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Cover photo: Civil servants from Tajikistan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Kazakhstan and Afghanistan engage in training though IPPA's Regional Cooperation and Confidence Building in Central Asia and Afghanistan initiative.

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.
The First Word

This issue of Q-News puts the spotlight on UCA’s Institute of Public Policy and Administration (IPPA). In the three years since it was founded, the Institute has had an impact at both the regional and country levels, generating research and information, providing training and establishing itself as a regional resource on policy development and public administration.

We feature the Institute’s regional frameworks to build capacity and knowledge in areas such as policy process and small and medium enterprise and regional trade in Central Asia. IPPA’s first certificate course in Policy Analysis is highlighted, as is a regional conference on food security co-hosted by the Institute.

Information is also included on the work of IPPA researchers as they develop a critical body of work in public policy and administration and contribute to an Asian Development Bank Institute study on linking Central Asian economies to economic centres.

Other stories feature visits to UCA by government partners. The Kyrgyz Prime Minister toured our Naryn campus site, seeing the considerable progress made during the winter and learning about construction contracts awarded within the region. The Canadian Minister of State visited UCA in Bishkek, where she was briefed on academic programmes and construction progress. Canada is a key supporter of IPPA’s research and capacity building initiatives, and UCA has an increasing number of partnerships with Canadian universities.

Stories on UCA’s social entrepreneurship competition in Kazakhstan and an agreement with Badakhshan University to create a continuing education unit highlight our partnerships with Aga Khan Development Network agencies, private enterprise and universities across the region.

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Kyrgyz Prime Minister Visits Naryn Campus Site

Kyrgyz Prime Minister Joomart Otorbayev visited UCA’s main campus in Naryn on 6 June 2014. He was accompanied by Osmonbek Artykbaev, Minister of Energy and Industry; Abdylda Suranchiev, Minister of Internal Affairs; Abdymamat Murzabekov, Deputy Minister of Transport and Communications; and Altynbek Ergeshov, Head of the Department for Organisational and Inspectorial Work and Local Governance of the Apparatus of the Government.

Prime Minister Otorbayev and his delegation toured the campus site and were briefed on construction progress. They were joined by Naryn Governor Amanbay Kayipov and Mayor Baatyrbek Jeenaliev.

Speaking to the media at the site, the Prime Minister said, “The University of Central Asia is a large and ambitious project. Construction, including faculty buildings and dormitories, is progressing alongside academic operations. Overall, the University and Aga Khan Development Network will bring socio-economic development to Naryn and the region, and the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic will support and look forward to its future developments.”

Since construction was launched in September 2013, UCA has established key worksite facilities. The stone crusher and batching plant are installed at the edge of the building site and are producing construction materials. The international standard welfare facility for staff is complete, with bathrooms, a commercial kitchen and a dining hall which will accommodate up to 130 construction staff. The site construction office is also ready for use. Water, electricity and telecommunications are connected at the site. UCA’s Naryn worksite was one of the few projects in the region to continue working through the winter season.

All ten contracts to complete these facilities were awarded to contractors from Naryn, and all work was completed employing a Naryn workforce. Since September 2013, UCA, through its contractors, has consistently employed over 140 local citizens in campus construction. UCA also directly employs more than 80 personnel for its operations and construction management in Naryn.

The first of over 20 works contracts will be tendered in June 2014, with construction commencing in July. Appointed contractors will ensure that the majority of their workforce is made up of workers from Naryn.
Canadian Minister of State Visits UCA

Minister Lynne Yelich (far left) briefed by senior staff on University programmes and campus development.

The Honourable Lynne Yelich, Canada’s Minister of State (Foreign Affairs and Consular), visited UCA in Bishkek on 19 May 2014.

“We are honoured to welcome Minister Yelich and her delegation,” said UCA Director General Dr Bohdan Krawchenko, “The Canadian government is a key supporter of UCA, and our partnerships with Canadian universities are enriching our programmes.”

Minister Yelich toured UCA and learnt about UCA’s capacity building initiatives, particularly those implemented in partnership with the Canadian government and Canadian universities.

“The Government of Canada is a big investor in education through skills development and training. We are pleased to see a regional university developing and encourage further collaboration with Canadian universities,” said Minister Yelich. “The Canadian Government highly values our relationships with Aga Khan institutions and our partnership with the Aga Khan Foundation Canada and the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN).”

Minister Yelich learnt about UCA’s contributions to regional growth and stability in Central Asia and Afghanistan and to women’s empowerment. She was impressed to hear that 60 percent of the 65,000 learners (past and present) in UCA’s School of Professional and Continuing Education in Tajikistan, the Kyrgyz Republic and Kazakhstan, are women, many of whom receive training in entrepreneurship.

The Minister was briefed on UCA’s academic and campus development plans and progress to-date. “UCA’s focus on quality, combined with its unique campus design and positioning as a regional educational facility, will ensure that it is well-placed to contribute to economic growth in the region,” said Minister Yelich.

“The Government of Canada is an important partner of UCA, and AKDN more broadly, with a growing number of collaborations supporting priority initiatives in Central Asia and Afghanistan. The shared commitment of the Canadian Government and AKDN to development is driving several capacity building initiatives which are addressing immediate needs and providing the foundation for sustainable development and security in the region,” noted Nurjehan Mawani, Diplomatic Representative of the AKDN in Afghanistan and formerly in the Kyrgyz Republic.

The Government of Canada supports a growing number of UCA initiatives including UCA’s Regional Cooperation and Confidence Building project and Research and Public Policy Initiative.

With Canadian support, UCA is working with Carleton University, the University of Alberta and the University of British Columbia to develop and deliver professional development, undergraduate and preparatory academic programmes, and conduct research on mountain societies.
UCA and the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF), Afghanistan signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Badakhshan University (BU) to establish a Continuing Education Unit at BU. The Unit will provide Afghans with the opportunity to improve skills and knowledge in vocational fields at an international standard of education.

“This agreement will enhance cooperation across borders and improve the livelihoods of future students through the professional development of instructors and the provision of internationally recognised certificate programmes.”

“UCA is delighted to embark on our first formal agreement with an Afghan institute of higher learning, and to bring our experience and expertise from across the border to build capacity in Afghanistan,” said UCA Director General Dr Bohdan Krawchenko. “This agreement will enhance cooperation across borders and improve the livelihoods of future students through the professional development of instructors and the provision of internationally recognised certificate programmes.”

Under the agreement, UCA’s School of Professional and Continuing Education (SPCE) will develop the professional competencies of instructors who will teach at the Unit, leading to their international certification. UCA will also develop learning resources, establish English and information technology international testing centres within the Unit, and establish an Advisory Committee to review progress.

The MOU was signed on 19 April 2014 by Dr Krawchenko; Dr Najmuddin Najm, Regional Director for Badakhshan, AKF, Afghanistan; and Khisraw Nazari, Director of BU.

“This is a timely initiative, based on market needs. It will help BU build capacity and improve the quality of education in the region,” said Nazari.

The agreement was established within the framework of the Multi-Input Area Development Global Development Alliance (MIAD GDA) programme, implemented by AKDN, with support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

The BU Continuing Education Unit is one of six learning centres established or supported by SPCE in Badakhshan province under the MIAD GDA programme to improve access to quality skills training. In the coming five years, these centres will train over 11,000 Afghan learners.

“Implemented through an innovative partnership between AKDN and USAID, the MIAD GDA programme is grounded in the premise that progress is most effectively achieved by working across economic, social and cultural sectors in a given geographic area over a sustained period,” said Nurjehan Mawani, AKDN Diplomatic Representative in Afghanistan.

Over 1,500 Afghans have completed SPCE programmes in English, Information Technology and accounting. In 2012, SPCE launched a professional development programme at government teacher training institutions and private education centres in Badakhshan province.
Seven winners in the *Change the World Around You!* social entrepreneurship competition received grants to implement innovative projects across Kazakhstan. The winners were presented with their awards at a ceremony at the International Academy of Business in Almaty on 25 February 2014.

*Change the World Around You!* is implemented in Kazakhstan by UCA, with support from the Aga Khan Foundation, in partnership with the International Academy of Business, and with funding from The Coca-Cola Foundation.

The winning projects include an income-generating worm composting project in Daulet village; a resource book for the visually impaired; cloud technology to access printers from mobile phones for university students in Almaty; a plastic recycling project in Almaty; a sewing workshop creating employment opportunities for people with disabilities in Sary-Ozek village; an information website for youth in Taldykorgan; and equipment for a training centre in Semey city.

“Being visually impaired, I constantly ask others for help when I need information,” said winner Migai Anatolyi, “My Braille resource book and audio aids will help people with visual impairments obtain legal, financial and other applied information.”

Information seminars in Taldykorgan and Almaty resulted in over 40 submissions to the contest.

Fifteen finalists attended a social entrepreneurship training programme in Almaty, conducted by UCA’s School of Professional and Continuing Education (SPCE).

The finalists presented refined business plans to an independent selection committee, including representatives of the Chamber of Entrepreneurs, DAMU Foundation, International Academy of Business, UCA and The Coca-Cola Company. Winners were selected based on the sustainability, feasibility, originality and social importance of their plan.

*Change the World Around You!* is part of UCA’s Empowering Youth for Socio-Economic Development of the Country initiative, which aims to reduce unemployment and address pressing social issues for youth in Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz Republic.

“This is the first time that *Change the World* was implemented in Kazakhstan, and the response has been tremendous,” said Gulnara Djunushalieva, Director of SPCE, “Not only did the contest highlight the creativity and determination of the youth, but also the interest and support of our partner institutions.”

In an exciting turn of events, DAMU, the Chamber of Entrepreneurs and Enactus have all offered support to implement finalist projects.

“The first time that *Change the World* was implemented in Kazakhstan, and the response has been tremendous.”
Events on Policy Process Spark Discussion Across the Region

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“We were privileged to have representatives of government agencies at each symposium to highlight both opportunities and challenges in developing policy process in the region.”

From December 2013 to February 2014, IPPA organised a symposium series on policy process in the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan and Afghanistan within the framework of UCA’s Research and Public Policy Initiative (RPPI).

“These events are part of UCA’s effort to build the capacity of public servants in evidence-based public policy development and analysis,” said Dr Bohdan Krawchenko, UCA Director General, “An essential component in this enterprise is a defined policy-making process in government. The symposia focused on how this process is organised, and how it can be improved to allow inputs informed by the best available research and analysis.”

Over 57 experts participated in the symposia, including representatives of presidential administrations, government ministries, state committees, business associations, non-governmental and international organisations, academic institutions and civil society.

“An added benefit of the series is that they engaged UCA’s partnerships in the region,” Dr Krawchenko expanded, “We were privileged to have representatives of government agencies at each symposium to highlight both opportunities and challenges in developing policy process in the region. In Tajikistan and Afghanistan, UCA co-hosted the symposia with important government partners.”

During each event, IPPA researchers presented country-specific case studies and summaries of IPPA Occasional Papers on international practices. Dr Krawchenko presented on policy-making process in countries of the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development. Government representatives provided valuable on-the-ground perspectives.
Policy-Making Process in the Kyrgyz Republic

“The Kyrgyz Republic needs adequate training of civil servants in fields such as public policy to tackle challenging issues,” said Oleg Tarbinski, Deputy Director of the Kyrgyz State Personnel Service. “The State Personnel Service has taken significant steps to improve the quality of public service through transparent recruitment based on merit. We look forward to cooperation with UCA on the professional development of staff.”

Tarbinski was speaking at the policy process symposium in the Kyrgyz Republic on 24 December 2013, where he also presented a case study on the State Personnel Service and the Formulation of Strategy.

IPPA researcher Cholpon Nogoibaeva’s presentation on Policy Development in the Executive Branch of the Kyrgyz Republic, demonstrated that a legal foundation exists for a robust and defined policy-making process in government.

“There is little need to revise the normative basis,” asserted Nogoibaeva. “Rather, the point is to understand and implement what has already been mandated. For example, Kyrgyzstan has excellent statutory requirements to ensure that economic legislation is subject to regulatory impact analysis. However, they are rarely adhered to.”

During the discussion, Tolkunbek Abdygulov, Head of the Economy and Investment Department of the Office of the Prime Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic, observed, “Policy processes are important but difficult to address, because they exist at the interface of theory and practice.”

About IPPA

IPPA was established in 2011 to strengthen public policy in Central Asia. It provides in-depth analysis on current and emerging policy issues facing the region, and improves the analytical capacity of governments and civil society to use evidence in decision-making processes through professional development.

The Institute contributes to sound public policy and administration in the region by conducting research on regional issues, drawing on local and international expertise; publishing and disseminating credible, peer-reviewed findings; offering professional development to government and civil society; tailoring undergraduate and graduate programmes to meet emerging demands for policy analysis; and sparking insight and debate through outreach and engagement events.

IPPA research and training initiatives focus on:

- Economic policy, including regional economic relations and trade, economics of development, and regulatory and micro-economic policy;
- Efficient spending and management of public services in three areas central to human welfare and government budgets: education, health and social protection; and
- Good governance, including the development of evidence-based policies through effective and inclusive processes.

IPPA offers a range of academic and professional development programmes to meet a growing demand for qualifications that support evidence-based policy making. These include a Visiting Fellows Programme for Afghan and Central Asian civil servants; a Post-Graduate Certificate Programme in Policy Analysis; and commencing in 2016, a specialisation in Public Policy and Administration as part of the Masters of Science in Economic Development through UCA’s Graduate School of Development, and an undergraduate major in Economics through the School of Arts and Sciences.
Tajikistan Symposium Co-hosted with Institute of Public Administration

IPPA hosted the policy process symposium in Dushanbe, Tajikistan with the Institute of Public Administration (IPA) under the Executive Office of the President on 21 February 2014. IPA Rector Dr Roziqzoda Abdulhakimi Sherali noted that the event launched a long-term partnership between IPA and UCA.

“The problems facing Tajikistan are complex, and there are no easy answers. A robust policy process will allow inputs for government decisions informed by the best available research and analysis,” said Dr Krawchenko.

Yusuf Madjidov, Deputy Head of the Department of Strategic Planning and Reforms of the Executive Office, welcomed participants saying, “Due to globalisation, the policy process in Tajikistan must adopt new characteristics, criteria and requirements. According to a recent Decree of the President, significant structural changes have been made in Government and the Executive Office of the President, and the Department of Strategic Planning and Reforms has worked to improve the policy process in Tajikistan.”

Tojiddin Jurazoda, Coordinator of Public Sector Reform Group under the Executive Office of the Republic of Tajikistan, spoke on The Agenda and Processes of Public Administration Reform in Tajikistan. He focused on the history of public administration, reforms and the need for continued improvements in analysis.

IPPA researcher Shokhboz Asadov described the highly centralised policy-making environment and process in Tajikistan. The process has benefited negligibly from public participation and the country’s intellectual, analytical and media resources. A deficit of analytical and administrative resources has led to the frequent adoption of legislation requiring urgent amendments. Asadov urged IPA to play a greater role in building the capacity of civil servants.

“Today’s presentations show how the analysis of policy and strategic decisions is a technical effort, requiring a professional environment and associated attention and resources,” noted Dr Roman Mogilevskii, Head of Research at IPPA.

Research and Public Policy Initiative

The Research and Public Policy Initiative (RPPI) aims to ground policy-making processes in Afghanistan and Central Asia in sound evidence and policy analysis by building the capacity of researchers to conduct independent and critical studies and by expanding the ability of policy professionals to utilise such research in policy development. Activities include research and initiatives on policy process in Central Asia and Afghanistan and the delivery of IPPA’s Policy Analysis Certificate Programme and the School of Professional and Continuing Education’s Local Economic and Community Development Certificate programme. The Initiative also includes the Mountain Societies Research Institute’s Central Asian and Afghanistan Research Fund, which is supporting a network of young Afghan and Central Asian researchers. RPPI is supported by the International Development Research Centre and the Aga Khan Foundation Canada.
Kabul Symposium Co-hosted with Afghan Ministry of Finance

The Kabul symposium was organised in partnership with the Ministry of Finance of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan on 25 February 2014. Abdul Razaq Vahidi, Deputy Minister of Finance for Administration, welcomed participants and reiterated the ministry’s commitment to strengthening policy development.

IPPA Research Fellow Zuhra Bahman described three streams in policy-making practice in the government of Afghanistan: single-issue policy-making by individual ministries; sectoral policy-making involving multiple ministries and stakeholders; and ‘siasat’ (‘important policy’ in Dari) on foreign policy and security, which largely emanates from the President. "We use ‘siasat’ when talking about foreign policy or national security policy. We borrow the English word ‘policy’ when speaking about economic and rural development, education and health, creating a hierarchy of priorities that misses interdependencies," observed Bahman.

Khwaga Kakar, Advisor to the Political Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, chaired a panel on ministerial-level policy development. Panelists focused on strengthening capacity of both the centre and ministries, particularly within the context of international donor-driven policy inputs. They included Nader Yama, Director of Strategic Coordination at the Independent Directorate for Local Governance; Ghazaal Habibyar, Director of Policy at the Ministry of Mines; and Mukhtar Ghafarzoy, Policy Advisor at the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development.

Regional Cooperation and Confidence Building Project

The Regional Cooperation and Confidence Building (RCCB) in Central Asia and Afghanistan project aimed to augment regional stability and security through efforts that encourage confidence building through increased cross-border regional trade.

The project strengthened the ability of senior public servants in Central Asia, including Afghanistan, Tajikistan, the Kyrgyz Republic and Kazakhstan, to access and formulate analyses required to develop their governments’ capacity to confidently advance regional cooperation agendas.

Building on RCCB Phase I efforts, Phase II of RCCB examined the importance of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and the informal trade sector in promoting regional trade and cooperation. Research conducted under the project is available on the UCA website.

RCCB was implemented with financial support from the Government of Canada, through the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD) and the Aga Khan Foundation Canada.
IPPA: Building Knowledge

2011

- IPPA established to strengthen public policy in Central Asia, under the Regional Cooperation and Confidence Building in Central Asia and Afghanistan project (RCCB), with support from the Government of Canada, through the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development and the Aga Khan Foundation Canada.

2012

- Multi-phase training programme in trade policy and negotiations for government officials from Tajikistan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Kazakhstan and Afghanistan implemented, including a regional trade policy and practice seminar for 60 government officials on trade policy and practice; follow up sessions addressing country-specific issues; and a regional Forum on Regional Economic Cooperation in Central Asia and Afghanistan.

Looking for an informed perspective on timely policy issues?

The Institute of Public Policy and Administration (IPPA) Working Paper Series is a peer-reviewed series designed to enhance dialogue between policy makers, the public and educators. Experts engage in research and discussion highlighting topical issues and best practices in areas such as institutional capacity in public engagement and policy analysis as a profession in government.

Full Series of IPPA Working Papers is available on www.ucentralasia.org/ippa.asp
### 2013


- IPPA co-hosted the Regional World Economic Forum (WEF) Workshop organised by WEF in Bishkek, under its WEF *Scenarios for the South Caucasus and Central Asia* project on regional economic cooperation.


- IPPA staff contribute to curricula development for UCA’s Bachelor of Arts in Economics and Master’s in Economic Development (specialisation in Public Policy and Administration).

- IPPA Public Lecture Series launched under UCA’s Public Lecture Series.

### 2014

- Research and regional workshops for stakeholders on small and medium-sized enterprise and regional trade in Tajikistan, Kyrgyz Republic and Afghanistan, under RCCB Phase II.

- *IPPA Visiting Fellow Programme* launched, enabling public servants and researchers from Afghanistan, Central Asia and other countries to conduct research and gain exposure to peers working on similar issues at IPPA in Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic.

- IPPA and International Food Policy Research Institute co-host *Agricultural Transformation and Food Security in Central Asia* conference.

- Summer School on Labour Markets in Central Asia delivered by IPPA and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, engaging Central Asian researchers on labour economics and market issues and relevant research and policy evaluation methods.

- *Policy Analysis Certificate Programme* launched, an executive programme for civil servants and others to develop skills to advance evidence-based policy analysis. The programme is being offered in the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan and Afghanistan in 2014 and 2015.

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are a critical driver of economic growth and trade in Central Asia. Between February and May 2014, UCA organised a series of workshops on the role of SMEs in regional trade in Afghanistan and Central Asia.

Bringing together researchers and representatives of government, businesses, chambers of commerce, civil society and the media, the events were organised under IPPA’s Regional Cooperation and Confidence Building, Phase II (RCCB II) in Central Asia and Afghanistan project.

Adding to 21 working papers published in RCCB’s first phase, IPPA researchers produced four papers which they presented at the events (see sidebar).

These include a case study on Export-driven SME Development in Kyrgyzstan: The Garment Manufacturing Sector by Dr Nurbek Jenish, an examination of the Recent Development of the Micro-SME Sector in Tajikistan by Dr Kanat Tilekeyev, an overview of Small and Medium Enterprises Development and Regional Trade in Afghanistan by Mujib Mashal (of the Afghan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU)); and an anthropological study on SME Development: Informal Communications and Role of Women by Altyn Kapalova.

A study of Trade in Agricultural and Food Products in Central Asia by Dr Roman Mogilevskii (IPPA) and Kamiljon Akramov (International Food Policy Research Institute) and a Synthesis Paper: The Growth of Export-oriented SMEs in Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, by Bente Molenaar Neufeld and Jessica Earl of the Centre for Trade Policy and Law, Carleton University, were also produced within the framework of this project.

In Kabul, Afghanistan, UCA co-hosted a symposium on Small and Medium Enterprises and Regional Trade in Afghanistan and the Heart of Asia Region with the Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 23 February 2014.

Attended by more than 120 participants, the symposium took place within the Heart of Asia - Istanbul Process regional cooperation framework, as part of Trade Commerce and Investment Opportunities and Education Confidence Building Measures.

“Small and medium enterprises are a main driver of business and economic exchange in Afghanistan and the ‘Heart of Asia’ region, especially between Afghanistan and Central Asia,” said Roya Rahmani, Director General of the Regional Cooperation Directorate of the Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

James Hill, Head of Mission, Embassy of Canada, underscored the importance of SMEs in economic growth that can provide a basis for stability in the region.

His Excellency (HE) Sham L. Bathija, Senior Economic Advisor to the President, provided an overview of the Afghan economy and its potential. In his presentation, Mujib Mashal of AREU noted that the SME sector is neglected in government policy, despite its critical role in providing employment.

Ensuing recommendations included fighting government waste and corruption; utilising com-
munity networks to promote entrepreneurship and counteract misconceptions about the economic viability of SMEs; fostering agricultural SMEs and increased participation of women; and learning lessons from Central Asian neighbours. Entrepreneurs from the Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan declared their interest in facilitating imports from Afghanistan.

Other panelists included HE Haqbeen, Governor of Sar-e-Pol; HE Tooryalai Wesa, Governor of Kandahar; Qaribullah Hijrat, Finance Director of Nangarhar; Ahmad Zia Sayedkhel, SME Development Director of the Ministry of Commerce; Azrakhsh Hafizi, Chairman of International Affairs Committee of the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industries; and Frishta Hazeq, President of the Royal Advertising and Printing Press.

UCA Director General Dr Bohdan Krawchenko closed the symposium, emphasising that “SMEs employ a majority of the labour force and account for a significant part of GDP in Afghanistan. Supporting their growth, including through regional trade, should be an important element of national economic policy.”

The Kabul symposium was followed by workshops on SME Development and Regional Trade in Tajikistan, the Kyrgyz Republic and Kazakhstan. At each workshop, country-specific studies were presented by IPPA researchers and other experts. Discussions focused on how to promote SMEs in regional trade.

The workshop in Dushanbe took place on 19 March and focused on how to unlock the considerable potential of the SME sector. The event was organised under the SME Growth for Central Asia project, funded by the United States Agency for International Development.

The workshop in Bishkek on 25 March included presentations by IPPA researchers and by Saniya Isakova of the Kyrgyz Investment and Credit Bank, who presented the bank’s products supporting SME development.

On 25 April, IPPA organised a workshop at the International Academy of Business (IAB) in Almaty. Joining IPPA researchers, IAB’s Asel Uskelenova presented on SME development trends in Kazakhstan, and Mariya Gusseinova of the Women’s Leadership Fund presented on women’s entrepreneurship in Kazakhstan.

IPPA Papers on Small and Medium Enterprise

Small and Medium Enterprises Development and Regional Trade in Afghanistan
Mujib Mashal
This paper analyses the role of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in the Afghan economy; the challenges of developing SMEs in an infant market economy; how SMEs are coping with the military transition and declining aide.
www.ucentralasia.org/resources.asp?Nid=647

Small and Medium Enterprise Development in Kyrgyzstan: Informal Communications and the Role of Women
Altyn Kapalova
This paper highlights issues related to informal channels of communications for building business relationships; the role of women in the development of small and medium-sized businesses; and the degree of influence of the development of SME on the business infrastructure in the capital city of Bishkek.
www.ucentralasia.org/resources.asp?Nid=686

Export-driven Small and Medium Enterprise Development in Kyrgyzstan: The Garment Manufacturing Sector
Nurbek Jenish
This paper examines recent developments in the garment production sector in Kyrgyzstan that contributes significantly to GDP and employment.
www.ucentralasia.org/resources.asp?Nid=658

The Growth of Export-oriented Small and Medium Enterprises in Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan
Bente Molenaar Neufeld and Jessica Earle
This paper examines how SMEs can serve as engines for economic growth. Relevant international trends are explored before we home in on the regional experience, focusing on Central Asia.
www.ucentralasia.org/resources.asp?Nid=725
Conference on Food Security Unveils Regional Research Programme

IPPA and the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) co-hosted a conference on Agricultural Transformation and Food Security in Central Asia on 8-9 April 2014 in Bishkek, engaging government officials, development partners and researchers.

“Agriiculture provides 30 percent of jobs in Kyrgyzstan and accounts for 18 percent of gross domestic product,” said Dr Nurlan Duisheev, State Secretary of the Kyrgyz Ministry of Agriculture and Melioration. “We need a common policy to ensure food security in the region, and must combine efforts to exchange information and share experiences.”

The conference unveiled IFPRI’s Central Asia Research and Capacity Strengthening Programme, which will be implemented with the Eurasian Centre for Food Security at Moscow State University, UCA and other research institutions, and IFPRI’s CGIAR Research Programmes on Policies, Institutions, and Markets and on Agriculture for Nutrition and Health.

“These two days are an opening chapter in a longer set of joint research topics, studies and analysis that we can undertake together,” said Dr Karen Brooks, Director of the CGIAR Research Programme on Policies, Institutions and Markets.

“This conference is an important step in engaging the Central Asia research community in the critical issue of food security in the region,” said Dr Horst Weyerhaeuser, Director of UCA’s Mountain Societies Research Institute, who moderated a session on Agricultural Trade and Regional Integration.

“We need a common policy to ensure food security in the region, and must combine efforts to exchange information and share experiences.”

Dr Nurlan Duisheev, State Secretary of the Kyrgyz Ministry of Agriculture and Melioration highlights the importance of agriculture in the Kyrgyz Republic.
IPPA Head of Research, Dr Roman Mogilevskii moderated a panel on Agriculture, Structural Transformation and Food Security in Central Asia and presented on Agricultural Trade in Central Asia. IPPA Research Fellow, Dr Kanat Tilekeyev moderated a session on Food Safety and Nutrition, Value Chains, and Linking Farmers to Markets, and presented on Access to Improved Seed and Fertiliser and Agricultural Performance in Kyrgyzstan.

Dr Johan Swinnen of the LICOS Centre for Institutions and Economic Performance at the University of Leuven in Belgium gave a keynote address on Agricultural Transformation and Food Security in Central Asia: Institutions, Markets, Value Chains and the Role of Government Policy. This was followed by sessions on agriculture, structural transformation, food security and safety and nutrition, value chains, agricultural trade and regional integration and a roundtable on policy and research priorities.

The second day began with a keynote address on Land Reform and Consolidation, Farm Reorganisation, Access to Modern Inputs and Agricultural Productivity, by Dr Zvi Lerman of The Hebrew University, Israel. Consequent sessions focused on land reform and consolidation, farm reorganisation, agricultural productivity, migration, remittances, export participation, household welfare, agricultural policies, constraints and modern input use, and climate change, agriculture and food security. Policy issues, research priorities and strengthening capacity were discussed during a final roundtable discussion.

The initiative is funded by the Ministry of Finance of the Russian Federation, the CGIAR Research Programme on Policies, Institutions, and Markets, the CGIAR Research Programme on Agriculture for Nutrition and Health, and the United States Agency for International Development.

Research on Connecting Central Asia with Economic Centres

IPPA Head of Research, Dr Roman Mogilevskii served as the lead consultant in an Asian Development Bank Institute (ADBI) study on connecting Central Asia with economic centres. The findings of the study were discussed by researchers from UCA, ADBI and Nazarbayev University at a technical meeting in Astana, Kazakhstan on 5 May 2014.

The study examined the relationships between the economies of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, and major economic centres such as Asia, the European Union, the Russian Federation and the United States.

The study also highlighted challenges and explored policy implications related to trade ties, foreign direct investment and financial flows, migration and remittances, and institutional cooperation between Central Asian economies and economic centres.

“All Central Asian economies performed well in the 2000s. However, that economic growth was strongly dependent on revenues generated by extractive industries in the region and in Russia,” said Dr Mogilevskii, “To truly integrate into the global economy, Central Asia now faces the challenge of economic diversification away from exports of a few primary commodities and labour towards more sophisticated manufacturing and services.”

Initial findings suggest that to enhance relationships between Central Asian economies and economic centres, public policy should build on national competencies in relevant sectors; be part of a well-planned and comprehensive process; facilitate investments in both hard and soft infrastructure; increase the ease of doing business in the region; and improve the predictability and cost of international transactions.
On 19 May 2014, IPPA began its Certificate Programme in Policy Analysis (CPPA) in Bishkek. A rigorous executive programme for mid- to senior-level civil servants, other government staff and independent analysts, CPPA is offered under IPPA’s Research and Public Policy Initiative (RPPI).

Twenty-seven learners are currently enrolled in the six-month programme, which is delivered in a flexible, part-time format to accommodate working professionals.

“I work as a chief specialist in the Ministry of Finance of the Kyrgyz Republic,” said Ayana Sydykova on her way into class. “Every day I face challenges and problems directly related to public policy. I believe this programme will be an invaluable experience for me.”

The Programme includes four practice-based modules on Policy Process, Economics for Policy Analysis, Methods of Policy Analysis, and Policy Evaluation. Each participant will also develop a policy paper to be presented at a colloquium, which will include a panel of senior government officials. The best papers will be published as policy briefs by IPPA.

“The information in this programme will help improve my analysis on issues related to the efficiency and modernisation of state and municipal services,” said Djamilya Kazieva, a civil servant with the Kyrgyz State Personnel Service.

Successful participants will receive an internationally recognised certificate indicating higher level understanding of policy analysis, jointly awarded by IPPA and its Canadian partner, the School of Public Policy and Administration at Carleton University.

“This programme gives both young and seasoned professionals the opportunity to develop their analytical thinking and contribute to the development of our country,” asserted Meerim Sataeva, a specialist with CJSC Alfa Telecom.

Through partnerships with government agencies and universities across the region, UCA will also deliver the programme in Tajikistan and Afghanistan in 2014 and 2015.
UCA is supporting efforts in Afghanistan to build the capacity of civil servants. In 2013-2014, through its Visiting Research Fellow Programme, UCA hosted three Afghan civil servants at its Institute of Public Policy and Administration (IPPA) in the Kyrgyz Republic.

For Research Fellow Abdul Shukoor Popalzai, an economic policy analyst with the Afghan Ministry of Mines and Petroleum, the fellowship provided unique insight into Central Asian mining and natural resource sectors.

In 2012, the Afghan Parliament approved a new national mining policy, following 2010 geological surveys which found far greater resources than previously understood. Initial reports estimate the value of Afghanistan’s natural resources surpassing $1 trillion. At the Ministry, Popalzai helps to generate policies to encourage international investment and facilitate the development of a diverse and dynamic private sector.

“The resource sector can play an important role in the development of Afghanistan,” said Popalzai. “Through research, we can develop recommendations to better manage the sector, make opportunite use of it and link it to other sectors of the economy.”

At IPPA, Popalzai researched developments in Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic and international best practice. He conducted interviews with the Kyrgyz Deputy Minister of the Economy and Director of Policy for the Mineral Sector, as well as numerous policy experts and academics. Useful findings from the Kyrgyz Republic included the need to develop contracts that benefit both the private sector and neighbouring communities; and from Kazakhstan, the importance of attracting foreign direct investment and the need to diversify the economy to shield against volatile commodity prices.

“We need predictability, sustainability and understandability in policy making.” explained Popalzai, “If our regulations are clear and we provide investors incentives to develop the private sector, we can then deal with poverty and foster national and regional development.”

In April 2014, Popalzai presented his findings to the Deputy Minister, Director of Policy, senior advisors and other officials at the Afghan Ministry of Mines and Petroleum. His research was greeted with support from high-level officials, who encouraged him to continue and offered to incorporate his work into future policy development. Popalzai was one of three inaugural Afghan visiting fellows.

The IPPA Visiting Fellow Programme is part of UCA’s Regional Cooperation and Confidence Building in Central Asia and Afghanistan initiative, supported by Canada’s Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development and the Aga Khan Foundation Canada.
Building Teaching Capacity in Small and Medium Enterprise Development in Tajikistan

Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) are major drivers of economic growth in developing economies. In Tajikistan, with support from the United States Agency for International Development, the Aga Khan Development Network is piloting a multi-agency approach to promote SME growth in the region.

Under the initiative, UCA is developing a Small and Medium Business Management Programme at its School of Professional and Continuing Education (SPCE).

To build capacity to implement the programme, through a partnership with the Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University (KRSU), SPCE selected 10 instructors from Tajikistan to enroll in a Master’s degree in small business management at KRSU.

For Khorog State University professor of management and marketing Gulbibi Valdosheva, her home province of Gorno Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (GBAO) would benefit from greater knowledge in entrepreneurship and business planning.

"Many local entrepreneurs lack the necessary knowledge of the needs of the people and the ability to market to those needs," Valdosheva explained, adding that small and medium-sized businesses in GBAO need investments and long-term loans at low interest rates.

UCA is training instructors like Valdosheva in a ten-module course designed to teach entrepreneurs the fundamentals of business planning, including managing costs and cash flow and branding and marketing. Upon completion of their training, the instructors will return to Tajikistan prepared to teach the new UCA-developed curriculum.

"We were taught by highly skilled professionals whose teaching methods meet international standards," Valdosheva said. As part of her master’s programme, Valdosheva will undertake an apprenticeship at an enterprise in GBAO, where she will study the enterprise and will make recommendations to strengthen their marketing approach.

Valdosheva was one of three instructors also selected to receive short-term executive training abroad. She attended a branding and marketing course at the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University in the United States, and is eager to take her new perspective and cutting-edge marketing strategies back to the classroom.

"We will train local entrepreneurs in need of current knowledge about effective business development," she said. "We hope to contribute to the development of entrepreneurship in our region."

The Small and Medium Enterprise Growth Project for Central Asia is an initiative of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Aga Khan Foundation made possible by the generous support of the American People, and implemented by agencies of the Aga Khan Development Network.
The World Mountain Forum (WMF) took place from 22 to 24 May 2014 in Cusco, Peru. A global gathering to promote sustainable mountain development, WMF was attended by 200 representatives of government, civil society and academia from mountain countries. Twelve Central Asian delegates attended the Forum, including representatives of UCA’s Mountain Partnership Central Asia Hub.

“Participants networked, shared information and highlighted the diversity of approaches to addressing mountain-specific challenges,” said Elbegzaya Batjargal, who leads the Central Asia Hub.

UCA’s Mountain Societies Research Institute, through the Hub, co-organised a session on mountain communities with the Centre for Development and Environment (CDE) at the University of Berne and the Foundation for Sustainable Development in Mountain Regions, Sierre Valais, Switzerland. Azamat Isakov, Director of CAMP Alatoo presented an assessment of mountain pasture resources.

Presenting on the Transformational Role of Women: From Passive Aid Recipients to Active Agents of Change, Aida Jamangulova, Kyrgyz Agency of Development Initiatives described women’s self-help groups’ promotion of food security and social mobilisation in mountain communities; “After receiving agricultural training, high-quality seeds and food supplements, the women gained knowledge, status within their families, and saw improved family nutrition outcomes and profits.”

Government representatives described national sustainable mountain development efforts. Tajik representatives included Khakdodov, Head of the Parliament Standing Committee on Environmental Protection; Zafar Mahmoudov, Project Coordinator, Environmental Land Management and Rural Livelihoods Project; and Khayrullo Ibodzoda, Director of the State Environmental Protection Committee. The Kyrgyz Republic was represented by Askar Beshimov, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and Mukhashev, Head, International Organisations Department, Foreign Affairs Ministry.

WMF 2014 was organised through a collaborative effort of eight partners, including UCA, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, Consortium for the Sustainable Development of the Andean Ecoregion, Albertine Rift Conservation Society, International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development, the Foundation for the Sustainable Development of Mountain Regions, CDE and the University of Zurich.
The Mountain Societies Research Institute (MSRI) hosted a workshop on Agroforestry Practices in Central Asia from 12 to 14 May 2014 in Chon-Kemin, Kyrgyz Republic, with the support of the United States Forest Service (USFS). The workshop was organised to raise awareness of ongoing agroforestry research and projects in Central Asia, and document and synthesise existing practices and research knowledge in related fields.

Attended by representatives of state committees, farmer associations and non-governmental and international organisations and independent experts, workshop participants assessed the state of agroforestry in agricultural and mixed forests in Central Asia. They also identified constraints and opportunities to implementing agroforestry to improve the quality of life of Central Asian communities and protect the environment.

Dr Horst Weyerhaeuser, Director of MSRI, welcomed participants saying, “We are excited to bring together researchers and practitioners from Central Asia and China to develop an action programme to move agroforestry research forward to improve the quality of life for Central Asian mountain communities.”

The research and workshop are part of a partnership coordinated by USFS. Other partners include regional universities, the World Agroforestry Centre, the World Bank, the Rural Development Fund, GIZ and the Food and Agriculture Organisation in the Kyrgyz Republic. This workshop aimed to further inform an MSRI background paper on the potential for agroforestry in Central Asia and to set the stage for a World Agroforestry Centre research office, to be established in Bishkek in 2014.

“Central Asian countries have good potential to further develop agroforestry. USFS welcomes the opportunity to share scientific and applied knowledge on agroforestry with Central Asian institutions to foster further research and development,” remarked Dr Jim Chamberlain, USFS.

Participants identified four key priorities to further develop agroforestry in the region: The improvement of agroforestry practices in home gardens; the development of agroforestry practices in walnut forests; the implementation of agroforestry in pasture management (silvopastoralism); and addressing possible constraints and shortcomings in existing legislation to better support agroforestry.

Workshop participants also visited Chon-Kemin valley forest, local fruit orchards and a training centre for members of the Kyrgyz Forest and Land Users Association. They observed horticulture and agroforestry practices on farms and demonstration plots, and assessed agroforestry training needs.
**News Bites**

**IPPA Researcher Participates in Policy Analysis Training**
From 28 April to 9 May, Nazgul Abdrazakova, IPPA Research Assistant, participated in the *International Model for Policy Analysis of Agricultural Commodities and Trade* training at the World Fish Centre, Malaysia, organised by the International Food Policy Research Institute.

**MSRI Hosts Delegates from Nepal and the UK**
From 6 to 11 May, UCA's Mountain Societies Research Institute hosted delegates from Nepal and the United Kingdom, and arranged a Naryn field visit as part of the Ecosystems and Poverty Alleviation project.

**Mountain Partnership Central Asia Hub Participates in Climate Knowledge Forum**
From 13 to 14 May, the Mountain Partnership Central Asia Hub, jointly with the Climate Network of Kyrgyzstan, participated in the Second Central Asia Climate Knowledge Forum in Almaty, Kazakhstan. The theme of the forum was *Moving Towards Regional Climate Resilience*, and included a round table on *National and Regional Climate Resilience Programme Design for Central Asia*.

**SPCE Opens Learning Centre under MIAD Afghanistan Framework**
On 2 June, the School of Professional and Continuing Education (SPCE) officially opened a satellite learning centre in Ishakashim district within the framework of the Multi Input Area Development Global Development Alliance in Badakhshan Province of Afghanistan, an alliance between the Aga Khan Foundation and the United States Agency for International Development.

**AKHP and Partners Engage in Kazakhstan**
In April and May, the Aga Khan Humanities Programme (AKHP) conducted a webinar series in Almaty on *Social Partnerships for Non-governmental Organisations*, organised by the Eurasia Foundation of Central Asia with the support of Chevron, and hosted a roundtable with the Regional Chamber of Entrepreneurs for Atameken Startup competition winners and Chamber employees in Taldykorgan.

In collaboration with the Public Association on Innovative Practices (PAIP), AKHP also hosted a roundtable on *Intellectual Platforms for Young Leaders for the Development of Social Partnerships for the National Chamber of Entrepreneurs in Almaty. PAIP and AKHP held a workshop on Introduction to Humanities in Taldykorgan.*

**UCA Public Lecture Series**

**April-June 2014**
The UCA Public Lecture Series highlights emerging research in and about Central Asia.

- *How Can We Anticipate Climate Change in Mountain Communities?* Dr Karim-Aly Kassam, Cornell University, 27 June 2014.
