Contents

The First Word ........................................................................................................................................ 3

SPECIAL ISSUE: MOUNTAIN SOCIETIES RESEARCH INSTITUTE
Sustainable Land Management Paper Highlights Existing Knowledge and Gaps ................. 4
UCA and GIZ Bring Mobile Digital Library to Naryn and Ak-Talaa Districts ...................... 5
MSRI Programmes and Resources .............................................................................................. 6
UCA Hosts International Mountain Day Events ...................................................................... 7
MSRI and the Mountain Partnership Central Asian Hub .......................................................... 8
Climate Change Panel Focuses on Adaptation .......................................................................... 9

ON LOCATION
On the Road with e-Bilim ........................................................................................................... 10

NEWS
Second Round of Social Entrepreneurs Ready to Impact Kyrgyz Communities ................. 12

CONSTRUCTION
Naryn Children Enjoy Sledding Facility at UCA Campus ..................................................... 14
New Governor of Naryn Visits UCA Campus Site ................................................................. 15

RESEARCH AND LEARNING
UCA and Kyrgyz Government Hold Round Table on Local Economic Development .......... 16

PEOPLE
MSRI Researcher Supports Central Asian and Afghan Fellows .......................................... 17

LAST PAGE
News Bites ......................................................................................................................................... 18
UCA Public Lecture Series ........................................................................................................ 19

Cover photo: Children in Jan-Bulak village enjoy digital resources from UCA's mobile library eBilim.

The University of Central Asia (UCA) was founded in 2000. The Presidents of Tajikistan, the Kyrgyz Republic and Kazakhstan and His Highness the Aga Khan signed the International Treaty and Charter establishing this secular and private University, which was ratified by the respective parliaments and registered with the United Nations. UCA was established to offer an internationally recognised standard of higher education in Central Asia and prepare graduates to contribute leadership, ideas and innovation to the economies and communities of the region. UCA brings with it the commitment and partnership of the Aga Khan Development Network.
As we begin our second year of publication, *Q-News* would like to thank you, our readers, for your continued interest, support and feedback. In 2013, the first four issues of *Q-News* were received enthusiastically by our audience across the globe.

It is heartening to see *Q-News* develop a growing following of readers. Our inaugural issue received 420 views the first day it was released. Our second issue focusing on Central Asian Cultural Heritage was immensely popular and our fourth issue, highlighting UCA’s progress in construction, received a record of over 2,000 downloads.

In its first year, *Q-News* reached approximately 5,500 e-subscribers. In addition to solid distribution across Central Asia, hard copies of *Q-News* were distributed to our readership in Afghanistan, France, Pakistan, Portugal, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States.

This first issue of 2014 puts the spotlight on UCA’s Mountain Societies Research Institute (MSRI). MSRI’s background paper on sustainable land management is featured, revealing the Institute’s approach to creating a comprehensive research agenda. Read about eBilim, MSRI’s mobile digital library, on its inaugural journey through the Naryn and Ak-Taala districts. Other highlights include the Central Asia and Afghanistan Research Fellowship programme and activities of MSRI’s partner the Mountain Partnership Central Asia Hub.

We look forward to continue to respond to your interest in UCA and providing you with engaging news from Central Asia. Please send us your feedback.

Happy reading!

Nisar Keshvani
Head of Communications
nisar.keshvani@ucentralasia.org

**Editorial Team:**
Managing Editor: Nisar Keshvani
Editor: Sia Nowrojee
Copy Editor: Shirin Nanjee
Writer: Savannah Hallworth, Nazarbegim Muzaffarova
Intern: Nilufar Bahromzoda
Design and Photography: Mikhail Romanyuk

The stories featured in this publication are copyrighted to the University of Central Asia. For permission to re-publish *UCA Q-News* stories or request high resolution images, please contact: Nisar Keshvani, Head of Communications: communications@ucentralasia.org
On 18 February 2014, the University of Central Asia’s Mountain Societies Research Institute (MSRI) hosted a seminar on Research for Sustainable Land Management: Status, Challenges and Pathways for Improvement. The seminar launched MSRI’s second background paper; Sustainable Land Management in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan: A Research Review by Candidate of Biological Science Jyldyz Shigaeva, Dr Bettina Wolfgramm and Dr Chad Dear.

“One of the influences behind MSRI’s background paper series is Isaac Newton’s famous quote: ‘If I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants,’ ” said Dr Chad Dear in his remarks, “Science advances by building on or contesting existing knowledge. We knew we needed a thorough understanding of existing research to move forward.”

Dr Dear also described how the infusion of international organisations in the post-Soviet Central Asian context has resulted in parallel, and different research conducted in English and Russian. The two research tracks differ not only in language, but in analytic approaches, with Russian-language research on sustainable land management relying on Soviet-era conceptual frameworks.

Lead author Jyldyz Shigaeva shared challenges faced when generating research on sustainable land management to effectively shape decision-making. These include a weak interface between research and action; limited understanding of complex social-ecological systems and how these impact land-use decisions; and insufficient collaboration between local and international researchers.

“We want research to be useful to all stakeholders, whether they are small-scale farmers, government officials developing land-use policy or researchers seeking to build further knowledge on sustainability,” explained Shigaeva, “For this to occur, the review found that research frameworks and processes require change.”

She also provided recommendations to use participatory research methods to engage stakeholders; employ a systems approach to address complex factors that influence decision-making; and increase opportunities for local and international researchers to exchange information.

Discussants Malcolm Childress of the World Bank and Almazbek Orozumbekov of the Centre for Cooperation of the Universities of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation under the Kyrgyz National Agrarian University provided feedback on the paper.

The seminar was attended by over 40 guests, including representatives of government agencies, non-governmental organisations, research institutes of the National Academy of Sciences of the Kyrgyz Republic and the World Bank.
UCA and GIZ Bring Mobile Digital Library to Naryn and Ak-Talaa Districts

On 12 December 2013, the eBilim mobile digital library was inaugurated at the UCA School for Professional and Continuing Education (SPCE) in Naryn. The library is housed in a new minibus refurbished to transport and facilitate the use of digital and electronic resources.

eBilim is a one-year pilot project designed to bring information and resources to communities in remote villages in Naryn Oblast. The project is being implemented through a partnership between UCA’s Mountain Societies Research Institute and the Mountain Societies Development Support Programme, with financial support from the German Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH.

‘Bilim’ means knowledge in the Kyrgyz language. ‘e’ indicates electronic media. eBilim brings together locally accessible knowledge and current technology. The vehicle is equipped with laptops and a database of over 2,000 text, audio and video resources in a variety of subjects. It will also serve as a dynamic platform, assessing and responding to the information needs of remote mountain communities.

“We need services and materials reflecting the needs and interests of the next generation of library users. We are pleased Naryn was selected to pilot eBilim, cleverly using technology to address local needs,” said Dinara Junusova, Head of Social Monitoring and Development, Naryn.

The eBilim vehicle will travel on a regular schedule to 10 villages in Naryn and Ak-Talaa districts for one full day each month.

“Large amounts of digital information have been produced in Central Asia by governments, civil society, universities and the media. eBilim can connect people in remote areas to the world of digital knowledge,” said Anar Orozobaeva of GIZ.

Users can print and download information from the eBilim database to USBs, DVDs, cell phones

“eBilim can connect people in remote areas to the world of digital knowledge.”
MSRI Programmes and Resources

MSRI is a university-wide, interdisciplinary research institute dedicated to addressing the challenges and opportunities within Central Asian mountain communities and environments. MSRI’s goal is to support and enhance the resilience and quality of life of mountain societies through the generation and application of sound research.

MSRI has five objectives:
- To generate new knowledge on mountain societies from academically sound research;
- To enhance Central Asian capacity to conduct sound research relevant to mountain societies;
- To serve as a knowledge hub for scholars, development practitioners and decision-makers;
- To inform policy and practice through sound research; and
- To contribute to the development of UCA academic programmes relevant to mountain societies.

MSRI, together with its partners, actively work to transfer knowledge to policy and practice aimed at improving the quality of life for people of the mountain areas in Central Asia. MSRI is developing its learning landscapes programme. This includes a system of long-term social and ecological monitoring sites in and around Naryn that will be used for research and experiential education for community members and future UCA students.

MSRI’s Background Paper Series strategically identifies research priorities and pathways and applies its findings for MSRI priority areas. This includes pastoralism, farming, sustainable land management and mountain tourism. MSRI Background Papers are available in various formats and languages. Other MSRI resources include English and Russian language publications, an online interactive Knowledge Hub and the Central Asia and Afghanistan Research Fund.

Outreach Officer Azamat Usupbekov outlines the route and schedule of the mobile library.

and other devices. eBilim also has children’s books and information resources. In summer months, the vehicle will visit summer pastures and host open-air movie screenings.

“eBilim operates from an offline database with the capacity to grow as internet connectivity improves,” said Aline Rosset, eBilim project manager, “Our success will heavily depend on our partners and community responses. This pilot will help us understand information requirements and adapt our scope to better cater to the needs of people living in remote areas.”

Community partners include the provincial, district and local libraries, schools and self-government bodies. Additional partners include www.bizdin.kg; Radio Azattyk; the Food and Agriculture Organisation; non-governmental organisations NGOs Bir Duino, AgroLead, Aigine, CAMP Alatoo and Novaya Literatura Kyrgyzstana; and Tenir Too and Ayil Demi newspapers.

For more information about MSRI, please visit: http://msri.ucentralasia.org
UCA and the Mountain Partnership Central Asian Hub hosted two events to celebrate International Mountain Day in Bishkek. International Mountain Day (11 December) is observed annually by Mountain Partnership members across the world. Since 2010, the Mountain Partnership Central Asian Hub, which is hosted by UCA, has coordinated the annual celebration in Central Asia with support from the Swiss Development Cooperation.

"International Mountain Day provides a unique opportunity to bring our regional partners together and highlight key issues and achievements of mountain communities," said Elbegzaya Batjargal, Coordinator of the Hub.

On 10 December 2013, a Food Revolution event was held to raise awareness of nutrition issues in mountain regions. Food products harvested in mountain areas were exhibited, and master cooking classes demonstrated how to use the products to create healthy dishes. The event was organised by the Agency of Development Initiatives (ADI) and the United Nations World Food Programme. ADI’s nutritional training manual, My Green Basket, was launched at the event.

“It is really a paradox,” said Aida Jaman-gulova, ADI Programme Coordinator, “Our mountainous country is perfect for farming and producing healthy food, and still there is a dangerous rise of malnutrition, with the highest prevalence among women and children. It is not because people do not eat enough; it is because their diets need improvement.”

The following day, a panel discussion on Mountains: Key to a Sustainable Future was held at UCA, organised by Mountain Partnership member, the Rural Development Fund. Stakeholders

“International Mountain Day provides a unique opportunity to bring our regional partners together and highlight key issues and achievements of mountain communities.”
shared their assessments on the country’s readiness for climate change and integrating mountain concerns into development processes.

Keynote speaker, Lubov Ten, Adviser to the Kyrgyz Economy Minister, described the challenges of implementing the National Strategy for Sustainable Development. Jyldyz Shigaeva of UCA’s Mountain Societies Research Institute discussed the contribution of applied research to social development in Kyrgyzstan.

Participants developed a policy brief with recommendations that was submitted to state institutions after the event. It has since received positive feedback from the Ministry of Economy.

The event also included a musical performance organised by the Aigine Culture and Research Centre and a fair featuring best practice demonstrations by Mountain Hub partners and mountain products.

Savannah Hallworth

MSRI and the Mountain Partnership Central Asian Hub

The Mountain Partnership Central Asian Hub has been hosted at UCA since 2010 and at MSRI since it was established in 2011. The Hub coordinates activities of Mountain Partnership members in Central Asia, focusing on creating platforms for information exchange between isolated mountain communities and regional knowledge sharing on climate change adaptation. In addition to hosting the Hub, MSRI engages in joint initiatives with the Mountain Partnership Hub and its members.

For more information on the Mountain Partnership Central Asian Hub and MSRI, please see: http://www.mountainpartnership.org/ and http://msri.ucentralasia.org/.

Healthy and natural floral honey, produced in the Kyrgyz mountains, being sampled and sold at the Mountain Product Fair.
Climate Change Panel Focuses on Adaptation

The Mountain Partnership Central Asian Hub at the University of Central Asia (UCA) hosted a panel discussion on climate change in Bishkek on 25 February 2014. Co-organisers included the State Agency of Environment Protection and Forestry, the Climate Change Coordination Commission of Kyrgyz Republic and the Climate Network of Kyrgyzstan.

The event was attended by over 40 climate change practitioners, scientists and researchers, and representatives of government and non-governmental agencies. Discussion focused on the institutional and political framework for changing climate adaptation in Kyrgyzstan, and government efforts to coordinate interventions to address climate change.

Keynote speakers Jyparkul Bekkulova of the State Agency of Environment Protection and Forestry Agency and Zuhra Abaihanova of the Climate Change Coordination Commission highlighted the need to respond effectively to the changes already taking place.

Mountain Partnership members, who make up the majority of organisations within the Climate Network of Kyrgyzstan, presented examples of their support of adaptation practices at the village and provincial levels.

“Villages face issues other than climate change, so adaptation efforts should be in agreement with local priorities such as crops, pastures, livestock, access to water, disaster risk reduction and infrastructure.”

Illia Domashov from BIOM Ecological Movement described their work to aid adaptation efforts through conservation and environmental community education. Rajap Karybaev from the Kyrgyz Sustainable Energy Financing Facility described its investments in improving residential energy efficiency.

Elbegzaya Batjargal, Regional Programme Officer of the Central Asia Mountain Hub, announced the Hub’s support for a series of thematic panel discussions in 2014, saying “Climate change is a dynamic process and it is important for stakeholders to come together regularly for dialogues like this.”

Alma Uzbekova
In January 2014, the eBilim mobile digital library started touring 10 remote villages in the Naryn and Ak-Talaa regions of Kyrgyzstan. The vehicle offers an extensive database, information technology and devices, children’s books and activities and other print resources. Despite the cold weather, participation has been overwhelming. Users range from young children and their grandparents to young teachers and seasoned administrators. This is the first time some village residents have used a computer. Regardless, there is uncontested interest in accessing and using digital knowledge and media. eBilim will return to the villages monthly.

Aline Rosset

Photo Credits: Aline Rosset, Azamat Usupbekov, Kubanychbek Moidinov, Mikhail Romanyuk

Outreach Officer Azamat Usupbekov introduces the eBilim database, laptops and tablets to educators and administrators in Togolok Moldo.
Kindergarteners in Konorchok watch Kyrgyz-language cartoons presented by eBilim’s mobile cinema.

Digital text, video and audio resources are available on various devices.

Girls in Jan-Bulak work and play interactive educational games on eBilim laptops and tablets.

Aline Rosset, eBilim Project Manager trains the Dobolu librarian on how to retrieve information from the database.

eBilim has a collection of Kyrgyz-language children’s resources.
Second Round of Social Entrepreneurs Ready to Impact Kyrgyz Communities

Six winners in the *Change the World Around You!* competition received up to $2,500 each to implement innovative projects across the Kyrgyz Republic. The winners received their awards at a ceremony at UCA in Bishkek on 17 January 2014. The ceremony was attended by Nuraliev Marat Abdykerimovich, Deputy Minister of Labour, Migration and Youth.

The winning projects included a fitness centre for the elderly with diabetes in Bishkek; a waste-paper collection and sorting initiative in Osh; a laundromat for people with disabilities in Bokonbaev village; a bathhouse to improve hygiene among miners in Batken; a training centre for children with disabilities in Nokat; and a call centre employing the visually impaired in Bishkek.

*Change the World Around You!* encourages young people to design and implement social entrepreneurial projects addressing community challenges. A series of information workshops resulted in 230 contest submissions.

Twenty-one finalists attended social entrepreneurship training at the UCA School of Professional and Continuing Education (SPCE) in Bishkek, including courses on social marketing, business communication and information technology, social entrepreneurship and business planning. Following the training, they presented refined business plans to an independent selection committee.

At the award ceremony, each finalist received a record of achievement and the six winners received seed funding to implement their projects.

“Now is the time for our winners to use their new design, technical, business and entrepreneurial skills to help their communities,” said Erdinc Guzel, General Manager of Coca Cola Bishkek Bottlers, Kyrgyzstan who are supporting the project, “The foundation of social entrepreneurship is a fundamental desire to help people. Social entrepreneurs strive to improve the lives of others, and the well-being of communities in the Kyrgyz Republic is a critical focus of Coca-Cola.”

Nine winners from last year’s inaugural Change the World competition implemented projects ranging from creating employment for rural students to building wheelchair accessible ramps at public buildings.

“Like last year’s winners, these young entrepreneurs have demonstrated creativity in addressing serious community challenges. They have skillfully integrated what they learnt during the social entrepreneurship training into their project proposals,” said Gulnara Djunushalieva, SPCE Director.
Asel Baidyldaeva
Asel Baidyldaeva is a 19-year-old university student who has worked with people with disabilities for over three years. Through her work, Baidyldaeva recognised the need for a special fitness facility for people with disabilities, particularly those struggling with diabetes. With her grant she is going to develop a facility in Bishkek.

“I proposed establishing a centre to serve the needs of elderly people with diabetes with specially designed programmes. Diabetes can be dangerous so encouraging a healthy lifestyle can have many health benefits, including less need for insulin.”

Aigerim Sakieva
Sakieva’s project will collect and sort wastepaper in schools in Osh to help create a healthier environment. She also hopes to change the mindset in Osh and encourage people to separate garbage and to recycle. The money received from recycling will pay the wages of those people collecting paper and will thus create employment opportunities.

“The social entrepreneur training really helped me develop the necessary skills to push this project forward,” said Sakieva. “The teachers were very professional and introduced me to different components of a business plan. The training definitely contributed to my win!”

Samatbek Monoldorov
Monoldorov’s project is to establish a laundromat in Bokonbaev village. “Most houses are not equipped with water lines and residents cannot install washing machines. Even if houses have water lines, many cannot afford washing machines. A laundromat will provide affordable laundry facilities. People with disabilities will be able to use the facilities for free,” said Monoldorov. He secured a building for the laundromat prior to receiving his grant funding. “When my project was named as a winner, I was initially worried, however, with the SPCE training, I am confident I’ll be able to effectively execute my project plan and that the project will have a positive impact in Bokonbaev village,” he said.

Nilufar Bahromzoda
The ‘Change the World!’ contest is implemented by UCA with support from the Aga Khan Foundation and in partnership with the International Academy of Business (Kazakhstan). The social entrepreneurship contest and projects are funded by The Coca-Cola Foundation and The Coca-Cola Company under the “Empowering Youth for Socio-economic Development in the Kyrgyz Republic, Kazakhstan and Afghanistan” project. Phase I was launched in July 2012 in the Kyrgyz Republic with nine winners receiving grants of up to $3,000 to implement social entrepreneurship projects in their communities. Phase II is currently underway in the Kyrgyz Republic and Kazakhstan. Look out for a story about our winners in Kazakhstan in the next issue of Q-News.
In December 2013, UCA’s Construction and Facilities Division unveiled a sledding hill at the Naryn campus site for use by neighbouring communities. The hill was excavated and watered to ensure smooth sledding with funding from UCA and donations of time and labour from campus construction contractors. Lighting for night-time sledding was connected and sleds were provided free of charge.

“UCA’s sports facilities include our tennis courts and football pitch which are open to the public and are popular during warm weather,” said Neil Carson, UCA Construction Manager. “But there was little to do during the winter, so we decided to build a sledding hill and give the children of Naryn some well-deserved fun.”

The hill is just one way that UCA is engaging the youth and children of Naryn. Students from UCA’s School of Professional and Continuing Education have toured the campus site and used the sports facilities. They have also participated in presentations by UCA executive designer AECOM on structural, geotechnical engineering and campus landscape design.

“The young people of Naryn are UCA’s future. By engaging them now, we hope they come to learn the range of opportunities UCA will bring to their communities,” said Chyngyz Usubaliev, UCA Liaison Officer.

Nazarbegim Muzaffarova

IPPA and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
Summer School on Labour Markets in Central Asia
This course will engage Central Asian researchers and policy makers and cover the basics of labour economics, a range of labour market issues in Central Asia and beyond, and introduce relevant research and policy evaluation methods.

For more information: http://www.ucentralasia.org/news.asp?Nid=680
The recently appointed Governor of Naryn, Amanbai Kayipov, visited UCA’s Naryn campus site on 22 January 2014. Construction is underway at the site and the campus is scheduled to open in 2016.

UCA’s Construction Project Manager, Neil Carson, welcomed the Governor. He presented the campus plans and described current progress in construction. The University recently installed a stone crusher and batching plant where concrete is mixed and manufactured. Carson’s presentation was followed by a visit to the construction site, where the Governor reviewed construction developments.

Prior to his recent appointment, Governor Kayipov served as Chairman of the Bishkek City Council. In 2011, he served as Chairman of the Standing Committee on Budget and Finance of the Council. The Governor has a background in education. Earlier in his career, he served as Director of Kaiypov Secondary School in At-Bashi District, Naryn Oblast and as Deputy Chairman of the Student Union of Kyrgyz National University.

Governor Kayipov expressed his appreciation for the positive relationship between the Naryn Government and UCA, “The Government of Naryn is open for cooperation, and I am always happy to support our relationship with UCA.”

University construction has generated approximately 200 on site employment opportunities through local contractors. UCA directly employs more than 80 personnel for its operations and construction management in Naryn. The School of Professional and Continuing Education is a leading provider of adult and continuing education, reaching over 16,000 course participants in Naryn since its inception in 2006.

The Governor was accompanied by his Assistant Ulan Eshmambetov, Naryn Government Press Secretary, Belekov Barkatabas, and reporters.

Chyngyz Usubaliev
Building a democratic state governed by the rule of law requires training the next generation of public and local self-government authorities. This was the focus of a national round table on Local Economic Development: Potential and Prospects organised by UCA and the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic on 11 March 2014 in Bishkek.

The event was attended by Nurkhan Momunaliyev, Chief of Staff with the Kyrgyz Government; Members of Parliament Esengul Isakov and Abdumutalip Kochkorbayev; Naken Kasiyev, Director of the State Agency for Local Government and Interethnic Relations; Bahtiyarzhan Fattakhov, Deputy Director of the State Personnel Service; and Moderator Jetigen Bakirov. Forty specialists from the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Economy and 70 heads of ayil-okmo from Naryn, Batken and Osh participated.

The event included an award ceremony recognising participants in UCA’s School for Professional and Continuing Education’s Local Economic and Community Development (LECD) training programme.

“UCA is building the capacity of civil servants in the region through targeted training. Our LECD certificate programme has reached over 1,350 civil servants in Kyrgyzstan since 2010,” said Dr Bohdan Krawchenko, Director General of UCA, in his opening address. “Intensive efforts by SPCE have created a better understanding of the training needs of civil servants in Kyrgyzstan. We are now adapting the programme for officials in Tajikistan and Afghanistan.”

Nurumbetov Syimyk, Head of the Inter-governmental Fiscal Relations Planning Department of the Finance Ministry presented on Improving Inter-governmental Fiscal Relations. State-secretary of the Ministry of Economy, Aydai Kurmanova, presented on Economic Development of Regions. Ulara Narusbayeva, Development Director of the Institute of Development Policy, delivered a report on The Role of Local Self-Government in Delivering Local Services.

The round table was held within the two-year Promoting Stability and Employment Opportunities in the Kyrgyz Republic project, aimed at improving livelihoods of the economically vulnerable while building the capacity of government officials and local authorities. The project is funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway, and implemented by UCA, the Aga Khan Foundation and the Mountain Societies Development Support Programme in the Kyrgyz Republic.

In 2013 and 2014, 130 local self-government specialists participated in the LECD certificate programme. In 2012, four round tables were held, ensuring continued engagement with the government and the public at the local and national levels.
Dr Mohira Suyarkulova is coordinating an exciting initiative at the Mountain Societies Research Institute (MSRI). The Central Asia and Afghanistan Research Fellowship (CAARF) programme is strengthening the capacity of researchers from Afghanistan, Tajikistan and the Kyrgyz Republic to conduct original research that learns from, and informs sustainable development in mountain areas.

“At MSRI, we link knowledge production to action for development,” said Dr Suyarkulova, “Mountain societies have valuable resources and face serious challenges. Understanding and acting on these is critical to improving the quality of lives and protecting mountain environments.”

MSRI recently selected 20 CAARF fellows from over 60 applicants. Fourteen research grants were awarded. Seven grants were to fellows from the Kyrgyz Republic, four from Tajikistan and three from Afghanistan. Six of the fourteen grants were awarded to women.

“The fellows come from a range of disciplines and are investigating a rich variety of topics, all relevant to mountain society development,” states Dr Suyarkulova.

Topics include food and energy security and sovereignty in Tajik and Afghan Badakhshan; the socio-economic impact of mining in Afghanistan; gender regimes in labour migration; Islamic finance institutions and practices in Kyrgyzstan, seismic safety of the Naryn River Cascade hydropower plants; agricultural water management strategies in the Amu-Darya river basin; and conservation of flora and fauna across the region.

An additional six fellows from Afghanistan received development awards. MSRI will facilitate training and mentorship to help them strengthen their proposals and prepare for the next round of grant applications.

“We are matching fellows to mentors around the world. Our mentors are respected scholars in their fields,” explains Dr Suyarkulova, “Through this process, CAARF fellows will join the growing international community of scholars researching mountain regions.”

Dr Suyarkulova herself brings regional and international experience to MSRI. Born in Tajikistan, she lived in Uzbekistan and graduated in International and Comparative Politics from the American University of Central Asia in Kyrgyzstan.

Dr Suyarkulova received her Master’s in Middle East and Security Studies and her doctorate on International Relations of Central Asian countries from University of St Andrews in Scotland. She has also taught at St Andrews and the OSCE Academy in Bishkek.

“It is rewarding to support other Central Asian researchers,” she says, “It is my hope that CAARF will result in exciting new knowledge and a regional network of skilled researchers who can support each other.”
News Bites

**Aga Khan Humanities Project Co-hosts Workshop in Taldykorgan**
The Aga Khan Humanities Project in Taldykorgan, in collaboration with the Public Association Innovative Practices, hosted an *Introduction to the Humanities* workshop from 18 to 20 March 2014.

**SPCE Provides Training to Aga Khan Foundation Afghanistan Staff**
From 11 to 17 March 2014, 22 AKF Afghanistan staff completed a Leadership, *Management and Communication Skills* training programme at UCA’s School of Continuing and Professional Education in Khorog.

**Mountain Partnership Members Learn about Farmers to Farmers Programme**
On 14 March 2014, the Mountain Partnership Central Asian Hub hosted a members’ briefing at UCA Bishek on USAID’s *Farmers to Farmers* programme. Farmers to Farmers provides voluntary technical assistance to farmers, farm groups and agri-businesses and promotes sustainable improvements in food security and agricultural processing, production and marketing.

**UCA Graduate Fellow Receives Best Paper Award at CIES Conference**
UCA Central Asian Faculty Development Programme Fellow Dilrabo Jonbekova received the Best Graduate Paper Award at the Comparative International Education Society Conference in Toronto held from 10 to 15 March 2014. Jonbekova is a PhD candidate at the University of Cambridge, UK.

**SPCE Khorog Trains Afghan Instructors**
From 3 February to 20 March 2014, the School for Professional and Continuing Education Khorog provided information technology and English professional development training to 21 Afghan instructors, as part of the Multi-Input Area Development Global Development Alliance (MIAD-GDA) programme, a five year initiative implemented by agencies of the Aga Khan Development Network and made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). From 1 to 9 March 2014, four Afghan Learning Centre project coordinators received management training.

**Cross Border Vocational Education Programme Begins Phase III**
On 1 March 2014, 45 Tajik and Afghan scholarship recipients began English and information technology courses at SPCE Khorog under a third phase of the Cross Border Vocational Education (CVEB) programme, made possible by the generous support of the American people through USAID.

**MSRI Staff Participate in Environmental Workshop in London**
From 20 to 22 January, Mountain Societies Research Institute staff Aignysh Isaeva, Munavar Zhumanova, Dr Chad Dear and Christian Hergarten participated in the Mountain Ecosystem Virtual Observatory (Mountain EVO) project kick-off workshop in London. The project involves a consortium of universities and research institutes in Europe, South America, East Africa, and Central and South Asia.
**IPPA Certificate in Policy Analysis Programme**

**Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic, May 2014**

This programme will build skills to advance evidence-based policy analysis. Offered in a flexible, part-time format to accommodate working professionals and the region, the programme will be delivered in Russian.

For more information: http://www.ucentralasia.org/news.asp?Nid=677

---

**UCA Public Lecture Series**

**January-March 2014**

The UCA Public Lecture Series highlights emerging research in and about Central Asia.

- **The Role of Mentality in the Formation of Development of Natural Sciences**, Dr Rajabov Tohir, Tajik National University, 18 January 2014.
- **Open Seminar: Research for Sustainable Land Management: Status, Challenges and Pathways for Improvement**, Jyldyz Shigaeva, Dr Chad Dear and Dr Bettina Wolfgramm, UCA Mountain Societies Research Institute and University of Bern, 18 February 2014.
- **Diversified Development: Making the Most of Natural Resources in Eurasia**, Ivailo Ivzvorski, World Bank, 6 March 2014.

Full details: http://www.ucentralasia.org/public_lectures.asp

---

**Kyrgyz Küüs: Analysis, Thoughts, and Opinions (Volumes I and II)**

by Asan Kaybïlda uulu (1929-2010)

This fundamental two-volume work written by well-known Kyrgyz ethnomusicologist Asan Kaybïlda uulu, is a tremendous contribution to the study of Central Asian traditional music. It is a tremendous contribution to the study of Central Asian traditional music presenting the findings of Kaybïlda uulu’s more than 20 years of ethnographic research on Kyrgyz komuz music.

For more information: http://www.ucentralasia.org/resources.asp?Nid=129
Pastoralism and Farming in Central Asia’s Mountains: A Research Review

This paper reviews the distinctive characteristics of mountain agro-pastoralism in Central Asia. The paper includes a discussion of past and present research directions and background to farming and raising livestock in the mountains. Key findings focus on biophysical, agricultural, climatic, governance and socio-economic aspects of the material, and the social and political environments within which agro-pastoralism is practiced in the region. Recommendations for future research are included.

Sustainable Land Management in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan: A Research Review

This paper reviews the state of research on sustainable land management in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan and analyses the interface between research and action. Recommendations are made for targeted, application-focused, multistakeholder research and knowledge sharing, which engages local and international researchers as well as practitioners, policymakers and land users.

Mountain Tourism and Sustainability in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan: A Research Review

This paper focuses on Mountain Tourism and Sustainability in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Tourism is one of the largest and fastest growing industries in the world and government, civil society and the private sector in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan place increasing emphasis on developing this industry. This paper examines relevant literature on these two countries through the framework of sustainability. The paper identifies gaps in the literature and recommends topics for future research and ways to strengthen research on tourism.