CCE Newsletter

Welcome to the CCE Newsletter, in which we cover updates of the Center's activities and initiatives, upcoming events and opportunities!

CENTER FOR CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

OSUN Get Engaged Student Action and Youth Leadership Conference

This Summer 2023, the annual OSUN Get Engaged Student Action and Youth Leadership Conference took place in Budapest, Hungary, at the Central European University. More than 60 students and coordinators from 20 OSUN partner institutions, including AUCA and TSI, attended the conference and had an opportunity to share knowledge, experiences and leadership skills honed during their civic engagement projects implementation. American University of Central Asia was represented by the Center for Civic Engagement (Nurzhamal Karamoldoeva, Executive Director & Zhamal Dzhumashova, Coordinator), Aigerim Bokoeva, TSI Dean of the School of Entrepreneurship and Service to Society, and amazing student leaders: Dzhamilia Lansarova, Shakhzoda Mirakova, Salima Almazbekova, Susan Azizi, Roona Farahi, Hawa Taban and Sophia Siddiqi.

During the period of June 27-July 4, 2023, participants were exposed to a wide range of activities, such as student presentations focused on themes of Education, Disability Justice, Gender Equity, and more, professional development workshops on the topics of community organizing, visual storytelling, public speaking, etc., group works, site visits, and so on, that would equip them with the necessary skills to develop solutions to local and global challenges. In the last day of the conference, for the final group work, AUCA team defined Get Engaged as “an inclusive community of youth leaders who act socially responsible with love and empathy to support each other and uplift the community.”

To learn more: https://opensocietyuniversitynetwork.org/newsroom/get-engaged-2023-a-stronger-web-a-wider-network-2023-07-17

Asia Pacific Cooperative Youth Summit (APCYS) 4.0: Championing Sustainable Lifestyles Through

Cooperative Leadership

Mira Dzhakshylykova is a Sustainability Coordinator who was representing AUCA and Central Asia in **Asia Pacific Cooperative Youth Summit.** Mira had the distinct honor of playing a pivotal role as a resource person and speaker during the Plenary Session on "Cooperation for a Sustainable Lifestyle". This summit, organized by the International Cooperative Alliance Asia and Pacific, provided an unparalleled platform for young leaders to engage in a collective endeavor towards a more sustainable and environmentally conscious world.

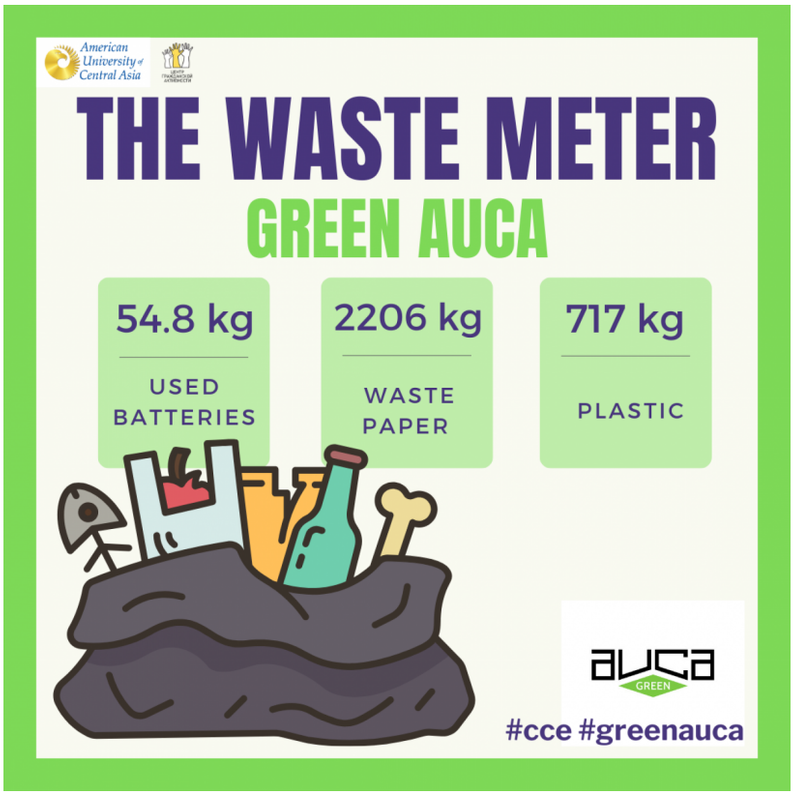
The APCYS 4.0, attended by 185 participants from 16 countries, was a remarkable convergence of minds. Throughout the event's 4-day duration, 13 speakers from 9 countries shared their expertise, contributing to 3 insightful plenary sessions and 8 informative breakout sessions. These forums allowed collectively explore avenues to champion sustainable living, drawing from cooperative principles and shared experiences.

Mira's engagement in the APCYS 4.0 and its Plenary Session on Cooperation for a Sustainable Lifestyle served as a testament to the pivotal role that educational institutions play in nurturing a culture of sustainability and cooperative values. It highlighted how young leaders, armed with knowledge and a sense of responsibility, can influence positive change at both local and global scales.

One of the summit's most impactful moments occurred on the third day, where Climate Action and Community Immersion Activities were organized. The Go Green Campaign 5.0 comprised a Conservation Awareness Talk by Sabah Parks, followed by a Beach Cleaning Activity at Manukan Island. This effort resulted in the collection of 57 kilograms of waste, symbolizing the commitment to environmental stewardship. Additionally, a Tree Plantation at Kota Kinabalu Wetland saw the planting of 261 trees, reaffirming the dedication to greening our surroundings. The summit culminated in the Mansau Ansau' Community Immersion Activities at KOBUNI, cementing the commitment to community and cooperation. The excitement reached its zenith with the COOP Pitch competition, where 11 finalists competed for recognition, and 3 winners emerged as beacons of innovative cooperative ideas.

"As I reflect on this transformative experience, I am proud to have represented our university as a Sustainability Coordinator and to have contributed to the overarching message of the summit: that cooperation is not just a means to an end, but a powerful force for shaping a greener, more harmonious world. One of the key results was the creation of great partnership with others"-Mira Dzhakshylykova.

The waste meter ("saved" waste) within the framework of the Green AUCA program



The work of the "Green AUCA" program is carried out all year round and does not stop even during the summer holidays. During May and three summer months (May-August), the team collected 86 kg of cardboard, 520 kg of paper, 173 kg of plastic and 42 kg of used batteries from the offices and handed over for recycling.
You can see how much waste we collected on the AUCA campus and handed over for recycling on September 1, 2023 (that is, saved them from a landfill) on our waste meter below:

- 54.8 kg of used batteries
- 2206 kg of waste paper (i.e., 2200 kg of paper & 186 kg of cardboard)
- 717 kg of plastic.

Recycling workshop for schoolchildren from Kant in the Chui Regional Library

In June 2023, the staff of the AUCA Library and Center for Civic Engagement held field workshops for 15 visitors to the American Corner of the Chui Regional Library located in Kant, schoolchildren from 3 Kant schools.
Green AUCA program coordinator Margarita Lazutkina told teenagers about waste recycling in Kyrgyzstan, spoke about the 6R eco concept, where, why, what and how can be recycled. Participants learned the topic through the recycling game, breaking into teams.

Children learned that they can also earn money from waste. And as it turns out, some participants are already collecting some sort of waste paper, plastic or batteries at home with their parents or at their schools.
One workshop participant said that she collected and recycled waste paper and plastic at home, saved up money and bought herself a bicycle. The kids are great role models!
How the workshop went, see here:

https://www.instagram.com/p/CuENlq1o1Nq/

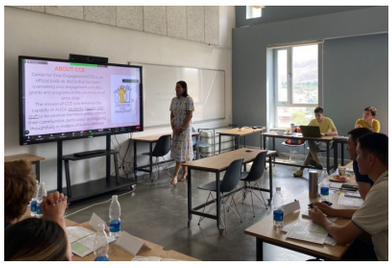
CCE & Orientation Week

From August 21 to September 1, 2023, AUCA hosted an Orientation week for freshmen.

The Executive Director of the Center for Civic Engagement Nurzhamal Karamoldoeva told about opportunities and advantages of Civic Engagement activities, presented programs through which students can implement their projects, and also shared the experience of previous Students and Professors who have already successfully completed projects.

CCE Sustainability Coordinator Mira Dzhakshylykova and “Green AUCA Program Coordinator” Margarita Lazutkina talked about waste management and the first steps that need to be taken to become more eco-conscious, on campus and in everyday life. During the presentation Margarita held a recycling game for students with prizes.

CCE also participated in the Orientation Week organized by CTLT for new faculty. Our team talked about the possibilities of cooperation and gave examples of successful joint projects that have already been implemented or are currently being implemented in the collaboration of CCE & Faculty & Students.



CCE Media Fellows

In Fall 2022, in order to promote civic engagement culture at AUCA and across the OSUN Network the Center for Civic Engagement decided to launch a new initiative - **CCE Media Fellows**!

CCE Media Fellows are AUCA students who engage in matters of public concern and create media materials (i.e., articles, documentaries) about various community-based initiatives of regular citizens of Kyrgyzstan. The idea is to raise awareness about such initiatives and thus encourage our community to become more socially responsible and civically engaged.

Salima Almazbekova (JMC) and **Alina Baitokova (TCMA)** became the first Media Fellows at the Center for Civic Engagement.

Below, you can take a look at the forth issue of our Media Fellows.

Alina Baitokova **Salima Almazbekova**

Student Civic Engagement: A Pathway to Active Citizenship

Civic engagement refers to the active participation of citizens in activities that help to strengthen the society, bring changes for the betterment of the community and address social, economic, and political issues. Each person can become an active citizen however civic engagement among university students is a cornerstone of the thriving community as they represent the future generation of leaders. When students implement social projects, they feel a strong sense of community and a necessity to bring changes with far-reaching implications. However, how do students from different countries with challenges such as authoritarianism, lack of quality education, economic constraints and external, political influences take initiative on civic engagement projects with a huge impact? We discover the stories of active students of the American University of Central Asia from Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan who have been successful in addressing the issues that matter most to them for deep and personal reasons.

Zainab Amirzai, senior student, Afghanistan

Zainab Amirzai, a senior student of the American University of Central Asia from Afghanistan, was leading a civic engagement project which researched the lives of Afghan immigrants in Kyrgyzstan. After the Taliban seized control in Afghanistan, many Afghan families were forced to leave their homeland, move to different countries and adapt in new environments. Zainab and her teammates interviewed Afghan families living in Osh and Bishkek cities to know more about the challenges they face every day in the new country. The final outcome of the project was presented in the form of the documentary and academic journal article.

Zainab shares that civic engagement for her is not just a concept but a responsibility and privilege to actively participate in the society, speak on issues that matter and be part of the bridge between the citizens and the government while reflecting the collective will. She believes that civic engagement helps her to foster her leadership and management skills, learn how to easily adapt to new environments and overcome different challenges. Civic engagement for her is not only about big projects but also about kindness and willingness to give back to the people around.

“Being a part of civic engagement activities is a social responsibility, does not matter how big or small your action is, every action counts. It could be volunteering in different organizations, helping your group mates with assignments, helping elderly people – every action counts”, says Zainab.

Zainab feels like she is a civically active citizen because through her projects she builds a strong connection with the community and contributes to the most pressing issues.

Masuma Makhamadalieva, senior student, Uzbekistan

Masuma Makhamadalieva from Uzbekistan is a senior student of the Television, Cinema, and Media Arts department at AUCA. Together with Zainab, Masuma was also researching the lives of Afghan refugees in Kyrgyzstan. In the project, she worked as a camera operator and translator during the interviews of each member of different Afghan families residing in Osh and Bishkek cities.

Civic engagement for Masuma is a sense of duty to analyze the problems that make society suffer and find different outcomes that can contribute to the solutions to these problems. Masuma believes that civic engagement is especially important for young people because they are becoming strong members of society with great opportunities to share their knowledge and benefits with those who need it most.

Masuma shares that before the project, she did not fully realize the depth of Afghan immigrants' struggles, she was shocked to hear stories of daily discrimination cases. Through the documentary, Masuma and her teammates hope to reach out to the authorities who can help Afghan people with different issues like the inability to recover their passports.

Masuma also feels a strong connection and necessity to bring change in her home country. She feels a strong sense of civic responsibility and believes that through her projects, she can address the issues that matter to her.

"I am a student from Uzbekistan and there are a lot of social problems and the biggest one is a problem with education. Not everyone has access to quality education and as a privileged girl from Uzbekistan, I have a strong sense of duty to help my community and show the youth all the opportunities they have. That is why civic engagement is vital because it is a way through which I can do that," says Masuma.

Saliya Khurova, senior student, representative of the Dungan minority in Central Asia, originally from Kazakhstan

Saliya Khurova, a senior student of the Journalism and Mass Communication department, is a representative of the Dungan minority in Central Asia and is originally from Kazakhstan. Saliya was a UNICEF volunteer, a president of the AUCA volunteering club and a project manager of the "Basketball for All" civic engagement project.

Civic engagement for Saliya is more than just an activity, it is one of the most important parts of her life as she not only helps the community but also tributes the memory of the close person and reaches a strong personal growth through her commitment to civic engagement.

Behind the interest in engaging in the "Basketball for All" which is a project for creating an inclusive world for children with disabilities and other diseases was Saliya's grandfather. He was a doctor and spent half of his life treating children with disabilities, autism, down syndrome and other neurological diseases.

"During COVID 19, he passed away and he could not see my success in this project. Everything I did was in memory of him and I imagined what he would say to me and how proud he would be," says Saliya.

Saliya shares that civic engagement greatly contributes to personal growth as she learnt how to lead projects, organize events, conduct negotiations and work with financi oнal papers. At the beginning Saliya had a fear of public speaking and she was worried about time management, however as she says, "I could do it all, so less fear, more love, just do what your heart tells you to do". Saliya advises everyone who wants to begin their civic engagement journey to never be afraid of asking for help, manage time wisely and work only on something you are passionate about.

Saliya is also proud to be a civic engagement activist and represents her minority.

"As a representative of the Dungan minority of Central Asia, I am really proud that I could take leading positions in different projects. I really want other Dungan boys and girls to follow my steps, take the lead, and take the initiative for civic engagement projects. I want them to understand that they are also capable of taking responsibilities of being leaders and still take actions even being a part of the minority."

Nurbolot Piridinov, sophomore student, Kyrgyzstan

Nurbolot Piridinov from Kyrgyzstan is a sophomore student of the software engineering department at AUCA. Nurbolot started his civic engagement journey when he was studying at the New Generation Academy where he engaged in different projects and realized the specific issues he wanted to address in the future projects. Nurbolot became passionate about helping high school students in the Batken region where he is originally from. He implemented several projects which were focusing on education as for example the "Digital Literacy" project where Nurbolot and his team were teaching high school teachers in Batken how to use digital tools.

Civic engagement for Nurbolot is a chance to make a difference in the field of education which he started to analyze and observe in high school. He shares the moment after which he realized that he wanted to connect his projects to the issue of low education in his home region.

"Civic Engagement for me is to help others, especially high school students. As a resident of the Batken region, I know that the level of education is low there because after graduation many students from my school went to Moscow to work as immigrants there. It was very sad for me and I felt that I wanted to help them. After that, I realized that I want to show high school students the opportunities of education and how education can help them in reaching their goals. I want them to recognize the significance of education in their lives. They can become good citizens and a good example for each other. I want to be a role model for them," says Nurbolot.

Nigina Zoidboeva, freshman student, Tajikistan

Nigina Zoidboeva, a freshman student from Tajikistan is a founder of the "She can" project which helps girls from Central Asia in applying for exchange programs abroad.

Civic engagement for Nigina means being an active citizen and as for university students it is an opportunity to get real world experience and develop soft skills. She also believes that while engaging in civic engagement, it is important to build a good network of people with the same values and interests as you. For example, during her exchange year in the United States of America she met many people from around the world with whom they still support each other despite the distance. Nigina also finds civic engagement as a chance to help her home country and her community.

"For me, as for the Tajik girl, civic engagement is helping girls from my hometown in order to get a better education and study abroad. Even if right now I am away from home, I am trying to organize different conferences and online workshops for them. I am telling them about US exchange programs, about studying at AUCA and I also assist them during the application process. Civic engagement means providing education for girls in Tajikistan," says Nigina.

She also shares the fears she had at the beginning of her journey and how she overcame them.

"Being engaged in social projects requires you to communicate with people a lot. At the beginning, I did not have good communication skills. That is why when I would approach someone to help, I was really shy and it was a big challenge for me. To overcome this, I realized that I need to be more confident. When I started doing this, I realized how many people are interested in my projects and how many people are willing to help me. I advise everyone not to be afraid to approach people and ask them for help and collaboration."

The engagement of these inspirational young leaders extends far beyond the classroom and leaves a huge impact on different communities. Student civic engagement is not just about society but also about the journey of self-discovery. It fosters critical thinking, problem solving and leadership abilities while also enhancing the values of responsibility, justice and social consciousness. Zainab, Masuma, Saliya, Nurbolot and Nigina have chosen to apply their learning to real-world challenges and address the issues that matter to them personally. It is important to note that each student, regardless of age or circumstance, has the potential to make a difference and become a civic engagement leader.

Below you can find YouTube video "Education and Civic Engagement - Students from Central Asia".

This article was prepared by Salima Almazbekova, junior student from JMC Department

Education and Civic Engagement - Students from Central Asia

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P9rpfUr7RoU

The video was prepared by Alina Baitokova, senior student from TCMA Department.

Click to edit

Contest of ideas!
How can I use coffee grounds in AUCA?

Within the framework of the "Green AUCA" program of the Center for Civic Engagement, we invite EVERYONE – Students, Faculty and Staff who are not indifferent to the topic of rational attitude to food waste, to take part in the contest of ideas.

Topic: how and where can I apply coffee grounds from coffee shops in AUCA?

Deadline: September 22, 2023

We all like to drink coffee, we drink it every day (and even several mugs). There are coffee shops on all 4 floors of our campus, where coffee grounds accumulate daily at the end of the day after brewed coffee.

A little statistics on Green AUCA: in just 3 summer months, 2 coffee shops – "Coffee Mania" on the 4th floor and "Coffee Shop" on the street near AUCA - produced more than 100 kg of coffee grounds! Since the beginning of the academic year, all coffee shops have earned in full force. In September this figure will grow to 50-60 kg per week, or up to 240 kg of coffee grounds per month! Just imagine how much raw materials are simply thrown away!!!

At the moment, coffee grinds are simply thrown into the trash. On the other hand, coffee grounds can turn into something useful for you and me - fertilizer for houseplants, body scrub, as an alternative to chemical reagents or sand/ash in winter during ice… Perhaps you will find another use for cake.

We are waiting for your ideas :)

Send your ideas on how and where you can use coffee grounds, with

1) justification NOT to harm the environment, of course (with links to research and materials, publications, where you got the idea from)

2) an approximate budget (how much money, what tools and materials will be needed to start your idea) to emails: **cce@auca.kg** and **lazutkina_m@auca.kg** (Margarita Lazutkina, Coordinator of the "Green AUCA" program).

The best ideas will have the opportunity to be implemented with the support of the CCE.

Upcoming Events

EcoTEDx-3 with International Speakers

DATE: October 14, 2023
TIME: 11:00 – 13:00
VENUE: AUCA, Forum

Partners: Waste Management Network in the Kyrgyz Republic WasteNet.kg; N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University, Kazakhstan, Astana.

Research conference

“PROSPECTS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACHIEVING CARBON NEUTRALITY IN THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC UNTIL 2050”

October 20, Friday
AUCA, CH, 09:00 – 17:00

Partners: UNDP in the Kyrgyz Republic, Green Alliance, Open Innovations, Green4, AVZUR, MU “Ala-Too” and other universities of Kyrgyzstan

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All on EcoMovie!

The program includes: showing videos on various eco-topics, exhibitions, games with prizes.

October 28, Saturday
AUCA, CH, 11:00 – 14:00

Partners: Waste Management Network in the Kyrgyz Republic WasteNet.kg

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Tree Planting

October 15, Sunday
Elm Grove (Карагачевая роща)

Don't miss our call!

1. The Student Initiative Development Program (SIDP) announces a call for applications for Fall 2023, which starts on Wednesday, September 20.
The Deadline is October 5th.

2. The center for Civic Engagement announces that Afghan Civic Engagement Program (ACEP) Call will be opened on Wednesday, September 20.
The Deadline is October 5th.

SUPPORT US!