

Damir Iskakov

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EDUCATION

Nazarbayev University | Foundation Year, Astana, Kazakhstan **September 2024 – May 2025**

- GPA 93/100; HackNU winner (GTM counter-playbook for Higgsfield AI from a teardown of Claude's growth).
- Audited, non-credit: Calculus I–II, CS I–II, Physics I–II, Linear Algebra, Discrete Math.

National School of Physics & Math, Almaty, Kazakhstan **September 2021 – May 2024**

- GPA 4.92/5.00, School Pride Award (top 5%). Founded the Software Engineering Club and Isol Podcasts; 300+ hours mentoring math, physics, and CS.

Yandex Lyceum | Python Programming & Data Science **October 2021 – July 2023**

- Two-year applied ML programme in Python (regression, random forests, clustering). 4.5% admit rate; Honor Graduate, top 3%.

Veritas AI | Deep Dive AI + Finance **December 2023 – March 2024**

- Stock forecasting tool implementing Golden and Death Cross strategies; mentored by Stanford and Harvard alumni.

RESEARCH

Own-baseline validation for single-cell potency scores | Open source **May 2026 – Present**

- The field's validation standard cannot separate biological signal from a sequencing-depth confound; replaced it with a conditional test against each score's own low-order statistic.
- Audited 13 published scores on 39,505 cells across 12 microscopy-staged timepoints, a ground truth fixed before measurement: 5 of the 7 testable scores survive residualization.
- Diagnostic released under MIT: github.com/IskakovDamir/potency-ownbaseline.

The Rise of the AI-Augmented Solo-Founder: Redefining Team Structures in Early-Stage Startups
June – December 2025

- doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18242188. Interviewed 100+ founders from YC, StartX, and unicorns; collaborated with Prof. Poh Kam Wong (NUS Business School, top 2% most-cited) and Geoffrey Moore (author, *Crossing the Chasm*).

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Pragma | Founder | AI automation infrastructure for businesses **June 2026 – Present**

- Production AI infrastructure for 50+ companies: agent systems, data pipelines, and parsers turning scattered documents, listings, and CRM records into queryable data.
- Runs on open-source models on client-controlled infrastructure, keeping proprietary data in-house. Pragma EDU teaches the same stack to 100+ founders and engineers.

Vetra AI | Founder | Personal secretary and clone **March 2024 – March 2025**

- Full-stack personal AI secretary turning everyday messages into organized plans and tasks. Top 100 Startups of Central Asia, *Digital Business*.
- \$200K in tech credits (Google, OpenAI, Microsoft, Cloudflare) and an \$800K investment offer. Press: Astana Hub, WeProject, Digital Business, Ulys, Jana.

nFactorial | Mentor and Speaker **November 2025 – Present**

- Mentored 400+ engineers and founders across the Higgsfield Growth, Generative AI, LLM Engineering, and Solo Founder tracks; mentees launched products, won early customers, and received job offers.
- Taught growth tactics, metrics and ROI, workflow automation, and generation pipelines; mentee companies reached 80,000+ users and \$120,000 raised, and several Growth graduates were hired by Higgsfield.

Victoria AI | Co-Founder & CTO **November 2025 – February 2026**

- Three domain agents over scoped document sets: 94% answer accuracy across 10,000+ live queries, NPS 8.7. Acquired by AVC Group for internal deployment.

BlueBots (Duke and Yale student startup) | **Growth & Innovation Lead** **August 2025 – January 2026**

- Launched 3 university pilots, growing MAU by 40%; partnered with 2 investors and 4 academic researchers.

COMMUNITY AND SPORTS

OyLab Startup Battles / Seven Studio | Co-Founder and Strategic Advisor **August 2025 – Present**

- Building Central Asia's largest youth startup ecosystem, 5,800+ total participants.

Master of Sport in Taekwondo (Kazakhstan) | Captain of the national team **2013 – 2023**

- 4x World Championship medalist; 6x Asian tournament champion.