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Supporting Professional Psychological Services and Research in Kyrgyzstan: A Collaboration with the Open Society Foundation & the Psychology Department of American University of Central Asia

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Supporting Professional Psychological Services and Research in Kyrgyzstan: A Collaboration with the Open Society Foundation & the Psychology Department of American University of Central Asia

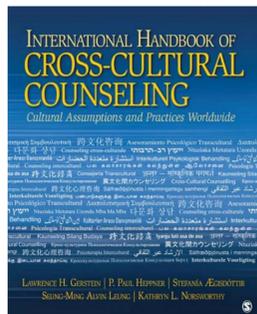
Sharon Horne, UMB Department of Counseling and School Psychology

Partnership Summary

This partnership between the Psychology Department of American University of Central Asia (AUCA), Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, and the Department of Counseling and School Psychology began in 2005 through an Academic Fellowship program that provides support for Returning Scholars to their home countries. Dr. Sharon Horne of the Department of Counseling and School Psychology has been working closely with the department for nearly a decade, focusing research and teaching mentorship of junior faculty and students; engaged research; and the development of a professional psychology community. Working with 7 Returning Scholars and other colleagues at AUCA, their partnership has produced publications as well as joint presentations at many international conferences, and fostered student exchanges.

Goals and Objectives

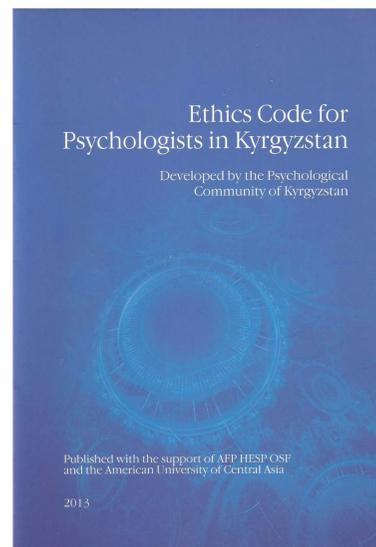
- To support a departmental infrastructure founded on academic freedom and collaboration through sustainable partnership between the psychology department at AUCA and UMB's Department of Counseling and School Psychology.
- To address the critical lack of availability of professional psychological services in the country. Currently, psychologists are not licensed and there is no board overseeing ethical practice. This lack of oversight has been harmful to the public. This objective met by supporting the training and development of effective and ethical psychologists to serve the public.



- To increase research capacity of the department to address psychological issues and concerns in the community and nation.

Results/Impacts

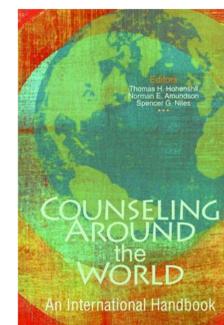
- The foundation of the psychologists' center Epicenter" along with the www.epicenter.kg webpage which serves as the online informational resource platform of the Kyrgyz Psychological Community.
- Through an inductive grass-roots initiative, psychology professionals worked on The Ethics Code for Psychologists in Kyrgyzstan for more than 8 years and the final code was recently published in Kyrgyz, Russian and English.



- Training of trainers on understanding, implementation, and usage of the Ethics Code was conducted.
- Four former AUCA students from Kyrgyzstan are currently pursuing their graduate degrees at UMass Boston in the Department of Counseling and School Psychology.
- The first doctoral cohort in the PhD program in counseling and school psychology is engaging in a social justice exchange to work with AUCA in developing a new assessment center and providing training for career and counseling services.

Approaches and Methods

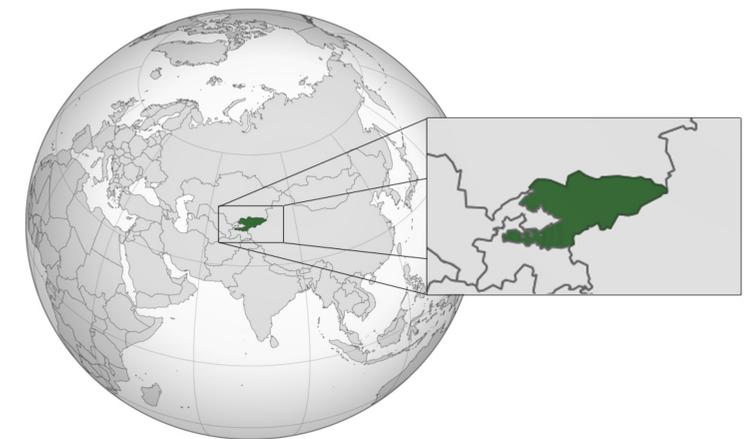
- Collaborative consultation in training approaches, creating the ethics code, and mentoring.
- This approach involves shared goal reflection and objective setting and mutual support.
- Organization of a series of round tables and focus-groups with practitioners and stakeholders in the community.
- In person meetings 2-4 times per year and regular Skype consultations.



Conclusion/Next Steps

- Incorporation of the Ethics Code into the curriculum of Psychology Departments at AUCA and other local universities
- Foundation of the Kyrgyz Psychological Association to oversee code and profession.
- Exchange of UMB students to Bishkek in May, 2014 to conduct trainings and further develop partnership. Collaborating with the National Center for Autism recently established.
- Strengthen collaboration with the American University of Central Asia as they develop the first doctoral program in Kyrgyzstan. These students may spend one semester in our PhD program in Counseling and School Psychology taking courses. Publish results of research on domestic violence and attitudes toward women and other collaborative projects.

The Kyrgyz Republic



Partnership Information



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