

# ENTREPRISE

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**ABOUT THE PROGRAM:** U.S.-Central Asia Education Foundation (U.S.-CAEF) Enterprise Student Fellowship Program is an undergraduate business education scholarship program for academically gifted students 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, economics, 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 THE SUPPORT OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT, ITS CITIZENS AND THE CENTRAL ASIAN-AMERICAN ENTERPRISE FUND, WHICH HAVE MADE ITS OPERATION POSSIBLE.**

# GRADUATION CELEBRATIONS

The U.S.-CAEF community celebrates the accomplishments of the 11th cohort of fellows at AUCA, Bishkek & KIMEP University, Almaty.

Fellows, alumni, and staff worked together to create special graduation events in Almaty and Bishkek on May 22 and June 9, respectively. In Almaty, due to COVID restrictions, the event was held online, while in Bishkek an outdoor reception was arranged that fully complied with all COVID-19 mitigation practices. Both programs featured the achievements of graduating seniors; congratulations from American Councils, university partners, alumni, and current fellows; and announcements about the recipients of the Steven F. Shea Excellence Awards for seniors & alumni.

## HONOR DIPLOMA



**BIBIGUL  
ARZYBAEVA**  
AUCA, KG

## SUMMA CUM LAUDE



**DILNAZ  
IMERAMZAYEVA**  
KIMEP UNIVERSITY, KZ

## MAGNA CUM LAUDE



**ALMAT  
ORAKBAY**  
KIMEP UNIVERSITY, KZ



**BEKZAT  
SADYRBAEV**  
AUCA, KG

## CUM LAUDE



**UMAR  
NASRIDDINOV**  
KIMEP UNIVERSITY, TJ



**DILRABO  
SAIDALIEVA**  
KIMEP UNIVERSITY, TJ



**NURSHOOLA  
AIBEK KYZY**  
AUCA, KG



**TALGAT  
MURATBEKOV**  
AUCA, KG

**42%**  
OR 8/19  
**GRADUATED  
WITH HONORS**

## GRADUATION CELEBRATIONS

CONTINUED



In Bishkek, the event was attended by representatives of the U.S. Embassy — **Emilie Bruchon**, Deputy Public Affairs Officer, and **Abai Iliiazov**, Alumni Affairs Coordinator.

## BEST SENIOR THESIS



**Nurshoola Aibek kyzy's** "Thoughts of Death: Influence of Mortality Salience on Implicit Followership Theory" was recognized as the winner of the Best Thesis Award 2021 by the AUCA's Student Intellectual Life Committee (SILC).

## WELCOME FRESHMEN

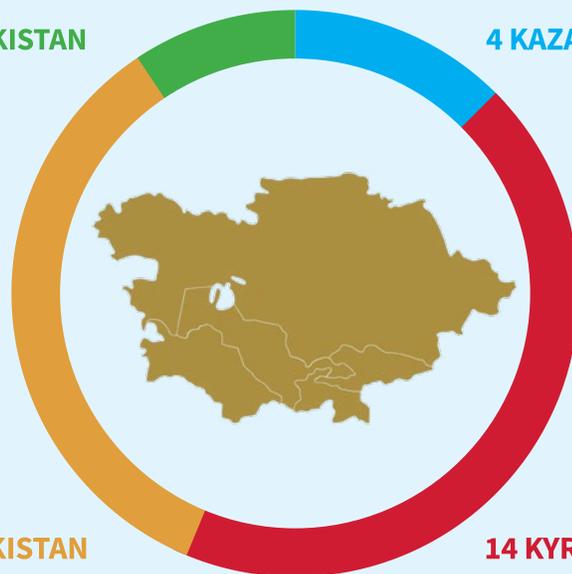
U.S.-CAEF has welcomed **31** new fellows to the program. The freshmen hail from four countries of Central Asia:

Selected from among 650 applicants, the freshmen cohort represents Central Asia's brightest students and future leaders. The program provides full scholarships for undergraduate degree studies in high-demand fields—business administration, economics, applied mathematics and informatics, or software engineering— at American University of Central Asia (AUCA) in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. The fellows are grateful for the support provided by the U.S. Department of State and U.S.-CAEF Board of Directors, and excited to embark on their new journey.

Welcome to the U.S.-CAEF Family!

2 UZBEKISTAN

4 KAZAKHSTAN



11 TAJIKISTAN

14 KYRGYZSTAN

## GRADUATING SENIOR AWARDS 2021

During the graduation events, organizers announced the recipients of the Steven F. Shea Excellence Award for graduating Fellows. This award was established by the Foundation in May 2015 to commemorate Mr. Steven F. Shea, a founding director, and the first president of U.S.-CAEF. The award is presented annually to the most outstanding 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.



WINNER

### NURZADA ABDIVALIEVA

AUCA GRADUATE

An economic sustainability advocate, Nurzada earned a spot on the Dean's List at AUCA in both 2018 and 2019. In addition to achieving stellar grades, Nurzada has been an active member of student life at AUCA. In 2018, she served as Project Leader of the Environmental Issues and Recycling group for the "Youth Challenges 2018" event. Nurzada also served as President of the Youth Social Entrepreneurship Program (YSEP), was a member of the USG Alumni Mentorship Program, and served as an economics tutor at AUCA's Writing and Academic Resource Center (WARC). She also participated in an exchange semester at Solbridge International School of Business in South Korea.

To complement her studies and extracurricular involvement, Nurzada has completed internships with Neobis, Burger House, and Tumar Art Group. Most recently, Nurzada was elected as President of the U.S.-CAEF Student Association at AUCA. Nurzada has also been selected as a finalist for the Washington-based Capstone Internship Program in the fall of 2021.



WINNER

### DILNAZ IMERAMZAEVA

KIMEP UNIVERSITY GRADUATE

Dilnaz has been a standout student and U.S.-CAEF fellow during her time at KIMEP University. As a result of her commendable academic efforts, Dilnaz earned a spot on KIMEP's President's List every semester from fall 2017 to spring 2021. She was also awarded a Global UGRAD scholarship to spend an exchange semester at the State University of New York (SUNY), Plattsburgh, NY in the U.S. Outside of her studies, Dilnaz has displayed an exemplary commitment to bettering her community through volunteer work. Over the course of her time at KIMEP, Dilnaz has developed professionally by interning for AIESEC Denizli, KPMG Kazakhstan, Coca Cola Almaty Bottlers LLP, and KIMEP University. Furthermore, she volunteered as a sports trainer at Camp Shriver and the Special Olympics, Kazakhstan during the 2016-2019 summers; as an English interpreter for the Study UK Exhibition 2018; as an organizer for Changallenge Cup Kazakhstan 2017; and as an assistant for the VI Football Championship for orphaned children organized by Baurzhan Foundation.

## TOP 100 TALENTED STUDENTS OF KAZAKHSTAN

2018: Dilnaz was selected as one of the winners of the Zhas Kyran award



**Dilnaz Imeramzaeva** has been selected as a finalist of the Washington-based Capstone Internship Program 2021.



## CAREER DEVELOPMENT DURING THE PANDEMIC

Despite the many challenges surrounding COVID-19, U.S.-CAEF fellows have taken advantage of numerous opportunities to further their professional development. In doing so, the fellows have demonstrated remarkable adaptability in the face of uncertainty, and unwavering determination that is nothing short of inspiring. As a result of their perseverance, fellows have put themselves at a competitive advantage and will be uniquely prepared to face the job and internship market once businesses begin to return to their regular operations.

### TACKLING COMMUNITY PROBLEMS WITH AN INNOVATIVE APP

BY **KAIRAT TAGAEV**-AUCA-2018-KYRGYZSTAN

Beginning in October 2020, my peer Ajara Beishembaeva and I were accepted to Accelerate Prosperity, a global initiative of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) aimed at supporting small- and medium -sized businesses, with our project called ‘MyWay.’



MyWay is a platform designed to connect passengers and drivers traveling between regions of Kyrgyzstan. This platform will serve as a solution for ever-fluctuating prices for transportation options, long waiting periods, and safety concerns. Throughout the acceleration process, we were able to participate in various trainings led by top IT companies throughout the world. Furthermore, we made great progress in the creation of our startup. We improved our software technology, conducted customer development surveys, and launched our MVP (minimum viable product) and got our first clients. Moreover, we were able to present our project to investors from all over the CIS countries and receive their feedback.

Finally, our project won first place in the Google Startup Weekend organized in Bishkek. Our team has already done a great amount of work, but we are not planning to stop anytime soon; one day, MyWay will be helping people to connect between regions all over Kyrgyzstan!



### PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT INTERNSHIP WITH GLOBAL ENCOUNTERS

BY **GULNOZ FAIZAKOVA**  
AUCA-2019-TAJIKISTAN

Since February, I have been interning with the Global Encounters – Tajikistan Hub (part of Aga Khan Development Network) as a social media manager. My main responsibilities include creating content and promoting the Instagram and Facebook pages, doing research on various designs, platforms, and audience preferences, as well as writing posts and articles on the Global Encounters alumni.

As this is my first experience in SMM, so far, I have learned a lot about marketing and how it functions. For me, it has been such an interesting experience, and I am sure, throughout my internship, I will keep learning and honing my writing and marketing skills.

## CAREER DEVELOPMENT DURING THE PANDEMIC

CONTINUED

## FROM INTERN TO CHIEF OF STAFF

BY IMRAN ALIMOV-KIMEP-2018-TAJIKISTAN

Beginning November 1, 2020, I started interning for an NGO called TajRupt and played a role in assisting various projects. The main goal of the organization is to empower youth through civic education and provide educational opportunities for personal development.

After interning for one month, I started working with the founder, who is a graduate of Stanford and Harvard, on different tasks related to investment research. In March, I received a job offer with the same organization and became a product lead. With a team of three people, I helped develop a new educational course, with the goal of helping high school students gain admission to universities. I was responsible for managing different processes like curriculum development, course marketing, and student enrollment.

Simultaneously, I also helped other departments with such tasks as marketing, employee evaluation, team culture building and many others. As a result of my efforts, I was promoted to the Chief of Staff position in June. Now, my responsibilities have doubled; I manage work process within the office, monitor employees' productivity and ensure that all deadlines and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are achieved. Through this position, I have realized that great results can only be achieved if one is eager to try different tasks, no matter whether they have experience in that field or not. Staying in one's comfort zone and only taking on easy tasks is one of the biggest mistakes a young person can make. The main lesson I learned is that growth comes when you face challenges and strive to obtain new information and skills, in order to achieve the best results.



## CAREER DEVELOPMENT DURING THE PANDEMIC

CONTINUED



### PROFESSIONAL GROWTH THROUGH COMMUNITY SERVICE

BY SAMAR KANATOV-AUCA-2020-KYRGYZSTAN

I recently received the “Community Action Award” from Open Society University Network (OSUN) for my summer internship at the Central Asian Youth for Water Network (CAY4W), where I held the title of regional intern for communication and logistics.

**According to OSUN’s website,** “The Open Society University Network sponsors Community Action Awards that help cover costs associated with underpaid or unpaid summer internships that support pre-professional experiences.”

Awards are up to \$1,000 for 4- to 8-week long internships over July and August 2021 for more than 30 hours per week. CAY4W is a regional network connecting youth in order to engage them into the Central Asia water management issues. As part of my work, I was involved in increasing awareness and involvement among young people by supporting the implementation of local projects. I assisted in CAY4W’s goal of **“empowering a new generation of water leaders in Central Asia”** to promote sustainable and peaceful development of the region through improving transboundary water management.



### DELVING INTO THE WORLD OF INVESTMENT

BY ALUA CHYNTEMIROVA  
KIMEP-2018-KAZAKHSTAN

Throughout the spring semester, I worked as an assistant for the foreign representative of Kazakh Invest, a national company that attracts foreign investments in different sectors of the country’s economy.

The company plays the role of the single negotiator on behalf of the government in discussing the prospects and conditions for the implementation of investment projects. The organization promotes the socio-economic development of the Republic of Kazakhstan and supports local businesses. The foreign representative is responsible for the regions of the USA and Canada; my job was to assist in finding suitable companies that were ready to collaborate. I analyzed the market and looked for companies in different industries with whom we could collaborate for certain projects. I implemented a systematic approach to the work that helped organize and streamline the procedures better. It excites me to read and know more about spheres and companies I previously only knew a little about. Moreover, this job gave me an opportunity to connect my personal interest in exploring the stock market (and my plans to start investing in the near future) with thorough research of North American firms.

## GROWING THROUGH NEW EXPERIENCES

Every semester, U.S.-CAEF Fellows take part in a wide range of initiatives that help them develop their leadership skills. Fellows shared stories about their recent experiences that inspired them to become socially responsible business leaders.

# UZBEKISTAN YOUTH LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

BY SURAYYO KHAYRULLAEVA-AUCA-2020-UZBEKISTAN

On June 12-14, over 70 students gathered for the Uzbek Youth Leadership Conference in Tashkent organized by American Councils for International Education and sponsored by the U.S. Embassy.



During the 2020 lockdown, students scheduled to participate in exchange programs from Uzbekistan were not able to travel to the United States. American Councils organized a Youth Leadership Conference to bring together the young leaders and encourage them to work on projects to develop their communities around the country.

As the only member from my region and as a representative of the FLEX Program, I was also invited to participate in a conference focused on project management and design led by a team of U.S. Government alumni mentors and Fulbright English Teaching Assistants. We initiated several team building activities and sessions on project management and design. On the second day of the conference, we learned the steps to develop and organize

community projects and discussed pressing social issues in Uzbekistan, and how to design projects to address these issues in our communities. The name of our project was “Girls Power.” We planned to conduct social trainings in our regions to support and motivate young girls. On the final day, we all presented our projects to our mentors and we were assessed according to project design rubrics.

The conference also included skill development sessions on leadership, civic responsibility, diversity awareness and tolerance, and community engagement. As a participant, I had the opportunity to broaden my network. I boosted my leadership skills and better prepared to address community needs and social concerns in Uzbekistan. During the conference, we also had the

opportunity to develop plans for addressing community needs while also attending trainings to develop our leadership skills, and to learn more about the U.S. approach to activism at the community level and focusing on promoting mutual understanding.

**In addition to that, the 2020-2021 Uzbekistan FLEX group was invited to participate in the summer 2021 Uzbekistan Youth Leadership Program! The Uzbekistan Leadership Program is a program administered by the U.S. Embassy in Tashkent with funding provided by the U.S. Government. The program provides a one-week civic education workshop in Washington, DC and a three-week leadership program in Seattle, Washington.**

GROWING THROUGH NEW EXPERIENCES

# REPRESENTING CENTRAL ASIA AT LEADERSHIP CAMP IN THE US

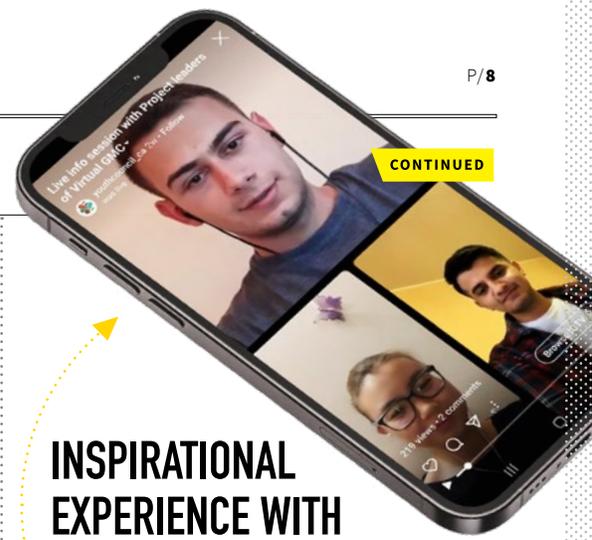
BY **BAKHTOVAR UMAROV**-AUCA-2020-TAJIKISTAN

I recently participated in a 9-week training for 500 young leaders around the world, organized by United People Global (UPG).

During the training, I attended several informative sessions on sustainability, community engagement, and movement building. Each session was held on Zoom, and we got the opportunity to divide into several breakout rooms to solve various cases and identify stakeholders for future projects. All participants were divided into ‘tribes’ that consisted of 6-7 people. My tribe is called “Sustriable.” It comprises people from Uganda, Brazil, India, Nigeria, and Morocco. Together, we developed community-minded solutions to environmental issues, keeping in mind the United Nation’s 17 Sustainability Development Goals.

UPG planned to send the three tribes with the highest “tribe scores” to Hurricane Island in Maine, U.S. Together with my tribe, thanks in part to our extensive social media efforts, over the past three months, we worked hard to achieve our goal of being named one of the top three tribes. I am so thankful to my team who have become like family to me and encouraged me to keep going when I was responsible for so many tribe duties on top of my final exams at AUCA.

**As a result of our hard work, our tribe was selected to take part in a week-long experience at the Hurricane Island Center for Science and Leadership in Maine in September 2021. I am so proud of us for being selected as one of the top three tribes. Furthermore, I will be the only representative of Central Asia to attend the camp on Hurricane Island.**



## INSPIRATIONAL EXPERIENCE WITH C5+1 YOUTH COUNCIL

BY **BEKJON MAKHMUDOV**-AUCA-2019-UZBEKISTAN

This spring semester, I was able to advance my knowledge in project management by participating in C5+1 Youth Council.

One of the best sessions I took part in was the Leadership Academy, moderated by C5+1 alumni. They covered various topics related to project proposals and management. The session provided a great chance for new members like me to gain insightful tips and experience. We also took part in several sessions aimed at improving our public speaking skills and preparing our own projects. Representatives of the American Embassy of Kyrgyzstan advised us on using different strategies to make our speeches clearer and to attract more attention from the audience.

I also became part of the C5+1 PR team. As part of this team, I created questions and led two information sessions on Instagram. These provided great opportunities to practice the speaking skills I gained during the Leadership Academy.

Because I did not previously have experience in project proposal writing, my participation in the C5+1 Program offered some clarity as to my potential in the field. For our project, my team and I had to use a template for the proposal, budget, and project framework. Although these were complicated tasks, we finalized our project with the help of professionals from American Councils, older fellows, and friends.



## GROWING THROUGH NEW EXPERIENCES

CONTINUED

### LEADING VOLUNTEERING CLUB IN CHOLPON-ATA

BY **BAKTYGUL TAZHAMATOVA**-AUCA-2020-KYRGYZSTAN

After opening the first volunteering club in Cholpon-Ata in 2019, I successfully held the second annual closing ceremony for the group in June 2021. Over the past two years, the Future Generation club gathered **72 volunteers** and implemented **more than 70 projects**.

This experience helped me to improve my teamwork skills; I am now more confident working with youth and solving problems within the team. Most importantly, I am able to be a leader who divides tasks between people and successfully manages large projects.

I enjoy working with the youth, and this club has greatly impacted the 72 young leaders of Cholpon-Ata and the nearby villages. Over the two years, volunteers not only improved their leadership skills, but also gained knowledge and experience in organizing social projects.

Currently, Future Generation is working with partners, sponsors, schools, and other organizations in Issyk-Kul to make positive changes in Cholpon-Ata, both virtually and in-person.



### MY FIRST MUN CONFERENCE IN TERMEZ



BY **OLIM DALIEV**-AUCA-2020-UZBEKISTAN

O'zbekiston Xalq Demokratik Partiyasi (O'zXDP), in collaboration with the Youth Affairs Agency, organized the Model United Nations (MUN) Conference in Termez, Uzbekistan on May 29-30.

The conference started with a welcome speech by Alisher Sadullaev, Director of the Youth Affairs Agency in Uzbekistan. Among the attendees were international students from over ten countries all around the world.

I was one of the 35 student delegates selected to participate in the event. As delegates, we discussed many current global issues, including the most pressing, the 72-year ongoing war between Israel and Palestine. In groups, we discussed the consequences of the war for youth as well as themes related to gender equality, and solutions for these issues. We started with our position speech, proceeded with several unmoderated and moderated caucuses, and ended with a presentation of our group resolution.

This conference was one of the best experiences of my life; I was able to advance my skills in public speaking, debating, and socializing as a whole, in a single event! I recommend and urge all students to participate in MUN conferences as they are very beneficial for skill-building and for making new friends! Even though the event lasted for two days, the time went by quickly and it felt as though it ended just as soon as it began. Participating in such events can enhance your soft skills, teach you to listen to other points of view, and improve your public speaking, delegating, and persuading skills. In addition, you learn to find a common ground with people from different backgrounds and diverse experiences.

**Although this was my first MUN experience, I was honored to be chosen as the Best Delegate.**

## MAXIMIZING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

U.S.-CAEF fellows seek out educational opportunities which have sharpened their skills and knowledge during a time of great uncertainty. Fellows' commitment to furthering their academic skillsets is commendable, and the following stories detail some of their experiences.

### HONING RESEARCH SKILLS THROUGH CAJVI

BY DINA MAMADJANOVA-AUCA-2019-UZBEKISTAN



This spring, I had the chance to participate in the annual Central Asian Journalism Virtual Institute (CAJVI), which was held entirely online this year. Implemented by Meridian International Center, CAJVI-2021 gathered young journalists to increase their legal knowledge, introduce them to processes for conducting digital investigations and verification, and highlight the importance of data journalism.

The virtual program united early-career professionals from around the world. Guest lecturers from Bellingcat, Gonzo Design Studio, kloop.kg, Media Policy Institute, and other mass media and research organizations provided informative advice about modern journalism trends. At the end of the program, my team and I were able to apply the knowledge we gained by presenting the Central Asian “Plovject” – a small digital research project on the fluctuation of pilaf ingredients in Central Asian countries throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. As pilaf is often considered a universal national dish for the five Central Asian republics, we felt it was necessary to examine and define the pandemic's economic impact on these ingredients.

I am thrilled that I got to participate in the journalism training program CAJVI-2021. Perhaps the most important knowledge I gained for my professional development was learning how to create appropriate data sets and using modern tools for data visualization. With the information I gained, I was able to start successfully implementing a salary survey at my internship at DaVinci.

### PROJECT MANAGEMENT CAMP IN TAJIKISTAN

BY SARFAROZ YUNUSOV  
AUCA-2019-TAJIKISTAN



I recently had an amazing opportunity to be part of the “Project Management Camp” organized by highly experienced specialists in the project management field.

I was chosen as a representative of Khujand city, Tajikistan. The goal of the camp was to enhance the knowledge and skills of participants and to promote a culture of networking and cooperation between participants across Tajikistan. There were 15 representatives of regions and cities throughout Tajikistan, each of whom had coordinated or were currently coordinating community projects to develop specific fields in the country, including IT, environment, and health. During the camp, we took part in various practical and theoretical exercises that helped us to discover creative and unique ways to expand our current projects and to think more creatively about solutions to the community problems that we face.

I also had a chance to make new like-minded friends and future creative partners, with whom we are planning to launch new, bigger, unique projects.

## MAXIMIZING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

CONTINUED

# MY JOURNEY IN DATA ANALYTICS

BY DANIL BONDARETS-AUCA-2020-KYRGYZSTAN



This spring, I attended a webinar organized by McKinsey about data analytics and data science in business and consulting. Today, data analytics drives decision-making in almost all spheres of modern society. I was inspired by how data analytics helps businesses identify new opportunities and improve efficiency and customer satisfaction. I have decided to deepen my knowledge in this field by taking several online courses on the Udeemy learning platform about data analysis, business intelligence, and machine learning. I have also studied many of the relevant tools used by data analysts and data scientists, such as Python, SQL, etc.

After completing several courses, I set a goal of completing the Data Analytics Professional Certificate program offered by Google on the Coursera educational platform. The program provided a great opportunity to gain new knowledge and develop new skills, such as programming in R, a programming language, and data visualization in Tableau. As the final assignment of the program, I applied my new skills and knowledge in practice and completed my own case study, where I performed customer segmentation and analyzed customer habits in order to increase the sales of a bicycle renting company. During the case study, I was amazed how it was possible to transform a set of data about renting station coordinates, dates, and times when the bicycles were rented, and some basic information about the customers into powerful insights that were not obvious at first glance. Overall, these courses helped me to understand my future career path better and motivated me to keep developing in this growing and prospective field.

## GIRLS IN IT

BY FARIZA DUSMATOVA  
AUCA-2020-TAJIKISTAN

Approximately three months ago, I came across an announcement on Instagram about the recruitment of girls for a programming course provided by the Alif school. I was interested in this announcement because the program is free and provides everything to learn basic techniques in programming. I applied for this program and did not regret my decision. Since I joined the program, I have learned a lot of new things and am still learning. Also, during these three months, I met a lot of talented and hardworking girls. I am extremely happy and grateful that there are such programs that help girls develop in different areas. It inspires me to develop and one day organize such a program myself for girls and women, who want to develop in the business and economics sphere.



# STUDY ABROAD

Each year, fellows broaden their horizons and expand their cultural awareness by living and studying abroad to supplement their coursework at their respective universities. This year, despite the pandemic, several U.S.-CAEF fellows embarked on study abroad semesters in various locations, capitalized on these unique experiences and made longlasting memories.

The variety of landscapes, the wonderful mild climate and beautiful nature make Turkey an ideal travel destination. By taking part in sightseeing tours, I had an opportunity to ride a hot air balloon in Cappadocia, attended a local Turkish wedding and even climbed Mount Ararat, which stands at a height of 4950 meters.



## A SEMESTER IN TURKEY

“This spring, I had the opportunity to participate in an exchange semester at one of the most popular Turkish universities, Bilkent University, located in the capital of the country, Ankara. This university has been included in the Times Higher Education World’s 500 Best Universities for several years. A distinctive feature of the university is its expansive campus with over 500 hectares, where university’s own buses run between buildings for students, and there are numerous cafes and private parks.

As I expected, the quality of education at the university was very high. Despite taking some of my classes remotely, all courses were incredibly exciting and informative. Thanks to guest speakers and panel discussions, I was able to gain a lot of new knowledge and experience. Additionally, I also studied the Turkish language and now, I can speak it quite well.

This study abroad experience allowed me not only to gain new knowledge in the field of international marketing, but also gave me a chance to get acquainted with a new culture, traditions and lifestyles.”



**DILARA JUMAGAZIYEVA**  
KIMEP'22

STUDY ABROAD

CONTINUED

# A SEMESTER IN AUSTRIA



“ In July 2020, I won an Ernst Mach scholarship to study at IMC University of Applied Sciences Krems, Austria. However, because of the pandemic, my studies were postponed until February. During my exchange semester in Austria, I learned a lot but the two main takeaways from me were: **(i)** don't be afraid of anything, but verify, analyze and investigate the situation yourself; and **(ii)** try to make as many connections as you can because meeting people from other countries gives you an opportunity to expand your horizons and have friends all over the world.

**TWO MONTHS:**  
**11 COUNTRIES**  
**20 NEW CITIES**

When the COVID-19 restrictions eased, I started my first backpacking trip in Europe. Together with my roommate, I visited 11 countries and 20 new cities within the remaining two months. I am so grateful to the Ernst Mach scholarship for giving me an opportunity to study at a foreign university, meet new people from all over the world and travel around the Europe. ”



**ARUYEL NURBEKOVA**  
 KIMEP'22

→ I started thinking about tourism opportunities in Kazakhstan and possibilities of creating a startup or business related to tourism development in my country.

Overall, this half of the year was one of the most unforgettable experiences I have ever had. Until mid- May almost the whole Europe was in lockdown. During that time, I could not travel. So, I used this time to study. The European system of education requires more self-discipline. If you want to, you can prepare for classes and exams in advance. Thanks to my consistent efforts, I passed all the exams related to finance with the highest grade, which is “1” in the Austrian system. Moreover, my studies also included tourism and marketing, which opened completely new paths for me-

# A SEMESTER IN SCOTLAND



“ In the spring semester, I studied at the University of Glasgow (UofG), Scotland, UK, as part of the Erasmus + scholarship program. When I arrived in Glasgow, the quarantine measures were easing, all university courses were online, but it was still a valuable learning experience.

Studying at UofG is different from studying at KIMEP. The university program is primarily designed to test students' research skills. The concept of research is given more emphasis at UofG than at KIMEP. Seniors are expected to produce papers that resemble the work of real researchers. While the KIMEP program is focused more on problem-solving, the UofG curriculum is more research and theory-oriented. **That is why it was hard for me to adjust to the new system in the beginning.**

Apart from my academics, I had a chance to visit many places, learned about a new culture, and met new people. I even met the only Tajik family living in Glasgow! I saw different historical places, monuments, castles, gardens, landmarks,

and even the famous soccer stadiums. I have traveled all over the UK, from north to south and east to west. I have traveled the seas and bays; I have traveled thousands of miles on trains, buses, and even ferries! During my time in the UK, I visited **four countries and over 12 cities!**

Since I spent most of my life in Central Asia, I experienced a sort of culture shock there. The weather was cold and windy, but the people in Glasgow wore what I would wear on a hot summer day. Also, unlike most of the world, the UK follows right-hand traffic regulations. I was so confused, and even after two months of living there, I kept making the same mistakes. I also noticed that British people are law-abiding citizens. In January, when the UK government imposed another lockdown, everyone followed the rules.

Overall, it was an amazing experience that helped me become more mature and self-reliant and broaden my worldview. On the way home, I was already feeling nostalgic, remembering my entire trip from start to finish and hoping to go back there someday. At all stages of the journey, I encountered challenges, but with a little support and God's help, I overcame them. However, these difficulties are always part of any journey. They make the good moments even better. Without them, the journey is not complete. ”



**ERADZH NASRIDINOV**  
 KIMEP'22

## STUDY ABROAD

A SEMESTER IN  
POLAND

Several AUCA fellows spent their spring semester studying at universities in Opole and Gdansk, Poland. **Zebojon Rasulova** and **Aigul Saparova** shared their stories in the passages below.

“ During the spring 2021 semester, I was selected to participate in an exchange program at Opole University, Poland. I am thankful to have had this opportunity, even during a challenging time amidst the pandemic. It took some time to adjust to life in Poland, as the European system of education is quite different from the American style I am used to at AUCA. Students study independently a lot more than they do at AUCA, and I learned quickly to develop my self-discipline.

My favorite classes were Advertising Psychology, Inter-national Financial Management, Economics of the European Union and Intercultural Communication. For the Advertising Psychology final project, I worked in a group with Erasmus Portuguese students. We were able to meet face-to-face and prepared a marketing strategy for a juice product. This experience helped me think outside the box and expose myself to different

ways of thinking. For International Financial Management, I conducted research on cryptocurrencies, which was very interesting. My teacher was from Germany and he was a professional in Finance. He helped me throughout my research and provided many helpful resources. My Economics of the Euro-pean Union course introduced me to economic policies of the EU, which I found fascinating.

Moreover, I really enjoyed the dormitory life with other Erasmus students. International students came from Spain, Portugal, Greece, Turkey, Belgium, and Morocco. Another AUCA student and I were the only representatives of Tajikistan and AUCA among the Erasmus students.

I also had a chance to travel within the Schengen area with other students. We traveled around Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary, Austria and Italy. Europe is so rich in history, culture, art and music. I visited museums, art galleries and music festivals. I am thankful to the U.S.-CAEF Program and AUCA for giving me this amazing opportunity. I advise all fellows to take part in a similar life-changing experience. ”



**ZEBOJON RASULOVA**  
AUCA'22



“ I spent my 6<sup>th</sup> semester as an exchange student at the Gdansk University of Technology in Poland. Many of the subjects we studied were based on practice; we encountered lots of simulations of business scenarios.

I learned how professionals build business models through modern instruments such as iGrafx, and also performed various business development tasks. During one of the classes, we discussed AUCA's WARC program (tutoring services provided by students), and the professor and other students thought it was a spectacular idea.

The highlight of my semester in Poland was attending a training on management conducted by a Senior Delivery Manager of an American IT company - EPAM Systems. During the four-week intensive training, our team of four built a concept for a project called “Wanna See,” a simple mobile app that shares the top 10 interesting places to see within the 10 km radius of the user's location. The project offered a unique chance to work with data scientists and programmers in Poland.

Spending time in another country as a university student allowed me to make new connections with people from all over the world both online and offline. But most importantly, I was able to build stronger ties with my U.S.-CAEF mentors, **Sezim Zhenishbekova** and **Daniir Abdiev**.

Overall, I would rate the experience of being an exchange student as 10 out of 10. I had some doubts regarding life in Europe during the pandemic; however, now I see that it was one of the best choices I ever made. Therefore, dear fellows, don't ever limit yourself if there is a chance for self-improvement. ”



**AIGUL SAPAROVA**  
AUCA'22

CONTINUED

STUDY ABROAD

CONTINUED

# A SEMESTER IN SWEDEN

Two KIMEP fellows won Erasmus scholarships to study at Uppsala University, Sweden in the spring 2021 semester. Founded in 1477, it is the oldest university in Sweden and the Nordic countries still in operation. Uppsala University is internationally recognised as being one of the **top 100 universities in the world**.

“ Even though all my classes were held online, I had an amazing opportunity to live in a new environment and learn about a different education system, culture and traditions. One skill I acquired at Uppsala University was self-learning because there were almost no lectures, but instead, there were primarily assignments and discussion seminars. It was difficult to adapt to, but now I am grateful to have experienced it.

Throughout the semester, I mainly took classes in marketing-related subjects, fulfilling my elective course requirements from KIMEP. During one of the courses, I had a chance to engage in a simulation activity on Markstrat, a game that lets users take

control of a virtual corporation. Prior to the course, I was only equipped with theoretical knowledge about marketing, but through the stimulation course, I was able to apply those theories in practice by taking part in decision-making processes of a company, starting from strategy to a production plan. This gave me the necessary tools for my future endeavors in the field of marketing.

In addition to my studies, I experienced other parts of Swedish life. Sweden is well known for its beautiful nature and high quality of life. I was also very lucky to fulfill my lifelong dream of seeing the northern lights in the northernmost city of Sweden, Abisko.

Having successfully completed my exchange semester, I can confidently say that I have learned and grown a lot, both personally and professionally. Not only did I learn about a different education system and culture, improve my communication, public speaking, and team-building skills, but I also expanded my horizons and created long-lasting global networks. ”



**ZEVAR MAMADJONOVA**  
KIMEP'22



OLDEST UNIVERSITY IN SWEDEN AND THE NORDIC COUNTRIES STILL IN OPERATION

UPPSALA  
UNIVERSITET



“ In January 2021, I embarked on an exchange semester at Uppsala University in Sweden through the Erasmus+ scholarship. Uppsala University provides a unique style of learning, which emphasizes students’ reflections on their own self-learning experiences. As part of the program, I was able to take such courses as International Marketing & Management, International Business Law, and Leadership, which provided me with in-depth knowledge of business from European and Western perspectives. To broaden my horizons while at Uppsala University, I also took a Basic Swedish class, the goal of which was to help students develop basic literacy in the language in oral and written forms.

Moreover, as part of the program, I got the chance to travel around Sweden and explore such wonderful places as Lapland, the Baltic Sea, and old Swedish houses that are more than 100 years old. Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to Erasmus+, the U.S.-CAEF Program, and KIMEP University for making my exchange semester possible; the result was a once-in-a-lifetime, truly unforgettable experience that I will cherish forever. ”



**SAVSANGUL MAMADLOIQOVA**  
KIMEP'22

## COMMUNITY LEADERS

U.S.-CAEF fellows consistently demonstrate their commitment to their communities by engaging in volunteer activities. Through their service, fellows inspire youth, and teach and learn invaluable skillsets. Their hard work reflects their deeply rooted affection for their respective communities.

### DEVELOPING STUDENTS' SKILLS THROUGH MENTORSHIP

BY SUIUNBU ZOOTBEKOVA  
AUCA-2018-KYRGYZSTAN

In my hometown of Talas, there are very few opportunities to advance professionally and academically. In high school, I dreamed about having a mentor who could give me advice and help put me on a promising career path. My dream came true at AUCA, where Moldalievna Meerim became my mentor. After having such a positive experience with my mentor, I was eager to share the knowledge and experience I have gained with the younger generation.

Starting in February 2021, I began working as an Education Mentor in my former high school in Talas, in the hope of creating more opportunities for students to develop their skills. The main goal was to share my knowledge, experience, and skills that I gained through university classes, U.S.-CAEF trainings, and other opportunities. As an education mentor, I was able to enhance not only students' academic growth, but also their personal development. I worked with about 30 8th grade students. During my work, I conducted individual and group tutoring sessions, primarily in English and Math. I also conducted several training sessions on goal setting, time management, and emotional intelligence. In addition, I taught them how to write essays and how to think critically.

Another part of my job was providing counseling for each student. Through the counseling sessions, I was able to encourage them to dream big to achieve their goals. I am so glad to have met many highly motivated girls during this work, many of whom also hope to study at AUCA. While working at the school, I gave some presentations about AUCA programs and opportunities for senior students, and helped them write motivational letters for the NGA Program.



## COMMUNITY LEADERS

CONTINUED

## TEACHING DIGITAL SKILLS TO RURAL TEACHERS

BY **NURMUKHAMAD TURKBAEV**  
AUCA-2018-KYRGYZSTAN



I was involved in a project sponsored by the Ministry of Education of Kyrgyzstan aimed at developing a new curriculum that could make distance learning easier for school children. Together with teachers throughout Kyrgyzstan, the Ministry recorded the training program on video and uploaded it to specially designed websites and mobile applications, and the lessons were also broadcast on state channels.

However, school teachers who came from remote regions of Kyrgyzstan were not always able to use Microsoft Word, Google slides, and video editing software that were essential for smooth delivery of the curriculum. Thus, a few members of a small team and I traveled to Arkyt village in the Jalal-Abad region, which is the headquarters of the Sary-Chelek Nature Reserve. Since the village is located in a high-mountain region, people do not have access to the Internet and the term “digital literacy” was completely new for teachers there. We talked about the importance of digital education and the methods they might be able to use in their classrooms. My main job was to introduce the teachers to Google Suites, and teach them to use basic features of Gmail and Excel formulas in order to create an online journal to assess students.

## CLEAN-UP WITH PERETO KYRGYZSTAN

BY **FARANGIS MIRZOBEKOVA**  
AUCA-2019-TAJIKISTAN



In April 2021, I heard about a great project being organized by Prereto Kyrgyzstan. PERETO is a project that aims to protect ecology and make life more sustainable. To carry out their mission, they organized several clean-up initiatives in famous tourist areas near Bishkek, as tourists tend to litter often and, in turn, damage the environment. I had a chance to be a part of this clean-up effort; we visited Konorchek Canyons, Orto Tokoy Reservoir, and Issyk Kul lake. It was disappointing to see how much trash, especially plastic, people leave after they have a vacation somewhere.

It required a lot of time and energy to do all the work, but it was very satisfying to realize how much trash we had collected by the end. As a part of this project, the Tazzar organization also taught us how to sort a different types of trash, how to dispose of it properly in Bishkek, and how to minimize use of products that are harmful to the environment.

It was a great pleasure for me to see some of the most beautiful places in Kyrgyzstan. The country has beautiful nature, so I hope local people and tourists will try hard to take care of it.

## DIGITAL LITERACY CAMP IN NARYN

BY **SEZIM KANATOVA**  
AUCA-2018-KYRGYZSTAN



After hearing from relatives in my village about their struggles with online learning throughout the pandemic, I started thinking about how I could solve this problem. I applied for the AUCA Student Initiative Development Program (SIDP), which offers small grants to students to encourage them to develop their leadership potential and professional skills by carrying out projects and initiatives to address social problems.

My first step was to send out a questionnaire to students in the village to find out about their experience with various technologies and digital platforms. Based on the results, I came up with the idea to hold a camp to teach students about Gmail, Google Docs, Google Slides, Google Sheets, and other creative tools like Canva and Wix. Thanks to a small grant from SIDP, I was able to implement my project.

The camp lasted five days, and it attracted 30 students, 2 teachers, and even one parent who requested to join the program. It was really inspiring for me to see the progress that everyone made over the five days, and I was impressed that students were not shy about asking questions when they did not know something. I also think the students had a lot of fun learning in interactive ways by playing games like Kahoot and Jeopardy.

I am thrilled to have had the opportunity to carry out this camp. Seeing students excited to have homework, showing up to the camp early to have Internet access for their homework, and coming from other villages for the program gave me motivation to continue holding these camps in the future.

## COMMUNITY LEADERS

CONTINUED

**KINDNESS SAVES THE WORLD**BY **FARIZA DUSMATOVA**  
AUCA-2020-TAJIKISTAN

Life is a mere moment, which consists of ups and downs, but there are things that can always make every person's life more beautiful. One of the most important is kindness, it awakens love, care, and inspiration in us and adds brightness to our lives. Recently, a story about a poor woman appeared on the Internet, a story about a woman, who did a difficult, typically performed by males, job for a piece of bread in order to feed her four sons with . I could not get past this story and decided to organize a small fundraising team and visit this woman. Fortunately, many of my friends supported my idea and we collected a good amount of money and clothes. I was extremely happy when I realized that I am surrounded by such kind people, who are ready to help. We collected everything needed for the trip and got ready for our journey. The state of life of those women we visited made each of us be grateful for everything we have. Seeing her tears of joy and beautiful smile on her face, I realized that real happiness is to make others happy.

**BASKETBALL FOR KIDS WITH AUTISM**BY **DIANA UVAROVA**  
AUCA-2020-KYRGYZSTAN

At the end of April, I took part in an amazing project implemented by AUCA students and FLEX alumni focused on providing support and companionship to children with autism. We have been working hard on this project since last year, but this spring we were finally able to make these wonderful children and their parents happy in person. Working with them was a great, unique experience. While working with the kids, we did a lot of exercises, played games, learned to play basketball, had a lot of fun, and made friends. Working with children with autism can be difficult at times, but it pays off when you see their progress, how hard they try, and their smiles when they learn something new. These kids are strong and incredibly kind. I personally learned a lot from these children; I learned to remain calm in difficult situations because it is so important for them to be surrounded by trustworthy people who can explain everything calmly and clearly.

**ENHANCING FINANCIAL LITERACY OF STUDENTS**BY **MUHAMMAD BOYMATOV**  
AUCA-2018-TAJIKISTAN

When I applied for a small grant to conduct financial literacy training for 30 orphans, I did not expect that I would eventually end up conducting training for more than 300 people in 8 remote cities of the Sughd region. The grant was offered by Arvand Bank, the second-largest bank of Tajikistan, and my project was among the grantees but was canceled due to internal circumstances in the orphanage. Later, however, representatives of the bank suggested I conduct similar training sessions in remote cities under the aegis of the "Global Money Week". The training sessions were aimed at improving financial literacy in the region.

Thus, together with our team of three, we organized and conducted training sessions on financial literacy and thereby gained invaluable experience. Almost 90% of all participants of our training did not know about such a term as financial literacy, which might reflect the level of financial literacy of all citizens. Therefore, we were happy to share our knowledge with the participants and this way contribute to their personal development.

# ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



## NEW ALUMNI OFFICER

On June 8, **Sevara Tadzhibaeva**, President of the Alumni Association, announced a new alumni officer – **Yusup Artykgullyev**, Vice President for Finance and Outreach. The officer is excited for the opportunity to promote the U.S.-CAEF spirit, and engage alumni in various events to support the Association's strategic goals.



**Yusup Artykgullyev** is a Senior Executive Assistant to the President of KIMEP University. An Accounting and Finance major, Yusup graduated from KIMEP in 2015, and since then, he has been working for his alma mater. He started as an administrative assistant and currently manages the Office of the President. In addition, Yusup is completing his master's degree in Public Administration at KIMEP.

Yusup is enthusiastic about social development and higher education. He enjoys playing volleyball, hiking, and reading books. His new passion is skiing; therefore, winter became his favorite season.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT — MENTORSHIP

CONTINUED

# ALUMNI MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

Several projects within the mentorship program were conducted to increase participant engagement and encourage them to take full advantage of the program’s offerings such as one-on-one advising by a professional coach, mentee for a day, and other opportunities.

**MENTEES & MENTORS WORKED ON BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS, PERSONAL & CAREER DEVELOPMENT GOALS, PLANS FOR PROGRESS TRACKING & DISCUSSED OTHER RELEVANT ISSUES.**

“The meeting was very helpful because I learned a lot about the financial advisory market of Kazakhstan, the top companies in this field, the challenges and what kind of graduates they look for to hire, future career prospects and employee benefits in different companies. We talked about day-to-day operations, what kind of projects they work on. So, it was a great learning opportunity.”



**MENTEE:**  
**ABDUVOHIDKHUJA QODIROV**  
KIMEP’21



**MENTOR FOR A DAY:**  
**JAHONGIR RAHIMOV**  
FINANCIAL ANALYST  
AT EBRD, KIMEP’18

“The program is going well for me. This month I was mainly writing my MA thesis proposal. Our meeting this month was mainly dedicated to overall feedback regarding my MA thesis. My initial purpose of joining the mentorship program was to have someone who could provide guidance on writing an MA thesis. Thus, I can say Zhamilia is a perfect match for me. I am so thankful for her time and advice.”



**MENTEE:**  
**GAVKHARKHON MAMADZHANOVA**  
GRADUATE STUDENT  
AT OSCE ACADEMY  
IN BISHKEK, KIMEP’20



**MENTOR:**  
**ZHAMILIA KLYCHEVA**  
A RECENT GRADUATE OF  
THE MASTER’S PROGRAM  
IN APPLIED DATA SCIENCE &  
INTERNATIONAL STUDIES,  
CLAREMONT GRADUATE  
UNIVERSITY, CLAREMONT,  
AUCA’17

“This month was so productive. This month, we had two online meetings per week, despite our tight schedules. As my mentor currently works for a Big4 company, he suggested I take part in the International Tax Olympiad organized by KPMG. The event was very useful as it provided super productive trainings with case cracking at the end, and I learned a lot about bilateral tax payments, avoiding double taxation and other useful topics. It was nice to see that one of our own alumni, **Alexei Yan**, as one of the event hosts. Additionally, my mentor advised me about internship opportunities and gave me a list of interesting business contests in which I plan to participate soon. As a result, I received several internship offers.”



**MENTEE:**  
**BEKSAT SAILAU**  
AUCA’22



**MENTOR:**  
**PALUAN RIMOV**  
CONSULTANT  
AT KPMG, KIMEP’20

“As I am eager to enter the consulting industry, my mentor advised me to talk with a person who has relevant experience to be more familiar with the specifics of the field. Thus, I became a mentee for a day with **Tangulu Diushakhmatova** who had worked for KPMG for several years before she enrolled in her current grad school. I learned a lot from our mentoring session. The advice and tips from my two mentors helped a lot when I applied for an internship with KPMG. Currently, I am getting close to receiving a job offer from the company. Moreover, my mentor advised me to take a Gallup test. After passing the test, I discovered my top five strengths and discussed them with my mentor. I believe that it was very helpful for me, as I learned a lot more on how to use my strengths and deal with my weaknesses. In addition, we also talked about how to create a good resume as well as the importance of soft skills. My mentor also shared several useful books and articles on the related topics.”



**MENTEE:**  
**DILNAZ IMERAMZAYEVA**  
KIMEP’21



**MENTOR:**  
**KARINA KUSSAINOVA**  
FORECAST ANALYST, CANADIAN  
TIRE CORPORATION, AUCA’14

## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT — MENTORSHIP

CONTINUED

## MENTOR &amp; MENTEE OF THE MONTH

The winners of the “Mentor of the Month” and “Mentee of the Month” competition were announced on the program’s Facebook group platform. Based on participants’ feedback and staff observations, the following mentors and mentees were recognized as most active and engaging during the second and third months of the program in May and June:

## MENTOR

## MENTEE

## MAY



**Tangulu Diushakhmatova** of Kyrgyzstan, AUCA’11 for the time and energy she put into providing guidance not only to her assigned mentee but to other participants of the program as well. Tangulu recently graduated from the Master of Public Policy program, London School of Economics and Political Science, London, UK.



**Aidai Topchubaeva** of Kyrgyzstan, KIMEP’18, Direct-to-Consumer Manager, RG Brands Kazakhstan, for her “openness to all opportunities of the program, commitment and positive attitude to learn and improve constantly” (Sevara Tadzhibaeva, Alumni Conference Coordinator).

## JUNE



**Derek Wood** (an external mentor), a returned Peace Corps Volunteer in Turkmenistan, Implementation Specialist at Points North, for his commitment and contribution to the overall success of the program and being a highly responsible and responsive mentor to his two mentees.



**Darya Rejepalieva** of Turkmenistan, KIMEP’22, for responsible attitude to the program, dedication to learning and practicing new skills, and continued progress. Recently, encouraged by her mentor’s support (Derek Wood), Darya won an opportunity to take part in an exchange program at Hanyang University, South Korea in fall 2021.

## JULY



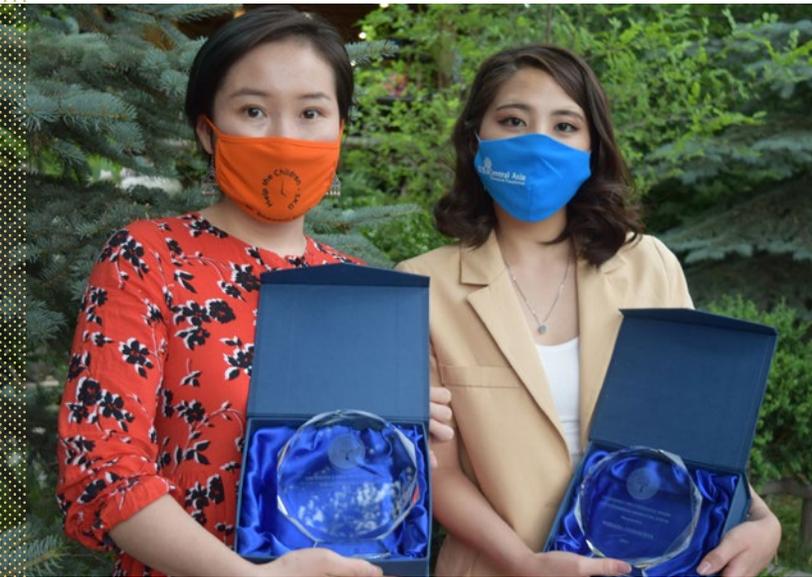
**Karina Kussainova** of Kazakhstan, AUCA’14, for her time and dedication to the program and for contributing to professional and personal development of her mentee as well as supporting and encouraging other fellows and alumni thus creating a positive environment and ensuring overall success of the mentorship program.



**Kasiet Mambetkul kyzy** of Kyrgyzstan, AUCA’19, for consistent improvement, open-mindedness, enthusiasm and willingness to gain the most out of the experience.

## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT — ALUMNI AWARDS 2021

CONTINUED



# ALUMNI AWARDS 2021

A total of seven U.S.-CAEF Alumni, three from AUCA and four from KIMEP University, were honored this year with the Steven F. Shea Excellence Award for their significant professional achievements, service to the community, and active commitment to the economic development of Central Asia. From among the Alumni, two individuals from AUCA and two from KIMEP University were selected to receive the top honor of \$1,000 and a plaque of recognition. In addition, three honorable mention candidates were also selected to receive a monetary grant of U.S. \$250 and a plaque of recognition.

## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT — ALUMNI AWARDS 2021

CONTINUED

## WINNERS

**AZIZ YULDASHEV**

PROJECT MANAGER, ENTER  
ENGINEERING PTE LTD, TASHKENT,  
KIMEP UNIVERSITY'11

As project manager at Enter Engineering Pte Ltd, Aziz directly contributes to the economic development of Uzbekistan. Aziz is currently involved in several projects that are of national importance, including the construction of the country's first nuclear power plant. Aziz and his team are also in the early stages of two other infrastructure projects that will benefit the Uzbek economy on a national scale, including the modernization of the Ferghana oil refinery and the construction of a chemical plant in cooperation with Air Products USA, which will bring upwards of a billion dollars in investments into Uzbek industries.

Prior to Enter Engineering Pte Ltd, Aziz worked at Coca-Cola Bottlers Uzbekistan and the municipality for Tashkent City.

**DINARA ATANTAYEVA**

SENIOR MANAGER, ECONOMICS AND  
DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT,  
SOVEREIGN NATIONAL WELFARE  
FUND SAMRUK-KAZYNA, NUR-SULTAN,  
KIMEP UNIVERSITY'13

Since graduating from KIMEP in 2013, Dinara has worked at two of the largest and most influential organizations in Kazakhstan, Tengizchevroil LLP, a joint venture between Chevron, ExxonMobil, KazMunayGas and LukArco; and Samruk-Kazyna, a sovereign national wealth fund in Kazakhstan that owns several national companies, including Air Astana, the state uranium company Kazatomprom, the state oil and gas company KazMunayGas, and the national rail and postal services. Samruk-Kazyna is responsible for over \$74 billion worth of assets.

After working at Tengizchevroil LLP for four years as an accountant and a financial analyst, Dinara went on to receive a Bolashak Scholarship to study at Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh, where she pursued a master's degree in International Business Management. After returning to Kazakhstan, Dinara went through a rigorous selection process that resulted in her becoming a Senior Manager in the Economics and Planning Department at Samruk-Kazyna. There, through her work, she is supporting programs that encourage sustainable development, the modernization of the economy, and the general increased valuation of Kazakhstan's national assets.

**ZUHRO GANJIBEKOVA**

INVESTMENT ANALYST & PROJECT  
MANAGER, ACCELERATE PROSPERITY,  
DUSHANBE, AUCA'18

Since her graduation from AUCA in 2018, Zuhro has been working with Accelerate Prosperity in several capacities, having risen through the ranks quite quickly. Accelerate Prosperity is a new global initiative of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) in Central and South Asia and provides technical expertise, creative financing solutions and market connections for small and growing businesses.

Zuhro's work as an investment analyst has seen her be responsible for facilitating investments that accelerated more than 20 enterprises in Tajikistan in a single year! Simultaneously, as a project manager she has been responsible for the delivery of one of Accelerate Prosperity's single largest donor projects with the European Union. Zuhro developed a series of recurring reports that enhanced the project's forecasting and budgeting processes.

In addition, Zuhro has been collaborating with UNICEF Tajikistan to implement a series of bootcamps within the framework of the UPSHIFT project that empowers young people to identify challenges in their communities and create entrepreneurial solutions to address them. The four-day bootcamps that Zuhro organized with her team promoted social entrepreneurship and social innovations among marginalized adolescents and youths between the ages of 15 and 24 in remote areas of Tajikistan. One of these bootcamps provided the foundation for a startup created by two other alumni, Nomnom.tj

**ASEL KALDYBAEVA**

VOLUNTEER LEADER, "HELP ISSYK-KUL",  
INTERNATIONAL, OPERATIONS MANAGER,  
TIER ONE ANALYTICS, BISHKEK, AUCA'17

Asel has been nominated for her remarkable work with the "Help Issyk-Kul" emergency response volunteer project initiated by Edil Ajibaev, founder of PicVPic.com., during a peak in the COVID-19 crisis in Kyrgyzstan. As a volunteer leader, Asel took on several important responsibilities which were critical for the success of the project. Following Asel's example, other U.S.-CAEF alumni – Uulzhan Aitnazarova, Shaislam Shabiev, and Sevara Tadzhibaeva – also joined the project. Due to the rapid response and coordinated guidance of volunteer leaders like Asel, the project was able to raise much-needed \$50,584 in aid for the rural regions of Kyrgyzstan and save many lives. With that money, the project was able to purchase an ambulance for the Taldy Suu village, vital medications for more than 750 people, thousands of units of PPE, and several important pieces of medical equipment such as oxygen concentrators, which were donated to local hospitals.

In addition, Asel spearheaded informational campaigns to keep the local populace informed about the virus. Her team prepared videos to teach people how to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and encouraged city doctors to share their experience of treating the virus with their colleagues in the rural areas of the Issyk-Kul region.

Professionally, Asel had worked with KPMG Bishkek since her graduation from AUCA in 2017 until 2020, where she has risen to the position of the audit supervisor. Recently, she started a new position with Tier One Analytics as International Operations Manager.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT — ALUMNI AWARDS 2021

CONTINUED

# HONORABLE MENTION



**ALMANBET ABYLKASYM UULU**  
 FOUNDER, SMART UNIVERSITY, PROJECT MANAGER, "YOU" YOUTH PROJECT, HELVETAS SWISS INTERCOOPERATION, AUCA'11

Almanbet has been nominated for his professional successes and his continued efforts to contribute to his community and provide guidance to his younger U.S.-CAEF peers. After graduating from AUCA in 2011, Almanbet began working at the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Center (OSCE) in several capacities, including having been the youngest person ever promoted in that office to the role of National Program Officer. After working at OSCE for several years, he joined the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development as an Analyst for nearly three years. Today he is the founder and owner of the Business Smart Academy Kyrgyzstan in Bishkek, where he hopes to provide foundational knowledge for youths interested in entrepreneurship.

Passionate about the ProKG's project "My School" aimed at encouraging student success, Almanbet decided to donate his award (250\$ or 21,000 Kyrgyz soms) to five outstanding graduates of school #50 and their teacher in his native Osh. The selected students hold top scores on the National Scholarship Test. Each awardee received cash prizes in the following amounts:

1. Beksultan Moldomyrzaev: 6000 KGS
2. Begimai Abdykalykova: 3500 KGS
3. Alina Tutanbek kyzy: 3500 KGS
4. Shaiyrbek Tolonbaev: 2000 KGS
5. Syymyk Zupuev: 1000 KGS

**TEACHER:**

6. Alymkan Kochkorova: 5000 KGS



**NILUFAR UMAROVA**  
 CO-FOUNDER, NOMNOM.TJ  
 FINANCIAL ASSISTANT  
 JAPAN INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AGENCY  
 KIMEP UNIVERSITY'19



**NIGORA BURHONOVA**  
 CO-FOUNDER, NOMNOM.TJ  
 HR ASSISTANT  
 OSCE, DUSHANBE  
 KIMEP UNIVERSITY'19

Nilufar and Nigora have been nominated together for their early successes in building their business, Nomnom.tj. After graduating from KIMEP in 2019, both Nilufar and Nigora were selected to be U.S.-CAEF Capstone interns in Washington D.C. Upon returning from Washington, Nilufar and Nigora took some time to establish themselves in their home country of Tajikistan. In late spring, they both participated in an UPSHIFT bootcamp that aimed to encourage innovative business solutions to social problems in Tajikistan. During the four-day bootcamp, Nigora and Nilufar developed the idea of Nomnom, a food delivery service for those who love home cooking. The goal of their project is to provide an opportunity to housewives to participate in the economy by making an income for themselves. Nilufar and Nigora received funding from UNICEF to develop their business, and were able to begin a soft-launch of the project in August. Since then, they have been hard at work developing their business, building a network of bakers and cooks, and developing their website and process.

As consumers appear to be tiring of cooking at home during the pandemic, food deliveries, particularly delivery of homemade food, is highly appreciated by many customers, and the demand for such services has been steadily growing in Tajikistan.

“ This is a great cause, and we are proud that Almanbet is making such meaningful contributions in his hometown.

— **Uranbek Turdumbaev**  
 U.S.-CAEF PROGRAM SPECIALIST

## ALUMNI STORIES

CONTINUED

# EARLY ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN MARKETING CAREER

BY ALUA CHYNTEMIROVA, KIMEP'22

**Timur Karimov** (Tajikistan, KIMEP '17) has been a hard-working, ambitious student since his time on the FLEX Program in the United States. While he was still a FLEX participant, Timur applied for the U.S.-CAEF scholarship, which he was subsequently awarded to attend KIMEP University in Almaty.

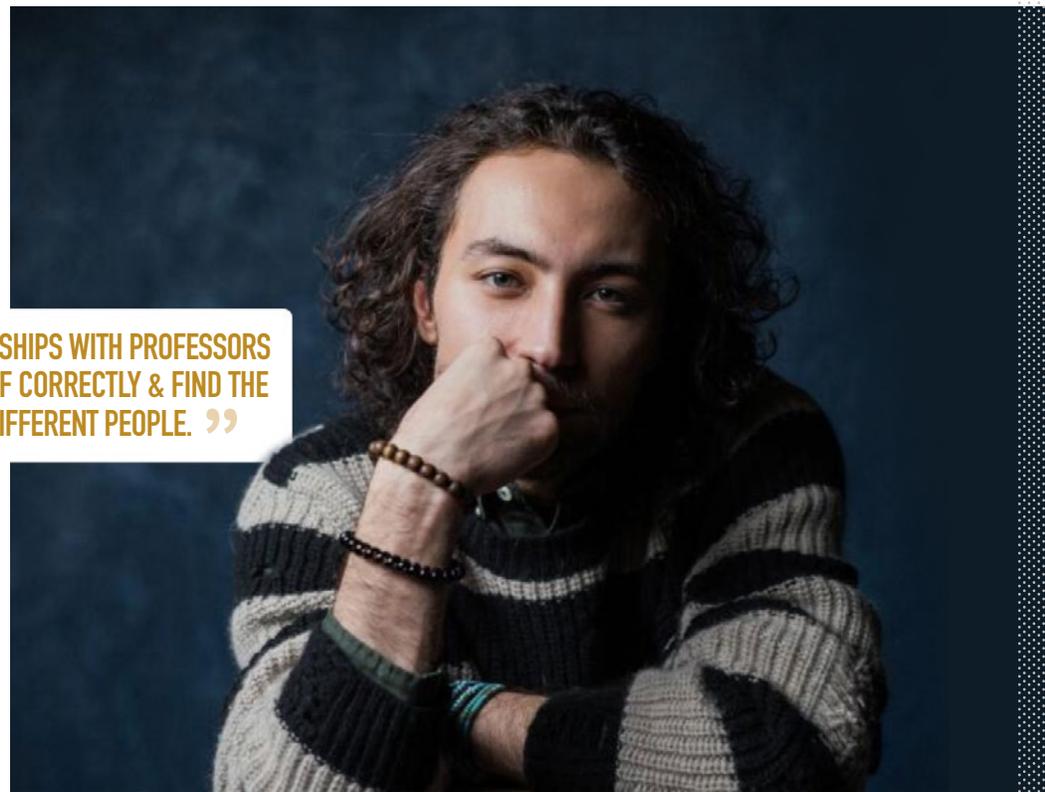
As a KIMEP student, Timur was extremely active and made a conscious effort to take advantage of as many social and professional opportunities as possible. During his four years, he worked diligently to improve his communication and networking skills, both of which contributed to his ability to secure various internship and job offers. Timur remarks,

“ I FOCUSED ON CREATING CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS WITH PROFESSORS & PEERS & LEARNED TO PRESENT MYSELF CORRECTLY & FIND THE RIGHT APPROACH TO CONNECTING WITH DIFFERENT PEOPLE. ”

Among the most formative professional experiences Timur took part in were the multiple internships he began in his third year at KIMEP. In this time, Timur took on positions with four different companies in their marketing departments, through which he gained valuable knowledge and skills in the marketing sphere.

The following year, upon learning that the retail chain H&M would be opening in Kazakhstan, Timur secured a position with the company as a team leader for the roll out efforts. As a result of his superior work ethic and exemplary job performance, he secured a permanent position with the company, and remained there for a total of 1.5 years.

Grateful for his experience at H&M but eager for a change, Timur eventually moved on to become the account manager of a marketing agency Tayniy Sovetnik. In this role, Timur involved himself in various interesting projects, working with



representatives from such top international companies as Coca-Cola. He later decided to begin working more on the client-facing side of the industry and accepted a position as brand manager with Efes, a Turkish beer company, where he worked on influential projects with leading companies like Miller.

Currently, Timur works for Henkel, a multinational chemicals company that works with various beauty care, laundry and home care, and adhesive technologies brands. Timur holds the title of brand manager and is responsible

for marketing efforts for branches of the company in nine different countries. In this role, Timur is engaged in traditional marketing strategies with an emphasis on data analysis. He also travels to the various branches to ensure smooth operations and open communication.

Despite being a relatively young U.S.-CAEF alum, Timur has earned multiple early successes in his career. He has no plans of slowing down and hopes to acquire an advanced degree in the near future to supplement his job experience.

## ALUMNI STORIES

CONTINUED

# THE JOURNEY TOWARDS SUCCESS

AUCA sophomore **Gulnoz Faizakova** has interviewed **Shahnoz Jonmamadova**, KIMEP'17 who was recently promoted to Senior Finance Manager at Aga Khan Health Service in Tajikistan, to learn about her path to success.



**Q** Can you tell us about your life after graduation: what was your experience after university life?

Life after graduation is not as scary as it seems to be to a fresh graduate. The transition from university life to a more mature and independent life is always a perfect opportunity for growth. Immediately after graduating, I traveled to San Diego, California as part of the Hansen Summer Institute on Leadership and International Cooperation. Upon completion of the program, I moved to Washington D.C. as a Capstone International Internship Fellow where I did an internship with 1776 Venture Capital firm. This experience has helped me to get immersed into the US world of business which was very helpful. Upon my return to Tajikistan, I was employed as an Area Finance Officer by the Aga Khan Foundation, Afghanistan. I had a great opportunity to travel to the cross-border parts of Afghanistan and contribute to the development work in that area. Currently, I am employed with Aga Khan Health Service in Tajikistan as a Senior Finance Manager where I am responsible for the overall financial operations of the organization.

**Q** How did your experience in the U.S.-CAEF Capstone international program help you in your profession?

During the Capstone program, I interned at 1776 Venture Capital firm which was engaged in providing investments for entrepreneurs around the world that aim to tackle social and economic challenges in complex markets. The U.S. experience gave me a competitive advantage back in

Tajikistan; however, I think the main takeaway from the Capstone program was my improved networking skills and innovative ideas for business and management. I remember how we invited executives/businessmen for a cup of coffee and discussed different contemporary business issues and asked for their advice. These meetings helped me overcome hierarchical barriers. In Tajikistan, there is a huge gap between high and middle-level officials. I keep open my doors for my staff to openly discuss their concerns and feedback related to our work. Furthermore, as part of my current job, I manage the financial operations of the biggest AKHS project - the Aga Khan Medical Center in Khorog (AKMC K), which was established in 2018 and provides high-quality medical services for the population. It aims to be self-sustainable by 2025, allowing it to expand its services and reduce medical tourism to other countries. AKMC K is a sort of a start-up, thus my 1776 VC experience is very helpful now.

**Q** How did you manage to secure a job with Aga Khan Health Service as a Senior Finance Manager?

I joined AKHS in October 2019 as a Finance Manager. A year later, I was promoted to the position of Senior Finance Manager. I think my educational background, thanks to the U.S.-CAEF scholarship, and hard work allowed me to win the trust of the management and colleagues to achieve a senior position early in

my career. I believe it is very important to take responsibility, participate in all organizational work, and never give up on new tasks.

**Q** What was the biggest challenge to start your job at Aga Khan Health Service, Tajikistan?

When joining Aga Khan Health Service, healthcare financing was new for me. I quickly realized that working from 8 am to 5 pm is not a way to quickly learn the job and make decisions that can help clinics achieve financial sustainability and at the same time ensure affordable services for rural communities in need. That is why working both hard and smart and diversifying our financial sources helped me succeed.

**Q** What do you like about finance the most? How would you describe your experience at AKHS?

At AKHS, I am responsible for preparing a budget for the entire organization, financial planning, and monitoring project performance against budget, preparing accurate and timely reports for donors, and general accounting and related financial functions of the organization. What I like most about my current job is that it helps me to see human needs first and then make financial planning. For example, together with the AKMC K team currently, we are working on establishing an insurance product scheme that will help the GBAO population to have access

## ALUMNI STORIES

CONTINUED

at AKMC, K. We all know that during the Soviet time medical services were free, but after the collapse of the Soviet Union, a health reform became necessary. Since the unemployment rate in Tajikistan is very high and the economic situation is down, people find it hard to pay for the services at AKMC K. However, the insurance product will be one of the first modern iterations of health insurance in Tajikistan and will charge a USD20 per capita per annum premium per person. If the insurance is successfully implemented, it will increase the number of people who can access AKMC, K services and improve the overall quality of care that patients in Gorno-Badakhshan and Autonomous Oblast (GBAO) receive.

**Q | Working in such a well-known organization in Tajikistan, what are the skills a SFM should possess?**

I think the most important skill a Senior Finance Manager should possess is the ability to translate figures into decisions, and based on that, set future vision and planning. I also believe that Senior Finance Manager should have good interpersonal skills like leadership and communication. For instance, currently, I supervise eight employees who are all senior to me age-wise and with different backgrounds. I believe that a Senior Finance Manager should first create a healthy work environment for employees, despite being a young leader, because if your employees are happy and motivated, their work will also be of a good quality. Moreover, you will always have to communicate with many stakeholders, including the government, donors, AKDN agencies, auditors, tax departments, etc.

**Q | Please share 3 main pieces of advice that in your opinion would help students to develop in Finance.**

While working at the Aga Khan Foundation, Afghanistan, my supervisor once said that three factors affect a person's professional development: educational background, experience, and attitude. And although, we always hear that experience is most important, I believe that personal attitude is very crucial. You may have years of experience, but if you do not have a positive attitude, the chances of your career being successful are very low. The second tip I want to give is to work hard and always strive to learn new things. The financial world and standards change every day, and

you need to follow the same path. I have seen people stay in their comfort zone and do not take responsibility. You better make mistakes but learn. The third tip I would like to give is to stay cool and make positive changes to the environment in which you work. Finance requires a lot of hard work, and the work can be very stressful at times but stay cool no matter what and keep smiling.

**Q | I think many people including me see you as a motivated & ambitious, what drives you the most in your life?**

I am motivated by new opportunities and challenges, developing an action plan for those challenges that contribute to the wellbeing of my community, and seeing the results of my efforts. For example, last year, we all faced the COVID-19 pandemic and the health sector in our country was not ready for it. Particularly, there was a lack of oxygen supply for the Covid patients, therefore, we decided to procure an oxygen generator for AKMC K which can supply the whole region with oxygen. As the oxygen generator was expensive and not part of the budget, together with the Eurasian Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), (Amina Iqbolzoda, U.S. -CAEF alumni, being part of the fundraising group) and other volun-

teers, we engaged in a robust fundraising campaign raising EURO 107K. Using the proceeds, we purchased an oxygen generator plant for AKMC K. This is what motivates me-like-minded people and results of hard work that makes the community life better.

**Q | You might have been interning in various organizations while you were a student, can you please briefly share about your first and last internship experience?**

My first internship experience was at DiningSmart Company in Almaty as a marketing assistant when I was a sophomore. This experience helped me to understand that I do not want to pursue my career in this field, so during my 3rd year at KIMEP University, I changed my major to Audit and Accounting. My last experience was at Mountain Societies Development Support Program (MSDSP), a branch of Aga Khan Foundation in Tajikistan. I realized that the work that is done at the organization is closer to me and the values that I possess. I realized that after graduation, I want to continue working with Aga Khan Development Networks and contribute to improving quality of life in society. As a result, I have been working with the affiliated agencies of the AKDN for the fourth year now.

“...we always hear that experience is most important,

I believe that personal attitude is very crucial.”



## ALUMNI STORIES

CONTINUED

## INTERVIEW WITH AIDAI ALMAZ KYZY

BY AISULU RYSPAeva, AUCA'23

**Aidai Almaz kyzy** is a U.S.-CAEF alumna who graduated in 2015 with a degree in Business Administration from AUCA. After successfully completing a master's degree at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, Aidai became involved in the IT and finance fields and gained employment with proctoring company Honorlock Inc., founded by U.S.-CAEF alumna **Elena Soboleva** (AUCA '11). In addition, she started organizing a weekly digital marketing course for fifty high-school students in Issyk-Kul. Though it was a long journey for Aidai, she managed to narrow her career path all while maintaining a commitment to community service. In the interview below, Aidai shares some important highlights of her work and elaborates on her experience in the IT sphere.

**Q: Considering the state of the world right now, how have you been doing during the COVID-19 lockdown? Is there anything you miss from life before the pandemic?**

When the pandemic became everyone's reality, I was just graduating from my master's program in Hawaii and had already started working part-time as a financial assistant at Honorlock Inc., founded by another U.S.-CAEF fellow, Elena Soboleva, and its chapter Paragon KG. By the end of my studies, Elena and I had already established that I would start my training for a full-time job in Florida. So, that was how I experienced the beginning of the pandemic! But later, once I settled back home in Bishkek, working from home alone, I started missing people.

**Q: That is a great accomplishment! Could you please share with us how you found such a promising employment opportunity?**

Once I was accepted to my master's program in Hawaii, I started thinking about how I needed to use the opportunity of being in the United States, where the IT industry is booming, and that I should seek out an internship or work experience in an IT company there. So, the first thing I did was email Rosa Thiele, Program Manager at American Councils who oversees the U.S.-CAEF Program. She kindly and quickly shared a list of contacts I could use to find an internship in the U.S. In the list, I found Elena Soboleva's email, and I promptly contacted her. That allowed me to truly feel the power of the U.S.-CAEF family and the network it has to offer us.

**Q: That is so true! What sort of work were you engaged in at Honorlock? Is there anything in particular you remember?**

At Honorlock Inc., I started working on book-keeping services, and later, as the company grew its number of clients, my tasks expanded to ensuring that the company received payments for its services. In January 2021, I started my position as a Business Development Manager here at Paragon KG. There, I started by helping the company grow its partner portfolio and preparing the company to get the SOC2 information security certification, which is helpful for many companies as it proves and assures that all the information stored in the systems, physical equipment, and the people working there is highly protected from external hazards. Experiencing such a spectrum of responsibilities was an interesting opportunity for me, for which I am very thankful.

**Q: Helping communities is a vital part of sustainable development, and your involvement in such efforts is inspiring. Your recent project from April 2021 called "Skill space" has been linked to increased children's literacy in Issyk-Kul. What was the main goal of this initiative and what were your main takeaways? Were there any skills that you obtained?**

Yes, I have been able to offer a weekly course to equip 50 high school girls with digital marketing skills in five villages in the south of Issyk-Kul. I would like to thank American Councils and the U.S. Embassy for helping me make this project happen. Most importantly, this project allowed me practice skills I never thought I would be good at. First, I feel more confident speaking in public now. Entertaining the audience and improvising when things are not going the way you planned

is another skill I gained. Also, I am now more experienced with planning and implementing budgets, which is vital when coordinating big projects.

**Q: Is there anything you are hoping to work on in the near future? If so, can the U.S.-CAEF community be involved somehow?**

Currently, I am very focused on my studies and am not planning another project. However, if there is a project or event I can be involved in together with others in the U.S.-CAEF community, I would be thrilled to do so!

**Q: What advice would you give to current U.S.-CAEF fellows who dream of working at a big company?**

I will share what I do when figuring out ways to get where I want to be: I like to go to the LinkedIn profile of a person who is already in a position similar to the one I want and analyze how he or she got there.

**Thank you for such an engaging and interesting interview. We are looking forward to hearing from you and wish you the best of luck in all your endeavors!**



## ALUMNI STORIES

CONTINUED

TURNING BOLD IDEAS  
INTO REALITY

## NARGIZA ZHAKYPOVA

**Sevara Tadzhibaeva**, Alumni Association President, recently interviewed U.S.-CAEF alumna **Nargiza Zhakypova** to find out more about her career path and recent successes. The interview is a great example of how U.S.-CAEF alumni can leverage their scholarships and university experiences to achieve their career goals and impact their communities. Since graduating from AUCA in 2012, Nargiza has created several successful businesses in and outside of her native Kyrgyzstan.

**Recently, Nargiza opened a full-day school in Bishkek. She believes that the school's innovative program will equip students with valuable skills needed in today's fast-paced, hyper-digital world.**



# ALUMNI STORIES

CONTINUED



WHATEVER IDEA YOU HAVE, NEVER DOUBT, JUST DO IT.

I ALWAYS GO FOR MY IDEAS.

**Q: After graduating from AUCA and the U.S.-CAEF Program, what kind of professional experience did you gain?**

After graduating from AUCA, I started working at CENKO (Central Asia-Korea), a logistics company. I worked as a Finance-Logistics Assistant for three years, during which time I learned a lot from my manager. Later, I started managing a 5 million USD yearly budget and curated the whole logistics operation. At the same time, I started my master's degree at OSCE Academy. I remember one day at university when I negotiated with a new Japanese partner about lower ferry rates from Japan to China— all through Skype during a break between classes! While other classmates had fun talking to

each other during breaks, I was on the phone solving various problems related to my work.

It was one of the busiest and most stressful years of my life, but it was worth it. I lived with my Mom at the time, and I had to work even on the New Year. But it brought back a sizable bonus, which was a lot of money for us back then. With some of this money, I was able to buy an online course and launch my own business.

One year later, I started to feel burnt out and quit my job at CenKo. I got a new job at an NGO, Search for Common Ground, as a Project Assistant. Working at an NGO has plenty of perks, but typically comes with a lot less stress compared to commercial companies.

Shortly after that, I found out my mom had cancer. I had been planning to go to Germany to continue my studies, but I decided to stay with my mom during her last years. Everything happens for a reason.

**Q: Could you talk about your university experience, particularly moments or opportunities that were extremely useful for your professional development and leadership skills? What kind of advice would you give to current freshmen in the U.S.-CAEF Program?**

One of the most important skills I learned at university — and that I use often in my work — is presentation skills. In particular, learning to prepare the presentation itself and delivering it to the audience was extremely helpful. Since opening the

very first branch of IT-RUN, I have made dozens of presentations to clients, investors, colleagues, etc. My advice would be to place emphasis on the self-introduction during your presentation; if the audience knows you and likes you, they will listen to and trust you.

Other important skills I gained were researching and analytical skills. I aim to conduct extensive research before any important task like launching a new project, opening a new branch, building a relationship with a partner, etc. For example, before opening a new branch in Almaty, we had to make an analysis of competitors and look at statistics about potential clients.

Of course, English and computer skills are also critical skills. Some

# ALUMNI STORIES

CONTINUED

people may have had fluent English skills and computer literacy before university, but not me. I have no words to express my gratitude to U.S.-CAEF for helping me develop these skills in me.

**Q: What inspired you to become an entrepreneur? Could you talk a bit about your company IT-RUN & its branches in other companies?**

After starting my job at Search for Common Ground, I was offered a higher position as a Project Coordinator as a result of implementing a project that received 3 million USD in funds from the U.S. government. I also met my husband, and after my mom passed away, we decided to move to Germany.

Soon after, my husband and I took on second jobs to pay for classes in IT, which we were inspired to do because my sister was working as a successful software developer in

the U.S. at the time. We took jobs like cleaning and nannying to pay for the classes. During the day time, we worked, and in the evenings we went to school. I liked studying IT, and realized it was a booming field in Berlin, where we lived. We launched a few businesses connecting Central Asia with Europe, including a travel agency and an educational center that helped students from Central Asia enroll in European universities.

These experiences inspired us to open the IT-RUN Programming Academy in Bishkek, which provides youth in Kyrgyzstan a chance to obtain IT skills and potentially work remotely for top companies in Europe and the U.S.

A large portion of the population has already migrated to Russia, Europe, and other regions to work as laborers. IT could provide a different kind of career path that allows them to stay in their home country.

The program has been a success. Within half a year, we became the biggest IT academy in Bishkek. We recently expanded to other regions in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Russia, and Tajikistan as well. Currently, IT-Run employs 127 part-time and full-time employees, and the Bishkek center, the largest of its kind in Kyrgyzstan, has 330 students at the moment.

After eventually moving to the U.S. and giving birth to my son, we expanded our business to offer an IT boot camp in Miami, marketed to people in Central Asia. Due to its success, we ran a similar boot camp in Dubai. I am so proud of our team. Whatever ambitious ideas we have, they are always there. It is important to have strong staff members.

While we were proud of our success with scaling up IT-RUN, we did experience some setbacks due to the pandemic. We had to close our branches in Miami, Dubai, and Czech Republic,

where we planned to launch a new branch. Other branches went online, but sales volumes shrank, so we started building our own IT educational platform. Despite our setbacks, we were able to slowly rebuild the business and our other 8 branches are operating successfully.

**Q: The American-European School is another one of your projects based in Bishkek- what inspired you to open a school? What is your current position in this company, and how is it related to IT- RUN Academy?**

American-European School (AES) is a full-day private school for grades 0-4. We launched this project this year. My mom inspired this project because she worked as a school teacher for 30 years, and I hope that now she is proud her daughter has opened her own school. I am one of the founders of AES but I perform a variety of duties since we are still in the beginning

SOME IDEAS WILL BE SUCCESSFUL, & SOME MAY NOT, BUT DEFINITELY IT IS ALWAYS WORTH IT TO TRY, AS IT WILL HELP YOU ON YOUR JOURNEY.



ALUMNI STORIES **CONTINUED**

stages of the project. Together with my team, I am recruiting teachers and other staff members, coordinating marketing efforts, organizing events and answering phone calls. I am really proud of the success we have experienced with IT-Run, and I am hoping to build an equally successful project with AES.

This year, we will welcome our first students to AES. Starting next year, we hope to have students in grades 5-11 as well. Currently, we have **24** staff members and plan to add **26** more employees. The school capacity is **400 students**. I am especially proud of and excited to work on our kindergarten, as we hope to create a stellar learning environment where our son will study one day.

**Q: It is so impressive that you are a business lady, social media influencer, wife, and mom! How do you manage work-life balance?**

Delegating helps a lot. After having my son, I was able to delegate some cooking and cleaning. I am grateful to have a full-time nanny for my son, as well as an assistant and driver. My husband and I try our best not to talk too much about work at home, but sometimes it is difficult! Once per week, we plan for just the two of us to have a date night. Regarding social media, I was more active a year ago, but now I am starting to get back into it. I think it is good to take a break from it every once in a while.



## ALUMNI UPDATES

## CONGRATULATIONS



**ZHAMILIA  
KLYCHEVA**

**AUCA'17**

Graduated from the Master of Science in Applied Data Science and International Studies Program, Claremont Graduate University, Claremont, CA, 2018-2021



**TANGULU  
DIUSHAKMATOVA**

**AUCA'11**

A Chevening scholar, graduated from the Master of Public Policy Program, London School of Economics and Political Science, UK, 2020-21

## ALUMNI UPDATES

CONTINUED

## NEW JOBS

**Kuralay Baisalbayeva**

KIMEP'12

INTERNATIONAL TAX &amp; COMPLIANCE SPECIALIST, ETS GLOBAL B.V., AMSTERDAM, NETHERLANDS

**Galym Dauletbaev**

KIMEP'12

AMAZON TRANSPORTATION SERVICES PARTNER IN DALLAS, TEXAS

**Ainura Turatova**

(DERKENBAYEVA)

AUCA'13

ASSISTANT PRODUCT MANAGER, SAMSUNG, DUBAI

**Merey Serdanova**

KIMEP'13

FREELANCE MARKETING RESEARCHER AND PHOTOGRAPHER

**Madina Damir kyzy**

AUCA'14

LEAD SPECIALIST, FRAUD AND INVESTIGATIONS DEPARTMENT, JOHNSON &amp; JOHNSON, DUBAI, UAE

**Chyngyz Zhanybekov**

AUCA'14

COMMUNICATIONS EXPERT, UNFPA EECARO, ALMATY

**Jemal Agayeva**

KIMEP'15

TECHNOLOGY ANALYST, INFOSYS LIMITED, RICHARDSON, TX

**Ilhan Yollyyev**

KIMEP'16

CONSULTANT, KPMG TAX AND ADVISORY, KPMG, MOSCOW

**Samat Nurtoleuov**

KIMEP'16

SENIOR ANALYST, AITU SAUDA LLP, NUR-SULTAN

**Medina Abylkasymova**

AUCA'16

NATIONAL RESEARCH AND EVALUATION SPECIALIST, UNDP, OSH

**Samatbek Osmonov**

AUCA'17

SOFTWARE ENGINEERING, FACEBOOK, LONDON, UK

**Asel Kaldybaeva**

AUCA'17

INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS MANAGER, TIER ONE ANALYTICS

**Zhibek Kamalbek kyzy**

AUCA'18

SENIOR MANAGER, INTERNAL CONTROLS AND RISK MANAGEMENT, BEELINE, BISHKEK

**Jahongir Rahimov**

KIMEP'18

FINANCIAL ANALYST, EBRD, ALMATY

**Aigerim Akimzhan**

KIMEP'19

CONSULTANT, TAX &amp; ADVISORY, KPMG, ALMATY

**Alisher Murtazaev**

KIMEP'19

E-COMMERCE MARKETING MANAGER, RG BRANDS, ALMATY

**Sultan Molutov**

KIMEP'20

CONSULTANT, DEAL ADVISORY, KPMG, ALMATY

**Paluan Rimov**

KIMEP'20

EXECUTIVE CONSULTANT, VALUATION, MERGERS AND ACQUISITIONS AND FINANCING, KPMG, ALMATY

**Atobek Rahimshoev**

AUCA'20

DATA SCIENTIST, CABAR.ASIA, DUSHANBE

**Olga Pykhova**

AUCA'20

PR &amp; MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT MANAGER, AMCHAM KYRGYZSTAN

**Maksud Rahimov**

KIMEP'20

KEY ACCOUNT MANAGER, SPEY MEDICAL LTD., TASHKENT

**Umar Nasriddinov**

KIMEP'21

SALES MANAGER, LIVO DEV, DUSHANBE

**Symbat Slambayeva**

KIMEP'21

MANAGER, COMMERCIAL OFFERS AND TENDERS, KAZGIPRONEFTE-TRANS LLP, ALMATY

**Azat Taizhan**

KIMEP'21

SALES MANAGER, AVIATA &amp; CHOCOTRAVEL, ALMATY

**Bekzat Sadyrbaev**

AUCA'21

E-COMMERCE, AMAZON

**Dilrabo Saidalieva**

KIMEP'21

CHIEF SPECIALIST, DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND INVESTMENTS FREE ZONE KULOB

## ENTREPRENEURSHIP

**Aizharkyn Burkanova**

AUCA'14

CO-FOUNDER AND CHIEF PRODUCT OFFICER, PERIMETR. APP (HYPERLOCAL COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT PLATFORM) WITHIN BSL.DEV IT COMPANY)

## PROMOTION

**Ulukbek Abdubaliev**

AUCA'15

SENIOR PLANNING AND COORDINATION OFFICER, OSCE, BISHKEK

**Aigerim Almazova**

AUCA'16

SENIOR FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE ASSOCIATE, INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION (IOM), GRAND-SACONNEX, SWITZERLAND

**Mohinav Amonulloeva**

KIMEP'17

FINANCE EXECUTIVE, COCA-COLA TAJIKISTAN

**Nursultan Irisov**

KIMEP'17

AUDIT ASSOCIATE (A3), DELOITTE, ALMATY

**Gulkaiyr Tashieva**

(SUIUNALI KYZY)

AUCA'17

ADVANCED FINANCIAL ANALYST, BAKER HUGHES, BUDAPEST

**Farzona Khaidarova**

AUCA'20

HEAD OF INVESTOR RELATIONS, OJSC "ALIF BANK", DUSHANBE

**Adil Khan Kalibek**

KIMEP'21

ASSOCIATE, ASSURANCE DEPARTMENT, PWC, KAZAKHSTAN, ALMATY

**Mukhammadnosir****Abduzhabbarov**

KIMEP'21

GROWTH AND MARKETING SPECIALIST, GLOVO KG, BISHKEK

## POST-GRADUATE STUDIES

**Khurshedmo****Jonmamadova**

AUCA'13

MS IN ECONOMICS, KHOROG STATE UNIVERSITY, TAJIKISTAN, 2019-2021

**Usnibegim Rahimjonova**

KIMEP'17

MBA IN INTERNATIONAL PROJECT MANAGEMENT, BARCELONA EXECUTIVE BUSINESS SCHOOL (BEBS), BARCELONA, SPAIN, 2021-2022

**Mohinav Amonulloeva**

KIMEP'17

ONLINE MBA IN INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS MANAGEMENT &amp; INNOVATION, BARCELONA EXECUTIVE BUSINESS SCHOOL (BEBS), SPAIN, 2021-22

**Saira Duishonbekova**

AUCA'20

GLOBAL KOREA SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM FOR GRADUATE DEGREES, DUKSUNG WOMEN'S UNIVERSITY, SOUTH KOREA, SEPTEMBER 2021 - AUGUST 2024 (A FULL SCHOLARSHIP FROM NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION WITH A LANGUAGE COMPONENT AT JEJU NATIONAL UNIVERSITY)

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