

## CAMCA FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

### Spring 2025 Fellows

Ms. Hokuma Karimova

Azerbaijan



**Ms. Hokuma Karimova**, 37, is the PR and Corporate Communications Director at NAR (Azerfon), where she oversees corporate reputation management, stakeholder engagement, and high-profile industry events. A visionary professional with over 15 years of experience in strategic communications, media relations, CSR, and brand management, she has played a significant role in advancing corporate communications and cultural diplomacy in Azerbaijan. From 2015 to 2024, Ms. Karimova served as Head of PR and Communications at YARAT Contemporary Art Space, where she led PR campaigns for both local and international exhibitions, managed community engagement projects, and launched *YARAT Friends*, Azerbaijan's first art membership platform. Previously, Ms. Karimova held roles as the Director of the Portuguese Office in Baku, Executive Director of Junior Achievement Azerbaijan, Board Member of the U.S.-Educated Azerbaijan Alumni Association, and Director of the Economic and Commercial Relations Department at the Embassy of Israel in Baku, fostering trade and investment between Israel and Azerbaijan. Ms. Karimova is currently an Adjunct Instructor on Corporate Communications at ADA University. She holds an MBA in Marketing and Communications from ADA University (2015) and a dual BA in International Relations and Diplomacy from Wartburg College in Iowa and Khazar University in Baku (2009). Additionally, she holds a diploma from the OSCE Summer Academy in Austria.

Mr. Rufat Hasanov

Azerbaijan



**Mr. Rufat Hasanov**, 37, is an award-winning film director and producer with over 15 years of experience in content creation, training and international consulting. His debut feature film, *Chameleon*, premiered in competition for the Golden Leopard at the Locarno Film Festival in 2013. His second feature film, *The Island Within*, won the Best Director award at the Sarajevo International Film Festival in 2020 and was Azerbaijan's official submission for the 94<sup>th</sup> Academy Awards. Currently, he is developing his third feature film while lecturing at the State University of Arts and Culture and Yarat Contemporary Art School in Baku. Mr. Hasanov has played a key role in shaping Azerbaijan's film industry, initiating the establishment of ARCA (Cinema Agency of Azerbaijan) in 2020 and serving as its Interim CEO (2022–2023). Mr. Hasanov is a member of the European Film Academy, European Audiovisual Entrepreneurs (EAVE) and Berlinale Talents

networks. He holds an MFA (Master of Fine Arts) in Directing for Film & TV from The Higher Courses for Scriptwriters and Film Directors in Moscow (2012) and a B.A. in Theater from Bates College (2009).

### Mr. Rati Golijashvili

Georgia



**Mr. Rati Golijashvili**, 34, is a healthcare entrepreneur and innovator committed to tackling antimicrobial resistance (AMR) through bacteriophage (phage) therapy, a groundbreaking technology that originated in Georgia, the global birthplace of phage research. He is a Managing Director of Georgian-based biopharmaceutical company BioChimPharm, a global leader in R&D and manufacturer of phage-based medications. Mr. Golijashvili also serves as Chairman of the Georgian Biopharmaceutical Cluster and a Board Member of the Georgian Pharmaceutical Association. He is interested in expanding access to phage medications (currently the only viable alternative to antibiotics) to patients suffering from antibiotic-resistant infections globally.

Under his leadership, BioChimPharm has gained worldwide recognition and won multiple innovation and science awards from Horizon2020, the European Commission, the World Bank, EBRD, FAO and other international organizations for its development of innovative pharmaceutical products that are effectively used to treat millions of patients suffering from antibiotic-resistant infections. Mr. Golijashvili holds an MSc in Healthcare Policy and Management from Ilia State University in Tbilisi (2020) and a BA in Business Administration from the American University for Humanities in Georgia (2011). He is a Forbes 30 Under 30 honoree and TEDx speaker.

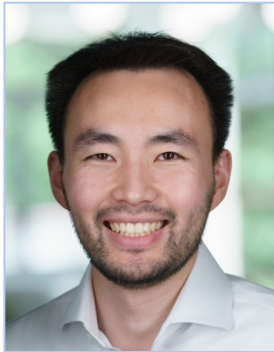
### Ms. Assel Mussabekova

Kazakhstan

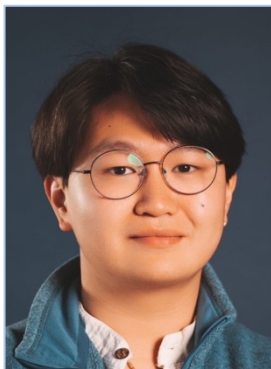


**Ms. Assel Mussabekova**, 39, is a commercial real estate and investment advisory expert with over 18 years of experience across Central Asia, the Caucasus and international markets. As a Partner and Executive Director at Colliers Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, she has led high-profile cross-border investment projects, real estate transactions and large-scale urban development initiatives. Her career began in 2007 at Locum Destination Consulting Almaty (a subsidiary of Colliers International UK) as a junior analyst, progressing to leadership roles, including a tenure at Colliers' London office, where she contributed to major international hotel and resort consulting projects. With expertise in market feasibility, investment strategies

and urban planning, Ms. Mussabekova values opportunities to contribute to sustainable development and economic growth in the region, seeking ways to apply global best practices to local markets. She remains committed to continuous learning and believes that strong partnerships and shared knowledge are key to fostering positive change in the industry and beyond. Ms. Mussabekova holds an MBA from IE Business School in Madrid, Spain (2008) and a BSS in International Relations with a minor in Financial Management from KIMEP University in Almaty, Kazakhstan.



**Mr. Daniel Abdyldaev**, 35, is the Chief Investment Officer at Accelerate Prosperity, the largest startup accelerator in Central and South Asia, where he oversees a portfolio of 100+ companies. He is also the Co-Founder of chANGELS, the first Kyrgyz angel investor organization, and Managing Partner at ADVentures, one of the first Kyrgyz venture capital funds. Previously, from 2019-24, Mr. Abdyldaev was General Manager at John Galt, the venture capital arm of the ololo group, the largest chain of innovative hubs in Central Asia. From 2017-19, he also served as the Country Director at Ticketon, the top online ticket sales operator in Central Asia and, from 2013-15, worked at the Australian boutique investment bank East Star Capital, which facilitated investments in the Kyrgyz Republic. Mr. Abdyldaev is also a Startup Building instructor at Compass College, the leading college in the Kyrgyz Republic focused on innovative industries. He holds a BA in Business Administration from the American University of Central Asia (2010) and is an alumnus of VC Lab (2023), the leading venture capital accelerator for emerging managers worldwide.



**Mr. Tsogtbilguundari "Bill" Khishigbat**, 29, is the CEO and Co-Founder of unnu.news, an award-winning explanatory journalism startup launched in 2022 dedicated to providing accessible, in-depth and engaging content for Mongolia's digital natives. As an entrepreneur, he focuses on building sustainable business models that protect editorial independence while promoting civic engagement. In 2017, Mr. Khishigbat founded the Seheeten Podcast, now Mongolia's most downloaded podcast with over 4.3 million downloads, fostering conversations on society, politics and personal growth. His journalism extends internationally, covering armed conflicts, global summits and conducting high-profile interviews, including an exclusive with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and on-the-ground reporting from the Russo-Ukraine War. His diverse background spans law, politics and media, with experience at Dorsey & Whitney LLP and managing U.S. state legislative campaigns in Minnesota during the COVID-19 pandemic. Mr. Khishigbat holds an MDP (Master of Development Practice) from Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Affairs (2021) and a BA in Political Science from the College of Liberal Arts (2018), both from the University of Minnesota. He is also a member of the World Economic Forum's Global Shapers Community, serving as the outgoing curator of the Ulaanbaatar Hub in 2025.



**Mr. Undral Amarsaikhan**, 33, is the Co-Founder and CEO of TenGer TV and Unread Media. Launched in 2015, Unread Media has played a pivotal role in nurturing and empowering the next generation of entrepreneurs and industry leaders through storytelling and community-driven events. In 2021, he co-founded TenGer TV, which has rapidly grown into one of Mongolia's leading news broadcasters and most trusted news sources. Under his leadership, TenGer TV successfully organized Mongolia's most-watched parliamentary election debates in over 30 years, setting a new benchmark for political discourse and public engagement. With 15 years of experience in the media industry, Mr. Amarsaikhan has been instrumental in advancing independent journalism and digital transformation in Mongolia's media landscape. He began his career in 2008 as a sports commentator and journalist and has since been actively involved with the Mongolian National Olympic Committee, serving as an advisor to the President and deputy secretary general. In these roles, he has contributed to sports governance and communication strategy, covering multiple Olympic Games. Mr. Amarsaikhan holds a Master's in Sports Management from UCLouvain, Belgium (2019) and a BA in Economics from the National University of Mongolia (2012). He was also a Curator at the Ulaanbaatar Hub of the World Economic Forum's Global Shapers Community.



**Mr. Nuriddin Lafizov**, 36, is the CEO of Alif in Uzbekistan. Alif is a leading fintech company driving digital banking solutions across Central Asia. With over 16 years of experience in the financial sector, Mr. Lafizov has held key leadership roles at Alif Bank, the Central Bank of Tajikistan and Kazkommertsbank in Tajikistan. While at the Central Bank, he oversaw international reserves management and foreign exchange policy and spearheaded Tajikistan's first Eurobond issuance, attracting significant international investment to the region. Since assuming the leadership of Alif in Uzbekistan, Mr. Lafizov has expanded the company's consumer financing, e-commerce and digital payment services. His efforts have secured over \$150 million in investments in five years, including a notable \$40 million commitment from investors from the U.S., UK, and International Financial Institutions in 2024. Alif Uzbekistan now ranks among the top Buy Now Pay Later (BNPL) providers and its mobile application is used extensively nationwide. Mr. Lafizov holds an MBA in International Management from Steinbeis-Hochschule Berlin (2015), an MA in Finance from Finance and Economics Institute of Tajikistan (2014) and a BA in Economics from Narxoz University (2010) in Almaty, Kazakhstan.





**Ms. Yelena Gareyeva**, 32, is the founder of the Young Professionals Network and the SAGA Podcast, creating platforms that connect young professionals with mentorship, skill-building opportunities and career guidance. From 2022-24, Ms. Gareyeva served as a Go Viral Ambassador for the Institute of War and Peace Reporting, promoting media literacy, entrepreneurship and the creative economy. She organized country-level festivals, workshops, networking events and mentorship programs. Now, Ms. Gareyeva is part of the C5+O.N.E. regional initiative under the American Councils for International Education, encouraging cross-border collaboration among mid-level professionals in Central Asia. She has successfully built three communities in Turkmenistan – FLEX Alumni, Go Viral and the Young Professionals Network. Ms. Gareyeva is also an audit committee member of the U.S.-Turkmenistan Alumni Association, working under the U.S. Embassy in Turkmenistan. In 2023, she was named Alumna of the Year by the U.S. Embassy in Turkmenistan for her outstanding contributions to society and efforts to strengthen U.S.-Turkmenistan relations. A FLEX program alumna, Ms. Gareyeva holds an MA in Interdisciplinary Research and Study of Eastern Europe from the University of Bologna (2016) and a BA in Anthropology from the American University of Central Asia in Bishkek.



**Mr. Davlat Umarov**, 30, is the Director of the independent online media outlet Gazeta.uz, covering political, economic and social developments in Uzbekistan. Upon joining Gazeta.uz in 2020, he executed the launch of its Uzbek-language editorial, now with a well-established team of a dozen journalists. Over the years, his expertise in strategic communications has led him to consultancy roles with the World Bank, IFC, UNDP and UNFPA. Mr. Umarov also specializes in monitoring and evaluating international development projects, working with organizations such as the International Organization for Migration and UNDP to assess projects with a portfolio exceeding \$5 million. In 2019, he served as a Special Representative for Uzbekistan in the Europe-Uzbekistan Association for Economic Cooperation (EuroUz), supporting the establishment of the business association. From 2018-19, Mr. Umarov worked at Morgan Stanley's Budapest office, where he was part of the team responsible for the Brexit transition. From 2016–18, he was also a co-organizer of TEDxMustaqillikSquare, the first independently organized TEDx event in Uzbekistan, and from 2017-19, during his time in Budapest he co-organized TEDxCEU. Mr. Umarov holds an MA in Public Administration from the School of Public Policy at Central European University in Budapest (2019) and a BA in International Relations from the University of World Economy and Diplomacy (2017) in Tashkent.