



Think Young
We lobby for young people

PROMISING KOSOVO

Kaltrina Hoxha
Drenushë Xhemajli
Alban Zeka
Artë Retkoceri
Kade Leniqi
Ylli Tafarshiku
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ThinkYoung Essay Competition 2010

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Preface

Young people dare. Some of them are inspired by career chances, some by their ideals, some dare for the passion and the fun of it. Young people inspire for change, growth, development. They look for opportunities, adapt easily and work committed in fulfilling goals. In this very mobile and fast changing environment where we live in, young people are considered as important resources which can help society towards higher prosperity, open-mindedness and understanding among people. Can and furthermore how can young people be trusted with important tasks? Are young talents today in short supply?

The European Union, as a multinational institution coordinating politics and economy, promoting development and peace within common borders, faces different challenges. Youth development and EU Enlargement belong to these challenges. How much attention and investment does European youth need? Should they be more involved in the policy making processes? And what is the European Union doing in the meanwhile? ThinkYoung has emerged as an international organization of young people for young people, raising the importance of youth involvement in the lobbying and decision making process at European level. Our work brought us also to Kosovo, a European country where more than half of the population is younger than 26 years and which is still left without any concrete European Union perspective. These two facts created the basis for our Kosovo project idea and we decided to address the topic of EU Enlargement from a unique perspective. Based on our research we think that there is a need that the European Union perceives Kosovo as a country of talented individuals who have concrete ideas on how to develop themselves and their country, who have concrete short- and middle-term requests to the European Union policy makers, who have an opinion about the relations of their country to the European Union and who have desires and dreams to share with their same-aged colleagues in the European Union countries.

Our Essay Competition as part of our Kosovo project, aimed at uncovering Promising Kosovo, that part of intellectual and young Kosovo which barely finds any opportunity for presentation at an international level and international stage. The topics that we chose and proposed for the competition gave opportunity to young Kosovars to advocacy in favor of the integration of Kosovo in the European Union. The official rules, the selection criteria and a high quality jury created a fair environment among the potential candidates. Ten authors were selected as winners of the competition and were awarded with a common prize, the opportunity to see their essays published in a book of ThinkYoung.

The organizing team would like to thank the participants of the competition, the donors and the other supporters for making all this happen. Our special thanks go to the Jury Members Prof. Dr. Nebi Caka, Ardian Harri, PhD, Gjejlane Hoxha, Uk Lushi, Dritan Mezini, William Wechsler, PhD and to Roland Lelaj, professional designer, who invested time and effort in designing this book and in considering this as his personal contribution in bringing *Promising Kosovo* closer to the international audience. We would further like to thank Besa Luzha from Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Ilirjana Kaçaniku from SOROS, Simon Hampton from Google Inc., Vedat Jashari from the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports of the Republic of Kosovo, Ali Caka from the Office of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Kosovo, Alejtin Berisha from Universum Institute for Economic and Social Studies, Niko Qafoku, PhD, from Institute Alb-Shkenca, Engjëllushe Morina from Kosovar Stability initiative, Beqë Cufaj, publicist, Prof. Dr. Karl Kaser from Karl-Franzens University Graz, Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Benedek from Karl-Franzens University, Dr. Ilirjana Bajraktari and Dr. Ilir Hoxha for their personal support throughout the project as well as our colleague Valmir Mustafa from UNI Group and our colleagues from ThinkYoung team Azzurra Giorgio, Simone Disegni, Anne Schley and Stefano Benini as well as Cristiano Fibbi and Anna Wiman for facilitating and supporting our path through this project. A special mention to the talented Alberto Gerosa and Davide Arosio who realized the documentary movie “A po vjen n’Prishtinë”, representing Kosovo in a discerning and modern way. Our last, and most important thank, goes to all the young people in Kosovo, who are a continuous source of inspiration, motivation and fun.

Lindita Komani and **Andrea Gerosa**, Editors

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For more information on the project and Think Young,
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CHAPTER 1

ΕΚΟΝΟΜΥ

Kaltrina Hoxha (age 19)



Kaltrina is a student of Applied Arts and Science at the American University in Kosovo with major concentrations in Economics and Statistics and Public Policy and minor concentration in International Relations. Prior to her studies at AUK she has had two years of high school studies in the United Kingdom

where she received a full academic scholarship for two years of studies at the Mount School York.

Despite her very young age, Ms. Hoxha is very active in extracurricular activities and has gained a wealth of experience in civil society and social issues since her early teenage years. During her high school time she has been working for a junior enterprise at her school in the UK, has been participant in several debated and student conferences. In 2008, she joined some 200 students from across the world at the Bath International Student Model United Nations conference, where she successfully represented and advocated sovereignty for the newly independent state of Kosovo. She has also participated in Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE) – Global Business Plan Competition.

Ms. Hoxha has volunteered at SOS Kinderdorf in Prishtina and has been gathering job experience as Project Assistant at BIRN Kosovo, a successful NGO in media development. Recently she has had also training sessions at the European Commission Liaison Office in Prishtina. She is fluent in Albanian, English, and Turkish and has basic knowledge of Serb language.

Kosovo: How can Education Stimulate Economic Development?

At some point in life, everyone has been in situations when parents have repeatedly stressed that education is paramount to one's development. At the time, one is unable to realize the significance that academic development could have on a wider social and national extent. The introduction of the first steam engine in 18th century – the Industrial Revolution – resulted in prosperity in almost all areas of life first in the United Kingdom, and later in the rest of the Western Europe, which shaped a new worldview, placing education as one of the top measures to consider, when determining a country's growth. Plenty examples of different countries in varying times through history, illustrate how increased levels of investment in education have been pivotal to the economic development in the long-run. The case of Kosovo, unfortunately, is similar to the countries that were late or for different political reasons were not able to make good use of this already established and proven relationship. By looking at the successes of other countries in having education as a tool to increase the involvement of youth in economy and to foster entrepreneurial spirit among them, this essay will focus on how these examples could be adapted to the case of Kosovo, for it to achieve higher rates of growth in the long run.

Before going into argumentation however, it is important to define both education and economic development in the context of their relation to clarify the standards used to draw the final conclusion of the essay. Many dictionaries define education as the process of gaining knowledge and economic development as the social and technological reformations taking place in a country's economy¹. The combination of these two definitions gives the output of a

¹ Source: Economic Development. *DEPweb: Beyond Economic Growth*. World Bank.

positive multiplier effect, where higher investments in education would result in a more knowledgeable output from universities, hence a more knowledgeable workforce, which would create fertile grounds for an increase in the productivity of a country.

Plenty of scholarly work has focused on education being directly correlated with economic growth. The arguments generally rest on two distinct aspects: building capacities of the human resources, in our case of university graduates, for a more productive labor force²; and on the fact that education is an essential aspect of developing or adapting working knowledge that suit best to a country's local production³.

Many scholars have stressed the importance of student enrollment in university as a factor boosting the quality of labor force and as a result the productivity of a country⁴. A great example in this sense, comes from Ireland, which in the period 1995-2007⁵ experienced a rapid economic growth, believed to be the result of a four-decade investment in enhancing enrollment rates in higher education institutions, as well as the introduction of educational programs designed to combine students' abilities with the needs of the economy. The fourty year investment in designing programs to stimulate youth to obtain qualifications was further strengthened with the reformation which did also turn the focus for studies towards fields that needed improvement and that were necessary for the national economy⁶. Applying the same principle to Kosovo, one identifies the high enrollment but unfortunately the low rate of graduation from the public university⁷. According to official data obtained from the Statistical Office of Kosovo, the number of students enrolled in the academic year 2005-2006 in all faculties

² Labour is one of the four resources of economy-land, labor, capital and entrepreneurial ability.

³ Popescu, Cristian C., and Laura Diaconu. "The relationship between the level of education and the development state of a country" (2009): 475-80.

⁴ Lange F, Topel R., *The Social Value of Education and Human Capital*, Amsterdam:Handbook of Education Economics, 2005.

⁵ This is also known as the Celtic Tiger, noting the economic boom experienced in Ireland in the twelve-year period.

⁶ Harris, William C. "Secrets of the Celtic Tiger: Act Two" *Issues in Science & Technology* 21.4 (2005): 23-27. *Academic Search Elite*. EBSCO. Web. 8 May 2010.

⁷ The essay excludes the participation and graduation rates of students in private universities, as no data is available.

of the University of Prishtina is 28,707⁸, and the number of students graduating in 2008⁹, which is the expected year of graduation for them according to the Bologna System¹⁰, is only 5,717¹¹. A simple analysis of this information provides with the number of students expected to join the labor market, hence their direct involvement in Kosovo's economy. While the resulting number of graduates seems very low, one has to be concerned also with the low rate of participation of this age group in the labor market. Additionally, annual analysis of the labor market in 2008¹² shows that most of the workforce in Kosovo is concentrated on jobs related to individual and wholesale trading, while the least concentration of the workforce is on the fields of mining, real estate and finance, which is an indicator that Kosovo is still very behind in development towards a modern, service-oriented economy.

Building further on the example of Ireland, educational authorities should also be the bridge linking students with companies, or government institutions that are willing to employ them, according to a Work-Study program. These would be excellent opportunities for higher education students to engage in the labor market, where if nothing else, they will be able to combine the knowledge they acquire during studies with the expertise of the workplace in their relevant field of study. Another aspect that the scholars believe education impacts economic development rests on the argument of education being the key tool in developing new knowledge and technologies, adaptable to national output. Scholars claim that the development pace of some countries is a result of education systems which create fertile grounds for labor force to innovate new technologies, necessary for boosting the national output¹³. Since 1999, China has moved the focus of studies towards science, engineering and management related fields, for students to equip themselves with the necessary know-how of fields which are

⁸ Source: Statistical Office of Kosovo, Statistics of Education 2005-2006.

⁹ Source: Statistical Office of Kosovo, Statistics of Education 2007-2008.

¹⁰ According to information on the website of the Ministry of Education, the University of Prishtina is part of the Bologna System since 2001.

¹¹ Given that the Statistical Office of Kosovo provides with the overall number of graduates per year, there is a possibility for this number not to reflect the real situation, as it may also take into account student who have enrolled in the University of Prishtina prior to 2005-2006 academic year but have graduated in 2008, which in turn should be even more concerning.

¹² Source: Statistical Office of Kosovo, Statistics of Labour Market 2008.

¹³ Harmon, C., Oosterbeek, H., Walker, I., "The Returns to Education. A Review of Evidence, Issues and Deficiencies in the Literature", Centre for the Economics of Education, LSE, 2000.

needed to fulfill China's economic goals. In addition to this, China has also encouraged studying abroad, where students would acquire knowledge and skills on modern technology, harness these and finally convert and adapt them to the production process of national output. Faith that China has put towards high-end knowledge on technology has paid off, as evidence shows China's tendency to become the future technological and economical power on regional and global levels¹⁴. Taking into account the example of China, one should also analyze the student allocation in different faculties of University of Prishtina. While mining, finance and real estate have been identified as areas lacking professional workers in the field, the student enrollment in these faculties reveals a discrepancy in allocation. According to 2007-2008 education statistics¹⁵, students that graduated from the faculties of Mining, Economics and Law are 55, 386, and 286 respectively. This shows that there is a small number of students focusing on mining, and that the students graduating from faculties of Economics and Law do not get involved in, or are not suitable in the fields of finance and real estate, which have been identified with lack of labor force. Therefore, one could easily conclude that in Kosovo there is no stimulation of graduates to join the labor force in these fields or that despite the high number of graduates, in the case of faculties of Economics and Law, the knowledge they acquire is not relevant to what the national growth demands. However, a positive development in the recent years is the focus the Ministry of Education has put on promoting higher education programs in a number of institutions around the world. Nevertheless, the problem of free movement remains a disadvantage to many students who are equipped to meet the enrollment criteria in these institutions. In this sense, many students are put down of joining international universities where they could obtain degrees in fields which are necessary to the economic development of Kosovo. A more liberal visa regime applied to Kosovo¹⁶, could enable higher economic prosperity levels of Kosovo as upon returning, these graduates would have been assets to their respective industries in Kosovo, because they would join the labor force of their field of

¹⁴ Simon, Denis Fred, and Cao Cong. "China's Future: Have Talent, Will Thrive." *Issues in Science & Technology* 26.1 (2009): 29-42.

¹⁵ Source: Statistical Office of Kosovo, Statistics of Education 2007-2008.

¹⁶ The Schengen White List Project - ESI." *European Stability Initiative - ESI*. N.p., n.d.

study. In this way, Kosovo could benefit from a highly qualified human capital, which would apply and adapt the knowledge acquired during studies abroad to the needs and deficiencies of the Kosovar national output.

In conclusion, as the experience of other countries shows, there are certain measures to be taken that could lead to higher national development rates. By encouraging enrollment in higher education, providing work-study opportunities to students and ultimately reforming the education system in accordance to the national economic goals, in the long-run education can prove to be the most efficient tool that would place Kosovo higher in the global GDP rankings. In hopes of such reform taking place in education, the much supported relationship between education and economic development might well hold true for the case of Kosovo.

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Drenushë Xhemajli (age 22)



Drenushë is a student of Bachelor Degree in Applied Arts and Science at the American University in Kosovo with a concentration in Management and Public Policy and a minor in Economics. Ms. Xhemajli has been volunteering in the NGO “Sfera” which aimed at helping poor people in Kosovo and has been

member of the NGO “Glocal Youth Parliament” which aimed at developing different projects for helping youth in need.

Ms. Xhemajli has also gathered several job experiences in form of part-time jobs, full-time jobs and internships at different enterprises in Prishtina as translator, sales manager, project coordinator, and product developer. She is fluent in Albanian, English, German and is beginner in Spanish.

The Economy of Kosova – Implementing a Monetary Policy in Kosova

Ten years have passed from the last war in Kosova. Before the war our country was always ruled by someone else and not from its native people. After the war, our country was pretty much destroyed and did lack a lot of things. Even though our politicians had the power to make decisions or take action about certain issues, we also had the internationals present in Kosova who took the main decisions for us. One of the first things we needed was development in almost every field. Now, looking back at the last ten years, Kosova has had a lot of positive achievements.

It is almost two years now that Kosova has become an independent country – the Republic of Kosova. Despite the improvements we should take action and push forward the process of implementing policies that are of a huge importance for Kosova, and could help it become a sustainable country. Kosova needs policies that have been already implemented in almost every other country and would support its continuing development and the rise in living standard for its citizens.

Policy options

In my opinion, what Kosova lacks most is a monetary policy. With a monetary policy, the government or Central Bank of Kosova would have the control over the money that circulates within the country and its supply. A monetary policy enables the country to achieve the objectives it has regarding the stability and growth of the economy. It also deals with the credit and interest rates that the country has. In order to have a monetary policy, a country in one way or another must be ready for its implementation. So, as an independent country, we as citizens of Kosova, should have the opportunity to manage and control our money.

Because of this, there are some policy options I would strongly recommend, with regards to a monetary policy in Kosova. Firstly, our politicians say that we do not have the monetary policy in Kosova, because that would mean that we should also have our own currency. As this is seen from their perspective as the only reason why we cannot have a monetary policy then for us it is probably better to come up with our own currency. One of the advantages of this policy option is that there would finally be a policy that allows us to manage and control our money without asking someone for permission. The government could coordinate the country's budget in a more proper way and invest in fields that are still in their first development stages and in fields that are of local and national interest. On the other side, coming up with our own currency could harm us in some ways. For example if we want to enter the European Union, Euro should be our currency. This means that, with the creation of our own money, our chances of entering the EU would be lowered.

A second policy option would be to leave the things as they are today. With this I mean that one of the options would be to leave our country only with the fiscal policy. This because it would be very time and money consuming to start implementing the monetary policy in Kosova, as we have huger issues to deal with at this point in time. Not implementing the monetary policy in Kosova would have a lot of disadvantages and of course also some advantages. An advantage of this option is that, by not implementing the monetary policy in Kosova, our government could work on improving the fiscal policy that we already have. But, I think that this policy option has more disadvantages than advantages. A first disadvantage is that our country would not have the possibility of managing the inflow and outflow of money. Another disadvantage is that without the monetary policy our Central Bank is not able to print money.

Moreover, the third and last policy option would be to implement a monetary policy in Kosova, because a country that has a fiscal and a monetary policy is able to become more sustainable and to get more developed. Our government could send students from Kosova to other developed countries for trainings and for completing their studies. A resulting advantage would be that Kosova would have more professional staff also to deal with the monetary policy in the future. Our own people would want to contribute more to

their country. But the implementation of the monetary policy would also have some disadvantages. One of them is that as Kosova never had the experience of having a monetary policy, we might lack professional staff that would deal with our country's monetary policy in the near future.

Recommendations

1. I think that the government of Kosova should take into consideration the third option. In order to be a sustainable country, the economy of that country has to be developed based on the standards from countries that have a very well developed economy.

2. In my opinion, the implementation of the monetary policy would have a lot of benefits for the people living in Kosova. A lot of educated people abroad would have the opportunity of using their knowledge in Kosova. People that have jobs not related to their profession, would be able to get a job as an expert, a job that would be actually related to the profession one has got. People would have the opportunity of working for their own country's sustainability and development.

3. I think that by having a monetary policy, the fiscal policy of the country would function even more properly. People from Kosova would have the opportunity of managing and controlling the money of their own country and would this way have the chance to invest in those fields where the investments are more needed.

Alban Zeka (age 23)

Alban Zeka is a student of Bachelor Degree in Applied Arts and Science at the American University in Kosovo. Prior to the studies AUK in Prishtina he had one year of high school studies in the US. Mr. Zeka has created two NGO which aimed at community building in Kosovo, “Kosova Charity” which followed the aim to investigate the Families in Need Throughout Kosovo and “Glocal Synergy” which followed the aims of making Research and Developing Strategies for Involving Serbian and Albanian Youth Community to the Social Activities Structured by the Organization.

Mr. Zeka has furthermore gathered job experience as Account Executive at a Marketing Agency in Prishtina and as Media Chief Officer at an international Marketing Strategy enterprise. He is fluent in Albanian, English and Turkish.

The Economy of Kosovo – Privatization

After the war, in Kosovo, throughout these ten years, the current and the past governments have tried to establish a democratic system with main components such as democratic institutions and free market as the most suitable system, which would certainly differentiate from the past Yugoslav socialist-communist regime.

One of the main reasons why capitalism has succeeded over socialism was the freedom that was given to the private sector which is mostly regulated by itself, or in other words, with no interference by governments. Specifically, according to the business dictionary, free market means any deal that brings together buyers and sellers and there is no interference from the government, and there are no restrictions throughout this process besides the forces that supply and demand can bring.

Of course, this has not been an easy path to be followed in Kosovo, and accordingly, some of the projects which would lead to a very well established market structure are still being implemented. From a public policy perspective, there have been tremendous improvements with regards to free elections in which citizens of Kosovo have the chance to choose the leaders or politicians they sympathize. Moreover, people have their freedom of speech and action which can be wisely used through protests and other social activities to address the issues of concern to them.

The economy of Kosovo still remains a huge problem for our politicians. According to the statistics which were made public by the Kosovo government, more specifically from the Ministry of Economy and Trade, from 50% of people being in poverty, 15% of them are facing extreme poverty. The average wage in Kosovo is around 250 euro, which comparing to other countries in the region is ranked as the lowest in the Balkans (World Bank 2008).

As a result, one of our government's main priorities is to improve the economy, which would naturally improve the standard of living for our people. One of the projects that the government is still in the process of fully implementing is the privatization of all public enterprises. Privatization is meant to prevent the corruption, increase investments, and also on the other hand, eliminate any possibility for any socialist – communist theory to be implemented. Privatization would ensure a free capitalist market in our country and would bring it closer to the free democratic western societies.

Even though there are numerous advantages from this process, the privatization process in Kosovo did not result to be as successful as it was expected. In the following paragraphs, you will get introduced to an analysis made for this process, in particular, the privatization of Post & Telecommunications Company (PTK). For efficiency purposes, the analysis is made based on four main pillars of Public Policy. Those four pillars, namely efficiency, equality, security, and liberty are analyzed from customers', PTK workers', and economic perspective.

Efficiency: How does it relate to the privatization of PTK (Post and Telecommunications Company)?

Especially now that there are two phone companies operating in Kosovo, each of these companies tries to be more efficient in its work or more creative in order to come up with new and beneficial products or services that will attract customers.

But what is the main problem that PTK faces when they want to introduce a new service to their clients? If they decide to bring in a new product there are certain procedures that they have to follow, which last more than two or three months before they are admitted from the government. IPKO in this case can introduce new services whenever they see it suitable without following the above mentioned procedures which will give them an advantage in time and flexibility. This will create a tradeoff between the two operating companies and it will make PTK less efficient in their work. Besides PTK, also customers will be benefiting from this privatization because of the increased competitiveness that will be created.

Besides the benefits from privatizing the company, there are also some dis-

advantages when it comes to efficiency. Taking into account the financial crisis which has spread all over the world, this is not the most suitable moment to privatize PTK. At this point of time PTK is underestimated. I think that the government will not be able to sell PTK at the price that they could. But of course, there are certain benefits that customers can get by the privatization of this institution.

After measuring the benefits and disadvantages that this action can have, I consider that the policy made by the government of Kosovo to privatize PTK is efficient since the new privatized company will increase the efficiency in the market and will offer people more suitable choices.

Equality

Even though customers will be facing lower prices, there might be inequality among workers of this institution. As soon as PTK is privatized and because of the new policies that the new owner can bring, workers can be dismissed from their work even though they might have been working for the company for 30 years. As in a new private company, they have to sign a contract together with all other current workers for three years, but after that if they don't meet the criteria set by the private owner they can be fired. This shows no equality among the workers of PTK since there are workers that have been working for a long time and workers who will start working after the privatization and who were selected in advance by the new owner.

Security

Although most of the workers' securities are issued by the governments, there are also private companies that issue workers' securities for their employees. In her book, Stone discusses the statistics of the increased eagerness to work by the employees as soon as they are provided with different kind of securities (social security, pensions, health insurance, etc). I consider security more as a goal of the government of our country that has to be set and achieved in order to encourage the citizens to work, which would also increase their efficiency. Thus in case of a privatization of PTK, employees of this company, compared to employees of other public companies, would only be secured by certain in-

surances that are offered by the government, if the new privatized company decides not to provide its employees with any additional insurance.

Liberty

This relates to efficiency as well. After privatizing PTK, besides efficiency there will also be freedom or liberty for the leaders of the company to come up with innovations while not going through the above mentioned procedures which take two or three months. This will save time to the company, and of course those who will benefit the most from this action taken by the government of Kosovo will be the customers.

On the other side, from the workers' perspective, privatization of PTK can be a threat to liberty. They can be dismissed more easily, something that can hurt them materially, considering this as one of their basic human rights.

Each goal is important in implementing a policy. In my opinion, the government should consider the goals which seem to be beneficial in long term. Efficiency and Security are the goals which I would consider as of higher priority. Efficiency would create more competition between the two operating systems in Kosovo which would lead to higher effective production. Security is one of the most important goals that the government should consider. By doing so, the government will increase productivity which will also lead to efficiency.

Our government should have established a more efficient, productive, and effective way of privatizing. The prices that have been set to the public enterprises were incredibly high and as a result most of the private owners have faced a budget shortage. Due to this budget deficiency, since most of the money has been spent to purchase the company, today private owners are not able to invest on improvements needed so that these manufactures can function. They are immobilized to even hire the necessary number of employees which would decrease the unemployment rate which today is one of the main problems our economy is faced with.

Lower prices of public enterprises in the privatization process would encourage foreign companies to invest in Kosovo. Those companies comparing to other domestic ones, have much higher investing capacities and can play a determinant role in improving the economy. Since the privatization pro-

cess includes all sorts of companies starting from small service ones to the big manufactures, foreign investments would be key factors on building the infrastructure, and more importantly, they would highly encourage domestic companies to become as competitive as possible in order for them to survive in the market.

In conclusion, privatization would have many beneficial results; there would be more money circulating in the country, considerably higher average income, more supply and demand of products, and higher standard of living.

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CHAPTER 2

INFORMATION SOCIETY

Artë Retkoceri (age 22)



Artë Retkoceri has enrolled for a Bachelor Degree in Applied Arts and Science at the American University in Kosovo with majors in Management and Public Policy and minor in Economics. She has received the Degree of “Associate in Applied Science” with High Honors from AUK in May 2009. Ms. Retkoceri

is very active in the community and community building activities, be it as a volunteer or as a member in NGOs. She has participated in several debate tournaments also in international level and has had several trainings regarding debate, public speaking, networking, critical thinking, and conflict transformation.

Ms. Retkoceri has gathered job experience in the US in a “work and travel” program, as a technician at the university library, as a math tutor, and as an assistant and media monitor in the course of an internship for a managerial consulting company in Prishtina. She has received Excellence scholarship in the first, second and third year of studies and also IPKO Foundation Scholarship in the third year of studies. She is fluent in Albanian and English and is a beginner in German.

Information Society

This year the Internet has been nominated for Nobel Peace Prize and has already been selected in the short list of candidates. What would be your arguments in favor of this candidacy with regard to the impact that the internet has had in your own personal life and in Kosovo's past and present.

Human beings are the most constant changing creatures on Earth. Starting with ourselves, we witness our tendency to change and look for further changes. In the very individual level, very often our life seems to have been stuck in past and no development can be witnessed. These harsh times usually lead to difficult periods of life when we don't see even one good chance for improvement. However, as soon as that dark feeling ends, we see brightness; we see the sun, the flowers, we simply see happiness. Depending on our position regarding mankind and its development, we have different attitudes and criticize it differently. However, it would be impossible and unacceptable to live in a modernized society, and not recognize the shape that information and technology have given to our life. Today industrialized society depends heavily on information and the current high-tech life might be at risk if we as human beings do not protect it properly and misuse it.

“The Internet is a worldwide system of computer networks – a network of networks in which users at anyone computer can, if they have permission, get information from any other computer (and sometimes talk directly to users at other computers). It was conceived by the Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA) of the U.S. government in 1969 and was first known as the ARPANET” (What is internet?). This definition can be considered a short explana-

tion of internet creation and its history. In fact according to the same source, internet at this time was created as a tool for universities to access information not only in the same university but also in other ones. So this very widespread tool to which almost everyone of us has had at least once access, was primarily created to make human's life easier and let them finish different tasks quicker. But how do people in general see internet today?

In general, citizens who use it more often look more at the positive sides of internet. The first one among some of these advantages that its proponents mention is *communication*. Many sources cite that as a tool of communication, internet has fastened this process a lot, and furthermore it has made possible for individuals from different parts of world to talk and see each other at the same time (Pakhare 3). Another huge advantage of the usage of internet is considered to be *information*. In fact, in general it is information what we search for on different web-pages and within a minimum period of time we are wealthier with information, something which only with difficulty can be achieved by using other information sources such as books, newspapers, people and others (Pakhare 5). The usage of services such as online banking, purchasing, job seeking are only some other advantages that internet offers. Furthermore the internet is also considered as a tool for *entertainment* where individuals find various options to spend their leisure and have fun (Pakhare 7).

On the other end of the line there are criticizers of the internet who claim that the internet has a very high impact in negative habits of humans. One of the issues mentioned by opponents is *access to personal information*. Indeed this is a very sensitive issue, because when accessing internet there is a higher possibility that other individuals or sources see our information or even personal documents (The Advantages & Disadvantages 5). Furthermore, as a user of computer, every person is a lot more exposed to *spamming* and other *virus threats* that otherwise would have less chances to reach our computers. Another very important point that the challengers of internet mention is the expansion of *pornography*. The main concern regarding this issue comes for youngsters and mainly children, who while being not fully aware of what is appropriate for them, might access sites that very easily may affect their behaviors, culture, and mental development (The Advantages & Disadvantages 5). These posed threats in general are seen as hazardous for the society also be-

cause of further indirect impacts that they can have in other spheres of life.

With all its positive and negative sides internet has been nominated for the Nobel Prize. According to Riccardo Luna, editor-in-chief of the Italian edition of *Wired* magazine:

“The internet can be considered the first weapon of mass construction, which we can deploy to destroy hate and conflict and to propagate peace and democracy” (Wallance 2). Taking into consideration these words, we can very easily see the aim of this nomination. In fact it is true that it is the strongest tool for information currently, and if used properly it can be very useful to fight unconstructive and maleficent human behaviors and habits. However, the internet is already in use, and it is completely up to us as humans to use it in the most positive way, and achieve the tolerance and peace that we have been looking for a lifetime long.

Coming back to my own country Kosova, we can see that even though it is a small country, internet has shaped the lives of the citizens very much. Internet as a very recent tool has been introduced here not so long time ago. It became known especially after the war, when foreigners invaded Kosova not only with new ideas but also new technology. Back then only a significant number of people had access to this important information tool. However, it has spread so quickly that today almost every household has access to internet, including those in most rural areas. The impact that internet and information sharing has had in Kosova could be seen as a very important contribution to the society in which we live in today. Of course that internet has put its “footprints” negatively and positively on our lives, however according to my opinion it has pushed Kosova’s society to move with huge steps towards an industrialized and more civilized world.

As a young citizen of Kosova and as a constant internet user, I can state that internet has a great effect in my daily activities. If I compare my life at the time when I did not know about internet and today, I notice huge improvements. Internet has enabled me to continuously research for academic purposes, to communicate with people geographically close to me and very far away and also to learn new skills about which otherwise I would have never heard. However, today I feel a lot more related to internet than to many people around me. Is this just another positive trait of internet, or is internet

creating gaps among humans because of the importance that we are giving to technology and easily accessible information? Furthermore, the fact that I have internet access almost at any period of time has led me to spending less time in reading and relaxing. Is it possible that internet has made us dependent on it and now we do not even find time to relax and at least enjoy our own original hobbies? Or is it already among the most important hobbies of ours?

Either way, internet doesn't seem to stop influencing our life and decisions. Hopefully the human nature does not become destructive as it has shown to be in the case of many other discoveries. Furthermore, it is important that we fully utilize each and every device for information sharing in the way that the nomination for Nobel Prize was intended.

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CHAPTER 3

THE EUROPEAN UNION

Kade Leniqi (age 21)



Kade Leniqi is a student of Political Science and Public Administration at the Texas Lutheran University in the US. Ms. Leniqi has already had several leadership and community service experiences in the United States. She is Community Service Volunteer at the Center for Servant Leadership, was Execu-

tive Committee Leader in the project Water to Thrive in Ethiopia and Committee Member at the Haiti Relief Project at Texas Lutheran University in January 2009. She is student of Leadership Certificate Program at her univeristy. Ms, Leniqi is winner of the Scholarship for Peace Program at Texas Lutheran University, The Bislimi Group (Prishtina, Kosovo) and was also nominated for “2010 Servant Leader of the Year” for student category in April 2010 at Texas Lutheran University.

Ms. Leniqi is engaged with representing students at her University, is active as Vice-President of the Global Student Organization and President of Young Democrats Organization and has also gathered job experience in Kosovo as journalist/TV reporter for a private national television in Kosovo, and in the U.S.A. has gathered work experience in several leadeship job positions in the campus of Texas Lutheran University. She is fluent in Albanian and English and can communicate also in Spanish.

The European Union

Historical perspective on the relations of Kosovo to Europe (the European Union). Pro and contras on the integration of Kosovo in the European Union. How does the EU policy towards Kosovo affect the life of young people? Why is visa liberalization an important topic for Kosovo and especially for Kosovo's youth?

The Republic of Kosovo is willing to continue the process of integration and complete its harmonization with European Union policies including the legislative, economic and political requirements to become a member state of the EU. In the historical context of the postwar period of Kosovo, the newest country in Europe, citizens, NGOs, and Kosovo's leadership have been showing commitment to promote democratic values in the path leading to integration in the European family and the worldwide community. The integration challenges are accompanied by major changes in the social and economic development of Kosovo. Kosovo's citizens, especially Kosovo's youth, are willing to integrate and accept Europeanization and also to contribute with policy ideas and proposals that can help meet goals and EU's policy expectations. Changing these policies would help to reframe Kosovo's international relations to the European Union around the principles of cultural exchange, stronger education, and economic reciprocity. This essay will discuss the involvement of the European Union in Kosovo, pros and cons of the integration of Kosovo into the EU, as well as its effect on the lives of the citizens while including the importance and the challenges of the visa liberalization process for Kosovo in the globalization process.

The newly established Ministry of European Integration is taking over all

the processes that have so far been coordinated by the Agency for Coordination of Development and European Integration. Specifically, it is coordinating and implementing the European agenda and also helping the civil society to take steps towards successfully accomplishing incorporation goals. The fundamental reasons for integrating Kosovo into the EU are that hopefully in the near future Kosovo will have the "... capacities, institutions, and, ultimately, state that will at some point enable Kosovo to join the post national EU fraternity", (Pond 104). Specifically, Kosovo and the EU are interested in the Stabilization and Association Agreement that all other Southeastern states have now signed as the first step towards being accepted in the EU family as a member state. Moreover, in order to develop a closer relationship with the EU, these countries will have to gear their political, economic, and institutional development to the values and models underpinning the European Union: democracy, respect for human and minority rights, and a market economy, along with Dayton compliance, inviolability of borders and good- neighborly relations (Infantis 34).

In addition, various news reports have been emphasizing the reasons for continuing the deep level of the cooperation between Kosovo and the EU, such as security and stability in the region of the Balkans. These issues regarding the integration process have led to discussions among the officials and the citizens of Kosovo about opportunities for progress. According to Elizabeth Pong, author of the article "The EU's Test in Kosovo", "the trump card is that the Kosovar Albanians, like everyone else in the Balkans, yearn to join the EU of peace and prosperity and must be on their best behavior to qualify. This combination of dependency and hope enhances EU leverage," (Pond 104).

On the other hand, it needs to be taken into account that not all of the European states have agreed on the status of Kosovo as an independent state and present different theories of how to handle Kosovo. However, the European Union was engaged in Kosovo through the European Commission before the declaration of independence. This was part of the so-called "European Solution", which was "a useful euphemism for not having a good solution and trying to make the best out of it, rather similar to the euphemism of a 'peace process' when this term is used to refer to the absence of a peace agreement while trying to keep the peace", (Yannis 164). The European Union considered taking responsibility for Kosovo, and ultimately, this process helped in es-

establishing EULEX Kosovo (European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo) after United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) mission was over in 2008. The EU is committed to support Kosovo in meeting the standards for common European values in government institutions, law enforcement and the judicial system. Nonetheless, at this point there are pros and cons on the integration of Kosovo into the European Union.

The moment that Kosovo declared itself willing to be part of the EU, a process of enforcing laws and implementing policies started. Kosovo has begun to embrace the vision of the European Union to meet successfully social, economic and political needs and challenges. For instance, in the future it has to support the European Union's goal to be a strong power on a global level. Taking this into account, Kosovo has to comply on EU's special issues such as global climate change, economic growth and reduction of unemployment, and common defense policy. However, because of its economic stagnation, at present unfortunately Kosovo is not able to implement these policies but since it has committed itself to comply with the EU *acquis communautaire*, it is investing resources and taking steps immediately to be part of integration, including making visa liberalization plans. According to the Kosovo's government plan called "Visa Liberalization Action Plan 2009-2011" which takes into account the EU requirements and advice, Kosovo needs to undertake steps to continue the process of the EU integration, such as providing security, procedures and conditions of documentation, cooperating in law enforcement and preventing and fighting the organized crime, terrorism, drugs, corruption and human trafficking. It also needs to cooperate with the EU law enforcement agencies regarding the judicial system, exiles and migrants and to provide data protection, as well as maintain respect for human rights, including minority protection.

Specifically, the possibility of membership in the EU is encouraging Kosovo even more to implement positive reforms that are influencing in a positive way the development of internal government and civic structures. At this point, Kosovo supports the EU's important role in promoting stability and prosperity in the region and the world. Additionally, Kosovo wants the EU to be developed into a genuine single area of freedom, security and justice, where individuals' rights are protected and organized crime is efficiently countered.

Also, economic stability and economic growth are one of the main priorities for Kosovo and represent a specific European Union interest for the future (Corrin 194).

However, it is important to address the fact that European aspirations are continuously influencing the internal state and executive decision making of Kosovo. For instance, issues of national sovereignty are often brought to the fore, because Kosovo has to compromise its state interests by implementing policies required by the European Union. In addition, it is argued that Kosovo would not succeed regarding immigration EU policies, and as a consequence the country would experience mass migration by Kosovars into other members of the European Union.

According to European Commission information available on its website, all members of the EU are affected by the flow of international migration and that is why they have agreed to develop a common immigration policy at the EU level. Unfortunately, as a result, in the present day there is less regional economic development and less cooperation between Kosovo and the rest of the European countries, a state of affairs that affects Kosovo's economy negatively and brings further social exclusion because its citizens don't have access to many opportunities when compared to neighboring countries.

The limited access to social, economic, and political events in Europe has isolated Kosovo's citizens and that is a strong reason why the EU needs to include it in the European family ("BIRN"). This change would have an immediate effect, because of the improvements and empowerment that it would cause in people's social and economic status as well as in their standard of living.

The goal of membership in the European Union has been a driver for greater prosperity and will improve the quality of life throughout the Republic of Kosovo.

The future effect of liberalization of the visa process will provide economic and security benefits for the state of Kosovo and its overall results would likely be positive if the EU were to agree that Kosovo will be part of the so-called White Schengen List or the Visa-free travel for the Western Balkans project. This would create and develop further mutual relationships between Kosovo and the EU, further extending changes that have already become part of the conscious Kosovars. This support would specifically help the majority of Kos-

ovo's population, youth, to become scholars with passion and commitment for the future, while expanding global intellectual curiosity and learning integrity. It would ensure furthermore future development through implementing the EU's legal mechanisms and making a difference in a developing state through leadership and commitment.

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Ylli Tafarshiku (age 24)



Ylli Tafarshiku is a student of Bachelor Degree at the American University in Kosovo with major concentration in Management and Public Policy and minor concentration in Economics and Statistics.

Mr. Tafarshiku has gathered professional experience as broadcasting man at a private television in Kosovo. He has been developing the production and broadcasting of all news, tv shows, sport program, within the program scheme as an integral part of Master Control Room and has been managing the TV Master Control Room while being present on job shift.

He is fluent in Albanian and English, has intermediate knowledge of Serbian and can understand also Italian.

The European Union

Historical perspective on the relations of Kosovo to Europe (the European Union). Pro and contras on the integration of Kosovo in the European Union. How does the EU policy towards Kosovo affect the life of young people? Why is visa liberalization an important topic for Kosovo and especially for Kosovo's youth?

It is quite a paradox to think that in the 21st century, labeled as the century of globalization where countries are doing their utmost to lower trading and traveling barriers around the globe and uniting with each other, a young and small European country in the middle of the Southeastern part of Europe is left isolated. Still we may better understand this harsh decision when we take into account the political, economic and social events that have been taking place, starting with the apartheid and war that Kosovo went through, the transition period of transferring competences from international to national institutions and the process of building democratic institutions.

Kosovo is not only the youngest country in the world that has declared independence but is also the country with the youngest population in Europe. The country that has gone through different political and economic systems throughout the years, from socialism in the mid 70's and 80's, to apartheid in the mid 90's and to international surveillance after 1999, has one important aim, to join the big family of European Nations. The country's main challenges remain development of democratic institutions, economic growth and an efficient judiciary system. Everyone would agree that joining the European Union and going through the Visa Liberalization process should be a top priority for the government of Kosovo. It would certainly be a great deal for

an isolated country to join any major international institution and especially an institution as important as the European Union; however entrance into the EU and Visa Liberalization would definitely not solve all of the country's problems.

Visa liberalization would be a major benefit for the young people of Kosovo. Visiting Europe's biggest cities, enriching cultural knowledge, shopping and partying would not be a major help for a young citizen of a poor developing country like Kosovo. However being able to travel freely to Europe without the tiring technical procedures of getting a traveling visa would mean a lot to a young citizen of Kosovo. First of all it would have an enormous psychological effect on a young citizen to know that he/she is not isolated and left out anymore. The feeling of frustration would shade away, as finally a young citizen of the newest country in the world would know that he/she is welcomed into the big European Family. Traveling freely into the oldest continent would allow Kosovo's young people to improve the image of their country. As they would travel and get familiarized with Europe and "Europeans," so also Europeans would get to know better the newest members of their family. As more Kosovars would visit Europe, more contacts would be created, more Europeans would visit Kosovo and a lot more economic opportunities would be created for Kosovo.

Europe could benefit quite a lot from Kosovo's main potential: young people. Even though due to the current financial crisis most of the European Union's member countries are having economic difficulties as unemployment rates are getting higher, a lot of countries having ageing population difficulties could use Kosovo's labor force. Also countries such as Poland, Czech Republic and Romania whose labor force has been reduced due to their entrance into the European Union as a lot of young people have moved to the more developed European countries, could use Kosovo's young labor force. While European Union countries would on one side benefit economically, so would also Kosovo with the remittances that would be sent home.

However on the other hand is hard to think of a visa liberalization process for Kosovo being implemented without any difficulties. Opening the doors and granting free traveling permission to the citizens a country with an unemployment rate of 50% and a staggering poverty rate of 37% would not be

one of the greatest ideas. A lot of people not being able to find jobs in Kosovo market would seek out ways to get out of the country, hoping for employment in the more developed European countries. This would create inefficiencies in European employment markets since Kosovo's labor force would be willing to work for lower wages than European Union labor force does. European Union countries would not be the only ones to be experiencing difficulties in their labor markets but so would also Kosovo's economy. As the labor force in Kosovo would drain away so would the number of foreign investors willing to invest in the country that once used to have the youngest population in the continent. Difficulties and constraints would not solely be of economic nature. Political and legal difficulties would arise as European Union member countries would have to deal with new asylum seekers.

In order to avoid all of this from happening we as young people of Kosovo together with Kosovo's government should start acting as soon as possible. Perhaps we need to understand that becoming a member of European Union and traveling to Europe without visas would not solve all of the country's problems. The technical requirements such as biometric passports, having defined and secured borders with the neighboring countries and more are essential requirements that need to be fulfilled in order to be considered as a potential candidate for membership into the European Union and for the Visa Liberalization process. However I believe that the real challenges for the government remain elsewhere. I don't believe that entrance into the European Union can ensure Kosovo that the unemployment rate of 50% will be reduced over night. I think that the main challenge for Kosovo's government in order to become a member of the European Union is economic growth which would reduce the unemployment rate. This objective could be met by attracting foreign investors to invest in the country, by fighting corruption and ensuring that Kosovo is a safe place to live in for every citizen and by making sure that everyone is part of the society. Establishing independent and transparent public institutions and promoting free speech are challenges that Kosovo's government faces. Implementing laws rather than creating and leaving them drafted for years as well as establishing an efficient judiciary system and solving thousands of unsolved cases should furthermore be of priority for our government. These policies together with the technical requirements are the real challenges that

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Kosovo's government and society faces.

I do believe in the functionality of the country of Kosovo and its entrance into the European Union and our way through the Visa liberalization process. I'm convinced that unlike some neighboring countries that are divided over the issue of entrance into EU the majority of Kosovo's citizens would like to see Kosovo joining the big European family. I do believe that Kosovo's future is in the European Union. However in order to achieve this, it is time for us, the young Europeans together with Kosovo's institutions to start acting rather than speaking towards our only path, the European Union.

CHAPTER 4

CULTURE

Blerta Zogiani (age 20)



Blerta Zogiani is a student of Psychology at the University of Prishtina with concentration in General Psychology, Statistics, Psycho-pathology.

Ms. Zogiani has recently participated at a start-up event in Prishtina and has gathered job experience as shop assistant.

Woman Emancipation in Kosova

Kosova, a country under development as all countries in the world continues to face many social, economic as well as cultural problems. Some of these problems are being solved day by day and perhaps one day only some of them will be still existing, which is quite a normal process in the development of a society.

If we compare the situation today to that of ten years ago, we can see that the role of women in our society has evolved a lot. Until recently women were nothing more than servants to the close family. Only a small percentage of them had the privilege of receiving education and of advancing beyond, not because they were not capable, but they were not considered to be able for that. Their mind was fed with such ideas about their inability to succeed and as result women grew up by having wrong perceptions about themselves. Women took care only of raising kids and never thought of their personal development. Even if sometimes someone asked if they felt a lack in their lifestyle, it was not surprising if this person got a negative response. How can you feel the lack of something that you never had, and of which you don't know what that looks like? But nowadays finding the answer on this issue is much easier. Now we have a very different life, compared with the life that our grandmothers and mothers had which serves to us as an example of a bitter past, fortunately never experienced by us.

Our women behaved in a way that was taught to them since they took breath for the first time. They grew up with only one purpose, to keep alive the concept of the “importance of family”, even if this might make of their lives a total sacrifice. Ultimately, despite the fact they had to go through all these difficult situations and sacrifices, nobody around them was thankful. To make a change in all this suffering, women of the years 2000 introduced some-

thing of which in previous time could only be heard of: rights and freedom of organization for their own life, education, employment and treatment as social human beings in our community. This decade signed the blossoming of a flower that had not been irrigated for centuries. Women no longer were seen just as housewives, indispensable unemployed mothers but as huge potentials for Kosova's society, and even beyond Kosova's borders.

Those women who once didn't have the chance to receive education and those who used to have a poor social life, started to realize the dreams they thought were inaccessible. Day by day, women grew more capable and knowledgeable by contributing with their potential in the development of the society. It was not surprising to see how capable they were in what they were doing though it was surprising to see how they had resigned themselves to their fate. A major role was played here by their relatives' willingness to support them. Jealousy, aggression, doubt, and many other psychological constructs became an obstacle when it came to the personal advancement of women. These constructs are inevitable in the life of every human being, up to when they damage people's sound reason.

The only way how they could succeed and beat injustice was through their work towards reaching their goals. After the last war in 1999 in Kosova, in the elections that were held in the year 2000 according to the 1244 UN resolution, women won 30% of the seats in the Parliament of Kosova. But this number did not include all females who are indirectly involved in political activities and different NGOs.

Women were involved in sport activities too, not only in basketball, volleyball, football or handball, but also in wrestling sports such as judo, karate or kick-box. They never stopped showing everyone how capable they are even though they had not so many chances to show it. None of these achievements of the Kosovar women, made them give up the wish of being devoted mothers. They still remain the pillar of the family, committed to duties, obligations and responsibilities they have taken. Now what not only women but our entire nation is missing, is the possibility to cross country borders without facing many obstacles. Nothing is unreachable. Through work and devotion we will achieve our goal of opening these borders just like we opened them inside of our community.

We want to move on with safe and meaningful steps for the future of our children and of every person who will become a citizen of Kosova, the country in which culture, sports and art are being cultivated, the country where technology is being welcomed and used more and more.

This development unfortunately does not include every woman in Kosova. In rural areas, women still continue to have a rough and hard life and remain discriminated. This kind of life affects more young women who after finishing high school or even primary school do not have many choices, and especially those young among them for which it is the parents who decide when they have to stop with their education process and get married. Fortunately this kind of thinking from the perspective of the parents is disappearing. But what happens to those women who want to be educated but who because of their poor financial conditions are forced to quit school? A great number of them are forced to get married and not lose their youth for "NOTHING".

All these discussible issues show that there is still a conflict between tradition and modernity. But I am very convinced that with the successes we are achieving there is a sign for hope. Men reached their highest peaks and now it is our turn to come on stage. Because behind every man stands a successful woman, educated or not, traditional or modern.

To conclude, we, WOMEN, strongly believe that one day, not very far from now, we will reach our goals, no matter what it takes. We have waited so long and the trip ends here. Kosovo's society is well-known as a society of healthy families and all this thanks to our women and I am proud to be one of them and of those who always search for more.

Arbër Hajrizaj (age 22)



Arbër Hajrizaj is a student of Bachelor Degree in Applied Arts and Science at the American University in Kosovo with major concentrations in Management, Media and Graphic Communication and minor concentration in Economics and Statistics. Mr. Hajrizaj is active in many extracurricular

activities. He has been volunteering at “SOS Kinderdorf” and “Amici dei Bambini” in Kosovo and is a member of the “AUK Charity Club”. Our Future European Integration 2010, Balkan Case Challenge 2010, Peace Camp 2009, AUK’s 3rd Annual Albanological Conference, South East Europe Future Energy Leadership Conference 2009, are some events and conferences where Mr. Hajrizaj has been participating lately.

Mr. Hajrizaj has gathered working experience as intern in the US, as marketing intern in a bank in Prishtina and as an interpreter for International Foundation for Electoral Systems during the 2009 mayor elections in Kosovo. He is fluent in Albanian, English and German.

The Only Child Phenomenon

The only child phenomenon is a fast growing one all over the world and lately it is also becoming a tendency in our society even though it is not yet much debated. A single child is a child without any biological or adopted sibling. A single child is a child without any biological or adopted sibling. This topic is not much debated in Kosovo other than the stereotyping. Children without siblings usually are given the reputation of being selfish and spoiled although that is not often the case as a lot of studies have proven, but it is the human logical assumption that single children rarely have to share things, and this is why they become selfish and because the parents have no one else to fulfill the wishes to, the only child will get all of them fulfilled. Only children are also often thought to be smarter than their peers. This belief comes from the assumption that parents have more time to observe their single children and they also have more resources available to engage their children in different educational activities. Yet no facts have proven these two most known claims made about only children, to be legitimate assumptions.

Being brought up without siblings I was asked the same question over and over again: How does it feel not to have any brother or sister? I never felt ready and able to answer this question because I never knew how it feels to have a sibling, so how was I supposed to tell the difference and at the end I never considered this to be a big issue. In my mind there was also one question coming up over and over again: why do people always ask me this same exact question and put pressure on me with it? As an only child I decided to dig deep into my thoughts and search thoroughly into online libraries to put on paper valuable information concerning the only child phenomenon, and finally give an adequate answer to the very frequent question I was asked.

To begin with, cases of families with only one child were rarer in the past, and only children were different from what they are today. “Only children tended to be shy, over-protected and socially withdrawn” (Pagewise, par.1). Nowadays psychologists say that this has changed. “Mobility and the resources to support an active social life have put an end to that” (Pagewise, par.4). They are just as other children, and that also because they are not a rare case anymore, many of their classmates are the only child in their families too. “Only children today are completely different people from those of just a few decades ago. Not only are they far more numerous, they are happier individuals who are well-balanced and more socially adept” (Pagewise, par.10). More families decide to have only one child because of financial reasons, because of potential divorces, women giving birth at a later age now, and several other reasons. Families are changing and the psychologist Newman went that far that he even called the families with only child the “new traditional families” (Juju, Holmberg par. 12).

My family was never the richest and that was one reason that made my parents decide to have only one child although this was different from how families in our neighborhood were formed but my parents knew that if they had one child they could fulfill him more of his wishes and raise him the way they wanted to. Another reason I believe why they were firm not to have more children is because I am a man. Having a boy in our society means that your family will go on existing and it also means you have one heir of your wealth and your family traditions will be transferred to the next generation and they will keep on existing. In the Albanian culture having a male as a son is important to the family because our culture has patriarchal tendencies as a result mostly of lack of education, but that is changing drastically lately as we see that more and more families have only baby girls in Kosovo and they are completely comfortable with that fact and they are proud of their girls.

Furthermore, I never wanted to be different and I never thought that not having siblings made me different; however during my life people have made me feel different because of that and the more I grew up the more I knew that I am different. The difference can be seen in my personality. Because during my childhood and adolescence when a person creates his/her personality I had

my “parents’ undivided attention and I developed strong self-worth and confidence” (McKinell, par. 3), and that is also what psychologist Carl Pickhardt said. Those traits are a result of the advantages that I had by being an only child. I believe that I would not be the person that I am today if I were not a single child. I am not saying that I would be a better or a worse person, but I would not be the one that I am today just as I would not be the same if I had been living in a different environment. The education that I got throughout my life, the music school, English courses, dancing lessons, the American education, were all made available to me from my parents because I was their only child thus they could afford all the investments. I enjoyed educational, cultural, and travel opportunities that because of financial reasons, would probably not have been made possible to me if I had siblings. All parents want the best for their children however the more children they have the more difficult is to manage and fulfill all the children’s wishes.

As a single child you experience a lot of loneliness. While for others, siblings are annoying, for single children in some moments it is the one thing that they need the most. When having troubles with parents there is no one you can complain about the argument with, on holidays there is no one to build sandcastles with and sometimes in life you feel that you cannot connect to peers at school because you were not used to it at home. You do not learn at home how to behave with your comrades. You have to learn this at school or somewhere else where you are surrounded by peers, and you may make mistakes in learning it just like you make mistakes while learning other things, however these mistakes may seem odd to other people because they learned about them while growing up with siblings and those behaviors come natural to them.

As an only child, you experience also a lot of pressure to be perfect all the time. As a single child you have “parents watch every move a child makes with eagle eyes” (Needman, par. 5). I had to do things that did not necessarily wanted to do my whole life because I did not want to disappoint my parents since in the end I was the only one they had, the only one to be proud of. Some things are just a norm in my life like the fact that I will live together with my parents in the same house even after I have created my own family. This is because I feel that I owe to take care of them because that is what they did for

me, and I want to be there for them when they are in need, and this can be best done while having them around. This is an issue that men with siblings do not have to worry about.

To conclude with, I might have gotten more toys than my peers, and my parents could afford more education for me however the fact that my parents enjoyed me without any guilt was the most valuable thing to me. In the end this was what did matter the most. They would let me make mistakes and let me learn from my mistakes just like every other child. How only children's personality develops and is formed is a result of the parents' way of raising their children just as it is for every other child. There are brats and spoiled children that have siblings and they became like that because their parents overindulged in the way they raised them up and also as a result of the environment where they were brought up. According to the psychologist Newman "There have been hundreds and hundreds of research studies that show that only children are no different from their peers" (Juju, Holmberg par. 12 said). Couples in their way to become parents should be able to decide without any influence from the outside how they want to arrange their families. We should all stop generalizing and stereotyping. Instead of that we should enjoy people and friends around us no matter the differences. So next time I get asked how it feels not to have any brother or sister, I will simply reply that it has its benefits and downturns but it feels just amazing being in this world.

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Darsei Canhasi is a student of Bachelor Degree in Applied Arts and Science at the American University in Kosovo with major in Business Management, Economics and Statistics and minor in Public Policy. Mr. Canhasi is a hard worker in various job opportunities and in voluntary work as well.

Called from the government of Kosovo, he has been accompanying international delegations during the European Week 2010 in May 2010. He has recently pitched also a start-up idea in a start-up event in Prishtina.

Mr. Canhasi has gathered job experience as intern in the US and professional experience working full time as photographer, organizer and promoter in an atelier in Gjakova. Mr. Canhasi has received several honors during his school time in Gjakova and has a number of certificates for attending conferences. He is fluent in Albanian and English.

Albanian Culture

What is the significance of Albanian hospitality? What are the other culture virtues?

For thousands of years a variety of occupiers conquered Kosovo. Nevertheless, its culture always contained a rich tradition and it never forgot the Illyrian heritage. When a guest enters an Albanian¹ home, they are seen as “kings”; they are gratified. Hospitality is a part of the culture that every Albanian should be proud of. It remains a proof that the culture is old, unique and vivid. Many international people observed and applauded our hospitality; while visiting they felt as being in their homes.

Albanian hospitality flows from the ancient people of Illyria. Illyrians lived throughout the Balkans, and they are known as the ancestors of Albanians. Little is known about Illyrians, but they did have their own culture, tradition and religion. Most importantly, they were known to be hospitable people. Thus, Illyrians made an unquestionable impact in today’s Albanian culture. Besides them, there was another important component. The so-called Kanuni (the code) was similar to today’s constitution; a group of laws that was legitimate to Albanian territory. The most famous one was *Kanuni i Lekë Dukagjinit* (Code of Lekë Dukagjini). According to Young, “many of Northern Albania’s people still live following the strict laws of the *Kanun* whose 1,262 Articles, set out in the twelve ‘books’ cover all aspects of mountain life: the regulation of economic and family organization, hospitality, brotherhood, the clan, boundaries, work, marriage, land and livestock, etc” (Young, 41). This being said, *Kanuni* had a separate chapter about hospitality. Once again, hospitality is pointed out as goodness of Albanian nation. Going beyond the Kanun,

¹ I refer to Albanians the same as Kosovars, so they basically have the same meaning.

it is evident that it not only gives privilege to the guest, it glorifies them. An example: according to Trnavci, who wrote a detailed article about the *Kanun*, “The respect for guests is one of the highest tenets for this body of law. The status of the guest is covered by the rules devoted to honor. It is stipulated in the paragraph 602: “The house belongs to God and guest.” The guest is under host’s protection. Murder of the guest inflicts gravest disrespect to the host, and hence obliges him to avenge this murder” (Trnavci, 23). Hereafter, according to *The Code of Lekë Dukagjini*, the guest is equal to God; what is surprising, if a murder happens, the host family is responsible for the blood feud. On the other hand, there are people who criticize the reputation of the *Kanun*. According to critics, the *Kanun* put the first steps of an uncivilized society. Regardless of these presumptions, one thing is sure: *The Code of Lekë Dukagjini* remains a golden heritage of Albanian history. Moreover, it gave the basis for the foundation of various characteristics of our nation.

During the history, Albanian hospitality was exposed to different foreign travelers. According to Tarifa, “Numerous foreign travelers testify on the hospitality of the Albanians; their hospitality has been solemnized, romanticized, and glorified by foreign travelers and a number of renowned anthropologists and historians, as well as diplomats” (Tarifa, 7). Tarifa points out that the respect for the guest has been observed from many foreigners that were in our country. Most notably, George Gordon Byron, the British author wrote about his experience in Albanian territories. During his traveling he spent a good time in our country. “The honest Albanian, after lending him all the assistance in his power to relieve the distress into which he was plunged, supplying his wants, and lodging him and the whole of his company, refused to receive any remuneration whatever, and only requested a written acknowledgment that he had been well treated. When Lord Byron would have pressed money upon him, he said “I wish you to love me, not to pay me” (Iley, 248). Lord Byron was one of the foreigners that were magnified with Albanian rich culture, he spoke proudly about Albanians.

If a foreigner guest is respected, this leads to the assumption that relatives are respected much more. At this point, there is a symbol that portrays the Albanian rich culture inheritance. Contrary to English, in Albanian the word “uncle” has a dual meaning; while in English “uncle” refers to the brother of a

parent; in the Albanian translation appear two different words: “xhaxha” and “dajë”. The first one refers to the brother of your father, while the second one refers to the brother of your mother. They might seem unimportant, but in fact, they contain a hidden message inside. The “uncle” situation signifies the importance that an Albanian gives to relatives. By giving importance to their relatives, they have built a strong basis for being a hospitable nation. Because they highly respect their uncles, they are embarrassed to call them in the same way. By doing this, they distinguish between the brother of their father and the brother of their mother. It is a sign of distinction between our culture and what might be well-known from elsewhere.

Throughout the world there is a trend of young people living away from their families. This trend is increasing on a daily basis, and furthermore it is seen as a prosperous development. While making an analogy with Albanian culture, things look completely different. Most of young Kosovars live together with their families and take care of their parents. If not a prosperous idea, this is a great fortune of our culture for sure. It makes us unique from other nations. Moreover, it shows that we care for the people who made a lot for us; and they are our parents. On the other hand, once again, it indicates that we are different from others; we have something to offer to the European community. In addition, we will try to prosper and in the meantime stick with our tradition.

Without any doubt, our cultural heritage, especially hospitality, is a rich virtue. Unfortunately, this virtue is not known internationally. Why? The answer lies in the fact that Kosovo is not integrated in the European Union. Our country is “limited” in the context that our assets, such as hospitality, remain hidden to the European countries. Visa liberalization is the first objective; achieving this, Europeans counterparts would be able to see the real values of Albanian culture. It could be the missing piece of a vivid European culture. Above all, our small country has something to offer that whole Europe was missing. A strong cultural tradition could have a big impact on everyone. Liberalizing visa, our respect for the guest would be emphasized while foreigners would be in touch more often with Kosovars. Tourists coming from abroad would have one more reason to visit Europe. This could be a model that all the member countries of European Union could adapt.

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