

## 2 Biographies

**Yulia Aleshkina** graduated from the Faculty of Management and Sociology at Bishkek Humanitarian University in 1999. Since 2000, she has been working in the fields of sociology, marketing, and evaluation research. With more than 20 years of experience, Yulia has conducted research in various fields, including healthcare, social issues, sustainable development, and peacebuilding. Over the years, she has managed over 40 research projects.

Since 2007, she has been an expert in monitoring and evaluation. She has served as a consultant for the Central Asian HIV/AIDS Program (CARHAP, 2007–2011), an M&E specialist for the HIV component of the UNDP Global Fund to Fight HIV, TB, and Malaria project (2011–2013), an M&E specialist with the UN Peacebuilding Fund Secretariat to support the Joint Oversight Committee (2014–2016), an M&E specialist in the Challenge Tuberculosis Project (KNCV/USAID, 2017–2018), and an M&E specialist for the TB component of the UNDP Global Fund to Fight HIV, TB, and Malaria project (from 2018 to the present).

From 2007 to 2011, she worked as an analyst at the Center for Health Policy Analysis (CHP). Throughout her professional career, she has developed more than ten training programmes and three practical manuals on monitoring and evaluation. She has also served as a trainer on M&E for local and international organisations, implemented and optimised two data collection and processing systems, and acted as the curator of the Review Group of the Joint Oversight Committee of the UN Peacebuilding Fund, under the Office of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic.

**Nurlan Baigabylov**, PhD, is an associate professor at the Department of Sociology of the Eurasian National University named after L.N. Gumilyov (Kazakhstan, Astana).

In 1997 he received a bachelor's degree in History from the Shakarim University, and in 2010 he received a master's degree in Sociology from the Pavlodar State University named after S. Toraihyrov. In 2013, he graduated from the doctoral programme of the

Eurasian National University named after L.N. Gumilyov, speciality—Sociology. From 2014 to 2023 he was the head of the Department of Sociology, L.N. Gumilyov ENU.

From 2018 to 2019, he was postdoctoral researcher at the Institute of Sociology at the University of Gazi, Ankara, Turkey; 2020–2022, postdoctoral researcher at the Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences, Frankfurt am Main, Germany (DAAD); 2019 (01.06.-01.09.), visiting researcher at the Migration Center, Yıldırım Beyazıt University, Ankara, Turkey.

**Alla Bessonova** is a prominent coordinator of the Expert Feminist Council at ENPUD. She is recognized as a narcofeminist, activist, and co-author of scientific articles focusing on women who use drugs. As a co-founder and Chairwoman of the Board of the Women's Network of Key Communities in Kyrgyzstan, Alla has played a crucial role in advocating for women's rights and empowerment. In her current position at ENPUD, Alla coordinates the Expert Feminist Council and has significantly influenced ENPUD's tactical plan to prioritize the development of Narcofeminism as a key objective for the years 2024–2026. She is also a dedicated member of the Secretariat of the Eurasian Women's Network on AIDS. In 2024, Alla received the Judy Byrne Award, recognizing her exceptional contributions to the field. This nomination was initiated by EWNA, ENPUD, and EHRA, highlighting her dedication and impact in the region. Additionally, Alla is a master's student at the Faculty of Social Psychology at Bishkek Humanities University named after Karasaev. She is well-known as a narcofeminist in the EECA region, celebrated for her commitment to advancing women's activism. Alla strongly believes that by supporting and developing the potential of women through narcofeminism, it is possible to reform and transform the current system of prohibition. Her work continues to inspire many and drive change in the community.

**Tianzhen Chen** obtained his PhD degree from Shanghai Jiao Tong University School of Medicine, with Professor Min Zhao as his supervisor. Currently, he is a medical doctor at the Shanghai Mental Health Center. Since completing his PhD, Chen has focused his research on investigating comprehensive interventions for substance use disorder and related mechanisms. Over the past few years, he has been dedicated to advancing digital diagnostic frameworks for

the appraisal of addictive disorders, implementing brief therapeutic modalities, and conducting recovery follow-ups. Furthermore, he has been exploring the application of neuromodulation techniques in patients with drug use disorders.

**Elena Devyatova** is a doctor and programme director of the NGO RIEC “INTILISH” with 20 years of experience in the field of civil activism, including in the field of prevention and harm reduction from drug use. She received higher medical education at the Tashkent Medical Pediatric Institute. In 2003, she joined the movement to combat drug use, starting with volunteer work. Over the past ten years, she has successfully coordinated the activities of 14 branches of the NGO RIEC “INTILISH” in Uzbekistan, including providing methodological support for the implementation of drug use harm reduction programmes. She is a participant in the development of several guidelines on the organisation and management of harm reduction programmes, drug policy, and psychosocial support for people released from prison, as well as psychosocial support for key population groups with tuberculosis in Uzbekistan

**Louisa Gilbert**, PhD is a licensed social worker with 25 years of experience in developing, implementing, and testing multilevel interventions to address HIV/AIDS, substance abuse, trauma, partner violence, and other co-occurring issues among vulnerable communities in the USA and Central Asia. She is a professor of Social Work at Columbia University and has served as the co-director of the Social Intervention Group since 1999 and the co-director of the Global Health Research Center of Central Asia since 2007. Her specific area of research interest has concentrated on advancing a continuum of evidence-based interventions to prevent intimate partner violence among drug-involved women and women in the criminal justice system. More recently, her funded research has also focused on identifying and addressing structural and organisational barriers in harm reduction programmes to implementing evidence-based interventions in order to prevent co-occurring issues of IPV, HIV, overdose and substance misuse among people who use drugs in the U.S. and Central Asia.

**Vyacheslav Goncharov** holds a higher education degree in Philology and is an expert in strategic communications, with over 20 years of experience as a professional journalist. He is the author of several publications, including a journalistic investigation entitled *From Concept to Implementation*, as well as manuals for journalists, students, university lecturers, and law enforcement officers. Since 2009, Goncharov has been dedicated to implementing projects that engage state bodies and local governments in healthcare, ecology, and education at the community level. In 2017, he began focusing on the field of tuberculosis, where he has worked on providing social support for patients, reducing stigma, and combating discrimination at the local level. His efforts have resulted in increased involvement of local governments and state bodies in anti-tuberculosis activities, as evidenced by the adoption of regional and district strategies and initiatives. In pilot regions, his initiatives have led to improvements in the detection, prevention, and support of TB patients, funded by local budgets. He has also played a significant role in supporting medical organisations through local governments and administrations and has contributed to increasing the percentage of newborns covered by the BCG vaccination in areas where new behaviour change approaches have been implemented. Additionally, Goncharov has developed innovative methods for informing target audiences using ICT and introduced the “Patient School” in pilot hospitals, which has successfully identified and supported patients prone to interrupting outpatient treatment.

**Nazgul Eshankulova** began her career after graduating from university in 2001, when she was hired as a senior office manager and teacher at the Department of Political and Legal Disciplines at Bishkek State University.

In 2003, she entered postgraduate studies at BSU in the field of Political Science and successfully completed her studies in 2005. Between 2008 and 2012, she defended her master’s thesis on the topic “The Legal Nature of the Sale and Purchase Agreement and Its Significance in Market Conditions” in the speciality of Jurisprudence at the Law Institute of the Kyrgyz National University named after J. Balasagyn, specialising in Civil Law Activity.

Currently, she is preparing to defend her dissertation for the degree of Candidate of Political Sciences, specialising in Political Sci-

ence, on the topic “Historical and Logical Explication of the Political Elite”.

She is the author of several teaching toolkits, including *Political Regional Studies* (2009), *Political Anthropology* (2016), and *International Relations and World Politics* (2024), available in both Russian and Kyrgyz languages. She has also authored textbooks such as *Fundamentals of Law* (2012) and *Ukuk Tanuu* (2024), along with more than 20 scientific articles.

**Chinara Imankulova** is a seasoned project manager with over a decade of experience at the public fund “AFEW”, coordinating projects supporting people who use drugs, prisoners, youth, and people living with HIV. Chinara has extensive experience in budgeting, having led budget development for national HIV/AIDS programmes and Global Fund proposals for Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. She has also planned and assessed projects for the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank. Chinara excels at project preparation, negotiation, donor engagement, implementation monitoring, financial reporting, and report writing.

**Tina Jiwatram-Negrón**, PhD is an Assistant Professor at the ASU School of Social Work. She received her PhD in Social Work from Columbia University, and completed her postdoctoral training at the University of Michigan. Dr. Jiwatram-Negrón’s research and teaching focuses on different intersections of gender-based violence, including HIV, HIV risk behaviors (sex work, substance use), and related trauma/mental health outcomes. She specializes in developing and testing interventions to address GBV and associated risks among socially marginalized women, both domestically and internationally, in partnership with community organizations.

**Ksenia Kiss** is a monitoring and evaluation expert with a higher education degree in International Journalism. Since 2014, she has served as the chief analyst at the public foundation “Door”, where she manages data collection from both field and desk researchers, assesses the quality of data, and prepares final reports. Since 2016, she has been involved in planning activities for projects in the social sector, specifically healthcare and education, and in preparing long-term monitoring and evaluation plans for these projects. From 2018 onwards, Ksenia has acted as an expert in collaboration with regional specialists, overseeing the formation of requests, data col-

lection, and processing, as well as assisting sub-grantees in developing Monitoring and Evaluation plans and relevant indicators. Her role also involves receiving, studying, and evaluating reports and data from project sub-grantees and conducting impact assessments of their activities. Additionally, Ksenia is a professional trainer in monitoring and evaluation, sharing her expertise to enhance the effectiveness of project monitoring and impact analysis.

**Medet Kudabekov** is a senior lecturer in the Department of Sociology at L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University. He earned a specialist degree in Social Work in 2005 and a master's degree in Social Sciences in 2012 from the same university. He is currently a PhD student in the Department of Sociology and Social Work at L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University (Kazakhstan, Nur-Sultan). His main research focus is the staffing of social work within the framework of modernising the social service system.

He worked as a national expert at the Project Office “National Resource Center for Social Work” under the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Republic of Kazakhstan. From 2018 to 2021, he pursued a doctorate in Sociology and has been a doctoral student in the international SOLID scholarship programme (Social Work and Strengthening NGOs in Development Cooperation for the Treatment of Drug Abuse) since 2021. His research topic is “Social Work and NGOs in the Field of Drug Abuse Treatment”, in collaboration with the Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences (Germany) and L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University.

In 2012, he received his master's degree in Social Work and since then has been involved in various UNICEF projects focused on providing social support to families with children in difficult life situations. In 2018, he began working as a national expert on the development of labour resources for social work at the National Resource Center for Social Work under the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Population of the Republic of Kazakhstan. After gaining significant experience, he recognised a critical shortage of professional personnel at the municipal level to implement proactive social work. In response, he co-founded the National Alliance of Professional Social Workers in Kazakhstan in 2018, with the goal of consolidating experts and specialists to develop a national concept for social work and enhance vocational education in Kazakhstan.

**Dr Ingo Ilja Michels** is currently working for the Institute of Addiction Research and as the international scientific coordinator of the SOLID Project in Central Asia and China. He is the former international coordinator of the EU Central Asia Drug Action Programme (CADAP) at the University of Applied Sciences in Frankfurt on Main, Germany. For a long time he was also the head of the Unit of Federal Drug Commissioner of the German Government at the Ministry of Health, Germany.

A sociologist and advisor for the treatment of drug dependency, Dr Michels has served as head of the Drugs and Prison projects department of the German AIDS-Hilfe in Berlin, as Drug Commissioner of the Federal State of Bremen, Germany, and as head of the Office of the Federal Drug Commissioner within the Federal Ministry of Health in Berlin, Germany.

**Kuralai Mukhambetova** graduated with honours in 1996 from Kazakh National University named after al-Farabi, earning a qualification as a sociologist and teacher of sociology. In 2004 she defended her dissertation for the degree of Candidate of Sociological Sciences on the topic “Social Anomie and the Formation of Value Orientations of an Individual in Kazakhstan”.

Currently, she heads the Department of Sociology at L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University. She has extensive experience in practical sociology and teaches advanced training programmes for social workers at the Academy of Management, Security, and Social Programs at M.S. Narikbayev Kazakh State Law University. She has published more than 55 scientific papers, both independently and in collaboration, including articles, teaching aids, and textbooks, and holds six copyright certificates for her scientific works.

For many years, she has been involved in socially significant projects, including the development and implementation of international initiatives in public health, prevention of social orphanhood, and social work with drug addicts. She served as a national expert for the UN Office on Drugs and Crime and completed training in social management, planning, evaluation, and monitoring of social programmes, and the development of social projects and polymodal supervision. She has been awarded the Honorary Diploma of the APK “For a Worthy Contribution to Strengthening

the Unity of the People of Kazakhstan” (2015) and the Badge of the Kazakh Academy of Education “Teacher-Researcher” (2016).

**Tatyana Nikitina**, a doctor, has been the director of the NGO RIEC “INTILISH” for more than 20 years and is an expert in public health management. Tatyana has more than 20 years of experience working in tuberculosis control and being involved in HIV prevention programmes among key populations, funded by the Global Fund and other organisations in Uzbekistan and the Eastern Europe and Central Asia region. She is a member of the CCM, a member of the Regional Collaborative Committee for Rapid Response to Tuberculosis, HIV and Viral Hepatitis (RCC-THV) of WHO/Europe, and a trainer and consultant for UNODC and WHO. She is one of the authors of several guidelines on the organisation and management of harm reduction programmes, drug policy, and psychosocial support for people released from prison, as well as psychosocial support for key populations with tuberculosis in Uzbekistan.

**Danil Nikitin**, M.Sc. in SW has represented the Global Health Research Center of Central Asia since 2007 and has headed the Global Research Institute (GLORI Foundation) since 2011. He earned his master’s degree in Social Work from Columbia in 2006. Internship with the UJA-Federation, the Open Society Institute, and the Social Intervention Group at Columbia University contributed a lot to his professional development. Prior to his graduate studies, he worked with Osh Regional Narcological Center as a programme administrator. After graduating from Columbia, Danil returned to Kyrgyzstan and as a director, principal investigator (PI), and co-investigator he led intervention research focused on GBV and HIV prevention in drug-using communities.

**Ulla Pape**, PhD is interim professor for Comparative Political Science at the University of Greifswald and a postdoc in the SOLID Project at the Institute of Addiction Research of the University of Applied Sciences in Frankfurt am Main. She holds a PhD in International Relations and International Organization from the University of Groningen. Before joining the SOLID project in 2022, Ulla was a research associate at the Freie Universität Berlin, the University of Bremen, the Radboud University Nijmegen, and the Higher School of Economics in Moscow. Her research interests include international health and social policy, welfare state development, and civil

society in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Ulla has published a book entitled *The Politics of HIV/Aids in Russia* (2014) as well as several articles in international journals, such as *Europe-Asia Studies*, the *Journal of Civil Society*, the *International Journal for Sociology and Social Policy*, and *Voluntas*. Within the SOLID project, Ulla is responsible for the research on social work in prisons and social work and infectious diseases (HIV, HCV, and tuberculosis). Furthermore, she focuses on the participation of civil society actors in developing social work in Central Asia. In addition, Ulla is a member of the editorial board of *Voluntas* and an associate lecturer at the Freie Universität Berlin.

**Jarkyn Shadymanova**, PhD is an associate professor at Bishkek State University and the American University of Central Asia. She holds a PhD degree in Sociology. Her research interests include qualitative and quantitative research methods, social work, the sociology of deviation, sustainable consumption issues, and gender studies. She was a postdoctoral researcher at the Sociology Consumption and Household Group at Wageningen University and the Department of Anthropology at the University of Amsterdam. Jarkyn is an author and co-author of numerous articles in peer-reviewed journals and book chapters on social issues. She has received several fellowship grants, such as The Global Dialogues and Women's Empowerment in Eurasian Contexts Feminist Mentoring (WEF) Fellowship, IGS, LMH, Oxford University, 2018, and the "Gendering the Youth: Representations of Gender in Contemporary Kyrgyzstan Media" Junior Fellowship Central Asia Research and Training Initiative, OSI, 2006–2008. Her research interests focus on sociology, gender studies, and the role of NGOs in drug treatment.

**Hang Su** is now a postdoctoral fellow of the Shanghai Mental Health Center. Since 2011, Hang Su has been engaged in the basic and clinical research of drug dependence and substance addiction, mainly focusing on addiction medicine, psychology, epidemiology, and sociology. At present, he is doing research into the treatment of amphetamine type stimulants and opioid addiction from several aspects, such as behaviour, electrophysiology, molecular biology, neuroimaging, etc.

**Natalia Shumskaia** is a dedicated public health professional with 23 years of experience managing organisations and projects. She has a proven track record in management within humanitarian organisations, advocating for the rights of key populations and their access to health and social services. Natalia has a strong interest in global health, health policy, and systems, research, HIV, and tuberculosis. With a PhD in Psychological Sciences, she possesses strong interpersonal skills, a fast learning ability, and a self-motivated work ethic. Her experience includes providing direct HIV services to vulnerable groups and publishing over 40 articles, including 15 on the psychology of development and acmeology.

**Assel Terlikbayeva, MD, M. S. W., MPH** has been the regional director of the Global Health Research Center of Central Asia (GHRCCA) in Kazakhstan since 2007. Her research interests have focused on behavioural and biomedical interventions related to HIV, TB, STIs, drug addiction, gender-based violence, and mental health in Central Asia. Currently, she is leading three large projects in Kazakhstan focusing on linkage to HIV and opioid assisted therapy (OAT) care and improving HIV treatment outcomes among injection drug users and sex workers. She is also a site principal investigator for the adaption and implementation of WINGS intervention among women from key populations in Kazakhstan. In previous years, the GHRCCA has completed several grants awarded by the National Institute of Health (NIH) focused on HIV among injection drug users and migrants, including a grant focused on adapting a couples-based HIV risk reduction intervention for people who inject drugs. Over the past 15 years, she has implemented substance use and HIV/STI prevention and intervention studies in Kazakhstan and created strong community partnerships, established close cooperation with governmental agencies, and trained and supervised local research teams in the recruitment and retention of research participants. Dr Terlikbayeva received her MD from the Almaty Medical University in 2001, her Master of Science in Social Work from Columbia University School of Social Work in 2003, and her Master of Public Health from the University of Albany in 2024.

**Guzalkhon Zakhidova** is a psychotherapist with over 20 years of experience. She is currently a PhD candidate at the Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences and a freelance researcher at the Bukhara

Medical Institute. She actively participates in scientific conferences and symposiums, where she presents her scientific work or other relevant topics. Zakhidova serves as a psychotherapist at the 2nd City Psychoneurological Dispensary in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. Her research focuses on the medical and social aspects of the use of new psychoactive substances among young people in Tashkent, Republic of Uzbekistan, through qualitative analysis.

