understanding of business processes."

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE



SUSI PROGRAM ON WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP

SUSI CONFERENCE

IN THE U.S. | ON JUNE 24- JULY 29, 2017

Two U.S.-CAEF fellows from different partner universities, KIMEP sophomore **Nigora Burhonova** of Tajikistan and AUCA freshman **Uulzhan Aitnazarova** of Kyrgyzstan, were delighted to meet each other in the US while taking part in the Study of the U.S. Institutes (SUSI) for Student Leaders Program on Women's Leadership. The fellows shared their thoughts about the program, which they found life-changing.

Nigora: “The program brings together young and ambitious women leaders from 20 developing countries, who want to make a positive change in their communities through applying the gained knowledge and skills for the improvement of their countries. SUSI is an annual five-week academic program funded by the U.S. Department of State and conducted by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. This year, twenty students from Central Asian countries were hosted by Green River College in Washington State to study leadership. The program consists of intensive sessions and modules on different topics of leadership and women’s issues, community service in several organizations, study tours to different cities in Washington state, meetings with influential women leaders, classes on US history and culture, public speaking, and many more.

The first portion of the program took place in Washington DC, where we participated in the conference, ‘Women Embracing Leadership and Service’, held at the U.S. Department of State. Eighty SUSI participants and US students gathered together to discuss the issues that women face worldwide. These issues include gender inequality, domestic violence, access to education and health, access to public life in society, early marriage, and so on. Along with all participants, we were able to suggest ways to deal with those problems and share solutions with each other. During the second part of the program, we learned about leadership through community service in a homeless shelter for men, a domestic violence shelter for women, food bank, boys’ and girls’ educational clubs, and restoration parks for animals and plants.

Overall, the SUSI Program has been one of the life-changing experiences in my life. I have expanded my world-view, both outward and inward mindsets; [become] acquainted with the American culture and people; created a network of people from all over the world; and gained a lot of new knowledge on how to be a good leader in your community, no matter what your background is. And now I am going to give back, and use the knowledge to improve my community.”



UULZHAN AITNAZAROVA & NIGORA BURHONOVA

Uulzhan: “For me, SUSI was an amazing journey of enhancing my leadership skills and learning about American lifestyle and culture. Each and every activity we did was so interesting and impactful on our personality and perception of the world. Reading several books and class discussions made me think differently about leadership, democracy, and sustainability and changed my perception of myself as part of the universe. I was surprised by people’s commitment to the society and their eagerness to help others during community service activities. It made me think that it is so easy to help other people and start making positive changes in your community. It was so great to talk to teachers, politicians, judges, volunteers and representatives of various organizations who impressed me with their professionalism and dedication. This made me realize how important it is to love what you do, and do what you love. I had an incredible opportunity to test myself in extreme sports like rafting and ziplining. I learned from this experience that when you have a challenge, it is frightful only at the beginning, but then you enjoy the process and results of this experience. In conclusion, the SUSI program on Women’s Leadership made me believe in my abilities to reach my all goals and it strengthened my desire to make the world a better place.”



MODEL UN CONFERENCE

ASTANA | MAY 31- JUNE 2

Akhror Ikromov
TAJIKISTAN 2015

“Development of public speaking, debating, writing, critical thinking and research skills; teamwork and leadership spirit as well as cultural diversity and unity of young generation—this is what I experienced during the MUN Conference in Astana at the Gumilyov Eurasian University. More than 20 countries (from CIS, Europe, the US) and hundreds of college and university students from the London School of Economics, AUF, Nazarbaev University, Boston University, etc. participated in this conference. I was part of the Social, Humanitarian and Cultural (SOCHUM) committee, and represented Georgia. There were two agenda items: measures to enhance the protection of human rights of prisoners and migrant workers. For three days, we debated on the rights of prisoners and migrant workers.

At the end of the conference, we were provided with a special Astana city tour and visited Astana Expo 2017. Astana fascinated me with its modern architecture, diversified design, and business centers, as well as Astana Expo 2017.”

STUDY ABROAD EXPERIENCES



UPPSALA UNIVERSITY, SWEDEN

Shahlo Jonmamadova, Tajikistan 2014 (Erasmus +):

"My academic experience in Uppsala was completely different from KIMEP. We have different education systems, different grading scales, different ways of teaching, etc. For me, every day was full of adventures and new discoveries. At KIMEP, professors come to class and explain the learning material, while in Uppsala professors ask students to explain the topics. Most courses consist of seminars and there are no midterm exams. There is only one final exam.

Another important part of my experience, which is not related to academics, is that I biked to school instead of taking a bus. The public transportation is very expensive, and you are considered to be more "Swedish" if you bike to university.

I was very impressed by the level of English the Swedish people have. Everywhere you go people speak English well and you never feel a language barrier. Swedes are extremely nice. They would apologize to you for speaking their native language once you tell them that you don't understand Swedish. But I was very motivated to learn Swedish, as I was fascinated by this language, which sounds so melodic. I took a course in basic Swedish at the university, and by the end of the semester, I was able to order food in cafés or write simple posts in Swedish.

Uppsala is an amazing student town with an excellent university. My time in Sweden exceeded my expectations. Swedes are very kind and generous people, and this is what made my experience so great. It was truly the experience of a lifetime."



JUNIATA COLLEGE, USA

ALEKSANDR KINYAKIN (3RD, RIGHT)

Aleksandr Kinyakin, Turkmenistan 2015 (Global UGRAD):

"I studied at the Juniata College in a small borough of Huntingdon, PA. There, I learned what the American education system is, which is hard to describe but easy to feel. One of its distinct features I observed is extraordinary student and faculty engagement in what they teach and learn. What strikes me most is the American mentality, constant readiness for classes, openness for discussion and sharing opinions. The whole class turns into a huge debate with a professor in the role of the moderator.

I lived not only in the dormitory interacting with other local and international students, but I also had a chance to spend fascinating time with my host family, sharing their lifestyle, meals, hobbies and so on. I fell in love with them. At the end of the program, I met 180 other UGRAD fellows at a workshop from all over the world. I was excited to talk to everyone and listen to their personal stories. I had never felt such an enormous multicultural connection. For the first time in my life, I felt my uniqueness and the uniqueness of other people. I'm thankful that UGRAD changed my life and my world perception."



SOLBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, SOUTH KOREA

Zhibek Kamalbek kyzy, Kyrgyzstan 2014:

"My exchange semester in Korea has been amazing! I learned a great deal about finance, especially about the stock exchange market. At SolBridge International Business School, theoretical knowledge is backed up by practice. Therefore, as part of the Investment Stock Trading class, we had a trip to the Korean Stock Exchange in Seoul on May 19. First, we had a tour of the Korean Exchange (KRX) office and museum. KRX employees told us about the history of the Stock Exchange in Korea. At the end of the tour, we learned about applying for Initial Public Offering (IPO), and created our own companies' profiles in the computer. Then we participated in a simulation game, and competed against each other and traded stocks. Students earning the highest returns received special gifts from KRX.

I am glad that SolBridge gave us opportunities to test our theoretical knowledge through practical activities such as playing simulations, site visits and learning from business experts."

Meerim Moldaliev, Kyrgyzstan 2015:

"I had a unique experience studying in a multinational environment in South Korea, where I met students from Europe, Mexico, China, and Indonesia. While studying at Solbridge, I actively participated in university events and student clubs such as Startup, Writing and Debate clubs. As a new member of SolBridge Debate Society, I had a chance to represent our university at the Korean National Debate Championship in Seoul - the biggest annual debate tournament in South Korea, which brings more than 50 teams. The debate topics were mainly about important current political and economic issues. Together with my teammates, Helen Park and Jacky Liu, we debated for seven rounds and made it to the final stage. It was a great accomplishment for our team and for me personally. I improved my communication and critical thinking skills, and met many interesting people."

COMMUNITY OUTREACH



EMPOWER YOUTH PROJECT IN TEPLOKLYUCHENKA

KUTTUBEK HOLDING A SESSION

ASEL KALDYBAEVA

ASEL KALDYBAEVA | KYRGYZSTAN 2013

On November 15, 2016 **Rakhat Kubanychbekova** and I started a leadership program, "Empower Youth", in Teploklyuchenka village, Issyk Kul. The goal of the project was to empower 16 high school students to develop leadership skills and boost their self-development. Launching this project, we really wanted to increase the number of university students from rural areas.

Participants took part in a four-day intensive training during the first stage of the program. Through sharing the success stories of young leaders of Kyrgyzstan from rural areas, we motivated teenagers to set high goals and dream big. In addition, we provided tips on applying for scholarship programs, taught them to write statements of purpose and launch social projects. During the first stage of the "Empower Youth" project, four social projects were implemented by participants of the program—(i) a concert in the village, the profits from which went to pay utility bills of the kindergarten for disabled children; (ii) creation of the schools' Instagram pages; (iii) sports events to promote an active lifestyle among adults of the village; and (iv) a marathon.

Eight most active and dedicated participants were selected for the second stage. The program paid for their trip to Bishkek, where they visited Open Doors at AUCA and Manas University, and participated in training

sessions conducted by AUCA students on February 4. Other participants traveled on their own. At AUCA, **Samatbek Osmonov** conducted a session on how to study effectively, while **Kuttubek Rakhmanberdiev** provided tips on how to launch a social project, and talked about the benefits of being active. The third lecturer was **Talgat Subanaliev**, an NGA alumnus and the first Kyrgyzstani to visit Antarctica. We are also grateful to **Azim Tilekov** and **Anisa Atalova**, who provided videos with interviews of successful people of Kyrgyzstan, and for the financial support provided by ProKG, a local organization promoting educational and professional capacity and the personal growth of young people.

The "Empower Youth" project participants were very impressed by our trainings and guest lecturers. For Rakhat and me, it was a great experience, which we would love to continue on a larger scale.

DREAM HIGH EDUCATIONAL PROJECT IN KOCHKOR-ATA



MEERIM ZHANYBEK KYZY (CENTER) | KYRGYZSTAN 2016

As a FLEX alumna, I received a \$325 grant for my Global Youth Service Day project (GYSD) called "Dream High" for middle and high school students. The project was held on April 24-27 in the Peace Fund Youth Center in Kochkor-Ata. The goal of the project was to teach youth to set goals and motivate them to be active leaders in their communities.

This was one of the biggest social and educational projects held in Kochkor-Ata. A total of 40 students from five schools came to participate in the project. They learned about new opportunities they can take advantage of as well as about financial literacy and volunteering, which we taught along with local Peace Corps Volunteers.

ENGLISH CLUB IN AT-BASHY VILLAGE

SAIRA DUISHONBEKOVA | KYRGYZSTAN 2016

On June 15, 2017, my AUCA friend and I opened an English club in our village At-Bashy. Since we were both free for the summer, we decided not to waste our time and help ambitious students who are interested in learning English. Now, at our club, we have three groups: two groups of beginners and one of intermediate level. To our surprise, there are even adults, about 30-40 years old, who are also interested in attending our club. I find teaching very interesting and joyful.



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



JUGGLING MOTHERHOOD AND WORK

Alena Li

AUCA CLASS OF 2011
HMF PROJECT CONSULTANT, INTERNATIONAL FINANCE CORPORATION (IFC)
BISHKEK, KYRGYZSTAN

The only thing university doesn't teach you is how to successfully combine your family life with career ambitions. Is there any chance to balance between these two things and is there a place for a "successful working mom" term? This was the question I had in my head in March 2015, when, having a 7-month pregnancy, I was invited to work for the International Finance Corporation. This was the chance I couldn't allow myself to lose: it's not every day that a respectable international organization offers you a job. Of course, I accepted the offer.

Today I'm a mom of a 2-year old active toddler, Alan, and a consultant for the Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan Housing and Energy Efficiency Project at IFC. It happened that I didn't have a single day of maternity leave, in its common meaning. Although sometimes I had to work remotely from home, I was actively engaged in all activities: I conducted trainings for partner financial institutions; participated in meetings with numerous project stakeholders; and had field trips to other regions of our country. I conducted presentations, visited offices of partners, provided coaching to loan officers, and completed reports. And all those activities I combined with spending the most exciting 2 first years of motherhood.

This was definitely the biggest challenge in my life. It's not easy to exchange these roles all the time: sometimes you need to sacrifice one thing to be successful in another. In my case, my son is my highest priority. However, as is always the case with perfectionists, I did and am still doing my best to perform my job. I can dedicate a whole day to my son and then spend the whole night completing the job tasks I am expected to do. No matter how many pending tasks I have, I always find time for my son, who, in his 2 years, has learned colors, numerical symbols and geometric figures, including parallelogram... Recently, I was promoted to another grade. For me, this implies that my assertiveness and aspiration for self-development were not in vain. This also means that all the investments made in me by U.S.-CAEF and AUCA were not in vain either.

Bermet Nurbekova

AUCA CLASS OF 2014
JUNIOR SPECIALIST, GERMAN DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION (GIZ)
BISHKEK, KYRGYZSTAN

As a U.S.-CAEF alumna you need to meet the expectations of all the people who believe in you. But it is not easy to achieve success for a young lady in Central Asia, where there are many expectations and restrictions for women.

I started my career in 2014 as project assistant at the German Development Cooperation (GIZ), where I am involved in the regional project "Strengthening of Livelihoods Through Climate Change Adaptation in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan." GIZ also works on other projects in various spheres such as education, economic development, health, law, and water management. Our project works in two remote areas: the Batken province in Kyrgyzstan, and Sugd province in Tajikistan. The project focuses on sustainable agriculture and disaster-risk reduction by helping local populations as well as local administrations. I have been actively engaged in all activities: training, procurements, meetings with all stakeholders, and I had many business trips to the Batken province.

As I have an 8-month-old baby boy Akai, now I must balance work with family. Luckily, GIZ supports women during maternity leave (I took a 6-month leave), and even allows women with small kids to work one-two hours less per day.

Just before my return after my maternity leave, I was promoted to Junior Specialist based on the annual assessment of employees. GIZ has its own set career structure, and I am right on my path. With the kind support of my director, family members, and colleagues I am able to perform all work duties and family obligations at the same time. I feel satisfied because all spheres of my life are balanced now, all my aspirations are fulfilled, and self-development is going on. For sure, investments of U.S.-CAEF in me were not in vain; they always stimulate me to move forward.

ALUMNI LAND THEIR DREAM JOBS



Yelena Vorobey

AUCA CLASS OF 2014
INTERNAL AUDITOR, E. ON SE, ESSEN
GERMANY

It was a pleasant surprise for me to find out that a graduate from any European university can extend a permit to stay in the country of study for one year after graduation in order to search for work or further study opportunities. As a graduating master student from Sorbonne Paris Cite sponsored by the Erasmus Mundus scholarship, I decided to try my chances.

So, I started applying early – during the spring semester to beat the competition of fresh graduates who flood the market in summer/fall. I sent a dozen applications for different positions related to my academic degrees and previous work experience, and received rejections to all applications but one. Although Europe, especially some of its countries, like Germany, Netherlands and the UK, provides a dynamic job market, employers are reluctant to hire foreigners. The knowledge of local languages, previous work/ internship experience and excellent grades are a must.

I was particularly interested in a trainee program – a rotation scheme offered by most big organizations in Europe, in which the employee tries him/herself in different positions before proceeding to a permanent placement. Normally, the selection for such programs consists of several stages, including:

document screening, online aptitude tests (verbal, numeric, logic), a telephone interview and a full day of assessments. The programs are highly competitive with several thousand applicants at the initial stages, out of which only a few are offered a position.

In the end, I got a trainee position as an internal auditor at E. ON SE. It is an international energy group that includes 40 companies and operates in 30 countries in Europe. There were three factors that made this application successful. First, the company itself has a focus on human strategy, diversity and investing in its employees. Second, the time of application – I applied a few days after the position was announced, which sped up the selection process for me. Third, I was genuinely interested in the energy field and renewables, which was reflected in my application. This year, the company only selected 8 people out of more than 3,000 applicants.

A few things I found useful when looking for a job. I had to be prepared for each stage of selection – provide high-quality tailored application documents (CV, cover letter), practice online tests, make extensive research about the position/company/industry.

It was also useful to get criticism/advice from other people in order to see myself from an assessor's view. Finally, I had to exert patience and optimism to continue applying until I found a perfect match.



Saidkabir Azizov

KIMEP CLASS OF 2014
PRODUCTION MANAGER ASSISTANT
SALINAS IMPREGILO
DUSHANBE, TAJIKISTAN

After graduating from KIMEP in 2014, I enrolled in the Master in Management - International Business program of the Graduate School of Management, Saint-Petersburg, Russia, and successfully graduated in 2016.

I think the hardest time comes when graduates start looking for a job. You know that eventually you will find one but the main question is whether it will be the one you wanted and the one that satisfies your ambitions. I decided to pursue my career in Dubai, U.A.E. I stayed in Dubai for over a month and found several jobs, but they did not feel right for me. I realized that I have a deep attachment to my country.

Finally, I came back to Tajikistan. I applied for different positions but one place was very attractive to me-- Rogun hydro power plant. It is the biggest industry in Tajikistan in terms of revenue (\$3.9 billion), and the future of Tajikistan depends on it. I had big hopes, and luckily I was hired by Salini Impregilo, an Italian construction company and general contractor of Rogun HPP. I am sure that this project will be one of the main drivers of economy of Tajikistan and the electricity produced by the plant will fully satisfy the country's need in energy. Working here makes me happy because I am part of a big project and big hope of my country.

I want to say thank you one more time to our sponsors of U.S. - CAEF for giving me the opportunity to study at KIMEP 7 years ago which opened doors to many more opportunities.

CREATING GLOBAL NETWORKS



HANSEN SUMMER INSTITUTE

SHAHNOZ JONMAMADOVA (3RD, LEFT)

Shahnoz Jonmamadova

KIMEP CLASS OF 2017
(3RD, LEFT)

On July 1-23, 2017 I participated in the Hansen Summer Institute on Leadership and International Cooperation, an exciting international program funded by a generous grant from Fred J. Hansen Foundation. The three-week institute took place at the University of San Diego in San Diego, California. There were 25 participants from 20 different countries including US, Brazil, Argentina, Guatemala, Cambodia, Lesotho, Ethiopia, Tajikistan, Serbia, Kosovo and etc. The primary goal of the program is to create an international community of young scholars who would use their summer experience as a foundation for creating lasting friendship and acquiring practical understanding of a more peaceful future.

Being part of HSI, I received hands-on trainings on leadership, social entrepreneurship, team building and negotiation. In addition, I met great academics, political and business leaders, including Azim Khasima, founder of Khasima Foundation, and Steve Swardlow, Human

Rights Watch researcher. The classroom trainings were complemented by local excursions including a trip to SeaWorld, 4th of July parade, Nextivity, Reality Changers and to the Mayor's Office in San Diego.

For me, HSI is a life changing experience. After the program, I went back to Tajikistan with a more open heart and mind on the realities of other countries. With 25 people from all over the globe we opened a new door toward a better understanding and appreciation of the world's diversity. I am glad to know that I have friends in 20 different countries now. Furthermore, working on social entrepreneurship projects, I received mentorship from the leading business leaders in the US. The program gave me an opportunity to create a very strong network. Now I can contact my mentors any time for advice. There are no words to express my gratitude to Ron Bee, director of the program, for the foundation that changed my life.



GLOBAL VILLAGE



ANISA ATALOVA (1ST, LEFT)

Anisa Atalova

AUCA CLASS OF 2016
PRESIDENT OF U.S.-CAEF
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION
ENTREPRENEUR,
LET'S MAKE UP
(1ST, LEFT)

On June 24 - July 29, 2017, I participated in Global Village, a six-week intensive international program for young leaders of business and industry at Lehigh University, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. I can surely say that this program was one of the best experiences in my life. I met so many bright people from 54 countries, took part in challenging business classes, executive sessions and tours to multimillion-dollar business companies, and had a chance to learn about each participating country through presentations, cultural nights, visits to Philadelphia, New York City and D.C. I spent sleepless nights with amazing people, with whom I made life-

long friendships. I have learnt a lot from the classes and meetings with executives of top companies. However, the networking part was the most special for me, which could not be gained anywhere but during this program. Now I can travel and make business all around the globe!

I highly recommend this program to aspiring and current entrepreneurs and business leaders, and to our U.S.-CAEF fellows and alumni. FLEX alumni should apply for a full scholarship provided by the U.S. Department of State. More information can be found at global.lehigh.edu, or please feel free to contact me anytime.



VISITING EXPO 2017

MALIKA PULOTOVA, KIMEP CLASS OF 2014

On July 27, during my business trip, I had a chance to visit EXPO 2017 in Astana, Kazakhstan. The main theme of the exhibition is Future Energy. This topic is vital for the 21st century as the world is switching from dependence on fossil fuels to green economies. For Kazakhstan, the exhibition plays a very important role – by 2050, Kazakhstan aims to meet half of our domestic power needs from renewable sources of energy. An ambitious goal but it accelerates country's transition to a modern and sustainable economy.

EXPO 2017 is a milestone event not just for Kazakhstan, but for the entire region - the exposition takes place for the first time in Central Asia. The Expo featuring over 100 international pavilions and 22 major companies in the field of energy gives you a unique opportunity to witness the latest engineering and scientific achievements and practices in the field of energy. For example, in Europe power plants that operate on biogas and phyto-fuel reduce the cost of electricity production to 0,029 USD per kilowatt-hour. Other practices include operating samples of wind, wave, and solar generators with a cost of less than half a cent per 1 kw / h. In Ukraine, motor biofuel is produced from microalgae and eihornia, which is by one-third more cost efficient than diesel fuel. Another example is Poland that produces cheap motor fuel from drilling coal. These are just some of the examples of technological advances the world has already succeeded in.

Unfortunately, a one-day visit was not enough to see everything at EXPO, but I definitely got a feeling of walking in the city of future. EXPO was a unique chance not only to watch green economy ideas and expertise from across the world but also feel each country's culture and people. This idea is well reflected at the USA pavilion that I was so excited to visit that day: the pavilion showcased America's leadership in technology and innovation, and the infinite energy of the American people. Pavilion also highlighted strong partnership between the USA and Kazakhstan: economic and diplomatic bounds that two countries have been building so successfully for a long time.

Kazakhstan's pavilion Nur Alem was delightful: being the only one spherical building in the world (80 meters in diameter with two silent wind turbines in the upper part of the pavilion, which provide reduced power consumption from the network) proposes thematic concept as a museum of energy of the future. It consists of eight levels - Future Astana, Space Energy, Energy of the Sun, Wind Energy, Energy of Biomass, Kinetic Energy, Energy of Water and National Pavilion. The pavilion gives an important insight about Kazakhstan's extraordinary potential to harness the renewable sources of energy including wind and solar power. Kazakhstan, being the world's fifth-largest producer of solar cells with a full cycle of extraction and processing of silicon, has a huge potential for solar energy development (that is 2.5 billion kwt/h) and for renewable energy sources (about 1 trillion kilowatt-hours). In addition, there are large reserves of pure quartzite, vermiculite, perlite, etc. that could be used for producing alternative sources of energy.

There is so much more to write about the exhibition but my advice is that you should see it to believe it. EXPO 2017 was a must-see event for me that gave me a lot of food for thought about near future. We are all in this world together, and we should make sure the global economic growth doesn't take place at the expense of our environment, and we must save it for future generations. Building a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world for all should be the main aim.

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