

The 12th Annual Life in Kyrgyzstan Conference 2026

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

Partners: Alatoo International University (AIU)
American University Central Asia (AUCA)
The World Bank
United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

Venue: Orion Hotel, 21 Erkindik Ave, Bishkek

Date: October 07-08, 2026

PROGRAM

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**
Eran Edirisinghe, Dean of Research, UCA
Zarylbek Kudabaev, Chair of Economics Department, AUCA
Nazira Esenalieva, Rector, AIU
Hugh Riddell, Country Manager, World Bank Group
Asel Turgunova, Program Officer, UNFPA
Tilman Brück, Professor, Humboldt University, IGZ, ISDC

09:30-10:30 **PLENARY SESSION 1.1 Keynote Speech**

Room [KARKYRA](#)

Moderator: **Kanat Tilekeyev, UCA**
Dr Damir Esenaliev, IGZ/ISDC
Welfare and Social Cohesion: Two Decades of Research in Kyrgyzstan

10:30-10:35 *Group Photo*

10:35-11:00 *Coffee Break*

11:00-12:30 **PARALLEL SESSIONS**

SESSION 1.2 Migration, Households and Economic Change in Central Asia

Room [KARKYRA](#)

Moderator: **Anwar Naseem, UCA**
Bakhytzhan Kurmanov, UCA
Migration Patterns of Central Asian Rural Youth in the Context of Russia-Ukraine Conflict
Ulugbek Tursunov, Social Policy Lab; Yonsei University

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

Feruza Jurayeva, New Uzbekistan University

Climate Change as a Driver of Migration in Central Asia and the Caucasus: Evidence from Structural Equation Modeling Using the Life in Transition Survey IV

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

Anastasiia Danshina, PIL Research Company

Living with Contradictions: Labour Values in Contemporary Kyrgyzstan

Elnura Omurkulova-Ozierska, PIL Research Company (online)

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

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 Gender, Institutions, and Public Policy in Kyrgyzstan

Room **[BOSOGO](#)**

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

Aizirek Erkebaeva and Aidana Usupkodzhoeva, IYCGE

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

Tolgonay Kalchoroeva and Akylai Anarbekova, 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

Elvira Isaeva, Ministry of Economy and Commerce of the KR/ Ritsumeikan University

Leadership and public service motivation: The roles of leaders' gender and gender-stereotypical attributes

15:00-15:30 *Coffee Break*

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, GIZ PREVECA

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

Adinai Zhanybaeva and Asyl Sagynbaeva, SPEAK4PEACE (Naryn), PEACEMAKERS (Osh)

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

Mirajidin Arynov, GIZ PREVECA

From Summer Camp to Youth Initiatives: Practical Experience from PREVECA

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

SESSION 1.9 Session by UNFPA: Demography and Population Dynamics

Room **[AKSAY](#)**

Moderator: **Asel Turgunova, UNFPA**

Nagima Ulanova, Kyrgyz-Turkish Manas University

Household Living Conditions and the Transition to Clean Fuels in the CIS: The Role of Energy Integration and Socio-Demographic Inequalities

Uulzhan Nasirdinova, 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

Eldar Abdimanapov, KEU

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

Nikita Ryazantsev, KRSU (online)

"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

Aikerim Sagynbekova, Ala-Too International University

Character Education and the Civic Mission of Higher Education in Kyrgyzstan in the AI and Industry 5.0 Era

Aida Kurbanova, Civic Participation Fund

Kyrgyzstan's Youth and Its Level of Citizenship

Ainuru Zholchieva, Ala-Too International University

Youth in Times of Uncertainty: Future Anxiety, Civic Values, and the Role of Higher Education in Kyrgyzstan

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

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

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](#)

Moderator: **Kadyrbek Sultakeev, AUCA**

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](#)

Moderator: **Kamila Sulaimanova, AIU**

Maral Sagynalieva , Ala-Too International University

Green Economy as a Basis for Sustainable Food Systems in Kyrgyzstan

Bermet Dzhurupova , Food Safety Expert

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

Igor Taranov, Ala-Too International University

Greenwashing Risks in the Organic Sector of the Kyrgyz Republic: Legal and Philosophical Perspectives

Omurbek Kenzhebaev , Ministry of Economy and Commerce

Policy Instruments for Developing a Green Economy and Sustainable Food Systems

Turdukan Bekimbetova, Ala-Too International University

Beyond Rankings: The UI GreenMetric Questionnaire as a Strategic Framework for Green University Transformation—The Case of Ala-Too International University

SESSION 2.3	Women, Work and Gender Norms in Central Asia
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Room [BOSOGO](#)

Moderator: **Bakhytzhan Kurmanov, UCA**

Elaine Young, InkubasiaLAB

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, Norwegian Institute for International Affairs (online)

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*

PLENARY SESSION 2.4 Keynote Speech

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*

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

Laiba Ali, UCA

AI-Driven Analysis and Forecasting of Glacial Lake Dynamics Using Multi-Temporal Satellite Imagery

Lucie Maruejols, Kiel University

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

Salima Bekbolotova, UCA

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

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, UCA

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

Zalina Enikeeva, 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, New Uzbekistan University

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

Bakytbek Kushnazarov, Village Health Committees Association

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

Tilman Brück, HU/ISDC/IGZ

Income Diversification to Manage Climate Risk: Evidence From Long-Term Panel Data

Sapan Kumar Pradhan, Jawaharlal Nehru University (online)

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: Poverty, Well-Being and Living Standards in Kyrgyzstan**

Room [BOSOGO](#)

Moderator: **Saule Chalbasova, UCA**

Eleanna Pappa, Humboldt University Berlin (online)

Seven Waves of Evidence: A Panel Data Analysis of Poverty Dynamics in Kyrgyzstan.

Nilufar Rashitova, Westminster International University in Tashkent (online)

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

Georgios Vasileiadis, University of Thessaly (online)

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

17:00	End of the LiK conference 2026
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