

U.S.-Central Asia Education Foundation (U.S.-CAEF) Enterprise Student Fellowships is an undergraduate business education scholarship program for academically gifted students sponsored by the U.S.-Central Asia Education Foundation (The Foundation) & administered by American Councils for International Education. The Foundation, in partnership with the American University of Central Asia in Bishkek (AUCA) & the KIMEP University in Almaty, provides educational opportunities in business and other activities for students from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan & Uzbekistan to cultivate a principled entrepreneurial environment in Central Asia that fosters the growth of free enterprise and open markets.

CAPSTONE INTERNS SHARE THEIR U.S. EXPERIENCES PAGE 5



CAPSTONE 2015 INTERNS IN WASHINGTON, DC

LEARNING BEYOND CAMPUS LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP IN THE U.S.

BY YULIANA BAKULINA, TURKMENISTAN 2014



YULIANA BAKULINA, TOP ROW, 3RD FROM LEFT

A year ago, when I was already a freshman at KIMEP, my friend told me about Study of the U.S. Institutes (SUSI) program. I decided to apply for SUSI's Women's Leadership program, an intensive academic program for women that provides undergraduate students with a deeper understand-

ing of the United States and helps participants enhance their leadership skills. I was very happy when I received an award letter. First two weeks of the program were held in Washington, DC, and the remaining four weeks we spent in Washington State.

During this period, I met U.S. women leaders from various professional fields and talented students from different countries. It was a great opportunity to learn from each other, develop strong relationships and work together on mutually beneficial partnership programs.

This experience gave me an excellent opportunity to learn about American culture and develop my leadership skills. It empowered me as a woman leader to serve the needs of my country. The experience gained and the skills developed will become my greatest tools in my future projects at KIMEP University. I feel that I became a better team member who can lead people to success.

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INNOVATE FOR CHANGE CONFERENCE IN DUSHANBE

BY ZULFIYA URUNOVA, TAJIKISTAN 2013



On June 29-July 13, I took part in the Innovate for Change Conference in Dushanbe, sponsored by the U.S. Embassy, UNDP and TCell Telecommunication. It was a two-week hands-on training for fourteen young students on social entrepreneurship, social innovation, and leadership.

During the first week, participants learned about entrepreneurship, leadership, project and startup management, and social change through presentations and sessions conducted by leaders from a wide range of companies, development organizations, NGOs, and entrepreneurs. Especially, I found the sessions conducted by the UNDP staff from different countries such as Turkey, Austria and Montenegro very inspiring. We also had speakers from USA and Germany who live and work in Tajikistan and volunteered to teach us at this training.

During the second week, participants were divided into two groups to work on projects directly with UNDP and TCell. The UNDP project focused on accessibility for persons with disabilities. I was part of TCell and our team was supposed to come up with ideas on how to increase the use of social media by people with disabilities. Managers of Tcell helped us throughout the project, teaching us how to conduct business. That was an incredible experience, because in the future I want to have my own business and this knowledge from personal experience will be very useful.

INTERNSHIP AT CENTRAL ASIAN FREE MARKET INSTITUTE

BY AZIM TILEKOV, KYRGYZSTAN 2013

After spending my spring semester in South Korea, I decided to intern in the analytical department of the Central Asian Free Market Institute (CAFMI) over the summer. CAFMI is an independent think-tank, based in Bishkek, which promotes principles of free market, rule of law, and minimal government through conducting research and educational activities in the Kyrgyz Republic.

We had several workshops organized by our mentors, experts, and partners of CAFMI on conducting different types of research and writing papers. Our team was tasked to prepare a policy paper about government's expenditures on elementary education and effectiveness of laws and regulations in opening private elementary educational institutions. While working on this policy paper, I acquired wide knowledge about the public sector, developed my research and analytical skills by working in a team with other interns under supervision of our mentors and supervisors. At the same time, I acquired legal knowledge because we had to work with constitutional data and the legal codes of our republic.

During the second month, I was transferred to the project management department where staff was involved in the project called Get in the Ring, a global startup competition, which will be held in November, 2015. Get in the Ring is organized in more than 64 countries worldwide, including Kyrgyzstan. The purpose of this project is to develop the business environment in the Kyrgyz Republic by developing





AZIM WITH HIS TEAM AT CAFMI

an open platform for entrepreneurs, experts and investors to create joint businesses. I will be working with my team on this project until the end of November. Our team consists of three people: a team leader, PR-manager and fundraising manager. I am the leader of this project and it is a great opportunity for me to develop my management and organizational skills. Even though the internship period is over, our team continues to work on this project as new representatives of CAFMI.

26TH INTERNATIONAL YOUTH FORUM IN SOUTH KOREA

KARIMKHON BUKHADUROV, TAJIKISTAN 2013

On August 18- 24, I had a chance to take part in the 26th International Youth Forum (IYF) in Seoul, South Korea organized by the National Council of Youth Organizations in Korea, hosted by the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family of the Republic of Korea, and supported by the United Nations.

The subject of the forum was Millennium Development Goals and Post 2015. MDGs are a set of goals established by the UN to eradicate extreme poverty and to achieve universal primary education. Seventy-one young people from 28 countries gathered to discuss these issues and establish new goals.

The forum consisted of group discussions and guest lectures by the representatives of the World Bank and the United Nations Development Program, as well as Ambassadors from the Philippines, Morocco, Canada, and the Republic of Korea.

Participants were able to write a Youth Declaration at the end of the forum and provide it to the United Nations.

Being part of the 26th IYF was important for me. Meeting the brightest minds of the world and discussing the Millennium Development Goals with them ensured me that uniting and providing a helping hand to each other is what we need in our century. Although much progress has been made in many spheres such as human rights and primary education, many issues remain unsolved and young people are capable of solving them. Thus the forum was able to inspire youth to take actions that would lead to the development of society. The forum gave me an opportunity not only to widen my outlook, step up and make my voice be heard but also to make new friends and discover a hidden treasure--Korea.



KARIMKHON BUKHADUROV



FIRST STEPS TO ENTREPRENEURSHIP



ANISA ATALOVA, KYRGYZSTAN 2012 ▲

I had been dreaming about opening my own business for a long time, but there were obstacles all the time, mostly inner ones. Finally, I decided that at least I should try to do something. So I opened my own little makeup store. It has been almost four months since I started my business venture and it is doing pretty well. The knowledge I received at AUCA proved to be very handy when I set up my business. At the same time, this experience showed me that my knowledge of finance was insufficient, so I decided to take more financial classes this year.

I want to sincerely thank the U.S.-CAEF Board for giving this amazing opportunity to get practical business knowledge at AUCA. I see my life changing for good and it would be surely impossible without the U.S.-CAEF program.



ADEL SULTANBEKOVA, KYRGYZSTAN 2012 ▲

Currently, I am a leader of the mini startup Free Bishkek Tour, which is based on the concept of the worldwide movement Free Walking Tour. Our goals are to support active tourism, spread information about Kyrgyz culture, and promote Kyrgyzstan abroad. Our mission is to provide an alternative to expensive tourism by offering guided tours for any budget. Participation in this project allows me to improve my leadership and communication skills and learn more about the tourism sphere.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH HEALTH PROJECT IN ORPHANAGE

BY DANIAR ABDIEV, KYRGYZSTAN 2015

This summer I participated in the FLEX-Ability workshop in Almaty where I learned about different aspects of creating social development projects. When I came back from the workshop, I submitted an application for a grant and I won. So in the fall, together with my FLEX friends I was able to organize and conduct a health project in Voeno-Antonovka orphanage where we taught children about personal hygiene and distributed small gifts purchased through the grant funding. We try to make it fun by teaching children through games and various group activities. The experience was rewarding, and I would like to organize similar projects in the future, hopefully, on a larger scale.



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT CAPSTONE INTERNS SHARE THEIR U.S. EXPERIENCES

The U.S. International Capstone Internship program is an opportunity for recent U.S.-CAEF graduates to immerse themselves in the global business network. The program is specifically designed to help these individuals explore career options, gain valuable skills and make professional contacts.

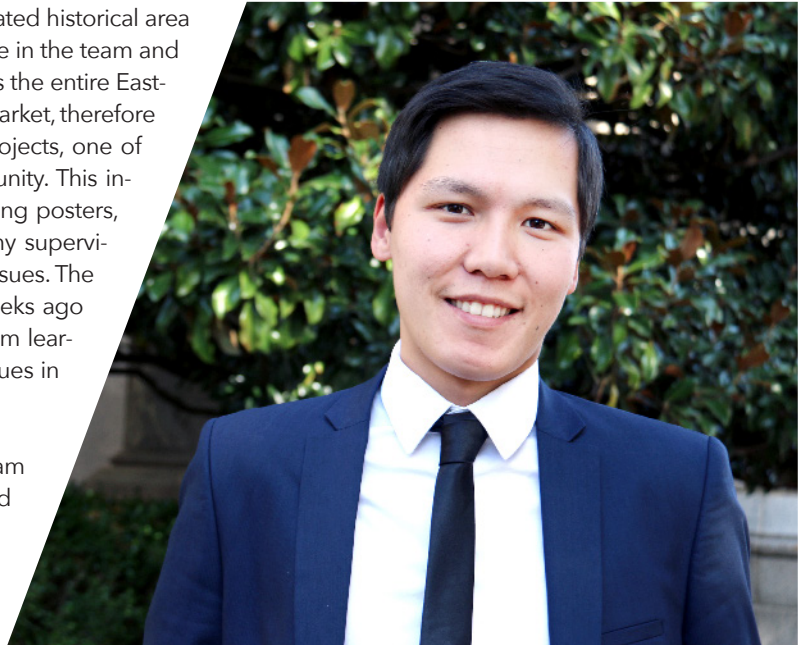
Six select interns are currently participating in The Washington Center's (TWC) postgraduate professional development program in Washington, D.C. In addition to their internships in local companies, fellows take part in the LEAD Colloquium. LEAD stands for Leadership, Engagement, Achievement and Development. Interns meet regularly with their LEAD instructors to have discussions about critical issues and leadership, engage with professionals in a variety of settings, and volunteer for D.C. community activities. Interns also take one non-credit academic course related to the sphere of his/her professional interest. The interns report that through this experiential learning program they are acquiring critical skills that will help them succeed in the dynamic and changing global business environment, experiencing a new culture, establishing new relationships, and enjoying new life challenges. The quotes below reflect the interns' first impressions and thoughts about their Capstone experience.

AMANTUR TYNBEKOV

REALTY PROJECT SPECIALIST & MARKETING MANAGER, DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL SERVICES| EASTERN MARKET

I love my experience in DC. I am interning in a beautifully situated historical area and place, Eastern Market. The staff is amazing, there 4 people in the team and we work closely. I have two supervisors—the first one manages the entire Eastern Market and the second one manages the area inside the market, therefore I am busy all the time. Currently, I am working on several projects, one of which is organizing Halloween for the neighborhood community. This includes getting approvals from governmental agencies, creating posters, talking to vendors and businesses etc. Almost every week my supervisor and I attend governmental meetings regarding different issues. The meeting with District Department of Transportation a few weeks ago was the first meeting at a high level. From these meetings I am learning how to make presentations and gaining insights into issues in Washington, DC and possible solutions.

The work environment is very friendly. I really feel like that I am a part of this team of dynamic professionals. Whenever I need help, I feel free to ask anyone for assistance. Because we deal with a lot of vendors, we receive a lot of invitations to different events, and these events keep our team very united.



OGULJENNET TAGANOVA

ACCOUNTING INTERN, CENTRAL UNION MISSION

Being around dynamic and energetic people in DC works like a wakeup call for me. It's a reminder that I need to continuously develop and learn from professionals. One of the first motivating professionals with whom I have met are my supervisors from the internship site.



I intern at Central Union Mission, which is a nonprofit organization that helps homeless people. The Mission has seven locations around the Washington, DC area, and I am an accounting intern in the administrative department. Previously, I had experience with basic accounting skills such as processing accounts receivable/payable and more advanced skills such as preparing financial statements. All of those processes were completed with the use of Microsoft Excel spreadsheets. However, I have never had an opportunity to work with the actual accounting software such as QuickBooks. Knowing how to generate different types of reports and adjusting them in QuickBooks and being able to export them to another software, gives me an enormous competitive advantage in the field of accountancy. Besides that, I have learnt how to make a PIVOT table in Excel, which is a useful tool for manipulating and sorting out big amounts of data. Also, PIVOT tables are useful for making visual presentations which involve numbers. I believe that these newly acquired skills will make me more competent in the market of Turkmenistan.

Besides the internship, The Washington Center provides us with an opportunity to enroll in an academic course. My choice was Global Markets and International Business Strategies. This course is practical and it is oriented towards real life cases. The instructor of the course works at the US Department of Commerce, Bureau of Industry and Security. The goal of the course is to understand the role which government plays in international trade, how firms control the export of their products such as technology and military sales. Another interesting aspect taken during the course is discussing current issues in the business world, and analyzing their possible effects in the nearest future.

VALENTINA KHOMENKO

RESEARCH ASSOCIATE, GIC GROUP

The material I have learned while doing research at my internship place helps me draw links when I work on case studies and prepare for my academic course, International Business: Case Studies in Strategic Trade Management. I am very glad that I can apply theoretical knowledge to practice and analyze practices using theory. The more I learn about international trade and the food industry, the more desire I have to work in this sphere in future.

TWC always reminds me to work constantly on my personal development, improvement of my professional skills, and expanding my networking through its assignments. This month we were supposed to ask two people to review our CVs. It gave me an opportunity to revise my resume and talk to qualified people in the sphere I am interested in. Moreover, it pushed me to continue contacting people to get their feedback on my CV although the assignment is already completed. I believe it is a great way to expand my networking, get more insights about the industry I want to work in, and thus be more successful.



AMINA IQBOLZODA

FINANCIAL ANALYST, IZAR CAPITAL GROUP INC.

At my internship place, there are five other students from TWC. They are from China, Gibraltar and South Korea. All are intelligent and sophisticated students. It is good to have them around. I am also learning a lot from them. It is a good networking source for me as these people also have the same interests and are planning to work in Investment banking. Our supervisors, who are also co-founders of the company, are really friendly.

To date, I have been involved in 3 projects. First one is with Mondragon, one of the 7 biggest Spanish companies. I have been doing research on Mondragon subsidiaries in the USA (there are 17 of them operating in the US market) and writing executive summaries for each subsidiary. Second project involves the database on Mergers & Acquisitions and financing deals in solar industry. My job is to subscribe for the Mercom (solar industry newsletter) weekly report and update the database for deals in the USA, Mexico and Italy. My third project is with Entrepid Inc which is also a Spanish company. I did research on the company's activities and wrote an executive summary.

At TWC, as part of my academic course, I am taking From Ideas to Action: the Anatomy of Entrepreneurship. It has been fun so far. I am reading "Entrepreneurship: A Real-World Approach" by Rhonda Abrams, a required book for the class, and find it interesting



and useful. Also, we were asked to subscribe for The Wall Street Journal which we use as a source for case studies.

JENNET GURBANMAMMEDOVA

JUNIOR INVESTMENT ANALYST, THORON CAPITAL



Before the internship started, I was very nervous. I was not familiar with the real estate industry and the title of my position “Junior Investment Analyst” scared me. Nevertheless, on my first day of work, my supervisor gave me a textbook on real estate and told me which chapters to read first to familiarize myself with the industry basics. I also registered for an online course on real estate finance and investments. These steps helped me a lot. If my supervisor used to give very basic tasks at the beginning of the internship, now the assignments are becoming more advanced and challenging. Even though I am very busy and the workload is quite large, I truly enjoy it. One of the things I really like about my job is the fact that I attend business meetings with my supervisor and participate in conference calls. This experience gives me an opportunity to meet business professionals and develop my communication skills.

NASIBA NURMATOVA

BUSINESS & ADMINISTRATIVE INTERN, STUDIO THEATRE

During my first weeks at Studio Theater, I was mostly involved in routine administrative tasks that were not challenging but helped me adjust to the office atmosphere. Once I felt comfortable with my daily work, I realized that as a young professional I need to do something more meaningful. So I waited for the right moment,



and asked my supervisor to give me real work. I asked him if I could also work in the business department. I kindly explained that I want to be more engaged in business activities and financial aspects of the company. My supervisor was receptive and arranged everything for me. Now I work for two departments which keeps me busy. As a result, after one month of my internship, I understood that everything is in my hands. I ask for tasks, I learn observing other employees, I ask questions.

ALUMNI AWARD PUT TO GOOD USE

BY YELENA VOROBEY, PRESIDENT OF U.S.-CAEF ALUMNI ASSOCIATION



◀ **Tangulu Diushakhmatova** (cohort 2007), one of the alumni winners of the Steve Shea Excellence Award, decided to put the monetary award (\$1000) to good use and create something meaningful-- she organized a 4-day camp for 30 high school students from her native school in Ananievo village, Issyk-Kul region on August 4-7. Tangulu is very grateful to Marat Diushebaev and Ayday Jakyzbekova, her colleagues from KPMG, Nargiza Ryskulova, project officer at UNICEF, Chyngyz Zhanybekov, U.S.-CAEF alumnus, and Chynara Erkulova, current U.S.-CAEF fellow from KIMEP University, who helped her implement her ideas and make the camp a huge success. Each of them was excited to share their knowledge and skills with students from this remote area where economic, educational, and social resources are limited.

“The camp’s chief purpose was to provide students with information about educational opportunities and encourage them to pursue their dreams. We wanted to tell them that everything is possible to achieve with proper planning and preparation. We presented success stories of Kyrgyz people who received

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



YELENA VOROBEY

I am an AUCA graduate of 2014 from Economics department. Being part of different exchange programs, I have spent more than three years working and studying in the United States, Norway and Kazakhstan. At the moment, I am attaining an Erasmus Mundus Master’s degree in a multi-university setting in four countries

education from leading world universities and now are making significant contributions to the development of the country. Especially, students were inspired by our speakers, Maksat Musaev, who currently works for Google in Wroclaw; Nargiza Ryskulova, AUCA graduate and Chevening alumna, who comes from a small village in Issyk-Kul region just like the participants themselves; and Shien Jing Ong, (Chynara's friend) who shared his recipe for success with participants and told them how he earned his bachelor's degree from MIT and PhD from Harvard. We also presented information on general requirements at various universities in Kyrgyzstan and abroad, including tips on getting scholarships, writing statements of purpose, preparing for entrance exams etc. To make the training more interactive we organized ice-breakers, games, team projects and panel discussions. I think that such camps have a positive impact and provide more opportunities for children from economically disadvantaged rural areas of our country. We were so excited to see and feel the energy and curiosity the children emanated. We were touched when they asked us if we were planning to do another one next year. I would like to finish my camp story with the words of gratitude to my team. I truly appreciate the support and team spirit we all shared," Tangulu wrote.

across the world. In addition, I have been actively involved in various charity and volunteering activities. Currently, I serve as the President of the U.S.-CAEF Alumni Association. This experience allows me to develop my leadership potential. I am highly motivated to make U.S.-CAEF a lifelong engagement for alumni and fellows.



TANGULU DIUSHAKHMATOVA, (CENTER) WITH CAMP PARTICIPANTS

Chynara Erkulova's feedback expresses what was on everybody's mind about Tangulu's venture: "I personally was so amazed and impressed by Tangulu, who decided to spend her long-awaited precious vacation days in the camp, instead of enjoying her time on the beach somewhere in Goa. I am sure that every single one of us wishes he/she had an opportunity like this when we were back in high school. Can you imagine talking to MIT and Harvard graduates, or talking to a Kyrgyz guy who made it all the way to Google when you are 14? Tangulu set a precedent for me personally, and we both believe that camps like this one should take place across the entire country in many schools. We hope to organize more camps next summer."



BUILDING BONDS THROUGH PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

BY YELENA VOROBEY, PRESIDENT OF U.S.-CAEF ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Alumni officers believe that the best way to strengthen the bond between the alumni community and current student fellows is through providing professional development opportunities. Participant feedback on the professional workshops in Almaty and Bishkek described below indicates that the alumni officers chose the right approach in their efforts to find the area where the interests of the two groups intersect.

MEETING WITH MARKETING GURU IN ALMATY

Over the summer, alumni officers had several meetings with the representatives of the U.S. Embassy in Kazakhstan to discuss possibilities for future collaboration, networking, professional development and other opportunities for U.S.-CAEF alumni and current fellows through USG supported activities and projects. This relationship has already proved to be fruitful. On October 13, four alumni-- Talgat Kadirov, Yusup Artykgulyyev, Moldir Kussainova and Jemal Agaeva- and three current fellows - Aiida Bagytzhanova, Chynara Erkulova and Yuliya Davydenko- were invited by the US Consulate in Almaty to take part in a unique workshop conducted by a creative marketing guru, Peter Corbett. Mr. Corbett talked to participants about entrepreneurship in the US, digital marketing, and technology. According to fellows' feedback below, the event was a great success.

CHYNARA ERKULOVA ►

KYRGYZSTAN 2012

First of all, I would like to thank American Councils for inviting us to such an event. I saw on Facebook that all meetings with Peter Corbett were fully booked, and I realized how lucky I was to be personally invited to meet him in a narrower circle of people. It was also a great opportunity for us to meet other alumni of USG programs such as Fullbright, UGRAD, and Open World.

What struck me most was that Peter did not hold this event as a presentation or a lecture, but instead, turned it into a relaxed networking opportunity, where each of us had a chance to ask him any questions.

I was expecting some kind of a show, but it was just a face-to-face talk! It was only after a while that I grasped his way of doing things, and I have to admit, it was much better than my expectations. Looking forward to meeting him again.



Peter Corbett is the founder and CEO of iStrategyLabs – a digital agency that develops solutions to clients' challenges and brings them to life in the online and offline world. He's widely known for his marketing acumen coupled with a deep technical background, and a focus on community building. His client work includes brands like NBC Universal, USA Network, Disney, Microsoft, NASDAQ, Coca-Cola, The US Army, Deloitte, McKinsey, Volkswagen, Audi, Ford, Hilton, Double Tree, Embassy Suites Hotels, Marriott and more. He has mentored half a dozen startup accelerator classes, advised hundreds of early stage tech companies, founded the massive DC Tech Meetup, and created the 12,000+ person DCWEEK festival.

AIIDA BAGYTZHANOVA ◀

KAZAKHSTAN 2012

The meeting was great! Peter told us a lot about his company, how he started his business and why he started it. He also shared some great advice on what we should focus on in our studies as well as what is needed in the business market today. He gave us great tips on how to start a business and told us how he handled some negative moments.

When he heard that I was interning at The Coca-Cola Company, he told me that he was involved in Diet Coke's sampling in the US. It was so great to hear that! Combination of his business background and IT skills to helped him set up a successful marketing campaign.

I am really happy that I was invited for this meeting. Peter inspired me a lot. He did not stop creating his own business even though it was hard in the beginning. And now, he is working with so many successful companies. Many students were impressed by his work so much that they asked him if it was possible to intern for him!

I would like to thank the U.S. Embassy for organizing this event. The meeting not only provided us with valuable professional information, but I also had a chance to meet many bright USG program alumni and great entrepreneurs and famous bloggers of Almaty. I hope that we will have more meetings of this type with other successful and inspiring people in the future. Students really need to meet and talk with entrepreneurs more. They give us more insights into the business world than our theoretical courses and they do motivate us with their accomplishments and enthusiasm.



ALUMNI ORGANIZE PROJECT MANAGEMENT TRAINING IN BISHKEK

BY YELENA VOROBEY, PRESIDENT OF U.S.-CAEF ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

On September 27, 2015, Karina Kussainova, VP for Professional Development, organized project development training for alumni and current fellows in Bishkek. Mr. Maxim Mischenko, a management consultant and business coach with thirteen years of business coaching experience from Almaty, Kazakhstan. The training covered all important aspects of project management-- project development cycles, project initiation and planning, staff management, risk management, project research, and the role of information technologies in projects. Judging by the turn out and positive feedback of participants, the event was a great success.

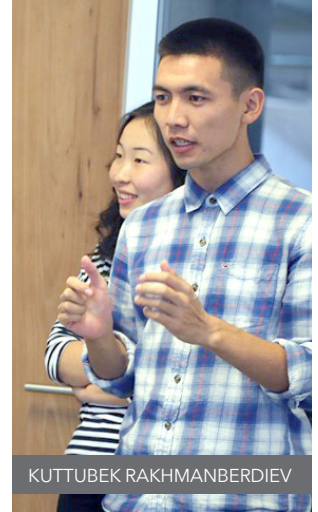


ADYLBEK DZHAPASHOV



MANAGEMENT TRAINING PARTICIPANTS WITH MAXIM MISCHENKO

"It was a pleasure to be a participant of this effective training. My expectations for this training were high, because the theme was intriguing. Before the training, I had had some experience in managing projects, but I came across many problems. This session helped me understand my errors, and find effective solutions and learn a lot of new and useful information," shared **Adylbek Dzhapashov**, Kyrgyzstan 2014. Another fellow, **Kuttubek Rakhmanberdiev**, wrote, "The training was one of the most useful and interesting activities organized by the U.S. - CAEF Alumni Association. Through this training I acquired valuable knowledge about the essentials of managing a project and its realization process, which will be definitely helpful in my future career. The trainer could provide us with interesting presentation materials and real life case examples. He divided participants into small groups and asked to write real projects (social, business etc.), which helped me better understand the connections of each project phases. In addition, I had an opportunity to talk with our program alumni and ask their advice about summer internships and about the current job market. Overall, this event was well organized and I had a productive day. Proud to be a member of the U.S.- CAEF family!"



KUTTUBEK RAKHMANBERDIEV

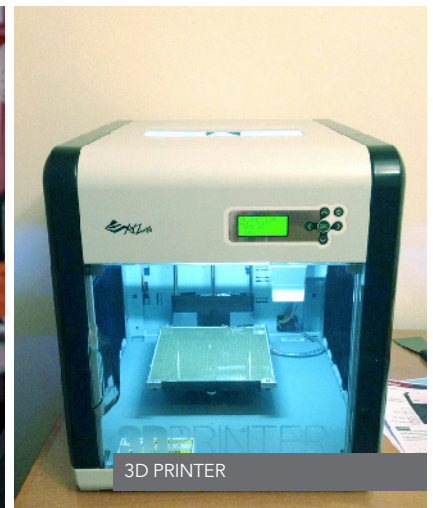


FROM IDEAS TO ACTION: INTERVIEW WITH IRINA ABASOVA

BY JEMAL AGAYEVA, VICE PRESIDENT FOR REGIONAL NETWORKS



IRINA ABASOVA

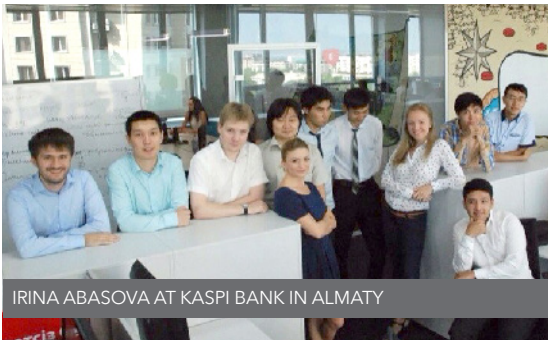


3D PRINTER

On October 26, Jemal Agayeva interviewed Irina Abasova, one of the first Turkmen U.S.-CAEF fellows who graduated from KIMEP in 2012. In this interview, Irina shares her thoughts about her first employment and the startup that she created three months ago.

Q: WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST EMPLOYMENT?

I started my career at Kaspi Bank in Almaty. I worked in the Analytics Department, the first of its kind in the entire country. The purpose of the department is to forecast customer behavior based on people's profiles, transactions, social involvements, etc. My responsibility was to analyze and predict how customers handle their loans and down payments. Due to lack of prior experience in the field, I had to read a lot and explore related topics. Based on this knowledge, I was able to create a forecasting model to analyze the behavior of our customers. Of course, my university education helped me a lot as well, especially my knowledge in Statistics, research and analysis skills as well as English skills proved to be very handy. Since most online data is in English, I was able to provide my colleagues with most credible and up-to-date information on the related topics. This project that I developed from scratch together with my colleague, a senior analyst, became very successful and continues to operate. It has been expanded -now thirteen people work in the department.



IRINA ABASOVA AT KASPI BANK IN ALMATY

Q: HOW DID YOU COME UP WITH AN IDEA OF CREATING YOUR OWN BUSINESS?

When my work became routine, and I realized that I was not learning anything new, I decided to move forward and start my own business. While researching business opportunities, I came across 3D printing. The concept of usefulness of this type of printing inspired me enormously. With the help of a 3D printer, people can create many practical objects such as artificial limbs, different equipment parts, etc. that are more cost-efficient and, therefore, affordable. So I decided to quit my job and create my own 3D printing firm in August, just 3 months

ago. There was no turning back. In two weeks, I received my new equipment, and I launched my startup.

Q: WHAT CHALLENGES DID YOU FACE?

The first month was the most challenging, because I tried to deliver orders while learning to use the new equipment. Despite all difficulties, I enjoyed the process. Now everything is going well-I know how the printer functions and how to attract more people, and I am on my way to achieve my plan. At this point, I expect my business to grow further, reach my break-even point in a month or so, and start making a healthy profit.

Q; WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS FOR THE FUTURE?

I hope to be able to raise capital to expand my business and reach out to different demographics. I want my business to be useful and practical, therefore, in the future, I would like to focus on clothing, medical and food sectors, the areas that are always in demand.

Q: WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SAY IN CONCLUSION? WHAT TIPS WOULD YOU LIKE TO GIVE TO OUR FELLOWS?

I am grateful for U.S.-CAEF and KIMEP University. Without U.S. - CAEF, I wouldn't have been where I am now, not within this short period of time. As I come from a big family, I couldn't afford to study at KIMEP. Thanks to the scholarship, I was able to focus on my studies, receive a quality education, and participate in KIMEP's study abroad programs and university life. This opportunity gave me a chance not only to develop myself, but also help others, and expand my network and build strong connections.

When I become successful, I will definitely invest in youth. I believe that if we want to change the world, we have to start from educating young people.

As for the tips to the current fellows, please remember that studying is not the only priority during your four years in university. You also need to be active in student organizations which can help you develop valuable teamwork and communication skills. I think U.S.-CAEF should make it mandatory for fellows to join student organizations. And of course, it is important to develop basic understanding of business and not to be afraid of taking risks.



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MEET NEW ALUMNI OFFICER: JEMAL AGAYEVA

Dear U.S.-CAEF community,

It's my pleasure to announce that I have recently joined the Alumni Council as Vice President for Regional Networks. I am originally from Turkmenistan. I graduated with a bachelor's degree in Finance from KIMEP University in 2015. Currently, I am enrolled in Master of Public and Municipal Administration at KIMEP University & reside in Almaty.

I hope that my communication skills and experience in coordinating projects & training workshops can be useful in this position. With great enthusiasm, I am looking forward to serving our U.S.-CAEF family and sharing best practices with our alumni as well as current fellows!

