

CAMCA FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

Fall 2023 Fellows

Mr. Mujib Mehrdad

Afghanistan



Mr. Mujib Mehrdad, 39, is a poet, playwright, translator and journalist. He is the author of several poetry collections, including "Gladiators Are Still Dying" (2007), which won the Afghan Civil Society's literature contest. His other works include "The Fishes Have Fled Our Veins" (2008), "Audience" (2009) and "Soldiers" (2014). His latest poetry collection, "Dolphin's Alley", won the Ahmad Shamlu Award for the Best Collection of the Year in Iran in 2021. He has also penned a collection of essays titled, "The Rain Passed", as well as translated the works of notable writers such as Allen Ginsberg, Sylvia Plath, Langston Hughes, Vladimir Mayakovsky and Rabindranath Tagore into Dari. Mr. Mehrdad served as a board member of the prestigious Kashane Nawesendagan (House of Authors) and the Afghanistan Pen Association, where he represented the organization at the 76th Congress of the International Pen Association in Tokyo in 2010. In 2014, he was selected as one of the participants in the prestigious International Writing Program (IWP) in the United States, joining 31 other poets and writers. Previously, from 2010-2011, Mr. Mehrdad worked at TOLO TV as a script writer; from 2011-2021, taught Persian literature at Albironi University; from 2014-2018, served as the spokesperson for the Ministry of Education of Afghanistan; and, from 2020-2022, held the position of editor-in-chief at *Hasht-e-Subh Daily*, Afghanistan's largest newspaper. Mr. Mehrdad holds an MA in English Literature from Punjab University, India (2020) and a BA in Persian Literature from Kabul University (2009). In 2022, he was a visiting scholar at Florida Atlantic University.

Ms. Lena Zakaryan

Armenia



Ms. Lena Zakaryan, 28, is a Director of Policy and Governance at AxelMondrian & Partners, a reputation management company. In her role, Ms. Zakaryan curates and oversees a myriad of activities and projects in policy and governance. Her responsibilities encompass social and political campaigns, programs and projects, along with establishing networks to foster connections with government officials, international donors, C-suite level representatives and political organizations. Ms. Zakaryan is also a lecturer teaching Political Science and Security Policy Studies at Eurasia International University. Previously, from 2021-2022, she served as a Scientific Analyst at the National Defense Research University, from 2018-2020, as a Senior Expert at the Office of the Prime Minister of Armenia, and from 2016-2018, as a Consultant at the Ministry of Defense of Armenia. In addition to her professional

accomplishments, Ms. Zakaryan actively engages various professional networks, including the Younger Generation Leaders Network on Euro-Atlantic Security (YGLN), the "Katarine" women leadership network powered by the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the U.S. Department of State's Institute for Educational Advancement (IEA) network. Ms. Zakaryan holds an MA in Security Policy Studies and Regional Politics (2018) and a BA in Political Science and International Affairs (2016), both from Yerevan State University. During her studies, Ms. Zakaryan also completed a specialized course in Public Policy Making and Governance at Southern Illinois University and the University of Chicago and, from 2021-2022, she participated in an executive leadership program offered by NDI.

Ms. Farida Asgarzade

Azerbaijan



Ms. Farida Asgarzade, 30, is an entrepreneur, educator, influencer and social activist. She has dedicated her career to supporting small and medium-sized entrepreneurs, particularly women, in starting and successfully managing their businesses. Currently Ms. Asgarzade serves as the founder and managing director of PEACHY, a mobile beauty and wellness tech service company. She is also the founder of HUMAN Foundation, a youth platform that has organized more than 20 projects and 100+ events, serving as the Foundation's Executive Director from 2015-2020. From 2017-2020, Ms. Asgarzade served as the Director of YUNUS Social Business Center UNEC at Azerbaijan State Economic University established by Nobel Prize laureate Muhammad Yunus. She also taught Economic Diplomacy at Baku State University and Management of SMEs and Management of Global Business at UNEC Business School at Azerbaijan State Economic University. Ms. Asgarzade is recognized as a One Young World Ambassador, having participated in the program in Ottawa, Canada in 2016; Tech Influencer of the Year in Azerbaijan Women in 2019; and Techmakers Ambassador by Google in 2021. Currently she also serves as a curator of the Global Shapers Baku Hub organized by the World Economic Forum. Ms. Asgarzade holds an MBA in International Business from Azerbaijan State Economic University (2015) and a BA in International Relations from Baku State University (2013). In 2020 she also completed a course in Entrepreneurship in Emerging Economies at Harvard Business School.

Ms. Sophie Berishvili

Georgia



Ms. Sophie Berishvili, 39, is a Political Secretary (Internal Policy) at the Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office (FCDO) in the British Embassy, Tbilisi since 2016. Currently, her portfolio includes internal politics, democracy, institutional capacity building, human rights (including minority, religious and LGBTQ+ rights), elections and UK-funded scholarship/fellowship programs. Ms. Berishvili began working at the British Embassy in 2008 and has held various positions during this period. Previously, from 2004-2008, Ms. Berishvili worked as a Human Rights Officer at the Public Defender's Office of Georgia. In this role, she reported on human rights, managed individual complaints and appeals and contributed to annual recommendation reports presented to the Parliament of Georgia. From 2003-2004, Ms. Berishvili worked at the International Society for Fair Elections and

Democracy (ISFED), an election watchdog. ISFED has led parallel vote tabulation (PVT) methodologies and was instrumental in identifying electoral fraud during the November 2003 Georgian Parliamentary Elections, contributing to the "Rose Revolution." Ms. Berishvili holds an MA in Law from Tbilisi State University (2006) and during her studies spent one year as an exchange student at the University of Saarbrücken, Germany.

Ms. Ainur Kapparova

Kazakhstan



Ms. Ainur Kapparova, 37, is a Co-Founder and Partner at KT Capital Group, an investment and consulting company specializing in financial advisory, strategic financial planning and strategic consulting that focuses on companies and investment projects operating in Kazakhstan and Central Asia. She is also a Co-Founder, Managing Partner and Business Development Director at Fast Meals and Goods LLP, a retail chain startup in Almaty, Kazakhstan. Ms. Kapparova has over 15 years of experience in banking and management consulting spanning positions with McKinsey and Company, State Street Bank and HSBC Bank in various international locations, including the United States, Japan, the United Kingdom and Kazakhstan. Additionally, she is the founder and former president of the Columbia Alumni

Association of Kazakhstan and has served as the managing director of Fizmat Endowment Fund and the executive director of the Young Presidents Organization (YPO) Kazakhstan chapter. Her recognition in the field is exemplified by her appearance on the cover of *Forbes Woman Kazakhstan* in December 2018. Ms. Kapparova holds an MBA from Columbia Business School in New York (2015) and a B.Sc. in Business Administration with a concentration in Finance from Boston University (2007).

Mr. Dastan Omuraliyev

Kyrgyzstan



Mr. Dastan Omuraliyev, 34, is a Co-Founder of the Agroindustrial Development Association, a top business association in the Kyrgyz Republic, and a member of the Board of Advisors at FARO Foundation. He is also the Founder, and from 2013-2023 served as CEO, of Ecoproduct Asia LLC, the largest domestic juice manufacturer in the Kyrgyz Republic. From 2020-2022, he also served as the Chairman of the Supervisory Board of ProKG, contributing to the organization's growth and development. For more than a decade, Mr. Omuraliyev has been a serial entrepreneur, with diverse business projects in manufacturing, agriculture, F&B distribution, real estate and recreational sectors and he has attracted over \$25mn of private foreign direct investment into these ventures. In 2019, Mr. Omuraliyev was

included in Forbes Asia's 30 Under 30 list as a promising young entrepreneur. Prior to this, he received a Certificate of Honor from the President of the Kyrgyz Republic for his significant contributions to the development of the manufacturing and agricultural sectors. Before his entrepreneurship ventures, Mr. Omuraliyev worked at PwC, where he gained valuable experience in assurance and at UniCredit Bank in Kazakhstan, where he worked in corporate restructuring and risk management. Mr. Omuraliyev is also deeply involved in social projects focused on youth development and education. He holds a BA in Finance from KIMEP University, Kazakhstan (2009).



Ms. Ainura Sagyn, 34, is a social entrepreneur, engineer, eco-activist, and Co-Founder and Co-Director of TAZAR, a green tech startup at the forefront of innovative solutions to waste management challenges in Kyrgyzstan. Her entrepreneurial spirit led to the development of the TAZAR mobile application, connecting waste producers with recyclers, thus reducing waste in landfills. She also serves as an Operational Manager at ARTISANT LLC, an NFT digital fashion platform. Ms. Sagyn is a vocal advocate for women's empowerment and sustainable technology. Her advocacy for women in STEM and green tech is recognized both in Kyrgyzstan and internationally. Throughout her career, Ms. Sagyn has initiated various projects to support her community, turning ideas and opportunities into impactful actions. Her initiatives range from co-founding the online magazine, SHEISNOMAD, to mentoring school girls to organizing coding training for girls across all regions of Kyrgyzstan. Ms. Sagyn also organized the first Central Asian JavaScript conference, emphasizing inclusivity and the integration of people with disabilities into the IT sector. Ms. Sagyn's contributions have not gone unnoticed. In 2021, she received the Abie Award and the Aurora Tech Award for her outstanding work and, in 2022, she was featured by BBC in their list of the top 100 influential women from around the world. Ms. Sagyn holds a joint MA in Computer Vision and Image Processing from the Autonomous University of Madrid, Spain, and the University of Bordeaux, France (2022) and a BA in Computer Engineering from Kyrgyzstan Turkey Manas University (2012). She also completed an Artificial Intelligence for Social Decision-Making Course at the Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur (2019).



Mr. Lkhagva Erdene, 36, is General Manager of External Affairs & Communication at the Oyu Tolgoi LLC copper and gold mine in Mongolia. Prior to joining Oyu Tolgoi, he garnered a decade of experience in media, journalism and communications. From 2013-2018, Mr. Erdene was an Executive Producer of News at Mongol Television, where he developed one of the highest rated current issues programs. He has also founded and held leadership positions in the country's first Media Ethics Council, the Press Institute of Mongolia and the Mongolian Center for Investigative Reporters. Mr. Erdene's journalistic prowess was globally recognized when he contributed to the Pulitzer Prize-winning "Explanatory Reporting" for his collaboration to the Panama Papers Investigation in 2017. Beyond journalism, Mr. Erdene led the Ulaanbaatar Global Shapers Hub, a community of the World Economic Forum, and he also contributed to various legislative initiatives relating to the media, mining and minerals sectors, as well as public-private partnerships. Mr. Erdene holds an MA in Journalism with a specialization in Global Financial Journalism from the Journalism and Media Study Centre, the University of Hong Kong (2013), where he was a Rotary Ambassadorial Scholar, and a BA in Journalism from Ulaanbaatar Erdem-Oyu Institute (2009).



Mr. Altan-Ulzii Chuluun, 33, is an Information and Data Analysis Division Director at The New Recovery Policy Accelerator Centre in the Office of the Prime Minister of Mongolia. His expertise revolves around harnessing the power of big data analysis to drive research and innovation in Mongolia's development, focusing on resolving critical constraints. Mr. Chuluun also serves as a senior consultant at the Ministry of Finance, actively shaping national economic policies. With over a decade of experience, Mr. Chuluun boasts a multifaceted background in monetary policy, macroeconomics, econometrics and macroeconomic modeling. His expertise extends to cutting-edge domains such as machine learning, data science and mathematical simulations, both within the public and private sectors. In 2019, Mr. Chuluun co-founded and currently serves as a Board Member of the influential NGO, Machine Learning Ulaanbaatar (MLUB), which advances the machine learning landscape in Mongolia. Previously from 2018-2022, Mr. Chuluun served as Senior Data Scientist at M-Bank, MCS Group and, from 2012-2018, as a senior economist at the Central Bank of Mongolia. Mr. Chuluun holds an MSc in Applied Mathematics (2016) and a BA in Economics (2012) from the National University of Mongolia. Currently, he is pursuing his PhD in Mathematics, further enriching his academic and professional prowess.



Ms. Nailya Menlasheva, 33, is an economist at the International Monetary Fund (IMF) office in Tajikistan, where she oversees analyzing economic data, developing policy recommendations and assisting in the implementation of financial programs. Prior to joining the IMF in 2017, Ms. Menlasheva worked as a Project Development Officer and then Head of the Department for Logistics at the Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED), a French humanitarian non-governmental organization that develops and implements programs that target the country's most vulnerable populations. From 2011-2015, Ms. Menlasheva worked at the Ministry of Finance of Tajikistan where she held various positions, including as Head of the Debt Analysis Department. Her commitment to green finance projects led her to secure grants and loans exceeding \$20 million through the Public Implementation Unit that she founded within the Ministry of Finance. Ms. Menlasheva holds a PhD in Finance and Credit (2022) and an MA in Accounting and Finance (2011), both from the Russian Tajik Slavonic University. She also completed certificate courses at the IMF, ADB, Vienna Joint Institute, Harvard Law School, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Georgetown University.



Mr. Nurmuhammet (Nury) Melayev, 38, is a Portfolio Banker at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) in the Ashgabat Resident Office. In this role, he oversees the EBRD Ashgabat Resident Office's corporate debt portfolio, actively contributing to project financing and business development initiatives within relevant sectors across the country. Mr. Melayev's extensive professional background, spanning over 15 years, encompasses financial analysis, budgeting, modeling, project financing, monitoring, business strategy, policy dialogue and collaboration with government agencies. Prior to joining EBRD, Mr. Melayev spent nearly a decade working with various private sector companies in Turkmenistan and the United States. His roles in mid and senior-level financial management positions played a pivotal role in formulating and executing comprehensive financial and management strategies. Mr. Melayev holds an MBA in Finance from California State University Dominguez Hills in the United States (2017) and a BA in Management from the International Turkmen Turkish University in Turkmenistan (2006). He further honed his expertise by completing the Chief Business Official Certificate Program at the University of California, Riverside (2013).



Ms. Nargis Dustmatova, 38, is a Managing Director at Finextra, a leading system integrator specializing in the banking and financial services industry in Uzbekistan, and the Chairwoman of the Fintech Association of Uzbekistan, an NGO dedicated to the development of the financial market and SME development through digital innovation in Uzbekistan. She also served as a SME Digitalization Business Development Specialist at the Asian Development Bank (ADB) Tashkent office. In addition, Ms. Dustmatova is a founder of ITCC Solutions Group Limited, a boutique FinTech recruitment agency based in North London. Ms. Dustmatova is an accomplished fintech professional with over 19 years of experience in sales, business development, account management, ecosystem creation, strategy development, go-to-market planning and global fintech recruitment. She is widely regarded as a subject matter expert in banking and financial software products, including digital banking, retail/corporate/universal banking, islamic banking, risk management, core banking, treasury and trade finance. Ms. Dustmatova played a pivotal role in facilitating the entry of major fintech companies into the Uzbek market. She has also supported over 500 women owned SMEs across Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan and has been nominated for a Women in Tech Lifetime Achievement Award. She works closely with the government on various regulations related to VC, startups, fintech instruments for SMEs and crowdfunding law. Ms. Dustmatova holds a BA in HR from Middlesex University Business School in London, UK (2008). She also completed executive education in Launching New Ventures at Harvard Business School (2013) and a Fintech Program at Saïd Business School, Oxford University, UK (2018).