

# ENTERPRISE

**U.S.-CAEF  
CHANGEMAKERS  
LEADING THE WAY**  
PAGE 2

**POSTGRADUATE  
EDUCATION**  
PAGE 28

**ENTREPRENEURSHIP  
IN ACTION**  
PAGE 10

**ALUMNI  
UPDATES**  
PAGE 32

**GROWING &  
BRANCHING OUT**  
PAGE 13

**ALUMNI  
SPOTLIGHT**  
PAGE 23

**CAPSTONE  
2022**  
PAGE 34

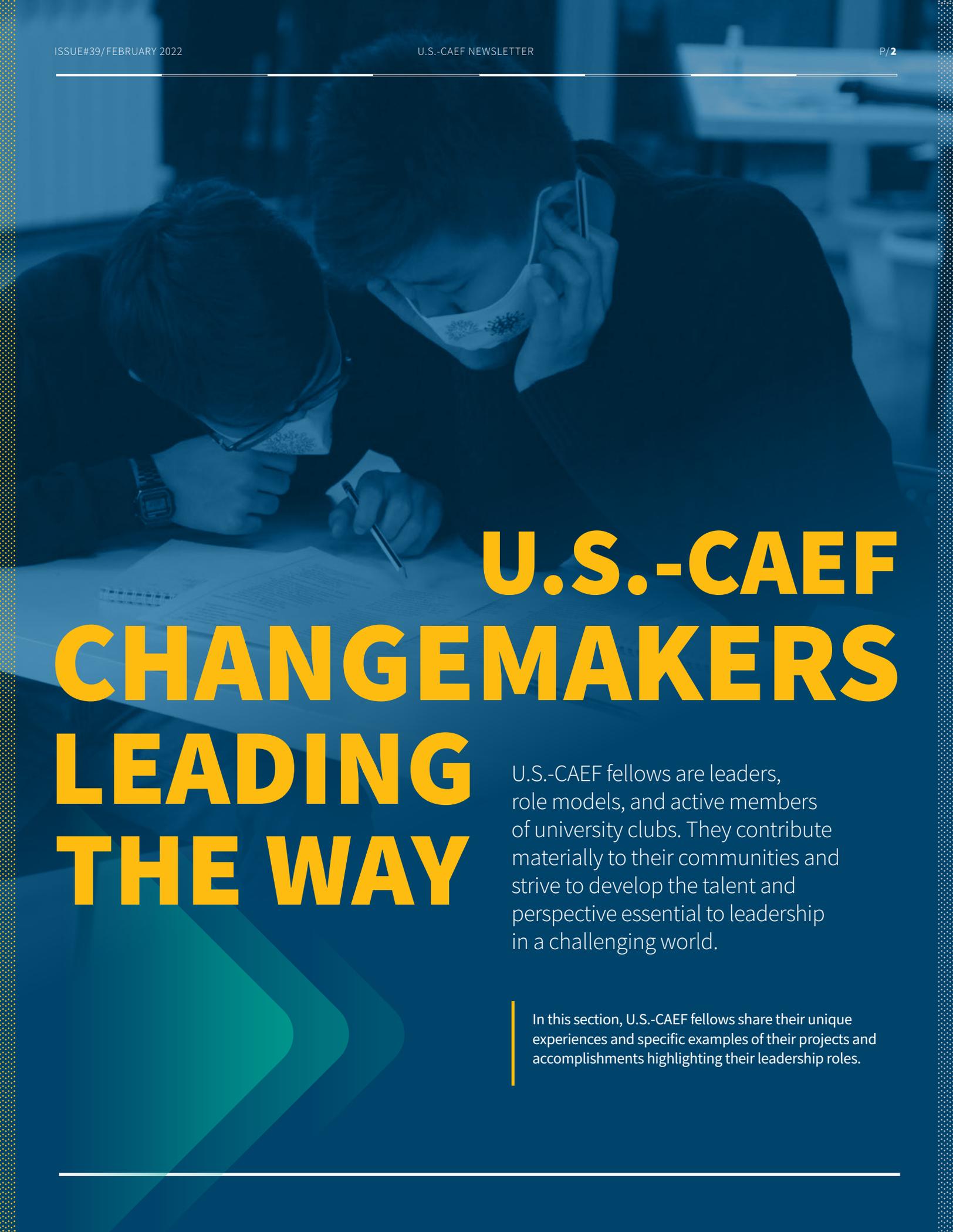
**SAIDKABIR  
AZIZOV**  
**FOUNDER SAEEDJON LOGISTICS** PAGE 23



**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.**



# U.S.-CAEF CHANGEMAKERS LEADING THE WAY

U.S.-CAEF fellows are leaders, role models, and active members of university clubs. They contribute materially to their communities and strive to develop the talent and perspective essential to leadership in a challenging world.

In this section, U.S.-CAEF fellows share their unique experiences and specific examples of their projects and accomplishments highlighting their leadership roles.

## U.S.-CAEF CHANGEMAKERS LEADING THE WAY

CONTINUED

# VICE PRESIDENT OF AUCA STUDENT SENATE

BY NAVRUZMO KHAYOLBEKOVA  
AUCA 2020 | TAJIKISTAN

Before I applied for the student senate election this year, I had heard this quote several times from my friends. Considering the difficulty of completing the procedure online, it was not the greatest idea to apply.

**“TAKE A RISK  
OR LOSE  
THE CHANCE”**

— ABHISHEK SALWAN

It was a difficult decision to run for the Student Senate election at AUCA, considering that as a sophomore, I had not yet had the opportunities to socialize with my peers in person. Nonetheless, with the help and support of my friends, I decided to move forward with my campaign. The process was quite intense; I had to post videos and photos to social media pages, design posters, and share and converse with as many students as possible at my university, since I was conducting my campaign almost entirely online. This experience introduced me to many new people and helped me to grow into a more responsible person. I understood that I needed to earn every individual's support, and that if one has the possibility to help someone, one should definitely reach out and support that person. I was thrilled that many people heard me and voted for me, and in the end, I was elected to the Student Senate. Once I became one of the senators, I ran for Vice President and was successful.

In this role, I intend to implement the following projects: initiate workable solutions to make AUCA an eco-friendlier university; organize a stationery store at AUCA; provide more opportunities for online education; prioritize student's mental health; create morning yoga and evening jogging sessions; and lastly, provide benches for AUCA.

I keep track of the actions of student representatives on various university and faculty committees and report on them to the Senate regularly. This position enables me to communicate with everyone, and I believe that by working together, we can discover more answers to the difficulties we face as students. Finally, becoming helpful to my university means a lot to me, thus I'd like to accomplish as many goals as possible.



## U.S.-CAEF CHANGEMAKERS LEADING THE WAY

CONTINUED



**“Become  
the kind  
of leader  
that people  
would follow  
voluntarily;  
even if you  
had no title  
or position.”**

— BRIAN TRACY

## HEAD OF HEARING COMMITTEE OF THE AUCA STUDENT SENATE

BY AISULUU RYSPAeva  
AUCA 2019 | KYRGYZSTAN

This quote guided me throughout the Student Senate elections at AUCA.

Since my freshman year, I wanted to be useful to my community and contribute to my school via academics and extra-curricular involvement. Therefore, the Student Senate election provided a chance for me to apply and implement useful projects by working closely with the school administration. After the long process, I came 4th in the elections and was appointed Head of the Hearing Committee. This position allows me to act as a bridge between the students and AUCA, and to support and assist students with their questions, concerns, and problems. I am thrilled to be in a role to which I am so well-suited; I love communicating with people of different ages and positions and uniting them under one mission. Furthermore, the position still leaves me with enough time to participate in other activities as well.

As a member of the Student Senate, I plan to implement such projects as Academic Database, educational hackathons, COVID-19 regulatory campaigns, a plastic-free initiative, and many more. Recently, I distributed free snacks during finals week and made free masks accessible to all who needed them at the university entrance. It brings me great joy to serve as a resource to my university community, and I look forward to carrying out as many helpful initiatives as possible during my time in the Senate.

## U.S.-CAEF CHANGEMAKERS LEADING THE WAY

CONTINUED

# FOUNDING ECON CLUB AUCA

**Dina Mamadjanova** and **Bekjon Makhmudov** recently created ECON Club at AUCA and received an award from the AUCA Student Intellectual Life Committee for the organization's activities.

BEKJON  
MAKHMUDOV ▶



“

At the beginning of the fall 2021 semester, Bekjon and I registered the ECON Club at AUCA, with the aim of providing youth interested in economics and related fields with opportunities to expand their subject knowledge and experience.

One exciting project we worked on was **ECON Bowl 2021**.

In collaboration with the Youth Economics Initiative international organization, we gave AUCA students a chance to apply their knowledge of economics while competing with other students around the globe. Our teams proved their excellence by answering nearly **90%** of questions correctly.

Unfortunately, due to the very high caliber of participants, even with such a competitive score, our teams were not able to finish among the top teams.

Nonetheless, this was a pleasant experience for our students; they were more than delighted to discuss the importance of the Herfindahl-Hirschman index, market structures, and much more while meeting other participants from different parts of the world.

— DINA MAMADJANOVA  
AUCA 2019 | UZBEKISTAN

## U.S.-CAEF CHANGEMAKERS LEADING THE WAY

CONTINUED



ZEBE RASULOVA (LEFT), NURMUKHAMMAD TURKBAEV (CENTER) & DINA MAMADJANOVA (RIGHT)

“ Another flagship event Dina and I organized this semester was **ECON Quiz**. We are tremendously happy to share that we are the AUCA Presidential Research and Education Fund awardees!

Our proposal to expand economics teaching and training for Bishkek high school and university students through ECON Quiz was approved as part of the PREF funding in the amount of almost **\$2,000**.

On behalf of ECON Club AUCA, we selected 10 outstanding high school students to engage in discussions on the importance of import-substituting businesses in Kyrgyzstan, economic growth factors, and international economic relations. ECON Quiz was carried out in the format of multiple-choice questions, where participants worked together in small groups and brainstormed over economics tasks. Besides acquiring useful information, participants were able to practice their communication and argumentation skills.

The event also featured two guest speakers, U.S.-CAEF senior fellows **Nurmukhammad Turkbaev** and **Zebo Rasulova**, who assisted the organizers and shared professional and life experiences with the participants.

ECON Quiz was part of a series of events that will be organized by ECON Club. Further, we are planning to arrange several more events that will cover economics on a bigger scale, with greater numbers of participants.

— BEKJON MAKHMUDOV  
AUCA 2019 | UZBEKISTAN

## U.S.-CAEF CHANGEMAKERS LEADING THE WAY

CONTINUED

# BECOMING COORDINATOR OF DEBATE CLUB MANAS

BY FARUKH FARKHATOV  
AUCA 2020 | KYRGYZSTAN

**Debate Club Manas** was wonderfully unique this year in so many ways. I improved as a speaker and became a mentor within our club. Earlier in the year, I made my debut as a **judge in the Interact Cup 2021**.



I was pleased with how the training turned out, as the number of participants in the anti-harassment training reached **over 100 people**.

As the equity officer of the club, I organized an anti-harassment training in order to teach people about acceptable vs. unacceptable behavior within the club. This training was designed to prevent gender-based harassment and to create a comfortable environment so that new members and older members are not put in uncomfortable situations. To conduct an important training like this, I invited the Teens Team, which is an internet platform that raises awareness about health, love, and relationships as they relate to adolescents in Kyrgyzstan.

A couple months before I received my judging achievements, I became the coordinator of Debate Club Manas. In this role, I organize and take part in events, meetings, conferences, and debate tournaments dedicated to training the upcoming generation of speakers; improve mentoring systems; and contribute to developing the debate culture in Bishkek.

In this role, I had to make formal judgments/decisions about a problem or disputed matter discussed in the debates. On November 7, I earned recognition for being the best judge at Interact Cup 2021. As a result of this achievement, I was invited to be one of the head adjudicators in another tournament dedicated to human rights sponsored by the School of Social Activism.

As a representative of the main panel of judges, our team had to come up with resolutions (topics for the debates) applicable to the theme of human rights for both the proposition and opposition sides. I came up with two topics that were discussed in the semi-finals.

In the beginning of December, I made it to the finals of Network Cup 2021 having been successful in the previous tournament. Network Cup is an international debate tournament dedicated to raising awareness of problems in Central Asia, organized by the Youth Council C5+1 and the U.S. Embassy in Bishkek.

## U.S.-CAEF CHANGEMAKERS LEADING THE WAY

CONTINUED



### SPEARHEADING ECO WORKSHOP FOR CENTRAL ASIAN & AFGHAN STUDENTS

BY BAKHTOVAR UMAROV  
AUCA 2020 | TAJIKISTAN

As a member of the C5+1 Youth Council, I had an opportunity to apply for an award from the U.S. Embassy. I was able to win a **\$5,000** grant for implementing an ecological project.

On November 27-28, I traveled with my team to Naryn to organize Youth Green Camp, a two-day camp aimed at raising awareness of environmental and ecological issues in Central Asia and Afghanistan.

High school and university students from all over Central Asia and Afghanistan (residing in Kyrgyzstan) had the opportunity to learn from leading experts in Central Asia and Afghanistan and discuss regional environmental & ecological issues.

Moreover, participants of the camp had a chance to present their solutions to the existing environmental problems in the region and won micro-grants for the implementation of their projects.

### GG TOKMOK EMPOWERS GIRLS



BY DZHAMILIA LANSAROVA  
AUCA 2021 | KYRGYZSTAN

Tokmok, Kyrgyzstan is my hometown, and since I was a child, I understood there were many problems there that needed to be addressed. Thus, I promised myself to try to solve them as soon as I had the opportunity. One of the main issues I wanted to work on was educational opportunities for women.

As such, this summer, I created a social organization called **“GG Tokmok”** to provide basic information about education and self-development. From August 10-12, I organized trainings for school-aged girls from Tokmok. The program consisted of three parts that took place over the three days:

- 1 ‘Girls Talk,’ where we discussed topics like dreams, fears, opportunities, and parental and familial relationships.
- 2 Sessions on meditating in nature, yoga, and other topics like the importance of taking responsibility and how to pursue one’s dreams.
- 3 Sessions on educational programs, scholarships, AUCA, NGA, and stories and experiences of successful students from different universities.

I believe that while we cannot change the whole world, we can change the world around ourselves. I hope my work has played a small part in making a difference in my community, and I hope to coordinate similar initiatives in the future.



## U.S.-CAEF CHANGEMAKERS LEADING THE WAY

CONTINUED

# LEADING CYBERSECURITY CHAMPIONSHIP



BY OYBEK TURAEV  
AUCA 2020 | UZBEKISTAN

I am thankful to have become a member of **C5+1 Youth Council**. During the time I have been a member, the program has provided us with amazing workshops and trainings to teach us how to implement our own projects among the youth in Central Asia and Afghanistan with the support of the U.S. Embassy and American Councils.

I am majoring in software engineering, and my interest in cybersecurity led me to pitch my project idea, “Cybersecurity Championship,” for youth in Central Asia and Afghanistan. To lead the project, I gathered team members who are interested in this topic, and was lucky enough to have 10 members join the project, each of whom is smart and works very well as part of a team. Throughout the project planning, we worked on the project proposal, the budget, and the framework of our project, all with the goal of submitting it for a chance to win funding for implementation.

We were thrilled to learn that our project was selected as one of the approved projects, and in that moment we all felt immense satisfaction from our hard work. However, the challenging aspects were still to come.

On December 11-12, we brought nearly 40 participants to Osh, Kyrgyzstan for our championship. Participants came from Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and various regions of Kyrgyzstan. During the event, we tried to raise awareness about cyberattacks among youth by way of discussions with professional experts in this field. Also, we helped participants with developing their project management and team-building skills.

Together with my team, we are in the process of securing funding for micro-grants for top championship teams to implement their own projects. This kind of chain reaction strategy to share knowledge about cybersecurity helps to create a solid foundation of protection against cybercrimes, particularly among youth. This project has been one of the best opportunities for me to grow as a leader, and it came with lots of challenges and exciting moments. I truly enjoyed the experience; I learned how to effectively lead a team, organize events, communicate with experts and organizations, and feel a sense of responsibility for my decisions. I also got to extend my network of professionals in the field of cybersecurity and find a new diverse group of friends. I am happy to have finished 2021 with these amazing experiences, and I am thankful for these opportunities from the C5+1 Youth Council. I am also grateful to the U.S.-CAEF community for providing me with everything to study and grow academically.



# ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN ACTION

Student-run startups are changing the ways in which students learn by offering valuable hands-on experience. Some enterprising U.S.-CAEF fellows start their own businesses while being students.

They view it as a great way to practice acquired skills and the possibility of developing their businesses into full-time careers. In the process, fellows learn to create a business venture from scratch, recognize commercial opportunities, manage staff and resources, and develop self-esteem, resilience and valuable leadership qualities.



## ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN ACTION

# GANADOR TEXTILE SHIPS ITS FIRST ORDER TO GERMANY

BY KAIRAT TAGAEV  
AUCA 2018 | KYRGYZSTAN

I am excited to share my success story about my sewing business, **Ganador Textiles**, which has completed its first order to Germany! We collaborated with a German startup called Steppix, which focuses on manufacturing dancing mats and producing break dancing video lessons.

HERGESTELLT IN KIRGISISTAN.  
MADE IN KYRGYZSTAN.

CONTINUED



Our goal as a company was to manufacture special bags for the dancing mats, which will be sold all over the world. Customers can place orders for the bags and mats from Australia, USA, Europe and Asia. We are so proud that we can now state that our products are used all over the world.

The negotiation with Steppix took more than 3 months, and although it was very challenging, it gave us extremely valuable business experience.

We worked on perfecting the products by using new sewing technologies, as well as preparing all the necessary legal documents for facilitating the international transfer of the products to Germany.

My hope is that business ventures in Kyrgyzstan will continue to prosper and discover new horizons in international markets. I hope Kyrgyz products will continue to be considered high quality products, and that our company has helped contribute to this status in the international market.

As of now, we have completed the first order with Steppix, and plan to work many more years to come! I would like to thank U.S.-CAEF and AUCA for the valuable knowledge I gained in western business techniques, which made this success possible. **My special thanks to alumni who invested in Ganador!**

## ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN ACTION

CONTINUED

# TURNING CHALLENGES INTO SUCCESSES

BY AIZANA ARSLANBEKOVA  
AUCA 2020 | KYRGYZSTAN

Last winter, my two friends and I decided to open a travel company called “**ADVENTOUR**,” where we would conduct tours to the ski base in Karakol.

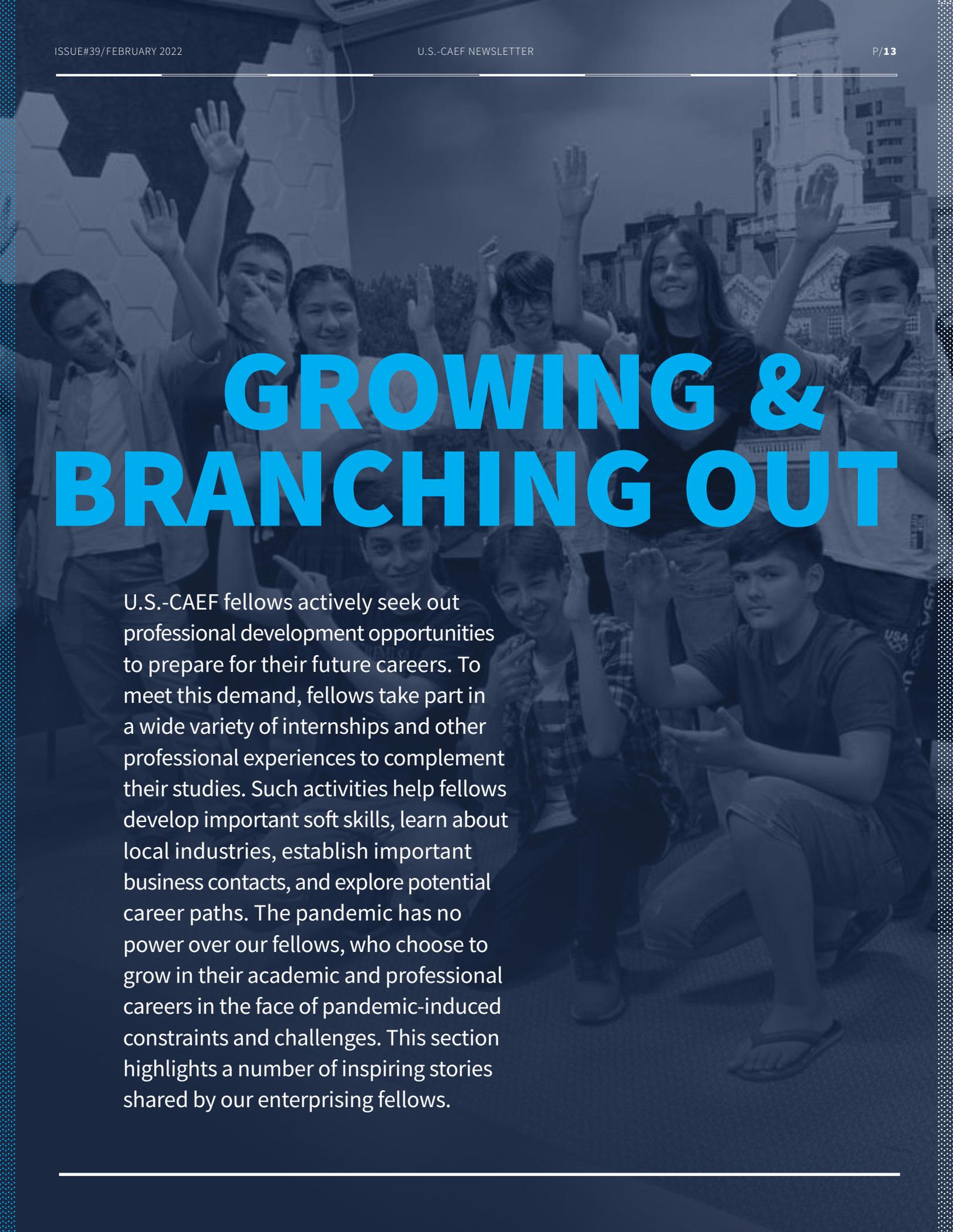
The reason we decided to start the business was that we all had an interest in entrepreneurship and starting a real business. None of us had extensive experience in this sphere, but we wanted to try our best to do quality work. I was primarily responsible for the marketing of our venture, since I have a background as an SMM specialist. However, I also tried myself as a manager, an organizer, and a guide. I used my university knowledge and my intuition to guide me in these tasks.

Overall, last year we successfully conducted tours for about 120 people. We gained significant experience by providing a quality service and, of course, making mistakes. I remember situations where we experienced unexpected obstacles, and we worked hard to make sure they were solved immediately. This experience gave me important insights regarding the direction that I want to take for the rest of my career. Since I am studying business administration, it is important for me to learn how to work with customers, as well as with my partners. Additionally, I learned to stay calm and strategic during stressful situations. Moreover, I found out that I am skilled at marketing, and that I love promoting products by developing creative ideas.

This year, we decided to continue with the ADVENTOUR project, and now we are working at an even higher level. I look forward to continued success with my partners on this journey!

Aside from ADVENTOUR, my friend Nurmukhamad and I became finalists of the U.S.-CAEF Idea Pitch, where we presented the idea of producing AUCA branded clothes. Even though we did not win and did not receive funding, we realized this project and now we are selling our U.S.-CAEF and AUCA branded clothes. This experience taught me to be very ambitious and accurate while producing my product, so that I can enjoy continued success in my business.





# GROWING & BRANCHING OUT

U.S.-CAEF fellows actively seek out professional development opportunities to prepare for their future careers. To meet this demand, fellows take part in a wide variety of internships and other professional experiences to complement their studies. Such activities help fellows develop important soft skills, learn about local industries, establish important business contacts, and explore potential career paths. The pandemic has no power over our fellows, who choose to grow in their academic and professional careers in the face of pandemic-induced constraints and challenges. This section highlights a number of inspiring stories shared by our enterprising fellows.

## GROWING & BRANCHING OUT

CONTINUED

# IMPROVING CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVES IN KYRGYZSTAN



BY FARUKH FARKHATOV  
AUCA 2020 | KYRGYZSTAN

The International Republican Institute is an American nonprofit organization committed to advancing freedom and democracy worldwide by helping political parties to become more issue-based and responsive, and by assisting and empowering citizens to become more civically engaged.



I got a chance to assist in one of their projects focusing on training women for upcoming elections. My training sessions focused mainly on sharing my knowledge of debate and public speaking, as well as advice for presenting information and communicating effectively with citizens. The main objective of my sessions was to refresh participants' minds and create an environment for efficient learning. To implement this environment, I chose to facilitate some games called "Revolver" and "Lost Ship" to encourage participants to physically interact and get acquainted with one another.

My presentations on debate and public speaking consisted of a step-by-step explanation of debating tactics commonly used in global tournaments, as well as an overview of common logical fallacies when giving presentations and a discussion of key communication methods when interacting with an

audience. At the end of each topic, I shared my own experience on how I used techniques from the presentations to develop my arguments in a comprehensible way.

I had an amazing experience working on this project; I met politicians and social activists from other regions, which allowed me to broaden my general understanding of Kyrgyz internal affairs. I also visited each region of Kyrgyzstan in just two weeks, which made for a very eye-opening experience.

When you are 18 and get the opportunity to travel around the whole country with the Director of Women's Democratic Network and other influential people, you start to realize that every minute you spent improving yourself and working toward your goals was worth it.

## GROWING & BRANCHING OUT

### DIVING INTO THE WORLD OF FINANCE

BY BEGIMAI AZIZBEKOVA  
AUCA 2020 | KYRGYZSTAN

In October of this year, I started an internship at Taighan Capital as an analyst. The company provides brokerage services and access to information about trading stocks, bonds, and stock exchanges worldwide.

I have two main responsibilities in my position: **preparing brokerage accounts for financially active companies**, and **evaluating the companies and their financial landscapes**.

This internship was my first experience in the investment sector. With each passing day, I learn more about the structure of the business, and how financial report consequences affect the flow of money into the company.

Starting in 2022, after obtaining the appropriate state financial supervision license, the company plans to launch trust management services for large investment portfolios. I am looking forward to participating in this project. I want to help local companies with ensuring active cooperation with the Kyrgyz Stock Exchange and contributing to the radical expansion of the list of securities represented on it, which will allow local enterprises more access to financial resources. At the moment, the popular Kyrgyz dairy production company, "Shoro," is participating in this initiative.

The most interesting part of my internship is monitoring the growth of prices for stocks that I have recommended to clients. Thanks to the company executives, I am now taking a course offered by the New York University Stern School of Business on conducting evaluations to ensure a more accurate assessment of a company. I am very pleased to work among a community of leaders, and I am excited that I feel I am improving my potential in my prospective career path. My internship also helped me come up with goals for the future.



CONTINUED

### MY JOURNEY WITH COCA-COLA AFTER REGIONAL INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

BY SAVSANGUL MAMADLOIQOVA  
KIMEP 2018 | TAJIKISTAN

After completing a two-month internship at CCI Tajikistan through the Regional Internship Program, my journey with the company continued, as my internship contract was extended.

I was also offered to become an **English tutor for the Finance Director of the company**.

I decided to accept this offer, since our lessons focused on improving business English and discussing real organizational business cases. I started working as an English tutor at CCI Tajikistan in September, and over these few months, I have worked hard to engage my student in practicing academic business English.

While this experience has been exciting, it has also been challenging, as I am working directly with the person who manages the finances of the whole company. My student also serves as my mentor, and has taught me a lot about how business structures operate and develop on a national and international scale. I am also able to observe the financial theories I learned about in my university classes in real practice.

In this way, the experience has provided a mutual benefit for us to improve our language skills and practice business case scenarios. Thus, I am very grateful to CCI Tajikistan for seeing potential in me and trusting me with such an important role.

## GROWING & BRANCHING OUT

CONTINUED



### LEARNING BY TEACHING AT TAJRUPT

FOTIMA MIRZOEVA  
AUCA 2020 | TAJIKISTAN

During the summer, I was offered the position of English instructor at an NGO called TajRupt. It was my first official work experience, and I really enjoyed it and learned a lot.

I led four groups of students starting from the A1 level and finishing with B1. There were fifteen students in each group, each of whom came with different backgrounds and knowledge. My work consisted not only of teaching English, but also discussing a wide variety of topics with students that they might not typically encounter at school, including globalization, the economy, and gender issues. The purpose was to learn the language while simultaneously broadening their worldviews and critical thinking ability. It was very interesting for me to observe the students' behavior, to find the suitable teaching method for each of them, and to capture their attention and encourage them in their studies. Likewise, I learned a lot from my students.

I learned to find the appropriate approach to communicating with different people, to be more articulate and clear in my explanations and to work with students of varying ages. I am happy to have had this experience because I met wonderful people and made new friends; I shared my knowledge with the youth and also learned a lot myself.



### CAREER DEVELOPMENT INSPIRED BY RAC 21

AMNIYA MUMINSHEEVA  
AUCA 2021 | TAJIKISTAN

After volunteering at the Regional Alumni Conference 2021 (RAC 21) in October and learning about the success of U.S.-CAEF alumni, I was inspired to improve my skills and identify the areas in which I should focus on developing.

I also started working at Alif Bank, where I worked for a short time as an operator and consultant. I learned that it was not quite the job for me, so I decided to look for a new job where I would be able to gain experience and knowledge. I found a position with Accelerate Prosperity (AP), which has helped me tremendously to develop professionally thus far. Since I started, I have learned a lot about incubation trainings, where anyone can participate with a business idea. Moreover, I have gained experience working with our HR manager, who has helped me to improve my attentiveness, concentration, and attention to detail.

It is essential to understand all aspects of a job, and to discover the ones which you most enjoy. Indeed, learning the theories and fundamentals of business is very helpful, but it is also vital to exercise all your knowledge during the process of working. It has been really interesting to learn and practice the knowledge that I gained during this semester.



### PUTTING TECH SKILLS INTO USE

DANIL BONDARETS  
AUCA 2020 | KYRGYZSTAN

In the summer of 2021, I had the chance to complete an internship at Namba Group, which successfully owns and manages several IT projects.

One of the main goals of the company is to build an ecosystem of e-commerce products. The core of this ecosystem is a popular app called Namba One. This mobile application combines various services including food delivery, taxi, e-gov, etc. The company has plans to further develop the ecosystem by launching an online business-to-customer (B2C) marketplace.

My main task consisted of researching different marketplaces, analyzing their concepts, evaluating the advantages and disadvantages of each company, and analyzing their revenue models. In the process, I gained valuable practical experience in conducting market and financial analysis. I also learned a lot about business in the field of e-commerce. Taking part in this project helped me to develop skills like structural thinking, searching for information, and highlighting the most relevant details in my analysis. I am confident that all the knowledge and skills I gained during this internship will be invaluable to my professional development and future career opportunities.

## GROWING &amp; BRANCHING OUT

CONTINUED

# PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN CENTRAL ASIA

BY SAMAR KANATOV  
AUCA 2020 | KYRGYZSTAN



## Learning about Circular Economy

Earlier this fall, I applied for and was accepted to a 6-week online course on circular economy offered by the United Nations System Staff College. The hybrid-format course provided extensive resources, and was organized and led by renowned global experts. Enrollment was highly competitive, as they received thousands of applications from across the globe.

This course, developed in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) explored the application of Circular Economy (CE) practices in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Theoretical, practical and case study-based approaches were used to illustrate and support the concepts. The course covered numerous real-life examples from around the world, and included helpful tools to advance CE practices. Participants also got the opportunity to engage with the distinguished experts through live webinars.

I plan on focusing my future career on bringing about sustainable development in Central Asia. Adopting circular practices would bring about great opportunities and challenges in the region, with which I would like to work; I believe this course will be an exceptional resource in achieving my goal.

The experience, overall, has been amazing, and it provided me with a great opportunity to learn with a diverse global community and gain additional expertise to complement my degree at AUCA.



## Fellowship with Oxus Society

In November 2021, I became a participant of the Fellowship Program with the OXUS Society for Central Asian Affairs. The program aims at facilitating collaboration between professionals in academia and civic activists of Central Asia for the common goal of fostering civic engagement through research.

The 12-month fellowship program will provide mentoring and training on research and advocacy for academics and activists. Selected fellows will attend a series of workshops on research design, writing policy briefs and running advocacy campaigns with renowned international experts. The project covers Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic and Uzbekistan on selected topics like media literacy, labor rights, education, urbanization and environmental pollution, rights of persons with disabilities, and gender-based violence.

The 53 fellows of the program are selected among individuals residing in one of the countries mentioned above on the basis of their respective work experience in civil activism and the non-governmental sector, as well as academic and scientific expertise. The project will conclude with presentations of final works in Bishkek or Almaty.

## GROWING & BRANCHING OUT

CONTINUED

# VICTORY IN IDEA SPRINT CHALLENGE

BY BEKZAT SAILAU  
AUCA 2018  
KAZAKHSTAN



In November, I participated in the 'Idea Sprint Challenge' case championship, organized by the Kazakhstan Finance Student Association. For the event, students from 11 countries, including Russia, Poland, Italy and USA, were tasked with solving a case provided by PwC, KPMG, Asian Development Bank and Jusan bank.

My team (comprising other AUCA students) and I competed against 114 teams and 366 total students, and we ended up winning the case championship! It was a tough challenge, but the skills and knowledge we obtained from professors at AUCA played an enormous role in our success in this championship.

At the end of the competition, I received an internship invitation from PwC.

I was grateful to receive this offer after receiving my first invitation from KPMG in March 2021. Having success in case championships I take part in, as well as joining different seminars and qualification programs, has not only boosted my personal portfolio, but has also given me practical knowledge that will surely be helpful if I eventually work for a Big 4 company. My goal after graduation is to join a Big 4 company through case championships and qualification programs, and to be able to play a crucial role in the development and progress of the business climate of Central Asia. If possible, I would also like to one day organize my own international case championship or seminar about case cracking, so other fellows and students can expand their knowledge and apply it in practice.

# LEARNING ABOUT CONSENSUS - BASED DECISION - MAKING

BY LOLA MARDINAEVA  
AUCA 2020  
TAJIKISTAN



I recently took part in a conference organized by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) that centered around the Model OSCE, a simulation game that reproduces the work of the OSCE Permanent Council during crises.

Participants represent the OSCE participating states and other relevant institutions and actors involved in resolving the problem. Model OSCE includes training seminars, lectures and practical work. The activity is carried out on the platform 'Youth Talks', which allows for discussing relevant and essential topics we care about and sharing about our experiences in our respective fields.

The conference was fascinating and informative. The organizing team

and presenters were professionals who shared their experience and knowledge with us. Team building was also an integral part of the event, which helped everyone open up and become comfortable with one another.

OSCE events are always professional and impressive, and it was a great honor to be a part of this event. Usually, all Central Asian countries and Afghanistan participate in this event, but unfortunately, due to certain restrictions, only participants from Uzbekistan were able to fly to Tajikistan this time. Despite only having participants from Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, we appreciated the diversity among the participants, and enjoyed learning about each other's cultures and becoming good friends.

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## GROWING & BRANCHING OUT

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CONTINUED

# EXPERIENCE WITH STARTUP HUB

BY TAZARFBEGIM SHOVALIEVA  
AUCA 2021 | TAJIKISTAN

A portrait of Tazarfegim Shovalieva, a young woman with long dark hair, wearing a black sweater with a white collar and a necklace. She is smiling slightly and has her arms crossed. The sweater has the text "ON EARTH" visible on it.

Although as a child I dreamt of becoming a doctor, I am very glad that I was awarded a U.S.-CAEF scholarship and was given the chance to pursue business. Shortly after starting my studies this year, it became clear that I made the right choice, and I believe the skills and knowledge I learn will benefit me in my goal of improving my country in the future.

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To advance my expertise in the business sphere, I decided to participate in START-UP HUB in October, which is a new platform for social entrepreneurship enthusiasts who hope to launch their own start-ups and put their ideas into action while simultaneously working on solving social problems.

The course I took through STARTUP HUB is different from other online course offerings and though it took place virtually, it was intended primarily for Tajik citizens. During the course, I met another student with whom I had a lot in common, and we discovered a shared love of creating a positive impact in our communities. Together, we laid out our ideas for a social entrepreneurship venture, and ultimately decided on developing a mobile application called 'WayTj' for users in Dushanbe, which would track in real time the location and schedules for public transportation in the city, including buses, trolleys, and minibuses. With the app, users will be able to find out exactly when their bus is due to arrive, and when they should be at their stop.

Due to the financial constraints involved with this venture (we estimate it will cost about \$10,000 to fully realize it) and limited time (the course is two months long and it will take at least six months to receive a government permit needed for the GPS tracking component of the app), we have not been able to implement the app yet. However, we are working with our course supervisor to hopefully realize the project in the summer.

Despite the setbacks, this process helped me confirm that I am very passionate about this field. I enjoyed every moment of the process, from brainstorming ideas to crafting the business plan. I am confident in my future and potential in the social entrepreneurship field and look forward to seeing where it takes me!

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## GROWING &amp; BRANCHING OUT

CONTINUED

**BUSINESS BOOTCAMP “3.2.1-START”**

As a first-year student in the Business Administration program at AUCA, I was assigned to develop a business plan for my Introduction to Business course. My group, which consisted mostly of U.S.-CAEF fellows, developed a carefully thought-out business plan, then decided to apply for the “3.2.1-START” program offered by the Institute of Youth Development (IYD) in partnership with Coca-Cola Icecek (CCI).

BY ALIIA MARS  
AUCA 2021  
KYRGYZSTAN



Winners of the 3.2.1-START program receive funding for their startup idea upon successful completion of three rounds of competition. I am pleased to share that we successfully passed the first round of the competition, and, as such, we received an invitation to take part in an intensive 4-day incubation boot camp that took place in Issyk-Kul. The boot camp happened to take place during the final weeks of the fall semester when we also had a lot of projects and finals going on for our classes, but I wanted to participate in the camp nonetheless to support my team.

The format of the boot camp adhered to a 50% lecture and 50% practice strategy, which allowed participants to gain a deeper understanding of theory regarding business development. I absorbed information and was also able to immediately implement it in practice. As a young business student, I often found

myself lost in class discussions, and the incubation boot camp helped to fill in some of those gaps and provide a lot of key information about business. Another benefit of the camp is that I was able to gain a lot of knowledge and insight from older university students who were a bit more established and had more experience in the business world.

Our schedule during the boot camp was very packed; our day started at 8 am and ended at 11 pm, with a full day of going from one lecture to another to group work sessions in between. Despite the strict schedule, the event organizers came up with a lot of fun group games and activities for us to engage in, which allowed us to loosen up and destress. Some of the most enlightening lectures I took part in included those about the UN Sustainable Development Goals, greenwashing, market positioning, customer development, market analysis and evaluation, and social media and branding. We were lucky to receive all this information from business professionals who are experts in their field, including Bermet Tursalieva, a marketing and branding expert, eco-activist, and CEO of “Ormon” branding agency; Emil Umetaliev, founder of “Kyrgyz Concept”; and Evgenii Badilovskii, business consultant and director of Freelance KG.

The most memorable moment of the boot camp was the simulation game, wherein we had the opportunity to mock-pitch our projects to investors. At the end of the four days, each participant received a certificate confirming successful completion of the bootcamp incubation program within the framework of the “3.2.1-START” project on the topics of “Business Planning,” “Social Entrepreneurship,” “Legal Security of Business,” and “Social Media Branding.” I am incredibly grateful for the experience to learn so much business knowledge in such a short period of time, and to have met a wonderful community of like-minded people.

## GROWING &amp; BRANCHING OUT

CONTINUED

# A SEMESTER IN FRANCE



BY ALTYNAI NURALIEVA  
AUCA 2018 | KYRGYZSTAN

I was excited to receive an Erasmus scholarship for my study at IAE Lille - University School of Management, Université de Lille in the fall 2021 semester. I was very lucky to be studying in person on campus during this time; after long remote semesters in Kyrgyzstan due to the pandemic, being present for in-person classes at IAE Lille felt especially rewarding.

My typical classes here lasted three hours, which was offset by little or no homework. However, that did not mean I could relax and take it easy all the time, because university education in France is primarily based on self-study and participation in group projects. As a result, I ended up dedicating a lot of my time doing research and analyzing additional study materials in order to completely understand the concepts discussed in class.

### The highlights of my university life in France were:

- 1 receiving practical and up-to-date knowledge including a startup simulation, a stock trading contest, and a Pecha Kucha presentation;
- 2 experiencing an international and diverse student body and building strong bonds with peers from over 10 countries; and
- 3 confirming the fields of study that I want to study further and those that I do not.

Apart from studies, I also traveled during the weekends and holidays, enjoying the diversity and beauty of Europe. These travel experiences were a truly mesmerizing aspect of my exchange semester. One lesson I learned from my exchange semester is that sometimes you need a taste of 'fresh air', a change of scenery and an all-around new experience to discover more about yourself. It was a trip around Europe, but it was also a journey of discovering myself.

# DIVERSIFYING MY PORTFOLIO & LEARNING ABOUT MY RIGHTS

I finalized my 2021 year with gaining new knowledge in a different sphere through the School of Legal Literacy. The experience opened new horizons and helped me develop and grow personally.

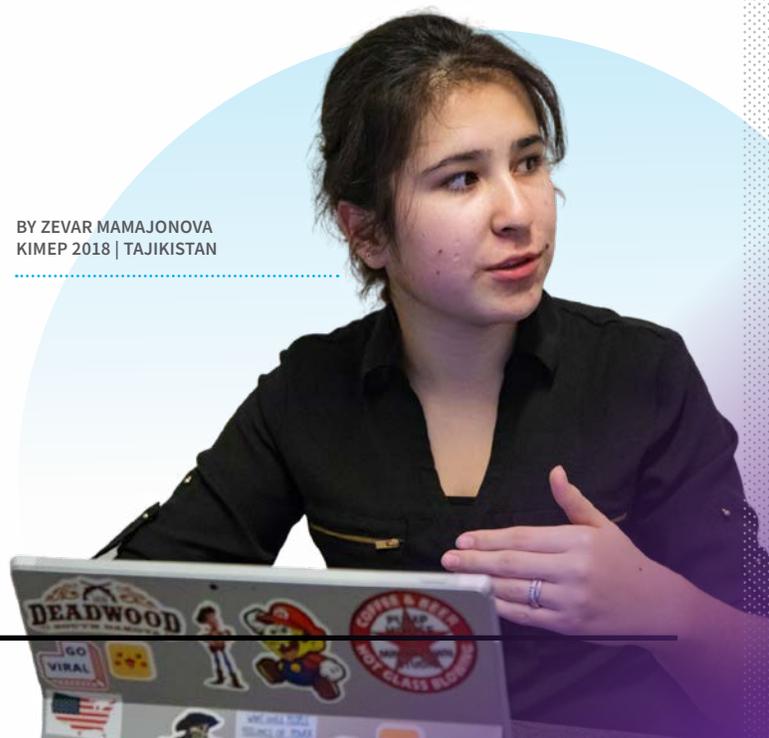
The School of Legal Literacy offers a series of webinars for non-law students conducted by lawyers and legal representatives. The program was organized for the first time by the Legal Clinic Club at KIMEP University, and it is based on a competitive selection process.

The lectures were held through November and December. As the program was intended for non-law students, speakers used different, effective techniques of delivering information and practical assignments, so that we could comprehend the material better. We covered several important for our daily life such as civil rights, family law and employment contracts.

Throughout my education in a foreign country, I have realized the importance of knowing my rights. This school was a great opportunity for me to better understand the most important rights I need to be aware of as a student and a foreign resident of Kazakhstan.

As I am always interested in diversifying my portfolio, discovering the legal field was a great addition to it. Most importantly though, I started applying the acquired knowledge which made me feel more confident in my actions.

BY ZEVAR MAMAJONOVA  
KIMEP 2018 | TAJIKISTAN



## GROWING & BRANCHING OUT

CONTINUED

# PROMOTING SPIRIT OF VOLUNTEERISM ON CAMPUS

BY AISULUU RYSPAeva | AUCA 2019 | KYRGYZSTAN

As the newly elected president of the U.S.-CAEF Youth Social Entrepreneurship Program (YSEP), I made a goal of expanding the organization by offering membership to other AUCA students as well. (The organization was created and run by U.S.-CAEF fellows of earlier cohorts and used to accept members only from the U.S.-CAEF community.)



Together with the new team of like-minded people, we registered the YSEP club with the university and represented the club at the AUCA Club Fair 2021. As a result of our efforts, more than 60 new participants signed up to join the organization.

People were very interested in contributing, due to our proposed goals and agenda. The goal of the club is to promote social activism and public service, and to unite young leaders in Central Asia with an entrepreneurial spirit. By joining this club, members will be able to develop themselves professionally and academically, with the hope of eventually becoming outstanding business leaders in Central Asia.

Currently, our plans for the club consist of fundraising within AUCA; initiating mentorship projects; organizing regional projects like gardening, teaching digital literacy, and empowering village girls

and boys; and promoting environmental awareness through an anti-plastic campaign and advocating for sustainable consumption. I also plan on coordinating professional development sessions for our members on such topics as LinkedIn, Notion, writing emails, and crafting budget proposals.

I am very grateful to older U.S.-CAEF alumni for creating such an impactful and helpful association that can be consistently used and developed by current fellows.

On November 24, U.S.-CAEF fellows, in collaboration with students of New Generation Academy (NGA), conducted their first food drive at AUCA in honor of Thanksgiving. The goal of the event was to raise money by selling homemade food, the proceeds of which would go to supporting a local orphanage in Bishkek. With the help of U.S.-CAEF freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors, we were able to raise \$64.

This event was implemented through the Youth Social Entrepreneurship Program (YSEP) club at AUCA. Preparing for the event was a lot of fun, as fellows were able to gather after distancing from one another for a long period of time due to the pandemic and feel the spirit of giving back to the community.

**“It was a very unique experience for me, as I have never taken part in a food drive before. Moreover, the fundraising initiative provided a great opportunity for me to get to know more fellows because we spent a lot of time and effort cooking together. Making such quick sales really made it feel like our hard work was worth it, and it felt great to know that we were helping children in need.”**



**AINUR KUTMANOVA**  
U.S.-CAEF FRESHMAN

Later, on December 5, fellows delivered the donated goods to Aidanek's Rehabilitation and Reintegration Center in Bishkek.

# ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

## FINDING AN ENTREPRENEURIAL NICHE IN TRUCKING LOGISTICS SERVICES

**Gulnoz Faizakova** (AUCA'23) recently interviewed U.S.-CAEF alumnus **Saidkabr Azizov** (KIMEP'14) about the company he co-founded, Saeedjon Logistics. After working in fields like construction, digital marketing, and sales in the early years of his career, Saidkabr made the admirable decision to follow his dream of starting his own business. In the interview, Saidkabr details challenges he faced starting his own venture, and offers advice to those looking to pursue their own entrepreneurial goals.



BY GULNOZ FAIZAKOVA  
AUCA'23

## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

CONTINUED

### Q: Could you give us a brief description of your business, Saidkabir?

First off, I would like to extend my gratitude and well wishes to the U.S.-CAEF Board of Directors, staff, alumni and current fellows for their interest in my career. Currently, I am the owner of a company in the trucking and logistics industry. My company is located in Dushanbe, Tajikistan and we provide online services like consulting, dispatching, accounting, brokering, and other services needed for transportation and logistics companies in the U.S.

I started working for another small business created by a friend in November 2020, and I was able to gain a lot of experience and knowledge in the field there. After some time passed, I realized I would be able to use my knowledge to start my own company that could provide similar services to other companies. I started by providing those services myself, then slowly began hiring employees and training them. Currently, we have two companies as clients that we are working with.

There are 3 people working for my company right now, but I am hoping to hire 7-10 additional employees within the next 6-8 months.

### Q: What did you envision for your career path after graduating from KIMEP and the U.S.-CAEF Program, and what led to your decision to open your own business in Tajikistan?

After I graduated from KIMEP University in 2014, I tried myself in different fields but I always maintained a passion for entrepreneurship. I worked in construction, digital marketing, and sales for several years, but I was never able to gain a true sense of satisfaction or fulfillment that one should receive from the work they do. While I still really enjoy digital marketing, I felt that I was not always using the knowledge I had spent so much time learning from the various universities I attended.

Thankfully, I am very happy with my job and company now, and I am glad to be able to hire and train people that effectively contribute to the goal of building a sustainable, socially

responsible company. We work within the logistics and transportation industry of the U.S. which is, in my opinion, the best logistics system in the world in terms of management, timing, and effectiveness. Large companies such as Amazon, FedEx, UPS, and many others speak for themselves with their speedy delivery times and massive client bases around the world. I am happy to be able to learn from companies in the U.S., as they give me good ideas that I might be able to implement in the Tajikistan and greater Central Asian markets in the future. I hope I will have that chance in the future, and will try to work on continuing to expand my knowledge of the industry.

### Q: What was the biggest challenge you faced when you started your own business?

When a person takes that risk and opens up a business, there are always obstacles and challenges that arise. My company provides services like management, dispatching, accounting, and brokering, and all these areas require extensive knowledge, experience, and time in order to reach a professional level. I think one of the biggest challenges for me was to find and hire the right people. Before I hire, I make sure that the candidate has solid English skills, and that they are experienced in the skill sets required for the position, whether it is advanced computer skills, communication skills, negotiating skills, or a mix of different skills. Secondly, to be successful, you need to have clients, and finding and marketing to them online was another challenge I faced early on.

### Q: Being an entrepreneur can be stressful — what keeps you motivated?

Being an entrepreneur is indeed stressful, but when you are doing work you love, it makes it a lot more bearable. I am always trying to find the right work-life balance to stay motivated with my job. One thing that particularly drives and motivates me is to keep the quality of the service we provide higher than the client's expectations, and, of course, client satisfaction is always a top priority.

### Q: What skills do you think are needed for aspiring entrepreneurs?

First of all, you have to be well informed about the business you want to be in. You have to take risks and be brave. For me, it was more important to try and fail than to never try at all. When you fail, you learn and gain experience, and that is an essential part of success.

It is also important to visualize, come up with the right plan, and make calculations that can help your business succeed. As one of my teachers once taught me, "having the worst plan is better than not having a plan at all."

### Q: What are some tips you can share with the current fellows?

Love the job you are doing, and that will make your life happier. Be brave- I think many people tend to devalue themselves and assume they cannot make it or achieve their goals. However, it is important to trust yourself and have confidence, as this will lead to great results.

### Q: What one line in your CV are you most proud of?

The line where I explain that I started my own business — that was the dream come true for me.

### 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?

I would be thrilled to have some U.S.-CAEF fellows on my team because they come from great backgrounds and I know they have gained the right skills to be valuable members of my team. If any fellows think the work sounds interesting, they are always welcome to reach out to me to learn more or talk about job opportunities.

### Q: Is there anything you want to add?

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the U.S.-CAEF Board of Directors, staff, and everyone else involved in the program that supports my and so many other alumni's and fellows' goals. The knowledge that I acquired at KIMEP University opened so many doors and led to many significant opportunities in my life.

**THANK YOU!**

## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

CONTINUED



## HOW TO FIND YOUR NEXT JOB WITHIN LARGE ORGANIZATIONS

BY YELENA VOROBAY  
AUCA 2014 | FUNDING MANAGER, E.ON

If you work for a large organization, you often have the option of trying different roles within the company. In fact, most companies promote life-long learning and even encourage employees to switch their career focus every 2-3 years.

This practice improves employee satisfaction and productivity, because they are exposed to a diversity of skillsets and learn new approaches to various challenges. But once you are a part of a large organization, how do you make the right choice in determining your next role?

After earning a master's degree in Europe through ERASMUS, I started working at one of the leading companies in the European energy sector, located in Germany. During the first year, I participated in the talent rotation program, in which I was able to learn about the company and find my best fit by completing short-term stints in different roles and departments. I am now in my fifth year at the company, and I currently work as a Funding Manager for municipal and industrial customers, but I am still weighing my options for what the next step in my career should be.

In my experience, I have found that there are three important factors to keep in mind when choosing your next job: networking, line manager and curiosity. Since there are so many job options out there, the easiest way to narrow them down is by networking with people from different fields. It was a common practice for me to connect with people from all departments and ask about their job, what they like about it, what the scope of their work is and what kinds of skills and qualities they think are needed to be successful. Based on these discussions (commonly known as "coffee catch-ups") I gained a good impression of the job I was considering, and was able to better navigate my options. Second, I always tried to get a one-to-one meeting with the line manager for the job, and sense whether there is a personality match between the two of us. Of course, this does not mean that you should only work for people that are similar to you; on the contrary, working with people with different characteristics enriches your professional development. However, it is important to assess if you and your potential manager could build a positive working relationship from the start. Last, but not least, always stay curious and try to develop yourself in new areas and tasks. I thought I had a clear idea of my career path when I first started out (audit/finance), but, surprisingly, the department I ended up working in permanently was in a completely different path than the one on which I had originally set out.

Whether you work for a large organization or not, I advise using these three factors when looking for any new job, and I hope these tips are helpful for current fellows and young alumni – no matter where you are in your career.

## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

CONTINUED

## INTERNSHIP WITH OSCE SECRETARIAT IN VIENNA

In November 2021, I was selected to take part in a two-month internship at OSCE Secretariat in Vienna, Austria as part of the curriculum for my MA in Economic Governance and Development.



**GAVKHARKHON MAMADZHANOVA**  
KIMEP 2020  
MA STUDENT | OSCE ACADEMY | BISHKEK  
INTERN, OSCE SECRETARIAT

Working for an international company was one of my dreams as an undergraduate student, and now I can confidently say that this dream came true. Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) is the world's largest regional security organization, which was founded in the early 1970s. One of the offices within the organization is the Office of Internal Oversight (OIO). OIO was established in 2000 by the OSCE Permanent Council, which is the organization's regular decision-making body. OIO consists of three units: internal audit, investigation, and independent evaluation. I was lucky to be an intern with the internal audit unit, which mainly focuses on identifying areas of potential risk. In addition to ensuring compliance of processes and systems with OSCE's Common Regulatory Management System (CRMS), internal audit assists management in achieving the organization's goals as well as continually promoting concepts of effectiveness, efficiency, transparency, and accountability.

During the first two months of the internship, I was assigned various tasks that broadened my understanding of OSCE in general and internal audit's particular functions and activities. Before joining OSCE, I participated in several internships at financial institutions and investment companies, but working at an internal audit unit was quite new for me. The work was interesting because the internal audit of an international company differs from that of local companies when it comes to ensuring compliance of systems and processes.

I consider internships an important factor in one's professional development. I was able to implement my theoretical knowledge that I gained during my MA degree in practice, develop my analytical skills by learning new tools like Power BI, and, most importantly, expand my professional network. Since my internship period was extended, I am excited to learn more and gain confidence as I progress in my professional career once I graduate from my master's program.

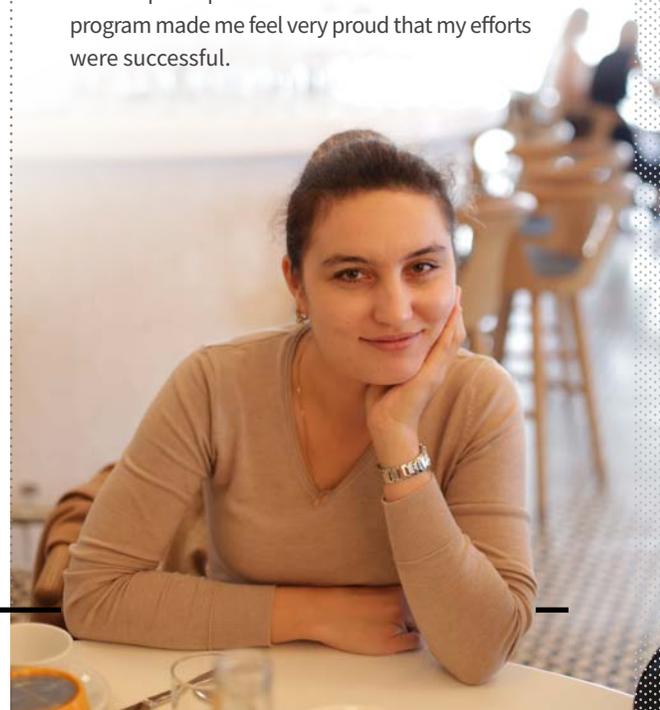
## CONTRIBUTING TO INNOVATION, UNEMPLOYMENT REDUCTION, & NEW BUSINESS CREATION IN TURKMENISTAN

**BY NILUFAR MATYAKUBOVA**  
ECONOMIC ASSISTANT | US EMBASSY ASHGABAT | KIMEP'13

During the summer of 2021, together with an alumna of the TechWomen project, Merjen Saparmuradova, I conducted a small start-up acceleration project at Geek Space within the Start-up Ecosystem-2021 program for about 15 people from various backgrounds.

The group of participants included entrepreneurs, university students, and recent graduates. The project lasted two months, and participants learned about the basics of starting a business, marketing, budgeting, coding, and other relevant topics. Merjen taught them coding basics for mobile apps related to their businesses, while I volunteered to serve as their business coach.

At the end of the program, two of our participants won prizes in the categories "Best Digital Innovation Project" and "Best Social Impact Project" for their ideas of creating a website for freelancers and creating a breast cancer information app, respectively. This start-up acceleration was my first experience in business coaching, and the fact that the participants won awards at the end of the program made me feel very proud that my efforts were successful.



## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

CONTINUED

**HELPING DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN IN KYRGYZSTAN**

BY GULNAZA KHALMANBETOVA  
PROGRAM COORDINATOR | AMERICAN COUNCILS BISHKEK | AUCA'17

After seeing a social media post by a local hospice with a list of 26 critically ill children and their wishes for gifts in the new year, I gathered a team of volunteers and organized a fundraising campaign through my Instagram page.



My main goal was to purchase the gifts that the children on the list had asked for. However, we were able to raise so much money that we decided to buy gifts for more children from low-income families across the country.

Thanks to the power of social media and my networks, we raised more than \$3,500. These funds were more than enough to grant the wishes of exactly 490 children across Kyrgyzstan. Each gift was purchased individually and packed carefully with love. The wrappings and ribbons were important because they created a magical and special surprise for the recipients.

As a result of our efforts, thanks to the generosity of the community and the hard work of the volunteers, we reached 26 children in Bishkek Hospice, 29 children in Batken (Erlanbek Matisaev, a current fellow and student

at AUCA, helped with the distribution of these presents), 17 children in Toktogul, 26 children in Talas, 103 residents of the boarding school for visually impaired children in Osh, 12 children in Karasuu, 26 children in Bazar Korgon (Jalalabad), and 181 students in the organized house in Uzgen.

One of the most amazing things about this experience is that it all happened in just three weeks. During this period, I put a lot of pressure on myself and didn't sleep well. However, playing a part in granting the wishes of 490 children made it all worth it.

**I hope to organize a similar fundraising initiative every year going forward, and I hope U.S.-CAEF alumni will join me next year.**

# POSTGRADUATE EDUCATION

Many alumni view post-graduate studies as an opportunity to take their passion to the next level, build on their foundation knowledge and experience, gain valuable up-to-date insights from industry experts, and delve deeper into niche areas of their professional interests. Others pursue their master's degrees to gain knowledge in a new area and open themselves up to new opportunities for employment, business, research, and collaboration.



## POSTGRADUATE EDUCATION

CONTINUED

## TIPS TO APPLY FOR DAAD SCHOLARSHIP

BY NILUFAR UMAROVA

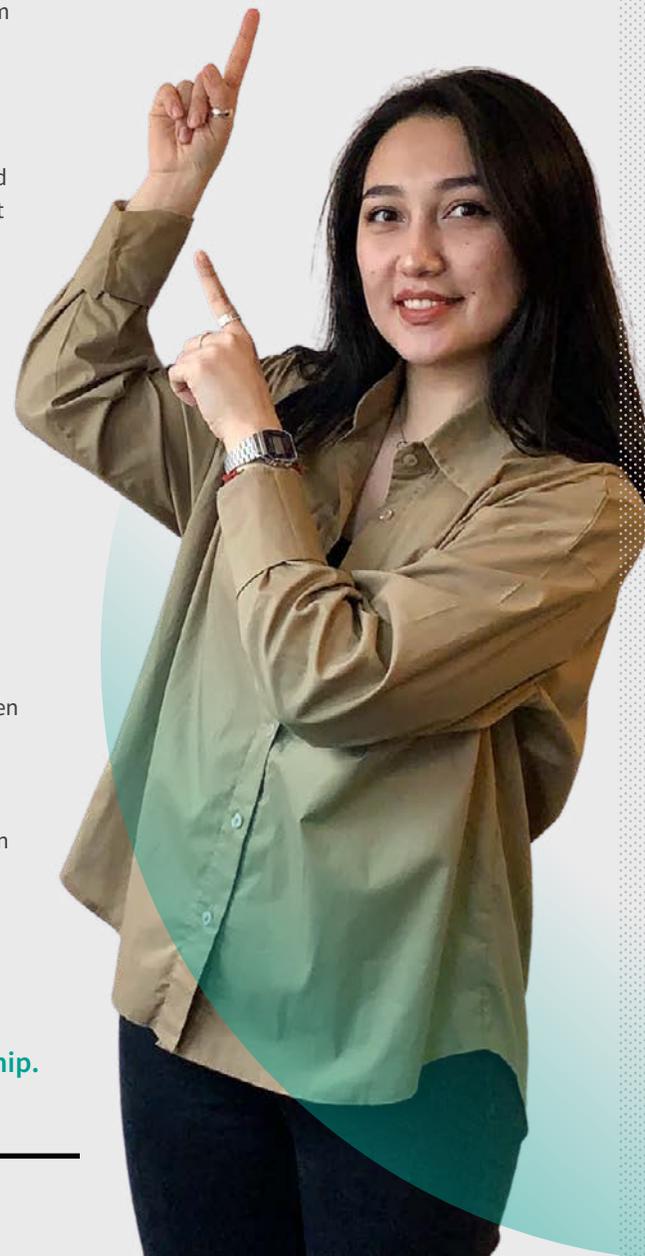
DAAD SCHOLAR | INTERNATIONAL MANAGEMENT & SUSTAINABILITY  
EAST BAVARIAN TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY | WEIDEN, GERMANY

I would like to share several tips with those considering or in the process of applying for German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) scholarships.



- 1 Decide exactly what you would like to study before you start the application process and check if DAAD has scholarships available for that particular field.
- 2 Treat the application process as a project with a very specific timeline and set of tasks to complete.
- 3 Conduct lots of research on universities and make sure to check the curriculum of the specific program you are considering to ensure it covers the topics you are interested in.
- 4 Do not assume you will be accepted to one of the three desired universities you list in the DAAD application. DAAD will still cover the costs if you get accepted to a university other than the ones you list in the application, as long as you let them know as soon as you receive an acceptance letter from the university. This happened in my case; I was not accepted to my preferred universities mentioned in the application, but I still applied to several other universities to increase my chances of acceptance, and it ended up working out well.
- 5 Bear in mind that you might be asked to send some documents by post (e.g. the recommendation letter(s) to ensure they are legitimate).
- 6 Note that the application for the scholarship is separate from the applications to universities. Check the websites of the specific universities and follow their application deadlines as well (just like we did when applying for the U.S.-CAEF scholarship and KIMEP/AUCA).
- 7 Research visa processes in advance and book an appointment at the embassy as soon as you receive an admission letter from a university because it can often be a time-consuming process.
- 8 DAAD provides a free German language course before the start of your studies. I would recommend signing up for the A2 level and study the A1 level on your own before the courses start, as it is very rudimentary. Ultimately, A2 level German will be much more useful when you move to Germany.

**Do not hesitate to reach out to me if you have any further questions or concerns, as I would be more than happy to provide assistance to our fellows and alumni who may be interested in applying for the scholarship.**



## POSTGRADUATE EDUCATION

CONTINUED

# FULLY FUNDED SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

BY NURZADA ABDIVALIEVA  
KDIS SCHOLAR, MASTER OF PUBLIC POLICY | KOREA DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE  
SEJONG, SOUTH KOREA | AUCA'21

During my senior year, I became really interested in pursuing a master's degree abroad. Throughout the whole year, I sought out scholarship opportunities that provided a monthly stipend, as I believe it is quite challenging to be a full-time student while also having to focus on earning money to provide for oneself.

Thus, after conducting thorough research, I discovered a large number of different scholarships available for recent graduates. I applied for two of them: the Global Korea Scholarship (GKS) and the Global Ambassador Scholarship (GAS) at the Korean Development Institute (KDI) School of Public Policy and Management. The difference between the two scholarships is that the former is a government scholarship that provides applicants a chance to apply to three different universities, whereas the second one is for one specific university, and involves fewer application stages. Indeed, there are many other ways to receive a full tuition waiver and regular stipend: government scholarships from different countries, direct university scholarships, scholarships from various foundations, and scholarships from large top companies.

For example, GKS is a government scholarship; other government scholarships include the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) scholarship in Japan; Government of Austria Scholarships; Stipendium Hungaricum in Hungary; Erasmus Mundus; DAAD, and so on. Usually, scholarships with the word "government" in the title imply that applicants are eligible to apply to up to three different universities, and thereby increase their chance of admission.

On the other hand, the GAS scholarship at KDI is valid for only one university, as is the case with the KAIST Graduate Scholarship, UNIST, ETH Zurich Scholarship, The University of Adelaide, Tokyo Institute of Science and Technology, and more. With many of these scholarships, recipients get a tuition waiver and a monthly stipend directly from the university without a third party being involved.

Aside from government and university scholarships, there are some foundations and companies that provide scholarships, including Aga Khan Foundation, POSCO (a South Korean steel-making company), Samsung, World Bank, Asian Development Bank Scholarship, etc.

Because there are so many sources of funding out there for master's programs, I recommend applying for some of these scholarships, as U.S.-CAEF students have great potential!



## POSTGRADUATE EDUCATION

CONTINUED

## STUDYING AT IMPERIAL AS A CHEVENING SCHOLAR

BY SHAHLO JONMAMADOVA  
CHEVENING SCHOLAR | MASTER IN SCIENCE IN INNOVATION, ENTREPRENEURSHIP & MANAGEMENT  
IMPERIAL COLLEGE BUSINESS SCHOOL, LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM | KIMEP UNIVERSITY'18



After a long, nearly 10-month process, I received the Chevening Scholarship to pursue my MSc in Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and Management (IEM) at the Imperial College Business School in London, UK for the 2021-2022 academic year. I am among **1,300** awardees of the scholarship among a pool of **64,000** applicants; the scholarship has about a **2%** acceptance rate.

My motivation for applying for the scholarship was my experience with Accelerate Prosperity Tajikistan as an Investment Analyst, where I consulted small- and mid-size enterprises (SMEs) and start-ups. The experience was challenging but also extremely rewarding, as I was able to gain experience in a variety of industries. I wanted to delve deeper into advising SMEs and start-ups, which is why I wanted to pursue a degree at Imperial.

Imperial is known for being a place where ambition meets opportunity. It is ranked as the third best university in the UK and aims to promote business through the fusion of technology and an entrepreneurial mindset. The program involves a lot of practical experience and allows students to work either at a start-up or as a consultant for a real client as part of their final project. I am taking courses like Design Thinking, Venture Capital and Growth Finance, Entrepreneurship, and Fintech. My cohort is very diverse; it consists of students representing 40 nationalities. We are currently taking classes in a hybrid format. I have discovered that I am passionate about fintech and am currently working on a project that I aim to continue at the university accelerator.

Apart from my classes, I am a member of the Imperial Investment Society, where I take classes on cryptocurrencies, and a member of Imperial Consulting Society, where I joined 180 Degrees Consulting. 180 DC is the world's largest student-run consultancy, which helps social enterprises to maximize their impact.

London is very diverse and cosmopolitan, which makes the experience all the more fun and memorable. I still have a long way to go, but the past few months have certainly changed me in more ways than I thought possible. My first semester opened my eyes to new perspectives as to what it really means to be an entrepreneur.

## ALUMNI UPDATES

## EMPLOYMENT

## NEW JOBS

**Jibek Aylchieva****AUCA'11**

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT, OSCE PROGRAMME OFFICE, BISHKEK, KYRGYZSTAN

**Kuralay Baisalbayeva****KIMEP'12**

TAX POLICY ADVISOR AT OECD-OCDE PARIS, FRANCE

**Madina Damir kyzy****AUCA'14**

LEAD SPECIALIST - AUDIT &amp; INVESTIGATIONS, JOHNSON &amp; JOHNSON MIDDLE EAST INC DUBAI, UAE

**Nazokat Alimova****AUCA'14**

- MANAGER, ACCOUNTING AT INTEGRITY MARKETING GROUP, WYLIE, TEXAS, USA
- FOUNDER AND DIRECTOR, "NAZ CPA TAX & BOOKKEEPING" LLC, WYLIE, TEXAS, USA

**Aidai Almaz kyzy****AUCA'15**

ENGLISH INSTRUCTOR AT Z. BEKTENOV GIRLS' HIGH-SCHOOL, CHOKTAL, KYRGYZSTAN

**Darina Yakovleva****KIMEP'15**

BRAND MANAGER, BSH HOME APPLIANCES ALMATY, KAZAKSTAN

**Altynai Kozubekova****AUCA'16**

SENIOR FINANCIAL ANALYST AT BAYER BERLIN, GERMANY

**Batima Myrzabekova****KIMEP'16**

GRANTS PROGRAM SPECIALIST, THE HEADQUARTERS OF ASSE INTERNATIONAL, INC., LAGUNA BEACH, CA, USA

**Malika Orazymbetova****KIMEP'16**

ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT, CREDIT SUISSE, MORRISVILLE, NC, USA

**Yuliya Lokkayeva****KIMEP'16**

BANKING ASSISTANT AT EBRD ASHGABAT, TURKMENISTAN

**Nursultan Irisov****KIMEP'17**

CHIEF FINANCIAL ANALYST AT JSC KAZPETRODRILLING ALMATY, KAZAKHSTAN

**Sitora Shagambayeva****KIMEP'17**

ASSISTANT BRAND MANAGER AT THE SCOTTS MIRACLE-GRO COMPANY BURLINGTON, ONTARIO, CANADA

**Adylbek Kenzhebek****AUCA'18**

WORKING STUDENT AT GLOBAL DIGITAL MARKETING, GFK BISHKEK, KYRGYZSTAN

**Takhmina Zakirova****AUCA'18**

ASSISTANT TO TRADE ATTACHÉ, EMBASSY OF HUNGARY TO THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC BISHKEK, KYRGYZSTAN

**Zhibek Kamalbek kyzy****AUCA'18**

SENIOR MANAGER IN INTERNAL CONTROLS &amp; RISK MANAGEMENT, BEELINE, BISHKEK, KYRGYZSTAN

**Ahrorkhon Ikromov****AUCA'19**

SKYENG, ENGLISH TEACHER BISHKEK, KYRGYZSTAN

**Daniyar Abdiev****AUCA'19**

DATA SCIENTIST, TALABAT, DUBAI, UAE

**Elaman Saralayev****AUCA'19**

AUDIT ASSISTANT 2, DELOITTE &amp; TOUCHE BISHKEK, KYRGYZSTAN

**Meerim Moldaliev****AUCA'19**

QUALITY ASSURANCE AUTOMATION ENGINEER SOFTWARE DEVELOPER IN TEST, SMITHMICRO SOFTWARE, PITTSBURGH PA, USA

**Zhanna Kenzhebekova****KIMEP'19**

SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER, EVENTICA COMMUNICATIONS, DUBAI, UAE

**Uulzhan Aitnazarova****AUCA'20**

JUNIOR PYTHON DEVELOPER, ATTRACTOR SOFTWARE, BISHKEK, KYRGYZSTAN

**Bayan Bekbas****KIMEP'20**

FINANCIAL ANALYST AT TENGIZCHEVROIL ATYRAU, KAZAKHSTAN

**Gavkharkhon Mamadzhanova****KIMEP'20**

INTERN, OSCE, VIENNA, AUSTRIA

**Talгат Muratbekov****AUCA'21**

FRONTEND DEVELOPER AT O! MOBILE OPERATOR (LLC NUR TELECOM), BISHKEK, KYRGYZSTAN

**Adilkhan Kalibek****KIMEP'21**

ASSOCIATE, ASSURANCE DEPT, PWC ALMATY, KAZAKHSTAN

**Azat Taizhan****KIMEP'21**

SALES MANAGER, AVIATA&amp;CHOCOTRAVEL ALMATY, KAZAKHSTAN

**Dilnaz Imeramzayeva****KIMEP'21**

EXECUTIVE 1, KPMG, ALMATY, KAZAKHSTAN

**Mukhammadnosir Abduzhabbarov****KIMEP'21**

LEXUS EXPERIENCE SPECIALIST, TOYOTA MOTOR ALMATY, KAZAKHSTAN

**Symbat Slambayeva****KIMEP'21**

IELTS TUTOR, (PRIVATE LESSONS) ALMATY, KAZAKHSTAN

## PROMOTIONS

**Anna Charintseva****AUCA'11**

SPECIALIST ACCOUNTING MANAGER AT VISTRA, ACCA, USA

**Yelena Vorobey****AUCA'14**

FUNDING MANAGER, E.ON, GERMANY

**Surur Ulugbek****KIMEP'15**

ASSISTANT MANAGER, PWC, PRAGUE THE CZECH REPUBLIC

**Zarrinai Yunuszoda****KIMEP'15**

AUDIT MANAGER, ECOVIS TAJIKISTAN DUSHANBE, TAJIKISTAN

**Gulkaiyr Tashieva****AUCA'17**

ADVANCED ACCOUNTING OPERATIONS ANALYST, BAKER HUGHES, BUDAPEST, HUNGARY

**Meryem Karakhasanova****AUCA'18**

COUNSELING PSYCHOLOGIST (CBT &amp; GESTALT THERAPY) &amp; "MINDCRAFTING" PROGRAM INSTRUCTOR AT NAZARALIEV MEDICAL CENTER BISHKEK, KYRGYZSTAN

**Indira Manjiyeva****KIMEP'20**

AUDIT ASSISTANT 2, KPMG ALMATY, KAZAKHSTAN

## ALUMNI UPDATES

CONTINUED

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**Assel Zhambyrbayeva**  
KIMEP'11

- CERTIFICATE OF PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTANT OF THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN
- CERTIFICATE OF TAX CONSULTANT OF THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN

**Medina Abylkasymova**  
AUCA'16

- COMPLETED 5 MONTHS RESEARCH PROJECT ON LOCAL PEACEBUILDING WITH THE UNDP KYRGYZSTAN
- COMPLETED ONE-WEEK TRAINING ON PEACE & CONFLICT ORGANIZED BY OSCE ACADEMY IN BISHKEK & CRISP; COMPLETED UNITAR ONLINE COURSE ON WOMEN, LEADERSHIP & PEACEBUILDING
- COMPLETED ONLINE COURSE ON CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION: YOUR PRACTICAL TOOLKIT FOR PEACEBUILDING

**Meryem Karakhasanova**  
AUCA'18

- COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY CERTIFICATION FROM BECK INSTITUTE, PHILADELPHIA
- MOSCOW INSTITUTE OF GESTALT & PSYCHODRAMA: LEVEL 1 PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION

## POST-GRADUATE STUDIES

**Askar Karabalaev**  
AUCA'11

MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY CAREY BUSINESS SCHOOL WASHINGTON DC., USA, 2021-2023

**Khurshedmo Jonmamadova**  
AUCA'13

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN ECONOMICS & MANAGEMENT, KHOROG STATE UNIVERSITY, KHOROG, TAJIKISTAN, 2019-2021

**Asel Kaldybaeva**  
AUCA'17

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN HEALTH ECONOMICS LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS & POLITICAL SCIENCE, 2021-2022 (CHEVENING AWARD)

**Tynystan Talantov**  
AUCA'16

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN FINANCE, CORVINUS UNIVERSITY OF BUDAPEST, BUDAPEST HUNGARY, 2021 - 2023

**Shahlo Jonmamadova**  
KIMEP'18

MASTER IN SCIENCE IN INNOVATION, ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND MANAGEMENT IMPERIAL COLLEGE BUSINESS SCHOOL LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM, 2021-2022 (CHEVENING AWARD)

**Zuhro Qonunova**  
KIMEP'18

MASTER OF NONPROFIT ADMINISTRATION PROGRAM, UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME MENDOZA COLLEGE OF BUSINESS NOTRE DAME, UNITED STATES, 2021-2022

**Nigora Burhonova**  
KIMEP'19

MASTER OF SCIENCE, KDI SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY & MANAGEMENT SEJONG, SOUTH KOREA, 2022-2023 (GLOBAL AMBASSADOR SCHOLARSHIP)

**Nilufar Umarova**  
KIMEP'19

INTERNATIONAL MANAGEMENT & SUSTAINABILITY, EAST BAVARIAN TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY, WEIDEN, GERMANY, 2021-2023 (DAAD PROGRAM SCHOLAR)

**Saira Duishonbekova**  
AUCA'20

MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION DUKSUNG WOMEN'S UNIVERSITY SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA, 2021-2023 (GLOBAL KOREAN SCHOLARSHIP SCHOLAR)

**Meerim Zhanybek kyzy**  
AUCA'20

MASTER IN GLOBAL ECONOMY & BUSINESS UNIVERSITY OF CASSINO & SOUTHERN LAZIO CASSINO, ITALY, 2021-2023 (A LAZIO DISCO SCHOLAR)

**Nurzada Abdivalieva**  
AUCA'21

MASTER IN SCIENCE, KDI SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY & MANAGEMENT SEJONG CITY, SOUTH KOREA, 2022-2024 (KDIS SCHOLARSHIP)

## AWARDS

**Indira Manjiyeva**

KIMEP'20  
AUDIT ASSISTANT 2, KPMG ALMATY, KAZAKHSTAN:  
RECEIVED A 'BRAVO' AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING PROJECT CLOSE OUT

Congratulations on completion of their master's degree programs in Economic Governance and Development, OSCE Academy, Bishkek to:

**Rakhnaza Kozhogulova (Abakirova)**  
AUCA'17

WHO WAS ABLE TO SUCCESSFULLY BALANCE HER ACADEMIC & CAREER DEMANDS WITH FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES.

**Gavkharkhon Mamadzhanova**  
KIMEP'20

WHO GRADUATED AT THE TOP OF HER CLASS WITH THE HIGHEST GPA.

## U.S.-CAEF 2022 CAPSTONE INTERNS IN WASHINGTON, DC

The U.S.-CAEF Capstone Internship Program (Capstone) is administered by American Councils in partnership with The Washington Center, TWC ([www.twc.edu](http://www.twc.edu)). Conducted in Washington, D.C., the program is designed to help postgraduate fellows gain hands-on experience in their prospective professional fields while developing critical skills and expanding professional networks. In addition to their internships, fellows take part in career track meetings focusing on global and executive competencies and professional coaching sessions providing individualized guidance about their career paths.



**SEVARA TADZHIBAEVA**  
SECONDARY SCHOOL ALUMNI PROGRAM  
INTERN | AMERICAN COUNCILS



**ABDU QODIROV**  
JR. BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER  
BUZZ VOICE



The Capstone program resumed in fall 2021 after being suspended for one year due to the global pandemic. A total of 10 Capstone interns comprising two cohorts- 2020 and 2021- took part in the fall in Washington DC while two interns, whose participation was deferred to spring 2022, embarked on their internship journeys recently.

We are excited to welcome our spring 2022 Capstone Interns in Washington, DC- **Sevara Tadzhibaeva**, AUCA'20 and **Abduvohidkhuja (Abdu) Qodirov**, KIMEP'21- and wish them the best of luck! In keeping with their interests and skills, the fellows were placed in internships at American Councils and Buzz Voice.

"It has been three weeks since I started my Capstone Internship at American Councils. I am very grateful I have been exposed to a variety of projects administered by my organization.

My current duties include creating an annual alumni program calendar and communicating it to alumni program representatives across the world. In addition, I have been assigned to organize a networking event which will bring program participants from different cities to Washington, DC.

The idea of being part of something impactful is a huge motivation for me to be an asset for the team. I feel proud and enthusiastic to be a member of such organization promoting education that has a great impact on society. I am looking forward for new challenges and opportunities along this journey."

"My experience so far with the Capstone program has been amazing. Currently, I am interning at an IT startup, and helping the team to prepare pitch decks and other documentations to raise series A investments. We are expecting to launch Buzz, our company product, in a couple of weeks. Buzz is a voice response marketing and advertising platform that allows people to use voice to respond to ads, discover places, and find brands. In my free time, I explore the city and take advantage of networking opportunities. TWC's Residential and Academic Facility is located downtown DC, so there is always something happening around us. So far, I have visited Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum, and an interesting car show. I have also attended an MBA tour, where university representatives reviewed my CV, and shared tips for creating a strong application."

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