UCA Co-hosts World Mountain Forum in Bishkek

Almost one billion people live in mountain areas, accounting for 13% of the world’s population. Mountainous regions are particularly sensitive to the effects of global and climate change, jeopardising many of the critical goods and services they provide – an area that covers 22 percent of the world’s land surface, and provides 60 to 80 percent of the Earth’s fresh water. The University of Central Asia’s (UCA) Mountain Societies Research Institute (MSRI) and the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic co-organised the fourth World Mountain Forum (WMF 2018), with support from the Government of Switzerland and the Aga Khan Foundation United Kingdom, from October 23-26 2018 in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. It brought together 300 participants from the global community across complementary sectors and different types of agencies including community members, civil society, academic, and government institutions, to share experiences and best practices, and develop integrated solutions to existing challenges of sustainable development in mountain regions.

Life in Kyrgyzstan Conference Ends on High Note

“The Life in Kyrgyzstan (LiK) conference is a stimulating academic event which brings together national and international researchers examining various social and economic changes in Kyrgyzstan and in the Central Asian region. We see increased use of data from the LiK Study for conducting research, policy analysis, and teaching at Kyrgyz universities. As of October 2018, LiK data was used by over 80 institutions worldwide.” said Dr. Damir Esenaliev, Senior Researcher at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute’s (SIPRI).

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World Mountain Forum

The Forum was preceded by the Youth Mountain Forum (YMF), held on October 22nd, and co-organised by UCA and UNICEF (Kyrgyzstan). It brought together students and young professionals from 14 countries, interested in climate change and Sustainable Mountain Development to serve as Youth Ambassadors during the main World Mountain Forum 2018. “The main challenges and possible solutions for mountain development include the need for stakeholders to exchange information on mountain regions to co-develop solutions; the need to ensure that indigenous and traditional knowledge are incorporated in global development programmes on mountains, and the importance of targeting vulnerable groups to the effects of climate change,” said Alidovar Sodatsairov, an undergraduate student from UCA, and Youth Delegate, who presented the outcomes of the YMF at the World Mountain Forum.

One of the conclusions of WMF was the need to highlight that the wellbeing of people who live in the geography of mountains is critical to downstream societies, yet their voices are not sufficiently heard. The overall discussion on Sustainable Development Goals focuses on lowlands and urban centres, and there is hardly any mention of the importance of mountains, which are the providers of critical resources such as water. Read more or watch video news reports by UCA, ТРК "НТС", and Ala-Too news24 for highlights from the event.

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Life in Kyrgyzstan Conference

Over 150 participants from 11 countries gathered in Bishkek for the fourth Annual Life in Kyrgyzstan (LiK) conference on October 17-18, organised by UCA’s Institute of Public Policy and Administration (IPPA), in partnership with the Leibniz Institute of Vegetable and Ornamental Crops (IGZ), and the International Security and Development Center (ISDC). The two-day conference provided a platform for national and international experts from the government and public sector, development agencies, non-governmental organisations, academia and research institutions, to exchange knowledge and experiences on recent socio-economic developments in Kyrgyzstan and Central Asia and to promote evidence-based policymaking. Topics included education, social cohesion, energy policies, migration and remittances, social protection, household welfare, trade, local development, climate change, child health, human capital, employment, technological development, social norms, agriculture, and data infrastructure.

The conference highlighted the results of the 5th wave of the LiK study carried out in 2016 by an international consortium of research institutions including UCA, IFPRI, IGZ, and FAO. The open access survey tracks 3,000 households and 8,000 individuals in all seven Kyrgyz regions and two cities of Bishkek and Osh, providing data over time on a range of topics, including household demographics, expenditure, assets, migration, employment, agricultural markets, social networks and subjective well-being to name a few. The data is freely available for non-profit research, policy analysis and teaching purposes.
News

Open Government Partnership – Prime Minister Lauds UCA

As part of the Open Government Partnership (OGP) conference on October 23rd, Mukhammedkalyi Abylgaziev (left in picture), Prime Minister of Kyrgyzstan, presented the “Achyk Okmot” National Action Plan for 2018-2020 to build an Open Government in Kyrgyzstan. At the conference, he presented a certificate of recognition to Dinara Musabekova (right), Head of UCA’s Civil Society Initiative, for her contribution to the development of the First National Action Plan and the formation of the National Forum.

He also called on active citizens, non-governmental organisations, and business to be actively involved in the OGP process. “It is important to note the important and special role of analytical centers, such as UCA and others, which can help with expertise of high-level decisions and solutions,” said Mukhammedkalyi Abylgaziev. The Prime Minister expressed gratitude to the international partners, in particular UCA, for its comprehensive assistance to the Government in building an Open Government through its Civil Society Initiative, and expressed readiness to cooperate.

Addressing the conference, Dr Bohdan Krawchenko, Dean of UCA’s Graduate School of Development, remarked “The issues facing the country are analytically complex and there are no easy solutions. It is only through the systematic application of knowledge to public problems that solutions can emerge.”

Silk Roads Conference

UCA’s Mountain Societies Research Institute (MSRI) held a Silk Roads Conference on “Anticipating Social and Environmental Impacts of China’s Belt & Road Initiative (BRI) in the Mountains of Central Asia” on October 26th. Forty experts from 13 countries participated. It aimed to strengthen strategic partnerships to study the challenges and opportunities of China’s BRI from a Central Asian perspective. The event helped identify important next steps to support a ‘greening’ of the BRI programme. Through such work, MSRI aims to advance Sustainable Mountain Development for the benefit of local societies, considering both social and environmental aspects of new regional dynamics.

‘Bam-e-Dunya Network’ Launched

UCA is one of the founding members of the Bam-e-Dunya Network (BDN), whose purpose is “to harmonize and strengthen integrated landscape management for long-term conservation and sustainable mountain development in the Hindu Kush Karakoram Pamir Landscape.” UCA, alongside its research and development partners, is keen to see a successful launch and growth of the Network, to work to protect and maintain all of the ecosystem services and biodiversity in the Pamirs and other mountains of the Roof of the World. Learn more: http://sdg.iisd.org/news/silk-road-countries-form-alliance-to-protect-roof-of-the-world
News

Cooperative Education Programme Builds Regional Partnerships

UCA's Co-operative Education Programme, launched in 2018, currently cooperates with 44 organisations across Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Germany. Khizer Zakir and Aqila Hassanzada, preparatory programme students from UCA, worked as Research Interns during their summer break with the Rural Support Programmes Network (RSPN). They gained experience conducting interviews in the field, writing success stories, and learnt more about rural development in Pakistan. Following Khizer and Aquila’s internships, eleven representatives from RSPN in Pakistan visited the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast in September to gain experience and insights on community driven development (photo).

Executive Masters Students Meet Kyrgyz Ministry of Finance

Afghan students from IPPA’s Executive Masters in Economic Policy (EMEP) programme conducted a meeting with Almazbek Azimov, Deputy Minister of Finance (MoF) of the Kyrgyz Republic and other Ministry representatives on October 5th. Mr. Azimov welcomed the students and discussed the main functions of the MoF, its financial system, standards, major sources of revenue, long-standing national economic policies, as well as the Ministry’s approach to implement the Sustainable Development Goals. In return, EMEP students also shared experiences of the MoF of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan including its functions and policies. EMEP at UCA is being offered to Afghan civil servants through a partnership with and co-financing from the MoF of Afghanistan, and is supported by Canada’s International Development Research Centre and Aga Khan Foundation Canada.

Addressing Social Problems Through Art

UCA’s Cultural Heritage and Humanities Unit (CHHU) conducted a workshop in Jalalabad, Kyrgyzstan on using art as a tool for raising awareness and solving social issues. The workshop brought together 40 high school and university students from Jalalabad, as well as Bazar-Korgon and Suzak districts. It was organised on October 13th in collaboration with the “Youth of Osh” and “Aravan Progress” non-governmental organisations. The workshop was part of a series of trainings that will help youth to conduct activities and events to solve social issues in their communities.

Cultural Heritage and Tourism Development in Kyrgyzstan

Altynt Kapalova, Research Fellow at UCA’s CHHU delivered a lecture on “Cultural Heritage and Tourism Development in Kyrgyzstan: Global Practices and Local Opportunities” on October 15th at the Sulaiman Too Museum in Osh. Regional museum employees, students, teachers and representatives from tourist organisations in Osh attended the lecture. Participants discussed issues such as cooperation between museums and tour operators, the creation of new tourist products to promote cultural heritage of monuments, the role of museums, local communities, and the involvement of young people in museums' activities, and government and non-governmental organisations in preserving cultural heritage in Kyrgyzstan.
Discovering Gorno-Badakhshan History

Just 13 kilometers from Khorog Town lies the ruins of a fortress and citadel. In ancient times, the area was used for Zoroastrian worship, and served the Shugnon and Khorog region. UCA's sophomore students at the Khorog Campus went on a field trip to visit this Boghev fortress as well as a fire temple in the Shugnon district in October. It was organised as part of a course on History of World Religions taught by Lecturer Shams Sharif. During the semester, students will visit historical and archeological sites in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast and will complete a project on the historical connection of religions in Central Asia. This includes a Buddhist temple in the Ishkashim district, a fire-worshipping place, Khorog Historical Museum, and the Holy Spring and Nasir Khusraw Museum in the outskirts of Khorog.

Community Mural Painting Project

UCA undergraduate students in Khorog organised a rock mural project in Dasht village with children from the community. They used their creativity to create a giant painting representing the ocean, an exotic seascape for this landlocked region.

Debate Training in Naryn

UCA's Aga Khan Humanities Project held a Cross-Debate Format (CDF) training on October 27-28 at the Naryn Campus for 18 students from UCA and Naryn State University. The training aimed to raise awareness about debates in general, AKHP's CFD, and prepare students for future debate tournaments in the region, as well as an International Debate Academy which will be held in December 2018.

Bollywood Night

As a weekend activity, a Bollywood Night was organised at the Khorog Campus. Students and staff tasted some Indian snacks, applied mehndi, danced Bollywood and watched a Bollywood movie, Kuch Kuch Hota Hai.
Visits to UCA

Ugandan and Afghan Ministers Visit UCA

Dr. Mary Kiktutu (2nd from left), Minister of Water and Environment in Uganda, as well as Mohammad Rafi Qazizada (2nd from right), Director General of the Afghan Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, visited UCA’s Naryn Campus on October 24th. The visit provided an opportunity to further deepen international relations, and share information about UCA and its programmes.

Clean Energy and Women

A group of women from the “Little Earth” public environmental organisation visited the Khorog Campus and met UCA faculty as part of a study tour for the “Clean Energy and Women on the Roof of the World” project in Khorog, Bartang Valley and the Ishkashim district. The aim of their visit was to acquaint women with interesting and successful projects, such as UCA, which contribute to the involvement of women in natural resource management and mountain community development, as well as increasing the capacity of women in the field.

Tajikistan Deputy Minister of Education

Dr. Latofat Naziri (left), Deputy Minister of Education of Tajikistan visited the Naryn Campus on October 13th. Representatives from UCA's Student Association led a campus tour for the Deputy, and also shared their experiences at UCA and their volunteer work in the community. “The UCA Naryn campus was a positive surprise. I am proud of all the UCA students who, in three years, have obtained such a good quality of education and improved their English conversation skills,” said Dr. Naziri.
Continuing Education

Skill Development in Tekeli

Thirteen students completed SPCE’s Crushing and Sorting Machines operator course in Tekeli, Kazakhstan. The 192-hour course combined practical and theoretical training to prepare specialists to work in local enterprises and have the necessary skills to work safely with crushing and grading machines. “I have been working in this sphere for more than 10 years and did not know many aspects of occupational safety,” said one of the participants who works in a Tekeli factory. “Now I know them, and it makes my life easier and safer.” The course was offered in partnership with the Tekeli Akimat and UCA's SPCE. Read more.

UCA Wins Second Place in Basketball Tournament

UCA's School of Professional and Continuing Education (SPCE) and Naryn Campus staff competed in an annual basketball tournament in Naryn in September. UCA's team won second place among 10 teams from various organisations and enterprises in Naryn town. Timur Bekbolotov (3rd from left) from UCA's Naryn Campus was also recognised as the “Best Player” of the tournament.

English Talking Club Launched in Naryn

UCA’s SPCE in Naryn launched English Talking Clubs for all age groups. Participation is free of charge and the classes are led by SPCE Instructors, UCA’s undergraduate students, and Academic Achievement Programme graduates, every Saturday. Each week they cover various topics, such as civic engagement.
Conservation Geo-politics: Envisioning the future of the ‘Belt & Road Initiative’ in the Mountains of Central Asia

Marc Fogggin, Matthew Emslie-Smith, Alice Hughes, Alex M Lechner, Troy Sternberg, Rafiq Dossani

China's Belt & Road Initiative (BRI) will bring huge investment into Central Asia in the form of roads, railways and other infrastructure projects over the next decade, and beyond. This MSRI Brief highlights potential environmental and social impacts of BRI, outlines key challenges and opportunities in advancing sustainable development goals, including the safeguarding of biodiversity and promoting more inclusive development in the mountain regions. This brief is available for free download from the UCA website.

Challenges of Social Cohesion and Tensions in Communities on the Kyrgyz-Tajik Border

Asel Murzakulova, Senior Research Fellow

The report is dedicated to the issues of social cohesion and conflicts on the Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan border after the two countries' independence. Based on the methodology of Knowledge Attitude and Practice, the study analyzes actors and spaces that play a vital role in shaping the social cohesion of border communities. It was commissioned by UCA in the framework of the "Reducing conflict over water and pastures in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan" project supported by United States Institute of Peace. Available for free download in English, Russian, Kyrgyz and Tajik from the UCA website.

Video: Central Asian Faculty Development Programme

UCA offers opportunities for Central Asian scholars to pursue an academic career internationally through its Central Asian Faculty Development Programme (CAFDP). Following their studies, CAFDP scholars return to UCA to teach or conduct research. The programme is designed to ensure that scholars from the region are strongly represented in UCA's faculty. Watch this video to learn more: https://youtu.be/Nr4jPtCzXZ8

ICT-Driven Technological and Industrial Upgrading in Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan: Current Realities and Opportunities

Nazgul Jenish

UCA's Institute of Public Policy and Administration Working Paper #47 examines the recent technological performance of Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, and identifies opportunities for their technological and industrial upgrading. Available for free download in English from the UCA website.

Current State and Development Models of Technology in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan

Nazgul Jenish

UCA's IPPA Working Paper #48 examines the current state of technological development of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, and advances technological and industrial modernisation options that could propel broad-based and sustained economic growth in these countries. Available for free download in Russian from the UCA website.
UCA Khorog Campus | Open Doors Event

The University of Central Asia welcomes the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (GBAO) community to the UCA Khorog Campus on **November 10th** (10:00 am - 6:00 pm) and **November 11th** (10:00 am - 2:00 pm). Tours will begin every 30 minutes, and no tours will be conducted before or after the scheduled times.

- Discover UCA's academic programme and facilities
- See the unique architectural and interior design
- Enjoy campus tours conducted by UCA students

Tel: +992 4464 08 220 (ext. 3231)
Address: UCA Khorog Campus, 155 Qimatsho Imatshoev Street, Khorog, 736000, Tajikistan

Open House for New Students

For Grade 11/12 students wishing to enroll in UCA's undergraduate programme in the 2019-2020 Academic year, parents and high school administrators, a separate and more specialised Open House will be held on **December 1st 2018** at the Khorog Campus, and on **February 3rd 2019** on the Naryn Campus.

Register online by: