

The 12th Annual Life in Kyrgyzstan Conference 2026

Organizers: University of Central Asia (UCA), Kyrgyz Republic
 Leibniz Institute for Horticultural Sciences (IGZ), Germany
 International Security and Development Center (ISDC), Germany

Partners: AIU, AUCA, World Bank, UNFPA

Venue: Orion Hotel, 21 Erkindik Ave, Bishkek

Date: October 07-08, 2026

PROGRAM

Draft as of Sep 22, 2026

DAY 1: Wednesday, October 07, 2026

Bishkek time, GMT+6; [click the room name to join online](#)

08:00-09:00	Registration and welcome coffee
09:00-09:30	OPENING REMARKS
	Room KARKYRA
	Moderator: Asel Murzakulova, UCA
	Christopher Gerry , Rector UCA
	Nazira Esenalieva , Rector, AIU
	World Bank Representative (tbc)
	Baktybek Kainazarov , Head of Office, UNFPA
	Timothy O'Connor , President, AUCA
	Tilman Brück , Professor, Humboldt University, IGZ, ISDC
09:30-10:30	PLENARY SESSION 1.1 Keynote Speech by Dr Damir Esenaliev
	Room KARKYRA
	Moderator: Kanat Tilekeyev, UCA
	Damir Esenaliev, IGZ/ISDC
	<i>What We Know and What We Still Don't Know: Welfare, Cohesion, and the Future of Research</i>
10:30-10:35	<i>Group Photo</i>
10:35-11:00	<i>Coffee Break</i>
11:00-12:30	PARALLEL SESSIONS
	SESSION 1.2 Migration, Households and Economic Change in Central Asia
	Room KARKYRA
	Moderator: Salima Bekbolotova, UCA
	Bakhytzhan Kurmanov, IPPA GSD UCA
	<i>Migration Patterns of Central Asian rural youth in the context of Russia-Ukraine conflict</i>
	Zukhriddin Juliev , Westminster International University in Tashkent

Disrupting the Path to Informality: The Role of Migration Experience in Kyrgyz Sectoral Transitions

Ulugbek Tursunov, Social Policy Lab; Yonsei University

Exposed Abroad: The 2022 Ruble Crash and the Welfare of Remittance-Dependent Households in Uzbekistan

Feruza Jorayeva, New Uzbekistan University

Climate Change as a Threat Multiplier: Perceptions of Environmental Stress and Migration Intentions in Central Asia

SESSION 1.3 **Negotiating Uncertainty: Everyday Responses to Social Change in Kyrgyzstan**

Room **AKSAY**

Moderator: **Mehrigiul Ablezova, PIL Research Company**

Gulnara Ibraeva, PIL Research Company

Constructing Employability: Evidence from Job Advertisements

Mehrigiul Ablezova, PIL Research Company

Competing Visions of Work: Mapping Labour Value Archetypes through Q-Sort in Kyrgyzstan

Elnura Omurkulova-Ozierska, PIL Research Company

Emerging Forms of Work and Social Protection Gaps in Kyrgyzstan: Assessing Coverage, Vulnerability, and Policy Options

Nailia Niazova, PIL Research Company

Living with Contradictions: Labour Values in Contemporary Kyrgyzstan

SESSION 1.4 **LiK partners and donors meeting (by invitation)**

Room **BOSOGO**

This session will focus on the future of the LiK Study and its funding

12:30-13:30 Lunch

13:30-15:00 **PARALLEL SESSIONS**

SESSION 1.5 **World Bank session: Growth, Poverty, and Labor Market Dynamics**

Room **KARKYRA**

Moderator: **Aibek Ashirov, World Bank**

Aibek Ashirov, WB

Listening to the Kyrgyz Republic: High-Frequency Evidence on Household Well-Being Amid Rapid Economic Growth

Aphichoke Kotikula, WB

Poverty Dynamics in the Kyrgyz Republic: From Rapid Poverty Reduction to Emerging Vulnerabilities.

Damir Esenaliev / Elizaveta Perova, ISDC / WB

Short- and Long-term Impacts of Center-based Childcare on Maternal Work: Evidence from Kyrgyzstan

SESSION 1.6 **Evidence-Based Policy and Green Economy Modeling in Kyrgyzstan**

Room **AKSAY**

Moderator: **Manas Kadyraliev, Green Economic Modelling Center**

Saikal Esenamanova, CEMA/KEU

Introduction to the Center for Economic Modeling and Analysis

Azhar Zholonbaeva, CEMA/KEU

Improving Air Quality through the Transition to Clean Transport, Decarbonization of Heating Systems, and Expansion of Green Areas

Kubanychbek Sagaliev, CEMA/KEU

Improving Soil Fertility through Crop Rotation, Irrigation, Precision Agriculture, and the Introduction of Sustainable Agricultural Technologies

Omar Dairov, CEMA/KEU

Scenario Analysis of Decarbonization and Modernization of the Bishkek Thermal Power Plant

SESSION 1.7 **Beyond Punishment: Critical Feminist Perspectives on Gender-Based Violence in Kyrgyzstan**

Room **BOSOGO**

Moderator: **Aizirek Erkebaeva, International Youth Council on Gender Equality (IYCGE)**

Aizirek Erkebaeva, IYCGE

The Role (and Limits) of Law Enforcement in Addressing Gender-Based Violence

Tolgonay Kalchoroeva, IYCGE

Normalization and Depoliticization of Femicide in Criminal Proceedings

Ayana Orozbaeva, IYCGE

Before the Harm: AI-Facilitated Image-Based Sexual Abuse and Legal Preparedness in Kyrgyzstan

15:30-17:00

PARALLEL SESSIONS

SESSION 1.8 **Resilience, Trust, and Social Cohesion among Youth in Kyrgyzstan (GIZ PREVECA Project)**

Room **KARKYRA**

Moderator: **Tilman Brück, HU/ISDC/IGZ**

Stefan Buchmayer and Mirajidin Arynov, GIZ PREVECA

The PREVECA Project: Design, Activities, and Integration with Research

Wolfgang Stojetz, ISDC

Youth, Resilience, and Social Cohesion in Kyrgyzstan: Quantitative Evidence from the Life in Kyrgyzstan Survey on PREVECA Themes

Philipp Schroeder, Nazarbayev University

Understanding Youth Perspectives through Event-Based and Applied Qualitative Research: Comparative Insights from the GIZ-PREVECA Summer Camps 2025 and 2026

PREVECA Summer Camp alumnus/alumna, tbc

From Participants to Practitioners: PREVECA Summer Camp Alumni on the Challenges and Opportunities of Implementing Youth-Led Projects

SESSION 1.9 **Session by UNFPA: Demography and Population Dynamics**

Room **AKSAY**

Moderator: **Asel Turgunova, UNFPA**

Nasirdinova Uulzhan, Osh State University

Academic Tourism, Educational Migration, and Their Multiplier Effects on the Socio-economic Development of the city of Osh and the Southern Region of the Kyrgyz Republic

Abdimanapov Eldar, KEU

Urban Population Growth and Motorization in Bishkek: A Statistical Analysis of Transport System Imbalances

Nagima Ulanova, KTMA

Household Living Conditions and the Transition to Clean Fuels in the CIS

Nikita Ryazantsev, KRSU

"Digital Nomads" as a New Form of Mobility in Central Asia: Socio-Demographic Aspects

SESSION 1.10 **Session by AIU: Educating Citizens in Times of Change: Youth, History, Civic Education, and the Future of Higher Education in Kyrgyzstan**

Room **BOSOGO**

Moderator: **Medet Tiulegenov, AIU**

Aizharkyn Kozhobekova, Ala-Too International University

More than Skills: Humanities Education in an Age of Uncertainty

Aida Kurbanova, Civic Participation Fund

Kyrgyzstan's Youth and Its Level of Citizenship

Timur Nadyrshin, Ala-Too International University

World and National History through the Eyes of Students of the Kyrgyz Republic: Hierarchy of Interest, Figures, and Sites of Memory

Medet Tiulegenov, Ala-Too International University

Teaching Civic Education in Authoritarian Settings

17:15-18:30

PLENARY SESSION 1.11 **Intellectual Economy as a New Driver of Growth in Kyrgyzstan: Empirical Data, Public Policy, and the Synergy of Science and Business**

Room **KARKYRA**

Moderator: **Kemel Toktomushev, UCA (tbc)**

Aziz Abakirov, High-Tech Park

Scaling Dynamics and Human Capital in the High-Tech Park

Daniyar Amanaliev, Ololo Group

The Intelligent Economy and the Role of the Creative Industries Park

Elnura Kazakbaeva, Research company Evidence Central Asia

Empirical Results of the Second Wave of the Study "Who Drives Kyrgyzstan's Creative Industries"

Almaz Chanachev, EPAM

Aligning Global Standards with Local Human Capital

Nazira Esenalieva, AIU

Research, Innovation & Entrepreneurship: From Knowledge to Policy and Business Impact (tbc)

18:30-21:00 Reception at Orion Hotel

DAY 2: Thursday, October 08, 2026

Bishkek time, GMT+6; [click the room name to join online](#)

08:00-08:50 **Registration & Welcome Coffee**

09:00-10:30 **PARALLEL SESSIONS**

SESSION 2.1	Session by AUCA: The Toi Economy in Kyrgyzstan: Tradition, Status, and Household Welfare
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Room	KARKYRA
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Moderator:	Kadyrbek Sultakeev, AUCA
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Kadyrbek Sultakeev, AUCA/ Justus Liebig University

Social Obligations, Status Seeking, and Household Welfare: Evidence from Social Events in Kyrgyzstan

Cholpon Turdalieva, AUCA

Consuming the Exotic: A Critical Analysis of Kyrgyz Tois (Fiests) Through the Lenses of Colonial Empire and Soviet Modernization

Pune Baiasova , AUCA

The Toi Economy in Kyrgyzstan: Wedding Positional Spending and Solutions Through Social Entrepreneurship

Asankojo Isaev, Dublin City University

Coordinated Precarity: MCs Navigating the Moral-Legal Interzones of Bishkek's Informal Toi (Feast) Industry

SESSION 2.2	Session by AIU: Transitions to sustainability in Kyrgyzstan's agrifood systems: integrating green economy, food safety, and organic agriculture into evidence-based policies
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Room	AKSAY
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Moderator:	Kamila Sulaimanova, AIU
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Sagynalieva Maral, Ala-Too International University,

Green Economy as a Basis for Sustainable Food Systems in Kyrgyzstan

Dzhurupova Bermet,

Food Safety, Quality Standards and Sustainable Development in the Agri-food Sector

Bakirova Zhanara, Ministry of Water Resources, Agriculture and Processing Indu

Organic Agriculture and Sustainable Rural Development in Kyrgyzstan

Kenzhebaev Omurbek, Ministry of Economy and Commerce

Policy Instruments for Developing a Green Economy and Sustainable Food Systems

SESSION 2.3	Women, Work and Gender Norms in Central Asia
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Room	BOSOGO
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Moderator:	Bakhytzhan Kurmanov, UCA
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Elaine P. Young, Inkubasia (non-profit)

Before They Were Counted: Covert Capital Cultivation and Rural Women's Path to Economic Participation in Kyrgyzstan

Niginakhon Uralova, Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz

Visualizing Gender in Uzbekistan's School Textbooks

Zebokhon Khayitboyeva, American University of Technology in Tashkent

Motherhood as a Leadership Resource: Career Progression and Leadership Development among Women Entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan

Altynai Klimova, OSCE Academy

Exploring the impact of the birth of the first child on female labor force participation in the case of Kyrgyzstan

10:30-11:00 *Coffee Break*

11:00-12:15 **PLENARY SESSION 2.4 Keynote Speech by Dr. Olga Popova**

Room **KARKYRA**

Moderator: **Tilman Brück, HU/ISDC/IGZ**

Dr. Olga Popova, IOS Regensburg

Informal Institutions and Female Empowerment in Central Asia

12:15-13:30 *Lunch*

13:30-15:00 **PARALLEL SESSIONS**

SESSION 2.5 Machine Learning Across Disciplines: Applications for Research and Policy in Central Asia

Room **KARKYRA**

Moderator: **Salima Bekbolotova, UCA**

Muhammad Fayaz, UCA

Machine Learning Approaches for Predicting Air Quality and Respiratory Health Outcomes in Central Asia

Sanjar Sadyrov, UCA

Machine Learning Classification of Hydro-Sociological Vulnerabilities in Kyrgyzstan

Salima Bekbolotova, UCA

Machine Learning for Multi-dimensional Food Security Prediction Using Household Survey Data

Lucie Maruejols, Kiel University

Gravity with Lasso: global cereal trade with factors of conflicts, COVID-19, currency, China, climate change and income ('6C')

SESSION 2.6 Migration and Household Transformation in Kyrgyzstan

Room **AKSAY**

Moderator: **Asel Murzakulova, UCA**

Azmat Hussain, UCA

Does Household Migration Change Gender Norms? Individual Fixed Effect Evidence from Kyrgyzstan

Nurbek Madmarov, AUCA

Migration and Collective Participation in Rural Kyrgyzstan: Preliminary Evidence from the Life in Kyrgyzstan Survey

Wolfgang Stojetz, ISDC

The impacts of international migration on entrepreneurship in origin households: Panel evidence from the Kyrgyz Republic

Nurgul Tilenbaeva, AUCA

Parental Migration and the Nutritional Outcomes of Non-Migrant Children: Gendered Evidence from Kyrgyzstan

SESSION 2.7 Food, Agriculture and Household Resilience in Central Asia

Room **BOSOGO**

Moderator: **Kanat Tilekeyev, UCA**

Mariia Ianova, IPPA GSD UCA

The Nutrition Transition in the Kyrgyz Republic: How COVID-19, Food Prices, and Economic Shocks Shape Diets and Health-Related Indicators

Zalina Enikeeva, IPPA GSD UCA

Female entrepreneurship in international agri-food trade: evidence from Kyrgyzstan and Armenia

Irina Hopp, Justus Liebig University Giessen

Profit or Provision? Gross Margins and the Logic of Smallholder Cattle Keeping in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan

Bekhzod Egamberdiev, IAMO

Gender-Sensitive Resilience in Kyrgyz Households: Latent Profile and Cross-Lagged Dynamic Panel Approaches

15:00-15:30 *Coffee Break*

15:30-17:00 **PARALLEL SESSIONS**

SESSION 2.8

Climate Shocks, Livelihoods and Household Adaptation

Room

KARKYRA

Moderator:

Arnaud Caiserman, UCA

Begaiym Emileva, UCA

Drought Risk and Milk Production: Evidence from Quarterly Household Panel Data in Kyrgyzstan 2013-2024

Angus Campbell, University of Melbourne

The impacts of climate change on health and livestock-keeping in rural Kyrgyzstan

Jules Hugot, Asian Development Bank

Income diversification to manage climate risk: Evidence from long-term panel data

Sapan Kumar Pradhan, Jawaharlal Nehru University

Temperature Shocks, Maternal Care, and Birth Weight in India

SESSION 2.9

Same problems, new frameworks? Development and knowledge in contemporary Kyrgyzstan

Room

AKSAY

Moderator:

Shakhrbanu Bagheri, University of Amsterdam

Julie McBrien, University of Amsterdam

A different kind of gender development? What a recent history of marriage interventions reveals about social science research and development in Kyrgyzstan

Shakhrbanu Bagheri, University of Amsterdam

Before the varyags arrived: Development Knowledge in Kyrgyzstan from Perestroika to the Present

Niginakhon Uralova, Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz

Intergenerational Post-Soviet Memory Transition in Central Asia

Aikokul Arzieva, AUCA

Understanding 'development' in Kyrgyzstan: what if people can think for themselves?

SESSION 2.10

Beyond Income: Measuring Well-Being and Welfare in Kyrgyzstan

Room

BOSOGO

Moderator:

Saule Chalbassova, UCA

Georgios Vasileiadis, University of Thessaly

Beyond Income: Trust, Future Expectations and Subjective Well-Being in Kyrgyzstan in an Era of Geopolitical Uncertainty

Nilufar Rashitova, Westminster International University in Tashkent

Multidimensional Poverty in Kyrgyzstan: An Alkire–Foster Analysis Using Life in Kyrgyzstan Data, 2010–2019

Uulai Rustemova, Kyrgyz-Turkish Manas University

Digital Divide and Household Welfare in Kyrgyzstan

Mimoza Emilbekova, AUCA

Modeling Competition and Cooperation Between Bakai Bank and MBank in Kyrgyzstan: A Game-Theoretic and Consumer Approach

17:00

End of the LiK conference 2026

Pre-conference events Pre-Conference Academic Workshop

Venue

UCA

Moderator:

**Martin Petrick, Justus Liebig University Giessen
Begaiym Emileva, UCA**

Nurgul Tilenbaeva, AUCA

Parental Migration and the Nutritional Outcomes of Non-Migrant Children: Gendered Evidence from Kyrgyzstan

Bakhytzhan Kurmanov, IPPA GSD UCA

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