

II. Institute Overview

The public foundation, CACSARC-kg, was established on the basis of the Bishkek Office of Central Asian Crafts Support Association (CACSA) and was registered as an independent, non-commercial organisation on 4 March 2009.

CACSA is an internationally known regional membership association that had its office in Bishkek from 2000 to 2008. (To learn more about CACSA, please visit the organisation's website: www.catgen.com/cacsa.kg.)

Starting with several enthusiasts of the crafts development movement in the region at the end of 2008, CACSA increased its membership to include seventy-six organisations from six countries—Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Mongolia—has developed more than fifty projects, and has given benefits to over five thousand craftspeople. During its eight-year run, CACSA developed the crafts sector in the region and provided artisans with services in training, marketing, and promoting their products to international markets.

CACSA organised and conducted more than a hundred workshops on traditional and innovative craft technologies, handicraft product designs, natural dyeing methods, and marketing for craftspeople in Central Asia and abroad—Hungary, Italy, Afghanistan, Turkey, Russia, the UK, and the USA. CACSA specialists carried out studies of crafts sector development throughout Central Asia as well as in Turkey, Afghanistan, and Georgia. Artisans of Central Asia participated in many international craft fairs all over the world. The following international festivals were conducted by CACSA: the Festival on Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue of Central Asia at the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris (2005), the Biennium Felt Symposium in Kyrgyzstan (2001, 2003, 2005, and 2007), and the Annual International Festival 'OIMO' ('ORNAMENT') in Kyrgyzstan (2006, 2007, and 2008). Along with the project activities, a number of volumes were published, including catalogues of handicrafts products of Central Asian producers, a directory of artisans, and a crafts map of Fergana Valley, methodical aids for artisans and trainers, and video-films on craft technologies.

In 2007 as a result of research funded by Aga-Khan Foundation and made by Association of Civil Society Support Centers, CACSA was selected as one of the best twenty-five non-commercial organisations among five hundred actively working NGOs in Kyrgyz Republic.

The CACSA Regional Office, according to its Charter, transferred to Almaty, Kazakhstan, at the end of 2008, and the Public Foundation, CACSARC-kg became the successor of CACSA and acquired the human and technical resources of the original Regional Office in Kyrgyzstan. CACSARC-kg continues with the activities that were implemented by CACSA.

Mission

Revive and develop traditional handicrafts of Kyrgyz and Central Asian people.

Goals and Objectives

- Improve professional skills of artisans in the Kyrgyz Republic and Central Asia and to develop their networking
- Promote Kyrgyz and Central Asian craft products in regional and international markets
- Develop business activities of artisans
- Preserve cultural heritage of the people of Kyrgyzstan and Central Asia
- Raise awareness of the world community on crafts and traditional culture of Central Asia
- Protect the rights of artisans of Kyrgyzstan and Central Asia

CACSARC-kg, being part of the world craft organisations' network, has linked with other craft organisations in Central Asian countries and all over the world—the World Craft Council, the Craft Council of India, and Aid to Artisans. CACSARC-kg has also been a part of a number of fund-raising activities. The major donors for these events have been the Eurasia Foundation of Central Asia, UNESCO, the Swiss Cooperation Office in Kyrgyzstan, the European Union, the Soros-Kyrgyzstan Foundation, GTZ, OSCE, the U.S. Embassy in Kyrgyzstan, UNIFEM, Aga-Khan Foundation, Aid to Artisans, and others.

(Charter of CACSARC-kg is attached).

Activities of CACSARC-kg includes following:

Identification

CACSARC-kg identifies bearers of traditional knowledge as well as the types of craft technologies and ornaments all over Kyrgyzstan.

Documentation

CACSARC-kg documents bearers' knowledge of different Kyrgyz traditional craft technologies, including those technologies in danger of disappearing. Also documented are the tools and raw materials, methods of preparation of the raw materials, craft items' production stages, and the forms and meanings of ornaments and ornamental motifs.

Inventory Making

CACSARC-kg researched and inventoried Kyrgyz craft technologies and ornaments in Kyrgyzstan and Central Asia three times from 2005 to 2011.

Database/Archive Building

CACSARC-kg collects an archive of the handicraft items, photos, and videos, including items found in the museum archives of the Kyrgyzstan and Russian Anthropological Museum in Saint Petersburg. CACSARC-kg also created a database of the descriptions of craft technologies and ornaments, classified by names of creators and territory, made photos and video films, and published articles on NMC.

Publication and Distribution

CACSARC-kg has published four catalogues on crafts items and exhibitions, a directory of craftspeople, and a crafts map of Fergana Valley, many leaflets, and articles in newsletters. The catalogues and directory were distributed in Central Asia and beyond.

Using Digital Content

CACSARC-kg produces video courses on different craft technologies and TV and radio programmes with the use of craftspeople interviews, video films, and clips about ICH.

Training

For the past eleven years, CACSARC-kg has been systematically working on transmitting the traditional knowledge and skills from the older generations to young people and from skilled masters to students by organising training workshops.

The main activities CACSARC-kg are in database/archive building, training, publishing, and distributing. In addition to this, CACSARC-kg is also providing services to craftspeople. This includes organising craft fairs and promoting their products to different markets all over the world.