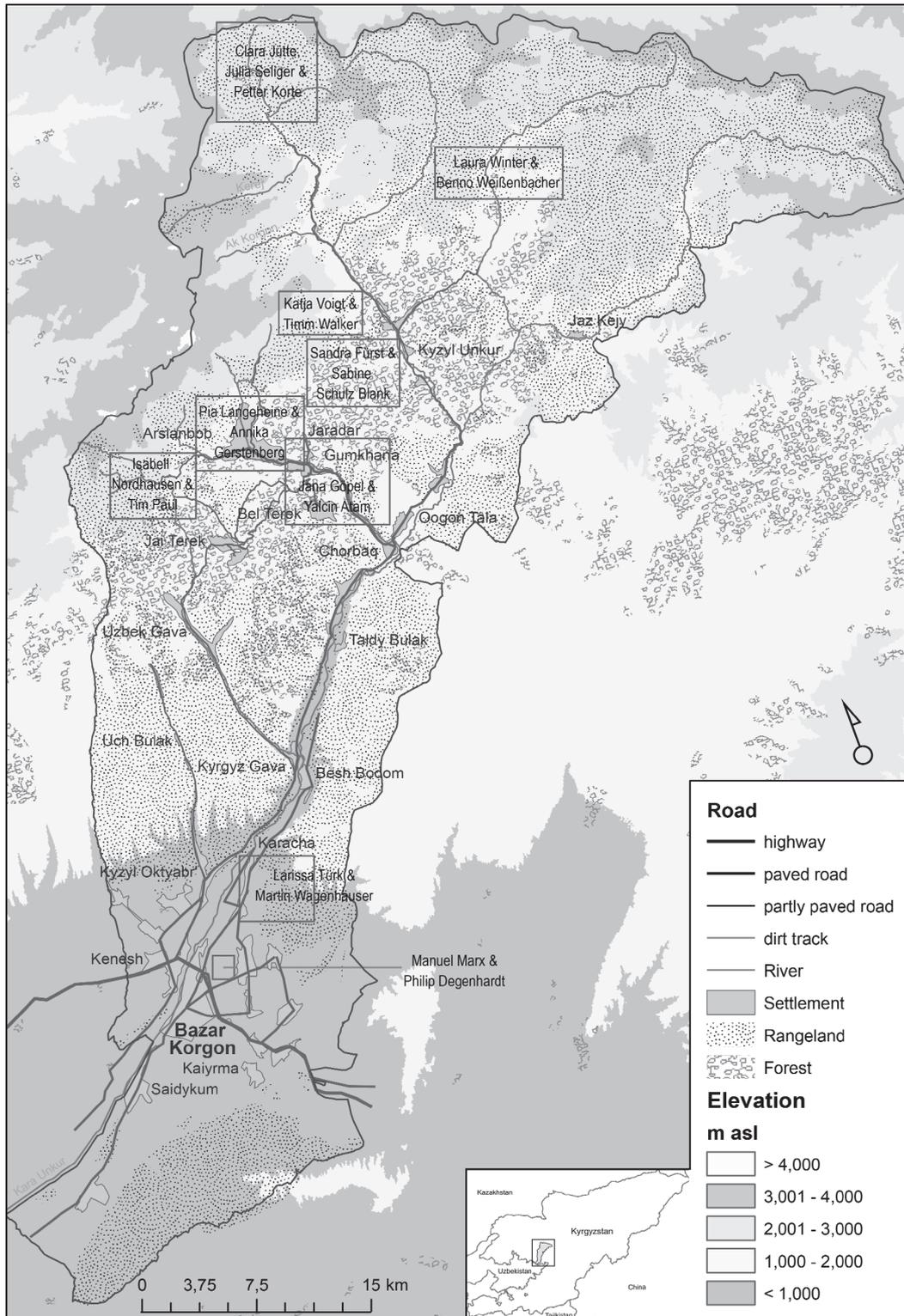


## **Foreword**

The training of students in the Department of Geography at the Centre for Development Studies (ZELF) of the Freie Universität Berlin includes the scientific preoccupation with theories of development, with social inequalities at multiple scales reaching from global to local arenas, and with questions of international development policies and practices aimed to ensure basic needs and sustainable development. Such theoretical and conceptual training goes along with the facilitation of methodical skills in empirical investigations. This shall help students to gather own experiences in empirical fieldwork and establish the link between development theories and practice. For this reason, we regularly conduct student projects in developing and post-socialist transition countries. These projects also form part of the curriculum of the Master's programme in 'Geographical Development Studies'. The experience of everyday life in urban and rural contexts, the perception of regional and global disparities, and the testing of own designed research tools to answer specific research questions provides the students with a high degree of exposure to various professional aspects of possible future employment as development experts as well as valuable personal experience for intended activities in teaching.

Following this approach, the project in 2013 was dedicated to specific issues of Kyrgyzstan's development after 1991. The rural population of the post-socialist society depends to a great extent on the utilisation of natural resources, and the project focused primarily on the use and the management of natural resources that occur in the context of development efforts of governmental and non-governmental institutions. The studies were conducted in the district of Bazar Korgon that forms a part of the walnut-fruit forest region located in the Jalal-Abad Province in the southwest of the country. Ten Kyrgyz-German groups of up to three students addressed specific issues through case study approaches and integrated their insights within this joint report. Two teams were dealing with the current utilisation, allocation and management practices of pasture resources (Jütte, Korte & Seliger). In addition, Voigt & Walker addressed the constellation of pasture-related legal pluralism and social practices, and another group of students conducted a research on the organisation of rural dairy farming (Weißbacher & Winter). Furthermore, a conflict about the access to, and the utilisation of a pasture was analysed by Nordhausen & Paul, and the tension between utilisation and conservation approaches for the walnut-fruit forest was examined by Fürst & Schulz-Blank. Another group studied the role of agriculture for the livelihoods of local households, and the post-Soviet transformation of land use systems (Türk & Wagenhäuser). Degenhardt & Marx attempted to understand socio-economic practices of a livestock market, and Atam & Göpel the different migration regimes and the role of remittances for development processes in rural Kyrgyzstan. Finally, development efforts of local and external actors and organisations were explored by Gerstenberg & Langeheine (Fig. A).



**Fig. A: Distribution and location of the research sites within the Bazar Korgon Rayon**

Source: Dörre 2014 based on KIRGIZGIPROZEM 1983; GLSKR & GUL 2004a, 2004b, 2005; Jarvis et al. 2008

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