

THE NEW STAR

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ISSUE 6

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AUCA'S STREAM COMPETITION: IDENTIFYING AND SUPPORTING CREATIVITY

The American University of Central Asia (AUCA) recently held its annual Stream competition, aimed at identifying and supporting creatively-gifted young people. The event serves as a platform for talented individuals who get a 100% discount on tuition at AUCA for all 4 years.

The competition, organized by the Office for Extracurricular Activities of AUCA Students, focuses on vocal and artistic abilities, including singing, dancing, and other performing arts genres. Participants, who must be citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic and no older than twenty-two, are selected through a series of qualifying rounds. The first round of the competition takes place online, with participants required to upload a video showcasing their talent. Successful candidates move on to subsequent live rounds, where they perform in front of a panel of judges, including AUCA staff and professional performers from the Bishkek arts community. The winners and finalists of the competition receive certificates of participation, with the top three contestants earning scholarships towards their education at AUCA. In addition, winners have the opportunity to receive free training in the preparatory department if they do not pass the university's entrance examination.

This year, the top three spots were claimed by Dilnoza Aidarbek kyzy, Aigerim Niyazova, and Elnur Toktonoev, who impressed the judges with their exceptional talent and dedication to the performing arts. The competition not only showcases the diverse skills of young people in Kyrgyzstan but also provides them with a valuable opportunity to pursue their passion for the arts.

Aigerim, a 19-year-old sophomore student at AUCA, is passionately pursuing a major in psychology. With an impressive 16-year background in dance, she recently made the thrilling transition from folklore to contemporary styles. Despite initial uncertainties during her first competition, Aigerim's unwavering perseverance and dedication blossomed during her second attempt, resulting in a gratifying victory. Looking ahead, her aspirations include obtaining a master's degree abroad while using her skills to assist others.

Aigerim firmly believes in the notion that *"if you do good to people, the good will return to you."* Overall, the Stream competition serves as a valuable platform for creatively gifted individuals to showcase their talents, gain recognition, and pursue their dreams of a career in the performing arts. The event not only benefits the participants but also enriches the cultural landscape of Bishkek and the wider Kyrgyz Republic.

Hoda Sadat
JMC-121



Do vectors, numbers, and equations make melodies?

An upbeat Kyrgyz professor combines two driving forces, mathematics and music. Elmira Musuralieva encourages a new generation to live with passion and purpose.

Being born and raised in Bishkek, previously known as Frunze, Elmira inherited her passions both from her mother's and father's lines. Her parents were born in a village near the capital, having an irresistible desire to study math. It has been a tumultuous journey for both of them to move to the capital and get accepted to the Kyrgyz State University. They fell in love, and together nurtured their aspirations and dreams. The success of her father grew in geometrical progression from an ordinary teacher to the dean of the Mathematics Department in the Kyrgyz State University. Little Elmira spent hours in her father's workplace learning new formulas and concepts. Her eyes were shining every time when she sneaked to see her father drawing unknown symbols on the blackboard and explaining a new theme to students.

Before moving to Bishkek, Elmira lived with her parents in an apartment that was situated in a school building. The only thing that rescued her from boredom at that time was listening to enchanting songs of children playing in the music school. Every time when children started playing new melodies, Elmira ran to their classes to be the first person to hear it. After each session, she meticulously observed musical instruments. They were producing melodies without even being used.



Musuraliev's family in Moscow

When her whole family moved to Bishkek, the first thing that Elmira's father did was that he got a German piano "Schiller" to support the endeavors of his daughter. Without having a musical degree, her father could easily play all the classical melodies, combining it with komuz rhythms and singing. "It was always noisy in our apartment as if my dad was giving a concert for 1000 people; lots of neighbors asked me whether my dad is an opera singer or not," giggles Elmira. All night long, she and her father spent time in front of the piano, learning how to play melodies. These were Elmira's first music classes. This was the first time she touched the piano. Later on, Elmira's parents decided to enroll their daughter to the Shubin's school, one of the renowned music schools in Bishkek up until now. She was the first one to be invited to the concerts. "I have never been afraid of giving a performance, and that's because of my music teacher, Yevgeniy Pavlovich, who astonished my bravery," says Elmira.

One day there was a grandiose competition among young musicians in Kyrgyzstan. The committee came all the way from Moscow to select 4 talented children to study in Gnessin Moscow Special School of Music. Elmira was one of them; however, her parents thought that she is too little for such long trips to a completely different country.

"I came to my first rehearsals, and there were dozens of eyes staring at me; those were the high school students. The conductor was not happy to see me there because I was the youngest musician there. But everything went better than I expected. I will never forget the sounds of those strings and how the whole orchestra was following the melody I played. At that moment, I felt that I was following my calling," says Elmira.

Elmira studied in school number 60. There, she ripped the rewards of her tutoring sessions with her father when she was a child. Elmira participated in all math olympiads, games, and competitions. One of the significant accomplishments was the invitation to the school number 61, which specialized in math. However, Elmira refused this offer to prove to her parents that she decided to become a professional piano player. Her parents were not satisfied with this decision. She left her musical dreams behind and got accepted to Kyrgyz State University, majoring in the mechanical-mathematical fields. Her parents were beyond happy; they were glad that their daughter finally made *"the right"* decision.

During all these years, Elmira played only for herself in her own apartment. The walls and her beloved plants were her audience, that embraced her with nothing but silence. She set a goal to learn at least 3 classical compositions per year to keep that connection with music that has been bringing colors and emotions to her life.

In 2008, Elmira joined AUCA as a math professor, unknowingly finding a place where her passions for math and music would merge. She revitalizes her classes with musical introductions and live performances, believing in nurturing both mind and soul. *"When I came to AUCA, I became alive again,"* says Elmira. Elmira significantly contributed to the university's musical life, including performing with the Kyrgyz symphonic orchestra at AUCA's 20th anniversary. This environment allowed her to be celebrated both as an effective math professor and a passionate pianist, making AUCA a supportive and admiring home for her dual talents.

*Shakhzoda Mirakova
JMC-122*

HOW IT FEELS TO BE AN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT IN THE USA PURSUING DREAMS: THE JOURNEY OF AN AFGHAN GIRL FROM KABUL TO MISSISSIPPI

"Education Prevailed"



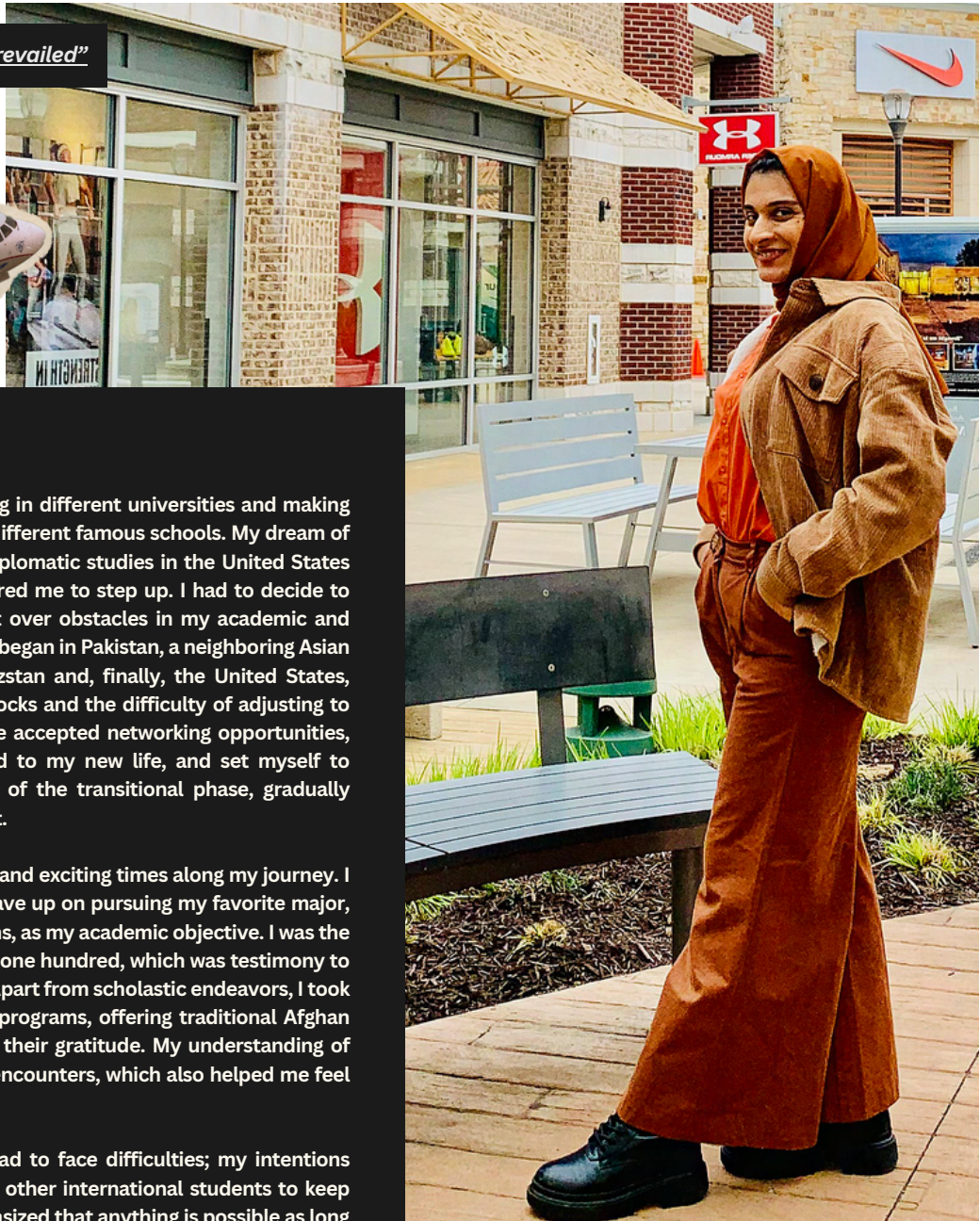
I'm fond of experiencing studying in different universities and making an academic journey of touring different famous schools. My dream of pursuing political science and diplomatic studies in the United States was a difficult one since it required me to step up. I had to decide to leave my home country and get over obstacles in my academic and cultural background. My journey began in Pakistan, a neighboring Asian nation, and continued to Kyrgyzstan and, finally, the United States, where I encountered cultural shocks and the difficulty of adjusting to an unfamiliar atmosphere. I have accepted networking opportunities, made new friends, and adjusted to my new life, and set myself to succeed despite the challenges of the transitional phase, gradually adjusting to my new environment.

I experienced both difficult days and exciting times along my journey. I overcame obstacles but never gave up on pursuing my favorite major, politics and international relations, as my academic objective. I was the only Afghan student in a class of one hundred, which was testimony to my determination and courage. Apart from scholastic endeavors, I took advantage of cultural exchange programs, offering traditional Afghan foods to colleagues and earning their gratitude. My understanding of culture was enhanced by these encounters, which also helped me feel at home in my new surroundings.

As I considered my journey, I had to face difficulties; my intentions made me move forward. I urged other international students to keep going after their goals and emphasized that anything is possible as long as you have the desire and put in the work required. You will begin to see that as a game with different missions that get harder and harder. Since the journey is long, they will go to every consecutive mission and nail it, doing so until they achieve that goal. To accumulate pertinent facts and present a thorough account of my journey, I made a deep dive into moments of life and represented those values.

Although this journey demonstrated the tenacity needed to follow one's goals in a foreign country, my dedication to achievement drove me forward despite many obstacles, motivating others in the process.

Mahdia Yari
ICP-121



my journey.

Trapped Abroad: The Trials of an AUCA Student in Berlin

What would you do if you had to go back home after spending a semester in Berlin when suddenly the borders closed and there were no ways of getting back home? This is the exact situation a 23 year old AUCA student from Tajikistan had faced during her exchange semester.

In 2020, the world was hit with the Covid-19 pandemic, and everyone had to isolate themselves for almost a year to prevent the spread of the disease. Such prolonged isolation has affected many, including Azimova Tasnim. During the fall of 2021, because of the aftereffects of the pandemic, Tasnim was depressed and was struggling with making friends. However, closer to the New Year, tired of the sadness she felt and becoming *“ready to socialize,”* she had asked a friend to introduce her to his friends. That is when she met French exchange students at AUCA. As she spent more time with them, she started thinking of going abroad herself. Luckily, that was when AUCA just announced the OSUN student mobility program, which allowed its students to spend a semester abroad.

Germany was Tasnim's first choice. *“I was super obsessed with Germany back then; I was even trying to learn German!”* she says. However, when applying, Tasnim was told that the chances of her being selected are very slim due to high competition. Sharing this detail, she let out a little laugh, saying, *“I was not scared as I knew I would be the one making the competition.”* Soon enough, Tasnim was already on the way to Berlin.

Unfortunately, Berlin turned out to be not what Tasnim expected. The city was too big and lonely. Despite her open and easygoing personality, Tasnim once again found herself in the same situation as before. However, this time it was because the community seemed to be less open to strangers. *“One of my goals for this exchange was to become friends with the locals, but I couldn't. It seemed like all of them were very really closed off,”* says Tasnim. However, she had no other choice but to continue her studies in Berlin.



As the end of her semester neared, an unfortunate incident occurred which prevented Tasnim from returning home. Closer to the end of 2022, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan had an armored border conflict, which caused Kyrgyzstan to close its borders. This was a restless time for both Kyrgyz and Tajik citizens, as this conflict created a lot of tension between the two nations. Being Tajik herself, with the borders being closed, there was no way she could re-enter Kyrgyzstan. So, naturally, Tasnim started coming up with backup plans. *“I had three choices. First, I sit and hope for the borders to open by the time I will be flying back. Second, I will be taking an academic leave for the time being. Third, applying for another exchange semester.”* All of these options were too uncertain, and there was no saying whether any of them would work out, but Tasnim was not going to give up that easily.

The first option was too unpredictable. She had no idea how long the borders would be closed: a day or a month? –a year? *“The second option was an immediate no,”* says Tasnim, as she did not want to waste any of her time, which left her with only one option. So that is what she did. Tasnim applied for another semester abroad, despite the possibility that she may be rejected. However, this time she applied to France.

The time spent waiting for the reply from the host university and the program was the worst. Stuck in an almost limbo-like state, Tasnim had no idea whether she had to prepare to move to another city or look for other backup options. During the anxious wait, Tasnim found herself in a state of uncertainty and isolation. It was interrupted by the long-awaited email that would define her life in the near future. *“I got accepted!”* Finally, after waiting for two weeks, her acceptance for another exchange semester in France was confirmed.

*Adeim Chynybaeva
LAS-120*





Rediscovering Kyrgyzstan: A Frenchman's Journey Back to the Heart of the Mountains, Working with a Local NGO

A guy returned to Bishkek after an amazing exchange year in Kyrgyzstan to work with locals in villages all over the country, but couldn't get a working visa for 6 months.

21-year-old Come [Cɔm] is the young man lying in his coach trying to decide on his work visa: do it himself or agree to pay a mysterious lady, who will do it for him. It has been already 6 months since he had visited the immigration office, and many others daily, with no luck. Frustrated, tired, and hopeless, he is about to take the offer and trust his business to someone else.

Surely this is not what he expected after a one year-long “vacation” during his exchange year in AUCA. He fell in love with welcoming Kyrgyzstan, where life is easy and people happily make him try “*kurut*.” After completing his exchange year, he returned to Paris for his Master's program.

“It's just one year pause till my life will start again in Bishkek”.

His “*pause*” ended, and Come had landed at Manas International Airport. However, this time everything is going not so smoothly. He is without accommodation, a welcome party, and lost his internship 2 weeks before his arrival. Yet, for now, he thought “*the hardest*” was to find a job, just to find out he didn't know yet that “*the hardest*” task to obtain would be his legal stay in the country.

France

Come Brunel is originally from Lyon. He is a graduate of the Sciences Po University in Le-Havre. 2 years of his degree happened during the pandemic, and like many other students, he couldn't enjoy his student life.

Instead, he focused on his studies and started learning Chinese. At home university, every student, however, must spend the 3rd year abroad. And most of them return after a year abroad to Paris to start their master's degree. Getting used to the charm of the small cities life in Paris is far from the stereotypical delusions. With a crowded and dense metro, it takes forever to take you to the campus.

“With millions of people, you spend your day in a subway.”

The big and busy city that separates students from their friends makes it almost impossible to see each other. Moreover, to afford accommodation, students have to live in the suburbs of Paris, which adds up to the distance.

Kyrgyzstan

"When I was in the airplane, I was wondering if I was making a mistake. But it was going so smoothly. I was in the right place."

Come's destination for his year abroad in 2021 became Kyrgyzstan. Before his arrival, he already agreed on where he will stay. Magically, he made some friends who were welcoming him in the airport.

Just in one week, he made so many friends. He invited all of his friends from Sciences Po for the fall break. Some of them then came to study at AUCA during the spring semester of 2022. Through Kyrgyzstan, he traveled all over Central Asia. Making friends, eating delicious food, and enjoying beautiful mountains made him fall in love with Kyrgyzstan.

"In Paris, you need an hour to see your friend. In Bishkek, you all live nearby and plan cool things together."

Bishkek is a city where you can find great activities. Time goes slowly here, and one has time for themselves. It is easier with transportation like buses and marshrutkas. As you live in the city, everything is close and accessible. If you want to rest and get distracted, 3 hours and you are in Issyk-Kul.

Challenges

"I wanted to give up. Everything is just not made for people to achieve it."

The main problem that Come faced during his internship was his work visa. To get the desired work visa, you need *"to apply to quota, where you need registration, and then to apply to the first visa, to apply to the final one."* However, it seems like no one wants you to get it. He noticed that immigration offices were full of confused Kyrgyz people and foreigners who were lost just like him. He even made friends with some of the regulars.

After paying several fines, missing his work trip, and almost losing his job, Come accepted service from the Kyrgyz woman. Surprisingly, all problems were in a small little detail - the ending of the email he registered with. One needs a .ru ending email, not a .com one. A little mistake that cost him 300 dollars. Come pointed out that bureaucracy is a *"hell"* everywhere, but it's different with people from other cultures who speak another language.

Finally, after two months—six months?—Come came back home with a long-awaited pdf file, the Work Visa of Kyrgyz Republic. It took 6 months, 500 dollars in total fees, weeks of insomnia, and constant fear of being deported. Now, he enjoys his internship, where he has a unique chance to interact with local people, hear their stories, and learn about their culture.

Culture

Come was adventurous from a young age. He is a Boy Scout who is currently benevolent and helps other members learn how to respect nature every summer. This is how he justifies his passion for NGOs and his desire to help people in need.

His work helped him interact with local people like never before. International NGOs are extremely delicate with locals. They believe that because of the propaganda, people don't want to deal with so-called "foreign agents." However, within one project in a small village of Naryn, Come had a chance to talk with people.

"They are welcoming and positive. They were happy to talk with a foreigner."

Now going back to the exchange year, Come realizes the gap between AUCA people and locals from small cities. Together with his NGO, they are trying to create a bond between North and South.

*Tasnim Azimova
JMC-120*

BLUE-HAIRED SHOOTER: AIJAN'S JOURNEY

Aijan, a 20-year-old Master of Sports, proudly returns home, becoming a Master of Sports. She was competing with the world's top air rifle shooters, bearing the weight of her country's expectations. Despite her parents' unwavering support during her journey to success, the same couldn't be said for her friends. She was nervous when she arrived at her first competition, in contrast to her parents' support.



Aijan's journey from a high school archery enthusiast to an air rifle shooting ace shows the power of drive and self-confidence. Her story is not just one of victory against challenges, but also of the possibilities of pursuing a passion and developing a successful career.

Aijan thought she'd discovered her passion the minute she picked up an air rifle. *"The gun in my hands was unlike the bow; I felt like it belonged to me all along,"* she acknowledges. After high school, Aijan enrolled at the American University of Central Asia, where she majored in psychology. Here, she not only studied but also formed meaningful relationships. *"AUCA helped me become the person I am today,"* she admits.

However, it was her parents' constant support that drove Aijan's success in the world of air rifle shooting. *"I am especially grateful to my mom and dad, who have supported me and continue to support me in this sport,"* she says with gratitude in her voice. Despite her family's support, Aijan experienced skepticism from her friends. *"Unlike my family, my friends didn't take the sport seriously,"* she admits. *"They did not understand that air rifle shooting was more than just a hobby."*

Even matters of the heart posed challenges for Aijan. Her relationship with a professional basketball player, which began during her undergraduate years, eventually ended as they pursued their athletic careers. Far from staying in the past, Aijan sees the experience as a starting point for personal development and self-discovery.

Her jarring blue hair stood out among other competitors in her first formal competition, a symbol of individualism that contrasted well with the hat that she needed to wear during training. The reason behind it is simple: experimenting. *"I loved how unique each color looked on me. From blue to blonde, I adored it."*





Motivated by failures, Aijan increased her efforts and her determination. She won her spot in China at the top of air rifle skills after putting in many hours of training and competing locally. “China’s teams are the ones who get all the top scores,” she exclaims, her eyes lighting up with awe.

Aijan's heart was filled with pride as she prepared to represent her country on a worldwide scale. She had no idea that this competition would result in her being awarded the title of Masters of Sport, an acknowledgement of her persistent devotion and hard work. “The next step I want to take is to become a world-class athlete. I believe I am capable of achieving it,” she says with certainty.

Looking ahead, Aijan is thankful for her parents' constant support and the ability to follow her passion despite all odds. While her friends first doubted her path, they have grown to understand the importance of air rifle shooting. With every accomplishment, Aijan shows the power of belief and the endless potential that exists inside. As she faces the obstacles ahead, she remains unbreakable, driven by a strong desire for achievement in both athletics and education. With each accomplishment, Aijan's success story serves as a light of inspiration for aspiring athletes everywhere.

*Darika Bolot
JMC-122*

UNITY AND FRIENDSHIP ARE STRENGTHENED BY THE FOOTBALL COMPETITION NAMED IN HONOR OF BORIS BAKHTALIEV

The third annual football competition was organized by the Unity club, demonstrating the friendship and memory of Boris Bakhtaliev's enduring spirit. Boris Bakhtaliev, who had a significant influence on his friends and family, is remembered with this competition. It was held from March 20 to March 23 during the academic breaks.

AUCA student Boris Bakhtaliev passed away under trying circumstances during the school year three years ago. This competition, put on by his friends, is a way to repay his generosity, friendship, and dedication. This competition acknowledges individuality and promotes the achievements he has made for the community.

The inclusive aspect of the community and the event, which attracted students from UCA, KRSU, and AUCA alumni, is what really set the Boris Bakhtaliev event apart. These connections between students from other universities not only improves interpersonal interaction but also the camaraderie and sense of solidarity that exists between students from various academic programs.

The inclusive aspect of the community and the event, which attracted students from UCA, KRSU, and AUCA alumni, is what really set the Boris Bakhtaliev event apart. These connections between students from other universities not only improves interpersonal interaction but also the camaraderie and sense of solidarity that exists between students from various academic programs.

Furthermore, the competition is growing to symbolize the generosity and tolerance of university students. The football players in the event engaged in memorable football games that were not only friendly but also maintained a spirit of camaraderie and remembering. In order for the squad to succeed, this gave the players the opportunity to build new bonds and discover similar values.

Reflecting on the Boris Bakhtaliev tournament, we must remember that it has become a symbol of resistance to difficulties. This incident serves as a reminder of our compassion and concern for one another, as well as a lesson in empathy that we should never forget. Therefore, it is through events like these that we remember to respect and value the past while also encouraging everyone to look forward to a better future for our shared university community.

*Anushervon Nurmamadov
ICP-122*





Making Volunteering Easy

In a world where technology has invaded every aspect of our existence, students at Technical School of Innovation are having an early educational influence on society.

By creating a special app (that isn't yet available in the Kyrgyz market), they encourage everyone to fight social problems through volunteering. Learn how students are transforming their ideas and knowledge into practical innovations that have the power to bring everyone together.

Involoo isn't just "another app," but a real breakthrough in volunteering and social engagement. It is a concept that builds the bridge between volunteer-seeking organizations and students eager to make a difference in their community. One of its key features is the user-friendly and speedy layout, which helps users save a lot of time on signing up. Now, thanks to Involoo, searching for events needing volunteers is easier and more convenient than ever before. Moreover, the app will be available for people from different regions, as it has its own event filter range. There is no longer a need for tedious interviews with different volunteer organizations; it is all done in a few clicks.

Involoo is still in its development stage, but its promises seem incredibly appealing. Soon, this app will be available on all platforms, and volunteering will become even more accessible to everyone who is striving to make the world a better place.

If you would like to find out more information, then [@involoo.tsi](https://www.instagram.com/involoo.tsi) is waiting for you on their Instagram!

Shahin Suzan Sest-2-21
FIP-5 Involoo



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