

Kosovo's Concerns

Voters' Voices



DEPARTMENT OF DEMOCRATISATION

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Foreword

The OSCE's Mission in Kosovo's mandate is to support the development of democratic structures, which represent the collective interests of all communities in Kosovo. The election of a Kosovo Assembly in November this year will be a further step in Kosovo's journey towards democracy and the superb opportunity for the people to take their destiny in their own hands and to develop a culture of good governance.

Political parties and civil society organisations are receiving continuous support from the OSCE Department of Democratisation to enhance their organisational capacity and to increase their political and social possibilities to advocate for democratic changes. The present booklet is part of the Department's efforts to involve people closely in the political life and to eventually hold politicians and administrators accountable for their decisions and actions. We strongly believe that the active participation of people in the political debate and in the decision making process are essential parts of any democracy. Accordingly, it is the purpose of the present report to draw the attention of the politicians, the civil society and broader public to the concerns of the people in Kosovo and to encourage politicians to respond to the demands of their electorate and take responsibilities.

A similar publication¹ was used last year successfully during the campaigning period for the municipal election to animate the discourse between politicians and the electorate. We hope that also the present report will contribute to make future leaders aware of what the communities demand.

It is essential that Kosovo's governmental structures are inclusive and represent the needs of the many communities here. We strongly hope that all the people of Kosovo eligible to vote, will on 17 November 2001 express their belonging to Kosovo actively through the ballot paper and participate thus in the creation of a truly democratic Kosovo where "all communities and everybody can live peacefully".



Ambassador Daan Everts
DSRSG
Head of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo

¹ Voters Voices – Community Concerns, OSCE Pristina 2000.

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Introduction

*“This is great, but is it likely that they will listen to our voices?”
“I hope our suggestions will influence the content of their agendas!”*

(Students from Skenderaj/Srbica)

On November 17th, 2001, the people of Kosovo will be voting for the first Kosovo-wide, democratically elected assembly. The Constitutional Framework for Provisional Self-Government ² promulgated on 15th May 2001 by UN regulation 2001/9 details the role and responsibilities of the future governing body of Kosovo.

In the light of this, the Kosovo Concerns Project of which this booklet is a product, was conducted. It is not only a survey on the views of people in Kosovo, but also an exercise in democracy. The main goals of this project are to offer people social and political awareness of their responsibilities in a civil society and to demonstrate the active role citizens can play in exercising their civil rights and duties and thus contribute to the democratic process.

The Kosovo Concerns / Voters’ Voices booklet intends to challenge political parties and candidates to focus on issues of concern to the electorate as well as encouraging voters that they should hold their elected officials accountable. It is envisaged that the political parties can use this information as a tool to direct their political campaign, as well as facilitating discussions and election debates between parties and people. Besides being used by candidates, civic groups and individuals during the electoral campaign, this booklet represents a tool for civil society to judge how the action of the elected leaders matches requests expressed by people.

The Kosovo Concerns / Voters’ Voices booklet is a report on what the concerns of the Kosovo public are in relation to the twenty-eight competencies that the future government will be accountable for. The publication reproduces both verbally and statistically the priorities of the electorate of Kosovo; it is a detailed account of which areas the general public of Kosovo believe elected officials should concentrate their efforts. Within each chapter, alongside the comments of the people of Kosovo, are some detailed facts that relate to some of the issues discussed.

The OSCE Democratisation staff conducted more than 100 meetings in Kosovo having discussions with more than 1300 Kosovo residents. In order to ensure a balanced cross section of views, participants to the meetings were

² Please note that in further text it is referred to as “Constitutional Framework”

invited from all ethnicities, all socio-economic groups as well as a mixture of urban and rural, male and female and young and old. At each meeting, the facilitator briefly introduced the Constitutional Framework and its relationship with the first Kosovo-wide central election since the conflict. Answering the different questions, the facilitators emphasised the importance of people's participation, not only in the election, but also in the political debate in general.

It was explained to participants that the purpose of the meeting was to give them the opportunity to express to future leaders their main concerns and priorities within the confines of the Constitutional Framework. Each meeting was divided into two clear halves, one for prioritising their concerns and the other for discussion. In order to prioritise individuals' concerns, participants were asked to complete a questionnaire, which listed the twenty-eight competencies that are prescribed within the constitutional framework, with a short explanation on each. Participants were asked to prioritise their top ten areas of concern, ranking them 1 – 10 with one being the most important issue for them. People were encouraged to think about the top three priorities they had chosen. They had to write their specific concerns, what action they would like to see and what the desired outcome would be. The facilitators then examined all the questionnaires, calculating the total number of points allocated to each competency and establishing the top five priorities of the group as a whole. These competencies were then presented to the meeting for discussion.

Overall, the atmosphere within the meetings was positive with the majority of the people willing to express their opinions and there were many comments suggesting that the public welcomed the opportunity to propose their ideas. There was hope that the politicians would take the comments on board. Most meetings were conducted in a lively and constructive environment. In some of the meetings involving the non-majority communities there were tough and interesting discussions as the participants used the opportunity to express their frustrations with the international community and to discuss their apprehension regarding the Constitutional Framework as well as to explain the situation in their particular municipality.

The booklet reports the verbal comments of the statistically top 20 competencies as were conveyed to us by the general public in the meetings. The ranking of peoples' priorities are reflected in the order of the chapters and can be seen in a statistical form on page xii.

The message on the priorities is clear: everyone places law and order, health, and education very highly. Indeed, these are the top three priorities except in meetings involving non-majority communities, where predictably these three rank below the issue of Rights of Communities. In fact this serves as a foundation for their perspective on the other competencies. For the population of Kosovo it is apparent that increased growth of civil society is necessary in order to direct the citizens towards a stable future. This can only be done through education where people respect and agree to live by a common set of rules, thus avoiding confusion and chaos. The following is a synopsis of the top ten issues that were discussed in the meetings.

The highest-ranking priority is law and order. The people of Kosovo believe that law and order is needed as a matter of urgency in order to ensure a stable

and trouble free Kosovo where a peaceful and civil society can live together harmoniously. However, there is one fundamental difference to the approach of the issue of law and order between the communities. The Kosovo Albanian community associates law and order with a positive step towards the community's aspirations of an independent Kosovo. Whereas for other communities, increased law and order will provide a more stable Kosovo that will in turn facilitate greater freedom of movement and more stability. Law and order for these communities is seen as the pre-requisite to ensure their rights. All Kosovo people are concerned about the increase in crime and its effect on the community, especially young people, and the socio-economic consequences. It was repeatedly mentioned that increasing the competencies of the Kosovo Police Service as well as trying to ensure a more favourable economic environment should combat crime. A poor economy leading to unemployment which leads to crime, is the cycle of depravation, which needs to be quashed.

Education, science and technology is the second highest ranking priority. There is a strong belief that a well-educated population can only contribute to a well-adjusted and productive society. The problem with the system that the people of Kosovo espouse is the lack of access to a good education programme. This is primarily due to poor resources; but teachers' salaries and the curriculum, that many believe is old fashioned, were also highlighted. People from rural areas and from enclaves conveyed their strong concern about very little access to education in comparison with those who live in the cities.

Health is the third highest-ranking priority. Everyone who discussed health describes the precarious condition of the health care service as it currently stands. Lack of facilities, lack of basic equipment and lack of motivated professional staff are the recurring themes discussed in the meetings. People believe that health care is a fundamental responsibility of the government and action should be taken immediately. In the meetings there was allegations of corruption, often people citing the example of how it was impossible to receive medicines from public clinics but the same doctor would have the medication in a private clinic. As with education those from rural areas and those from enclaves described their difficulties in having access to basic medical healthcare.

Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC) ranked fourth in the priorities. This issue was primarily discussed only within the Kosovo Albanian community which spoke of its desire to have KPC as the army for Kosovo. The discussions and most of the proposals were outside the realms of the Constitutional Framework.

Economic and financial policy ranked the fifth highest competency. All participants agreed that the economy was a significant cause for concern. The main consequence of the poor state of the economy is its devastating effect on employment. The solution is divided into two distinct ideas: state owned property versus privatisation. Everyone was unanimous that the uncertainty regarding the political direction of Kosovo impeded foreign investment. Taxation, micro loans for small businessmen and foreign investments were the three main concrete proposals from the people of Kosovo to facilitate the reconstruction of the current destroyed economy.

Good Governance, human rights and equal opportunity is the sixth highest concern. Most participants at the community meetings recognised that these

concepts are intrinsic to a democratic society. One concrete proposal is the developing of opportunities for women in the workplace. Their professional and economic empowerment can only serve society positively. Members of all communities agree that more transparency within the political machinery is necessary. The accountability of elected leaders as well as those who hold senior civil administrative positions is an immediate desire. The people of Kosovo want to know how and why policy decisions are made. Many participants also acknowledge the role that they can play either as individuals or in associations.

Youth and sport is the seventh priority. In the Constitutional Framework these issues are classed as one competency, which often manipulated the direction of the discussions within the meetings. The biggest complaint is that there is not enough space and/or activities that are solely aimed at young people. The majority of the population in Kosovo is under the age of 26. Overall the message is clear: young people are asking for acknowledgement, respect and inclusion in the development of society.

Number eight among the priorities is environmental protection. When a society has to confront severe economic, political and social problems, the state of the environment is never the primary concern. However, politicians should look at how to remedy the current situation, as many people are increasingly concerned about the amount of litter on the streets and the pollution in the air and water.

Overall, the rights of communities is the ninth priority. For the non-majority communities, this is the most important concern, ranking highest. Rights of communities is their vital request and serves as the foundation that all the other competencies should be based upon. Within the Kosovo Albanian community, the issue is still a serious concern. Specifically, the young people on average placed this competency as their sixth highest priority requesting, often very eloquently equal rights for all the communities in Kosovo.

Culture is the tenth priority. People are concerned about the lack of adequate places for organising cultural events. The reason why this issue received relatively high attention is due to people generally identifying “culture” with “recreational activities”. Many people are keen to preserve and promote “Kosovo culture” especially in the context of the increasing globalisation of society.

The comments in this book are solely the opinions of the people of Kosovo and do not reflect the view of OSCE or the editors. The publication is a report based on the questionnaires and discussions that were held at the community meetings and does not profess to be a quantitative or qualitative scientific based study. However, this publication can be used as a general guide for ascertaining which are the main political concerns for the average resident of Kosovo.

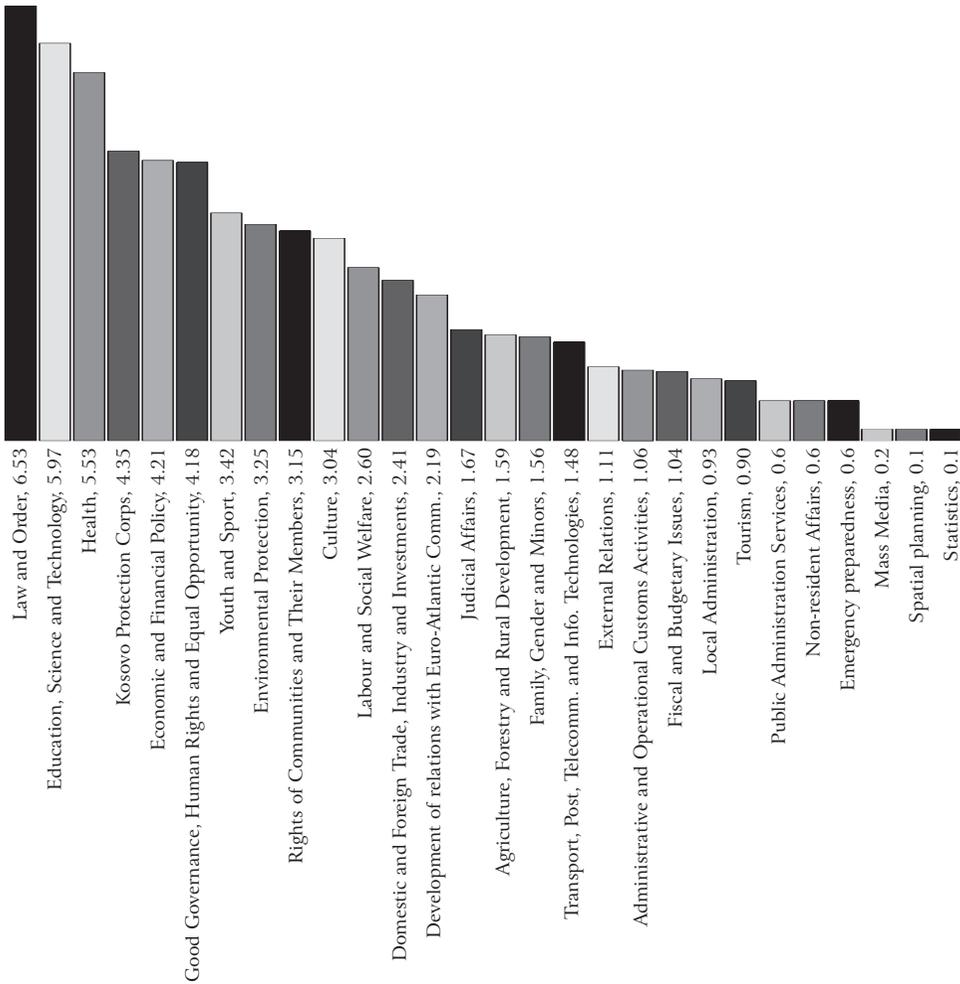
The twenty-eight responsibilities, as appear in the Constitutional Framework, are as follow:

1. Rights of Communities and their Members
2. Economic and Financial Policy
3. Fiscal and Budgetary Issues
4. Administrative and Operational Customs Activities
5. Domestic and Foreign Trade, Industry and Investments

6. Education, Science and Technology
7. Youth and Sport
8. Culture
9. Health
10. Environmental Protection
11. Labour and Social Welfare
12. Family, Gender and Minors
13. Transport, Post, Telecommunications and Information Technologies
14. Public Administration Services
15. Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development
16. Statistics
17. Spatial Planning
18. Tourism
19. Good Governance, Human Rights and Equal Opportunity
20. Non-Resident Affairs
21. Local Administration
22. Judicial Affairs
23. Mass Media
24. Emergency preparedness
25. External Relations
26. Development of Euro-Atlantic Relations
27. Law and Order
28. Kosovo Protection Corps

Priorities

During the meetings the participants received the questionnaire with the 28 areas of responsibilities of the *Constitutional Framework for a Provisional Self-Government*. They had to indicate the 10 most significant, ranking them in order of priority. To evaluate the importance of the priorities 10 points were assigned to the first one, 9 to the second, until the tenth, which received 1 point. All ratings of the 1316 questionnaires, which were filled in, were then calculated together to produce the average score (from 0 to 10) for each issue.



LAW AND ORDER

“Without a well structured system of law and order there is no democratic process.”

(Kamenicë/Kamenica resident)

Law and order is the highest concern for the people of Kosovo. It consistently appears in the top five priorities for all the ethnic communities. However, the perspective of law and order and the reason why it is a top priority differs between the Kosovo Albanian and the non-majority communities. For the Kosovo Albanian community, it is clearly felt that the observance of law and order is a basic condition for a well functioning society. The message of the meetings within the Kosovo Albanian community is quite clear, strong laws are needed in order to govern effectively and that this is the only way that independence can be achieved; law and order is the priority for the management and functioning of a state, and for building up a country. The Kosovo Serb community agrees that law and order is a basic condition for a well functioning society, but stresses in their meetings that law and order has to be improved in order to ensure greater stability. More specifically for all the non-majority communities, law and order is viewed as a measure for facilitating greater freedom of movement and a way of guaranteeing their community rights. All communities express a strong desire for an increase in law and order to create a peaceful and harmonious society where people can live freely without violence.

The strong perception is that when law and order exists, everyone understands their role and the community can then evolve. Law and order is the foundation stone of a stable future Kosovo: “There is more of a need for law rather than bread. We are starving for laws,” says a resident in Klinë/Klina. Once law and order exist, then society can focus on other issues like education and health. Often, people speak of a need to have a stronger legal basis in Kosovo. It was mentioned that this is of crucial importance for the future stability of the region. The perception is that strong law and order will bring about a Kosovo without any future problems. “Without law and order, there is no peace and no future for Kosovo, with good laws and peace, Kosovo will go towards the future,” says a resident from Kaçanik/Kaçanik.

Economic Development

Law and order is often specifically linked to economic development³ “Law and order is the precondition for economic development,” states a resident in Pejë/Peč.

Residents are concerned that an uneasy political situation clearly distracts foreign investors, and so the situation regarding unemployment will continue. Moreover, one of the consequences of having a lot of people without jobs, with nothing to do, is crime. So the vicious cycle goes on. A peaceful and law abiding society can only have a positive effect on the development of the economy.

Side effects of Crime

There is a lot of concern among people about the apparent lawless society that exists in Kosovo and how this affects people's freedom and human rights. Indeed, it is felt that only with the rule of law, can society ensure the respect of human rights and freedoms. In order to improve other aspects of life, people need at first to feel free and safe. Currently, the general perception is that crime is dominating, it is hard to ensure a free and democratic society if there are not effective and efficient institutions to protect the people of Kosovo. Specifically, people blame the lack of a central authority for the alleged non-functioning of the law.

A young man from Gjakovë/Đakovica says: “Prostitution, drugs, trafficking of people and kidnappings are rampant. Criminals are walking free in the streets”. All of these crimes were consistently raised in the community meetings.

One meeting in Malishevë/Mališevo also discussed the apparent existence of many weapons. “All weapons should be given up because as for now we do not need them and I hope we won't need them anymore,” says a woman at this meeting.

There is a huge concern that criminal activities are taking place and the consequence is the notion that the police are allowing them to happen. The lack of respect for the law is leading to corrupt groups taking over or controlling the main and relevant business activities, taking the society on a disastrous path towards anarchy. The view is that only a certain section of society is causing the main problems of criminality in Kosovo. A female shopkeeper from Glogovc/Glogovac speaks of the rise in organised crime and how owners of shops are constantly asked to pay money. The lack of a strong law is making Kosovo the road that all the crimes in the Balkans pass upon.

A women's group in Glogovc/Glogovac states that the current situation for women in their area is a growing concern. They allege there have been several cases of rape and violence against women. “Girls aren't safe in the streets,” says a woman in Gjakovë/Đakovica.

People believe that drug abuse is an imminent problem. All communities are worried regarding the consequences of this for the young generation. “The situation is alarming, if nothing is done, there will be a ruined generation of young people,” states a resident from Kamenicë/Kamenica

There was a request at some meetings to increase the legislation in connection with the workplace, specifically to protect the employee. “Workers are treated like slaves,” says one student at the University of Pristina. Other students from

³ See also chapter on Economic and Financial Policy

the University state that senior people, bosses and directors often take advantage of the vacuum of labour laws and misuse their positions. Indeed, some students feel that law and order legislation should focus on dealing with corruption. "The corruption in the big state enterprises like hospitals, KEK or the staff in the custom operations has to be stopped," says one male student.

Judicial System

A common belief is that convicted criminals are not being dealt stiff enough penalties and sensible legislation in favour of this should be introduced as soon as possible. It was regularly discussed that the police should prioritise their tasks. Most communities are under the impression that the police are concentrating more on traffic violations than on more serious crimes e.g. drugs trafficking. It was widely mentioned that a well functioning judicial system is the basis of a free society. It is also felt that judges and judicial and legal authorities should be awarded higher salaries to provide better motivation and to prevent corruption within the judicial institutions.

An independent court system, which should incorporate a strong independent appeal system, was regularly mentioned. A woman from Vitina/Viti says: "criminals should be tried by international judges." All the communities advocate more action taken to remove corrupt judges. There should be an increase in international judges and prosecutors in order to support domestic judges, who are not only partial but moreover are often threatened by the accused persons. "Judges should be monitored by the internationals," says an elderly gentleman from Skenderaj/Srbica.

A consistent proposal running through the meetings is to increase the responsibilities and competencies of the Kosovo Police Service, not just to start the capacity building process. It is deemed that cooperation with the respective communities would be easier. Lack of appropriate legislation leading to ineffectiveness of the law enforcement bodies, is a common thought. Frequently mentioned is the need to increase the salary in line with increased authority and it is also often recognised that Kosovo's police officers need more in-depth and longer training. According to a lawyer from Kamenicë/Kamenica, "low salary for police officers weakens the effectiveness of their work."

Crime Prevention

At a meeting in Gjakovë/Đakovica, discussions took place regarding the prevention of crime, in order to build confidence for the future. Education is cited as the key; more attention has to be paid in schools to teaching about the social effects of crime as well as the personal consequences for people who commit crimes. Specifically, in relation to drug use prevention, a man from Prishtinë/Priština says schools should teach of the side effects of drugs; the lack of institutions for rehabilitating people with drug habits is also pointed out.

Role of the Individual

Some communities are concerned about not understanding the law and the lack of information over the applicable law, be it Yugoslav law or UNMIK regulations. Confusion also arose over the division of competencies between KFOR, UNMIK police and KPS. "This confusion and mix up has to be clarified," says a farmer from Kamenicë/Kamenica. A Gorani from Dragash/Dragaš states: "We don't know the applicable laws".

Facts about Law and Order

- To date 4,105 basic recruits have graduated from the Kosovo Police School.
- At present 4,384 UNMIK Police officers are active in Kosovo (Cimic Report July 2001).
- The budget 2001 will enable the developing police force to operate a small but modern fleet of vehicles and provide a range of other support services (cfr. Kosovo Budget 2001).
- Juvenile delinquency is still low, but it is a growing phenomenon. Most of the crimes the 14 to 18-year-olds commit are aggressive acts, thefts, killings and raping. Contrary to the fears of many only 5% of the juveniles' crimes are drug related. During the ongoing year, an average of 50 young people between 14 and 18 years of age are in detention (UNMIK/JIAS Department of Social Welfare).
- The major offences committed in Kosovo are: arsons (28%), aggressive assaults (20%), murders (13%) and kidnapping (10%), which are more frequent in the Prishtinë/Priština and Gjilan/Gnjilane regions (cfr Cimic Reports of 2001).
- The total number of crimes/offences, between January 2000 and August 2001, is constantly around 500 per week (UNMIK/JIAS Department of Social Welfare).
- In 2001 the number of murders, arson and car theft is decreasing, whereas thefts, burglaries and assaults are increasing (UNMIK Police, Press and Public Information).
- The prison population continues to rise at an unsustainable rate. The total prison population at the end of June 2001 was 624: this means that the prisons in Kosovo will run out of space by the end of the summer (cfr. Cimic Reports 2001).
- The number of judges and other court officials will grow as the Department of Justice and the legal system mature. At the end of 2001 it is planned that there will be 52 fully functioning Courts (cfr. Kosovo Budget 2001).



EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

“Without proper education, we will not be able to develop the economy nor to serve as leaders.”

Teacher from Kaçanik/Kaçanik

The future of democracy, economy, development and general welfare in a modern and civilised society is clearly directly linked to the level of education of its citizens. The participants in the community meetings prove to be fully aware of this fundamental responsibility, ranking education as one of the top priorities and addressing it as an unequivocal message to the future authority. The future government has to invest a lot of energy to improve the current educational situation, which so far is considered to be in a very precarious state.

Education is viewed as the best tool for individual and collective development. A member of the Roma community in Gjilan/Gnjilane says: “Trade can work individually, but education needs the government.”

The desired progress and achievements in the education system, will also contribute to conquering other social problems like unemployment or criminality. Teachers have the almost unique opportunity to teach their pupils some basic rules of living together, especially working on the emotional aspect of the group dynamic.

No education, no future

“Lack of education has degraded the population, and brought a loss of awareness of our own tradition and religion.” “Education is the guarantee for employment.” “Education is the main channel through which Kosovo can build its future.” These are opinions repeatedly expressed in the community meetings. Most of the principles of a modern society, such as a respect for rule of law or economic development, are related to a properly functioning education system. “If there is a healthy education, there is also a healthy state, otherwise we will have a society dominated by chaos and disrespect,” says a school director from Kamenicë/Kamenica.

Reforms, teaching methods and equipment

“Conditions of education here in Prishtinë/Priština are not acceptable,” says a school director. “We need to implement an education plan, because our intention is to join Europe and we need to think that graduates and diplomas have to be recognised by other European countries.”

Despite the fact that the people think the difficulties in the educational system derive from many problems, people do consider the professional level of the teachers as rather low. The lack of school equipment, of adequate facilities, particularly science laboratories and information technology, libraries, furniture and playgrounds are also serious concerns. “A comprehensive assessment of the needs shall be done at the municipal level and then directly forwarded to the central authority which should take action,” says a teacher from Gjakovë/Đakovica.

In essence there is agreement that basic reforms have to be introduced, teachers’ pedagogical and didactic skills need to be improved and salaries reasonably adapted as well as modern equipment provided to schools in order to allow more dynamic and proper teaching methods. “A total revision of the curriculum is required, including reducing the number of subjects in the curriculum at high schools as well as at university level. Co-operation with students from European universities has to be pursued,” says a woman from Gjakovë/Đakovica. A young woman in Prishtinë/Priština asks all teachers and professors “to reduce the subjects and amount of lectures. We are overloaded, it is an old fashioned system, so we have to reform it. Make it simple and more precise”.

“How can the reforms be implemented if we are missing 70% of the physical space to organise proper classes?” asks a school director in Prishtinë/Priština. He adds: “Comparing our educational system with western models, we should first of all normalise the timetables so that every student can start classes at 08.00 hours and leave the school at 16.00 hours instead of working in three shifts”.

The constant request is that the working conditions of education staff should be improved, firstly by increasing the salaries of the teachers. “The salaries of teachers and professors are almost on the level of social assistance,” says a farmer from Tuxhevc. In such conditions it is difficult to request more motivation from teachers and professors, who are “really not working for money, but just because of their idealism”.

Education in rural areas

“All inhabitants should enjoy the equal right to education at all levels and in their language. There should only be a joint plan and programme for education,” says a Gorani from Globocica, Dragash/Dragaš. In all areas of Kosovo everybody should have the opportunity to receive the same level of education. As a young man in Dečan/Dečani says: “The future parliament should take any possible actions ensuring that the educational system in rural areas remains as good as in urban areas”. In fact some parents in rural areas are afraid that the level of education might not be as good in villages as in the surrounding cities. As a result they fear that their children might be marginalised, not only because of the distance between them and the nearest towns, but also because of the discrepancy in the quality of the education received. In rural areas the lack of capacity is often a reason of concern especially at secondary school level. “Youth very often are

forced to quit the education because of no incomes and sources to travel on a daily basis in town,” says a mother from Shtime/Štimlje. In the enclaves young people denounced the enormous difficulties to attend an academic institution. A student in Zubin Potok complained about the difficulties in attending: “We have been evicted from the university and forced to go to Serbia proper, where we don’t have basic conditions to work: no furniture, no computers and other facilities”. A young woman from Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, who was studying in Prishtinë/Priština says: “Now the faculty is in Blace, but since I cannot travel frequently and it’s difficult to find books, I probably will not finish my academic studies”.

Additional educational activities within and outside the schools are also needed. “The education system should start by being able to provide the parents with a new culture, by teaching them to send their children to the school, ” says an Ashkali in Podujevë/Podujevo.

Access to education

Due to the restricted number of students that can be accepted at the university, the enrolment procedures are not transparent and in some cases considered as not fair and irregular. “Corruption is rampant when it comes to enrolment in University” says a student from Gjakovë/Đakovica.

Since education is a fundamental right in a society everybody should have the same opportunity and access to facilities, including students with special needs. “The fact that we are physically handicapped doesn’t mean that we do not deserve to be educated,” states a young man from Shipol, Mitrovicë/Mitrovica. In Gjakovë/Đakovica a young student speaks of the lack of qualified teachers and finance, as well as the absence of programmes to help handicapped persons to be incorporated into every day school activities. “There is no access capabilities to schools for handicapped children, which hinders them taking part in the schools”.

Participation in education for women in rural areas appears also to be a matter for the political leaders. “The illiteracy rate is still high among young women in rural areas, this creates a natural dependence on the family, which impedes their emancipation,” says a woman from Deçan/Dečani. Education is a top priority for a Kosovo Albanian woman in Bare, Leposavić/Leposaviq, who expresses her strong concern about the very low percentage of educated women: “being uneducated at the beginning of the 21st century, I feel like I am handicapped”.

Facts about Education, Science and Technology

- The Department of Education and Science covers a major part of the public services in Kosovo. Its budget share in the Kosovo Consolidated Budget is 28%.
- Around 100 schools have been newly built and provided with furniture and equipment; more than 200 have been rehabilitated. No more classes have to be held in tents (UNMIK/JIAS Department of Education and Science).
- There are approximately 23.000 teachers, 6.000 administrative and support staff for 400,000 pupils in 800 education facilities (UNMIK/JIAS Department of Education and Science).
- Only 2.8% of Kosovo infants and young children have access to child-care facilities or to pre-schools. The compulsory age for schooling in Kosovo is now six to 15

years. The secondary school sector is large, with an enrolment of 76.000 students. The University of Prishtinë/Priština is the only public institution of higher education in Kosovo. It comprises 14 faculties and six extensions in regional municipalities (higher schools). Some 18.500 students and more than 1.600 staff study and work in the university. Special needs education is the smallest sub-sector, enrolling 8.000 students.

- The old model of nine years in primary and three years in secondary school has been changed and now the model shall be five plus four plus three years. Teachers' training will play the central role and be core for the reforms, providing the much-needed experts for implementing new curricula.
- The salary of a primary school teacher working full time is currently 291 DM per month and for a secondary school teacher 318 DM (UNMIK/JIAS Department of Education and Science).
- The illiteracy rate among the population in Kosovo (older than 10 years) is 6%, of which 83% are women. 71% of persons older than 14 years have completed elementary and high school, 9 % posses some kind of higher education (UNMIK/JIAS Department of Education and Science).

Interview with Prof. Dr. Michael Daxner
Co-Head of Department of Education and Science

What are the greatest challenges for you in reforming the education system in Kosovo?

The mind-set of the education peers has only partially changed, and the exchange of intellectual elite is still incomplete. The reforms are accepted as a necessary instrument for becoming recognized and reputable, but they are not embraced yet as a chance to change the concept of society. But there are more fundamental challenges: we need much more money, and we need it now; we must adjust teachers salaries and social structures, or we run short of qualified educators; and we must complete the school building and rehabilitation program within the next year.

Most of the people complain the education level in Kosovo is too low, would you agree to that?

Yes, I do. The level is low, and fortunately, many people understand now that they were carrying a 'life-lie', when they referred to the previous standard of education. Especially girls are discriminated, as are impaired children. Today, I would suggest that a new start is more appropriate than building on questionable educational traditions. (In the beginning of the mission, I did not see so clear into the shortcomings of the traditional education myths).

Is there an intention to privatise the University? If yes, how would you judge it?

No. If there should be proposals for new or additional private institutions, the law will provide transparent procedures.

In many community meetings people stated that the motivation of the teachers is low because they are not adequately paid. Would you agree to this?

Yes, as I said above. But we face two problems, not one: we need more teachers and they must be better qualified, this is one problem. And we must pay them adequately, otherwise the better qualified will continue brain-drain, which has already started. On the other side, we cannot leave our policy of low salaries, because it will be Kosovo revenue which must be accountable for public services from next year onwards. The international donors must help us in education and other sensitive fields.

Schools could have an important role in the building of a civil society. How would you see the possibilities and the challenges in Kosovo?

We need education not only to improve employability. A political class must be created, which will replace the images of the hero and the virtual Albanian by the image of the courageous learner and the European. The young generation is fed up by being guided through a very authoritarian and shallow regime of elderly peers, who have no real contract to the biographies of young people. I hear a lot of hidden frustration, which may well become aggressive, because it does not have the open field on which competing life-concepts can be displayed.

How would you like to see the Kosovo education system in five years from now?

In 5 years, a regional education network shall not be based on the bases of nation states, but become imbedded in a tuned regional network, where exchange of locations and specialization provides better opportunities for all ethnic groups. I trust more into the supra-national concepts than in forced integration.



HEALTH

“If you are not healthy you cannot take care of anything else.”

Young woman, Podujevë/Podujevo

A healthy population is a pre-requisite for a properly thinking society. Health is one of the responsibilities for the future government, which was very frequently raised as a top priority. The health care system is currently considered to be in a very precarious condition: lack of equipment and facilities, poor basic services and unmotivated professional staff are some reasons cited as an explanation of why there are serious concerns. “Health does not have time to wait and the rights of people on health care are endangered because of various deficiencies,” says a Gorani from Globocica. A resident of Istog/Istok expresses his concern about the fact that every day new diseases and infections are appearing, which needs immediate attention, but the lack of equipment makes it very difficult.

People also link pollution to diseases. “In the village there is no sewage system and potable water, that contributes to diseases,” says a 26-year-old medical nurse from a village near to Malishevë/Mališevo. In Plementina the garbage collection and the overfilled containers are a risky factor for the health of people, particularly for children living there.

It is said that health issues cannot be solved on an individual basis, but are one of the fundamental duties that concerns the government. It will have to take responsibility to introduce adequate measures to improve the current difficult situation. “Health is a necessary stepping stone of the forming of Kosovo and has to be one of the main priorities for the future political leaders,” says an elderly man from Sibofc I Eperm. “Health is very important for any population everywhere, in Kosovo we now have very bad sanitary conditions and lot of things should be changed. It is high time for the authority to do something, starting by state hospitals and health houses,” says a journalist in Prishtinë/Priština.

Hospitals, Clinics and Medical Staff

People are very concerned about the bad conditions of clinics, hospitals and surgeries. It is repeatedly argued that the salaries of the doctors are too low and therefore they are not fully motivated; the facilities are often overcrowded and access to the medical services in some rural areas is difficult. “Patients should be

able to book for an appointment, instead of having to queue for hours. There should be an increase of salaries for the medical staff to prevent some doctors from pressuring the patients to go to their private consulting room,” says a man in Gjilan/Gnjilane. In Kamenicë/Kamenica, there is a proposal for the establishment of an obligatory health and social insurance for employees.

A school director in Tuxhevc states: “Many things are missing, general checks are very expensive and no one has health insurance; we don’t have a permanent doctor in the village and so access to the health care is very limited and difficult”.

Of course, the current political situation affects and arguably impedes access to healthcare. Doctors should assist all people, regardless of their ethnicity or religion, in accordance with the Hippocratic oath. Unfortunately, the reality is that people, who don’t belong to the majority community, have difficulties in being accepted by Kosovo Albanian doctors. This problem of free access to health services is consequently linked to the first listed area of responsibility of the Constitutional Framework, the Rights of Communities and their members. “If we have rights as community we will have the rest of the rights,” says a Roma in Prizren. An Ashkali in Fushë Kosovë/ Kosovo Polje proposes multiethnic clinics, emphasising that Kosovo Serbs and Kosovo Albanians doctors have to work together. “When it’s possible for security guards, why should it not be possible for intellectuals?”

Private, public, health insurance

Generally, people agree that health treatment cannot become a mere business matter, that health care should not be an issue of money which is only accessible to rich people. The apparent current difficulties within the health care system leads to some treatments only being provided within private clinics. “In some private clinics and health houses you can find everything, but in public health houses everything is missing, even the most basic medication,” says a woman from Prishtinë/Priština. The belief is that there is something wrong with the system; people say that, despite the fact that the standard of health in Kosovo is very low, there are good doctors.

It is argued that the conditions in the minority areas are worse than the rest of Kosovo and that people have serious problems taking care of their health. “Our community comprises more than 3,000 people and we don’t have any medical station. We had three cases when children died, poisoned with an over dosage of anti lice treatment because of the absence of a doctor who could have prescribed the dose that is allowed to be used,” says an Ashkali from Podujevë/Podujevo.

Preventive medicine

In some meetings people raised the issue that some health problems are caused by a shortage of information. Health education in schools or, more generally, a good information campaign for the population would contribute to an improvement in the conditions of public health. Preventive medicine is a well-known, powerful, not too expensive and efficacious tool. “To improve the normal health services you don’t need only hospitals and doctors, it is also possible through normal healthy way of living, possibilities of physical exercise, health education and other preventive means,” says a man in Dobrotin.

A young man from Obiliq/Obilić says: “A Kosovo wide inoculation campaign

should be organised in the schools to eradicate some illnesses of students in advance". A woman in Pejë/Peč also emphasises the importance of educating the youth through "a health awareness raising media campaign".

A specific measure is suggested by a woman in Deçan/Dečani: "The department of public health should launch a public awareness campaign on some relevant women diseases that are well-spread in Kosovo and are currently increasing the mortality rate among women; because of lack of prevention. Women's associations could serve as a focal point for the department in order to facilitate the dissemination of information to the women in the different areas". A woman in Pejë/Peč says: "Many women are not aware of some diseases or health problems, like breast cancer for instance, that could easily be minimised and cured at an early stage, if some information was delivered to them".

Health care in rural areas

Many participants in the meetings asserted that rural areas have a lack of health services, health education and health facilities. Often espousing that on a practical level there are no hospitals, no specialist field visits (pediatricians and gynecologists), and a lack of affordable medicine, especially for people with chronic diseases. "There are no specialist in Novo Brdo," says a woman. "The nurses are not regularly paid and there isn't any staff on duty overnight. People are too poor to go to Prishtinë/Priština or Gjilan/Gnjilane just for an injection".

"As a mother, the quality of the medical services that are offered to our children in the village clinics is very important. Due to the poor economic conditions in rural areas, we do not always have the financial means to afford drugs. Therefore I hope that the future authority will take care of this vital issue trying to find a reasonable solution," says a resident from Deçan/Dečani.

Answering the question: "How is the situation in the villages?" a woman in Rahovec/Orahovac says that usually people do not have the money to pay for a visit and wait until the last moment, when their situation is really bad. "They must be really sick to visit a doctor. Otherwise they don't go anywhere, they just take a medicine they have at home, regardless whether the medicine is expired or not".



Facts about Health

- The total number of personnel working in the health sector in Kosovo is 13.610, of whom 2.100 are medical doctors, 6.200 nurses, 360 dentists, 50 pharmacists, 290 midwives and 4.610 other staff. The numbers –except for support and administrative staff- are low. In Europe, only Albania has lower doctor and nurse density than in Kosovo (UNMIK/JIAS Department of Health and Social Welfare).
- Many people in Kosovo have limited access to health services due to geographic and economic constraints. Residents of enclaves and minority areas face even greater limitations than the majority population because of security reasons and as a consequent movement restrictions (see Access to Health Care in Kosovo's Minority areas", World Health Organisation, May 2001).
- The Kosovo health care system is hospital, physician and drug oriented and less developed in primary health care and nurses. There is little local competence in health care planning, policy development and health economics (UNMIK/JIAS Department of Health and Social Welfare).
- Hospitals have to face problems with water, electricity, heating, clinical waste. The total number of staff in the hospitals is low, in particular there is an acute shortage of specialists. The supply of drugs is irregular.
- Tuberculosis incidence is high at 77 new cases per 100.000 population (UNMIK/JIAS Department of Health and Social Welfare, see also the chapter on Environmental Protection).
- Some 15% of pregnant women do not see a health worker at all before delivery and about 30% benefit from only one or two visits. Up to 50% of all deliveries take place at home without professional assistance (UNMIK/JIAS Department of Health and Social Welfare).
- Infant mortality is around 25 per 1.000 live births (UNMIK/JIAS Department of Health and Social Welfare).
- The Department for Health and Social Welfare has trained the first group of 102 doctors from all over Kosovo on Family Medicine for (CIMICREP 816, 12 July 2001).

Doctors, nurses and hospital beds in Kosovo and Europe (data from UNMIK/JIAS Department of Health and Social Welfare)

	Doctors Per 100.000	Nurses per 100.000	Hospital beds Per 100.000
Europe	346	772	728
Kosovo	139	361	278

The main health care institutions (data from UNMIK/JIAS Department of Health and Social Welfare)

Institution	Number
University Hospital	1
Regional hospitals	5
Health houses (large policlinics)	29
Ambulantas (small primary health care centres)	234
Rehabilitation centres	2
Tuberculosis hospitals	2
Institute of Public Health	7

KOSOVO PROTECTION CORPS (KPC)

Kosovo Protection Corps was the fourth priority so therefore was discussed in almost all of the meetings attended by the Kosovo Albanian community. Participants who seized the opportunity to discuss what they wanted the KPC to be as opposed to discussing what the KPC is. It was hardly ever a discussion point within the non-majority communities, whose discussions focused on the reality of their day-to-day lives as opposed to the desired wishes concerning an institution like KPC.

Facilitators of the meetings found it difficult to keep the discussion about the role of the KPC consistent with the Constitutional Framework. A man from Klinë/Klina succinctly states the course of the majority of the meetings: “KPC is not a priority here as a civilian force but rather as an army as soon as the conditions for that exist.” In fact in almost all of the meetings the participants would only speak about the role of the KPC within the context of it being an army. The majority spoke about how KPC could have a role in ensuring law and order in Kosovo and that it should become a regular army. Most insisted that it should have the appropriate financial means and legal power and status to fulfil this. “They represent the army of Kosovo,” says one young man from Skenderaj/Srbica. A student from Fushë Kosovë/ Kosovo Polje states that he “expected KPC to be an army of Kosovo and order to be enforced by them.” Regularly participants reminded the facilitators that the KPC has been a successful army previously and that this had legitimised their role, consequently they should be treated and respected in this way. Moreover it was often mentioned that the international community should play a role in training and helping to professionalise the KPC as an army. Usually the notion of having a professional army for Kosovo was inextricably linked with the issue of independence. A woman from Vitina/Viti says: “There is no country without an army”. A student from Pejë/Peç says: “If the state does not have an army, for me, it is not very reasonable.”

On some rare occasions, the discussion about KPC stayed within its remit as a civilian emergency preparedness team. The points raised were that they should be provided with more equipment and training in how to deal with potential emergency situations. “If there is a flood in Gjakovë/Đakovica, how could they

get there quickly and save people?” asks a schoolteacher from Prishtinë/Priština. Concern is also expressed at the low salaries received by members of the KPC, and that this has an effect on motivation of staff, considering that society is asking them to risk their lives in fire and floods for the good of others.

A Kosovo Albanian man from Dragash/Dragaš states that KPC should also be composed of other ethnicities. This is echoed by a female Kosovo Albanian doctor from Prishtinë/Priština who says: “I would say in KPC should be included all other minorities, it does not matter who they are. We don't have to be selfish and only have Albanians in KPC, all other groups have to be integrated, this is the way of creating multi-ethnic society.”

Facts about Kosovo Protection Corps

- The Kosovo Protection Corps was officially constituted upon the inauguration of 46 key leaders on January 21st, 2000. KPC consists of an active corps of 3.000 members and an auxiliary branch of 2.000. Ten percent of its members should be recruited among the minority communities (KPC Training Programme, International Organisation for Migration IOM). The present number of KPC members is 4.510 (CIMC Reports, July 2001); the majority of the 500 slots for minorities still remain to be filled (see www.un.org/kosovo).
- KPC prepares proposals for training under the guidance of regional IOM staff. 42 projects have been approved of which 22 are completed. The KPC spent 125.000 man-hours in order to complete the projects. They have been successful in undertaking joint projects with various humanitarian Organisations operating in Kosovo (KPC Training Programme, IOM).
- The monthly average salary of an active KPC member is 292 DM (see www.un.org/kosovo).

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL POLICY

“The economy is the fuel for all other branches of a society.”

Woman from Ferizaj/Uroševac

Economic and financial policy was a recurring topic for discussion in the meetings. It was unanimously agreed that the state of Kosovo’s economy is a significant cause for concern. Economics is a complex issue and there were some diverse viewpoints on how to deal practically with the issues. The majority of people with whom the issue was discussed, favoured a fairly rapid form of privatisation; but there are still many people who advocate the resurrection of state owned enterprises. Both methods being cited as a panacea for unemployment which in all meetings was discussed as the major social consequence of the economic policies at the moment. All the community members advocate that a healthy economy goes hand in hand with a healthy democracy and that it is of crucial importance for the young people and for the future of Kosovo. An Ashkali male from Podujevë/Podujevo states: “The economic and financial policy implemented so far has failed to satisfy the population.”

A destroyed economy

The re-starting of the economic sector of Kosovo “is not easy, as everything is still destroyed” says a male student from Skenderaj/Srbica. “Economy is at zero level” and that for a long period it has been “weak and underdeveloped”, says a young man from Ferizaj/Uroševac. Many similar comments were expressed at the community meetings. Many people argue that if it was not for the current politicisation of their society, this would be the number one concern for the vast majority of the population. “Only the black market is functioning,” says a woman from Gjakovë/Đakovica. The general view of the destroyed economy, is that high unemployment and lack of modern technology is crippling any form of constructive free market. Lack of modern technology is often stated as an essential problem. The recognition that Kosovo’s economy is in a transitional phase is clear, and comments demonstrate that society is aware of the inevitable chaos that occurs and the negative side effects. An economist from Kamenicë/Kamenica says: “Some groups can create mafia styled cliques.” And a woman

from Dragash/Dragaš says: “[The] creation of a strong economy and financial system would stop corruption and society could go in the right direction.”

A good economy helps other aspects of society as well as serving as a precondition for a generally healthy society with a positive effect on law and order. “In order to achieve good results in every field its necessary to have a good economic situation,” states a male technician from Pejë/Peč.

Unemployment

At a meeting in Pejë/Peč, the high unemployment in the municipality was discussed. This is due to the fact that major factories in this area are no longer operating. “We are in urgent need of employment and income as 6,000 people in Peje are on the streets,” says a woman at this meeting. A man from Zubin Potok states how high the unemployment rate is. He says there is no production because of a lack of raw material. He states: “Providing people with the opportunity to earn a source of income and to raise their standard of living, will significantly raise their level of independence.” A woman from Štrpce/Shtërpçë says economic progress could help the process of reconciliation. “Economic development would solve many problems, the economy between different communities would bring people together.” At this meeting Kosovo Serbs requested more investment in non majority communities.

The side effects of unemployment are well known: “social deviation” says a labourer in Kaçanik/Kaçanik “bad health” says another man from Prizren. It is strongly felt that young people are particularly affected by unemployment, often leading to social tensions and contributing to alcohol abuse and domestic violence. “In the brain of an unemployed man, the devil will put his eggs,” says a man from Kaçanik/Kaçanik.

In Isniq, a village in Deçan/Dečani municipality, the participants explain that the rate of unemployment is very high as most of the inhabitants used to be employed in agriculture before the conflict. Now very few are currently working due to a lack of equipment and seeds, and the high cost of labour. A women’s group in Deçan/Dečani says: “The vast majority of the women in rural areas are unemployed” despite the fact that many have completed schooling and finished university education. A woman in Gjakovë/Đakovica says unemployed women “are sometimes facing a social marginalisation and losing independence in the family because of our unemployment.” The women from Deçan/Dečani suggest that elected officials should encourage small-scale women’s initiatives in rural areas, which could create jobs and help the economy develop at village level. “Most women have good ideas but need financial support for start up of activities. Elected officials should develop a support programme for individual women entrepreneurs.”

How to kick start the economy

Many people advocate the reactivation of the state owned factories. At a meeting in Skenderaj/Srbica participants discussed the opening of the big factories. An unemployed male participant says: “All of us were working in Trepca; this is the job we know.” The men of Skenderaj/Srbica believe that immediate action has to be on providing job opportunities and unanimously agree that this should be done through the process of reactivating the socially owned companies. A notion echoed by a youth in Podujevë/Podujevo: “Reactivate industry

giants.”

This concept is also advocated by a group of men in Vushtrri/Vučitrn who believe that to revive the economy in the first place, the giants should be opened. The examples they give are Trepca, Feronike, EXTRA, KEK, and Llamkos etc.

The other train of thought calls for privatisation as soon as possible, in order to create a more productive economic system. A woman from Istog/Istok says: “Privatisation is so necessary.” A man in Pejë/Peč states that the way to go forward is not by adopting an economic policy which takes Kosovo back to the old system. He says: “Efforts should focus on a modern future-oriented economy, not old style factories.” Many people say future fiscal policy should be in line with western models. “The desired outcome is a European model of economy for Kosovo,” states a young man from Ferizaj/Uroševac. A man from Dragash/Dragaš says: “Economic policy should be based on privatisation and free market.” Socially owned property and business can often lead to large bureaucratic organisations where no one has any sense of responsibility, which in turn affects the motivation of the workers. An economist in Kamenicë/Kamenica states: “I don’t agree that keeping state owned property means workers will take better care of the property. Socially owned property is everyone’s, but in terms of disposal/alienation, it is no one’s”

A female nurse from Gjakovë/Đakovica wants more legislation on privatisation “which will transform state property into private property.” A NGO representative, also from Gjakovë/Đakovica, says: “If we have transformation of state property into private property, then potential investors will invest freely, having a positive effect on unemployment.”

There is a widespread belief that the newly elected authority should stimulate economic development by supporting the creation of small and medium enterprises. Micro loans for supporting small businesses would be a way of fostering small entrepreneurs; bank systems should offer business loans. A woman from Podujevë/Podujevo says that slowly donors should be replaced by investors.

A woman in Štrpce/Shtërpçë says more investment and attention should be paid to small local businesses. Elected officials should “find markets for the products of the communities”. A man from Deçan/Dečani region says a programme should be designed at a central level for the development of micro business; and at municipal level, a plan should be adopted to ensure a maximum use of natural resources available in the region.

It was generally felt that there are a number of professional and business experts in Kosovo who could contribute greatly to the economy. It was mentioned that often these people may not be able to speak English and are therefore losing positions to younger, less experienced people. “People with professional experience are fired just because they don’t speak English while inexperienced ones with English are hired,” says a student from Gjakovë/Đakovica. And a resident from Kaçanik/Kaçanik says: “We have a great potential of economic and human resources.”

It was also felt that society should try to encourage Kosovo business people, who currently work abroad, to return as well as encouraging people with professional skills to stay. A resident from Pejë/Peč says elected officials should encourage and activate the scientific potential that already exists here in Kosovo and

try and motivate those people to stay. And a woman from Kaçanik/Kaçanik says experts on economic development and financial matters should be employed.

Co-operation with foreign companies

"The lack of capital which is connected directly with limited foreign investments, is a problem," says one person in Gjakovë/Đakovica. At almost every meeting where this was discussed, people were very concerned about how to attract foreign investors, and were fully aware that the current political situation is an impediment. Investors need security. Without trust and guarantees no foreign capital will come to Kosovo.

A youth from Kaçanik/Kaçanik says: "Without reasonable economic and financial policy as a framework, no western enterprise will invest money in Kosovo."

"We have many factories here but not investments from the European Union," says a woman from Gjakovë/Đakovica.

Taxation

Overall, there is a majority view that taxes need to be paid and a general viewpoint that this is a pre-requisite to a strong economy. A mechanic from Prizren says: "Nobody pays taxes". Often it was said people should pay taxes and respect laws. A teacher from Vitina/Viti states: "I think Kosovo should not be the tax haven as it is called now. I think people should pay more taxes. I think people should pay their obligation in order to have a strong economy." A woman in Prishtinë/Priština says: "There should be more extensive taxation policies, like taxes on the wealthy".

When value added tax (VAT) is mentioned, the consensus is that it should be revised rather than burden the consumer with taxes. A woman from Vitina/Viti says: "It is too early because prices have increased and this is not fair."

Facts about Economic and financial policy

- Composition of Estimated Revenue (500 million DM) for the Kosovo Budget 2001 should be composed of 61% Taxes, 32% Donor Grants and 7% Fees (Central Fiscal Authority, 20th June 2001).
- Estimated Taxes by types of Tax (comprising a total 303.9 million DM) are 29% VAT, 27% taxes from commercial exercises, 17% from sales, 15% customs, 9% presumptive, 2% property, 1% hotel, food and beverage taxes (Central Fiscal Authority, 20th June 2001).
- Kosovo General Government Expenditure Budget foresees for Health and Social Security 35%, for Education and Science 24%, for the Justice sector 9%, for Emergency Preparedness 6%, the Municipalities are receiving 6%, Utilities cost 5%, the Public Services 4%, Transport and Infrastructure 4%, and other expenditures 7% (Central Fiscal Authority, 20th June 2001).
- The energy, water and waste disposal sectors suffer from years of neglect in maintenance and investments in physical infrastructure and human capital. Substantial parts of the system are approaching the end of their useful life. The institutional structure is inadequate to support the operation, management or financing of these services (UNMIK/JIAS Department of Reconstruction).

GOOD GOVERNANCE, HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

“Only if we have good government can we ensure equal treatment of every person, a fair and decent behaviour of the state towards every citizen and guarantee human rights.”

Student from Gjakovë/Đakovica

Good governance, respect of human rights, equal opportunities can lead to sustainable peace in Kosovo. This competency ranks sixth for the people of Kosovo. It is recognised that these concepts are the basis for participation in political and public life, and help to ensure the implementation of democratic principles. According to a woman from Leposavić/Leposaviq: “Good governance could be the key of many social, economic and political problems.”

The common theme running through the meetings in all communities was that with good governance, human rights and equal opportunity would inevitably follow. Good governance is the pre-requisite condition of human rights and equal opportunity. A woman from Podujevë/Podujevo states: “There is a connection between the terms... if we have good governance then we will also have equal rights and opportunities without any discrimination.”

Human Rights

The non-majority communities view this as an area which particularly refers to their situation, especially with reference to freedom of movement. A civil society actor from Štrpce/Shtërpçë says: “Serbs are deprived of their rights. No respect for basic human rights in Kosovo as regards to Serbs. A lack of freedom of movement and our right to property has been violated.” The need for equal rights for minorities is echoed by all ethnicities within Kosovo. A Roma male from Istog/Istok says: “All communities should have equal rights and be equally responsible within the law.” And a female Kosovo Albanian from Vushtrri/Vučitrn states: “Good governance should be equal governance, more rights for minorities and freedom of movement for all communities.”

Equal Access to Education and Work

The restriction of freedom of movement runs parallel to equal access to education and work for the non-majority communities within Kosovo. People do not enjoy basic equal opportunities, like access to employment. "This is due to a non-existent freedom of movement," says an internally displaced Kosovo Serb in Plementina.

The lack of a meritocracy within society, and the absence of equal opportunities is also a key concern. An unemployed woman from Gjakovë/Đakovica says: "Good governance is supposed to represent all segments of the society but here this does not happen, because there are people who have more opportunities than the others."

Whenever this subject was elaborated on in the community meetings, a focus was the inequitable treatment of women. Very often women took this opportunity to discuss the lack of possibilities for women and the lack of representation of women in the democratic process.

"Females should have rights in every field," states a young mother from Malishevë/Mališevo.

Not surprisingly, the general consensus was that the participation of women in the decision-making processes should be increased both in local and central governance. The women say that many issues governmental authorities deal with, especially human rights, would be easier to discuss if women had some power. Until the authorities appear to recognise and speak to women, the majority of women and especially those from rural areas, will feel underrepresented.

A female teacher from Glllogovc/Glogovac argues that respect for human rights and equal opportunities can only be achieved through the inclusion of women in all spheres of life. "Giving more space for women involvement, the respect for human rights will be achieved and transmitted, because women are like a transmission chain of values."

Also women clearly do not want just to be represented but to have the opportunity to represent. A social worker from Glllogovc/Glogovac says: "It is dangerous to exclude women; if women are excluded from governance then democratisation of Kosovo's society will not work." A lack of respect for women's rights is the dominant message of many discussions regarding equal opportunities within the sphere of good governance.

Accountability of officials

There is a distinct view that governing authorities should be made more accountable to the people, not only in regard to budget and policy decisions but also in connection with employment of staff. An increase in transparency of governing bodies would lead to more respect from the population. "Without transparent practices at municipal or national level, citizens are more and more reluctant to pay taxes and there is no possibility to build up a modern state in Kosovo," says an engineer from Deçan/Dečani. At a meeting in Gjakovë/Đakovica, participants felt strongly that there should be increased financial audits in state owned companies and municipal authorities. They said that courts should be used for grievance procedures if irregularities are discovered.

It is often felt that politicians do not listen to the people who have elected them, which can lead to resentment. As a mother from Vitina/Viti says: "The

voice of the people should be heard because the people have elected those who govern". Generally people are concerned, that the bad practices of the past will continue. People of all communities want an efficient and less bureaucratic government, where the administrative staff are professionals working in positions earned by merit. An unemployed male from Leposavić/Leposaviq states: "The former governance was too centralised, old fashioned and less efficient." A student from Malishevë/Mališevo says there is a "need for a more efficient and less bureaucratic government, also the governance should not be a corrupted one." A fellow student from Gjakovë/Đakovica says there are "too many unqualified persons appointed to administrative positions." A young technician from Mitrovicë/Mitrovica hopes that "lawful institutions, adequate and professional people in key positions" will be the result of a democratic and integrated Kosovo.

Role of Civil Society

"An efficient government collaborates with the organs of the civil society," states a shopkeeper from Podujevë/Podujevo. There is a belief within the community as a whole that Good Governance should involve and stress the collaboration with civil society branches like non-governmental organisations. An authority should work efficiently and co-operate with everybody inside the legal frame no matter who they are; indeed generally the view is that government co-operation with civil society actors would lead to greater efficiency and would also facilitate participation by more people.

According to an unemployed female from Leposavić/Leposaviq "ordinary people should have active participation in core administrative structures." She also says: "Individuals, either by themselves or collectively, should participate directly and more actively in the process of democratisation."

Facts about Good Governance, human rights and equal opportunity

- In less than two years more than 1.000 international and local non governmental organisations were registered in Kosovo. Their activities range broadly from protection of human rights and democratic development to social safety, economic development and environment protection. More than 300 were registered as public benefit organisations entitling them to tax and customs fees exemptions. Some of these have however already lost their public benefit status, failing to meet the reporting requirements.
- The civil society organisations have a vital and viable role to play facilitating inclusion and participation of the diverse Kosovo communities to prevent citizen's and communities isolation from newly established local and central governmental institutions.

YOUTH AND SPORT

“A country with such a numerous youth has to take serious the responsibility for its young people.”

Student in Kamenicë/Kamenica

The future of the young people in Kosovo is on the mind of many as the lively discussion in numerous meetings show. Kosovo has in fact an extremely high percentage of young people among the population compared to other areas in the region.⁴

The perception of the future for the youth of Kosovo is for many uncertain; the present also does not appear healthy. Young people everywhere complain “they have nothing to do” and that they “are bored”. On the other hand they wish to participate in the creation of Kosovo’s future; they want to be heard. The following chapter summarises the concerns expressed by the young and not so young people at the community meetings. The discussion often focused around the subject of sport in relation to youth, since these two responsibilities of the Provisional Self-Government are put together in the Constitutional Framework.

The Voice of the Youth

“Greater chances should be given to the youth,” says a student in Štrpce/Shtërpçë. Indeed young people feel neglected by the authorities. A student in Kamenicë/Kamenica wants those in power “to invest in all fields concerning youth, like education, in order to prepare young people for a professional life.”

“Every town should have a space reserved for the youth. The elected officials have to consult more with us. Now we are only passive recipients of their decisions,” says a youth group in Skenderaj/Srbica.

Young and old are concerned by the emerging delinquency among young people, as a result of lack of opportunities, and the high rate of those who leave school or do not enrol in activities. A young man from Gjilan/Gnjilane wants the government “to create programmes for young people to prevent them from turning to crime.”

“Unfortunately many young people have to abandon studies in order to support their families,” says a young person from Kamenicë/Kamenica. A youth

⁴ The youth between 15 and 25 years of age in Kosovo is 25% of the total population; 50% of Kosovars are less than 22 years of age (UNMIK/IAS Department of Youth and Sport).

group from Bishatzhin, near Gajakova/Đakovica, says: "Youth should be treated properly, all energy should be dedicated to studies and not to sell cigarettes in the street. If young people finish education they can then find proper employment, for that reason the schools have to be improved".

Money and efforts are devoted to the wrong cause according to a headmaster from Kamenicë/Kamenica who says "there have been more investments into sport than in education" and a student from the Tuxhevc village near Kamenicë/Kamenica states, "the educational system needs more investments".

But young people want more than just be kept busy in order not to misbehave "We need activities, which would help us to promote the understanding of broader cultural issues," say Roma and Ashkali youth in Rahovec/Orahovac.

The situation for youth all over Kosovo is far from being ideal, but the situation seems to be desolate in the villages and rural areas. "There is nothing to do, therefore the young people are leaving the villages," says a young worker in Gjilan/Gnjilane. "The government should invest in youth activities in villages to prevent all the young people leaving for the cities".

Youth and Sport

"A strong and healthy youth is the future of Kosovo," states a young man from Skenderaj/Srbica. A universal belief is the positive educational benefits of sport. A mother from Obiliq/Obilić wants "all kind of sport activities to be promoted, it would help young people to learn about non-discrimination". Another woman in the same meeting points out that "through sport young people learn the concept of fair play, which will guide them throughout their lives".

A student from Pogradje, near Gjilan/Gnjilane, says: "If young people have the opportunity to play sports, they will not get involved in drug use, drug dealing, drinking alcohol and criminal activities". And a group of youngsters in Fushë Kosovë/ Kosovo Polje are convinced that "if they were more sport activities, the young people would be taken off the streets. Through sport youth will develop healthier".

It appears that there is a general lack of available space for children and teenagers to gather after school and during the holidays. "During the school-holidays, a lot of young people are hanging out with nothing to do for two months and we are forbidden to use the playgrounds of the school," says a young person in Fushë Kosovë/ Kosovo Polje. "Now that the schools are closed, we can only walk up and down the main road. We need parks and more sport activities" was the unanimous concern of the youth gathered in a meeting in Skenderaj/Srbica.

The young people from all of Kosovo want to see from the future government investments in premises, in sport activities, in sport associations, because they "need activities for the youth and not more coffee shops" says a student in Novobërdë/Novo Brdo

Enclaves

Apart from the general problem of remoteness which many young villagers experience, the youth in the enclaves also strongly have the feeling of being locked up in small places with little opportunities to go somewhere else. "What can we, the youth in the enclaves do?" asks a young Kosovo Serb in Silovo, Gjilan/Gnjilane. "We are two-hundred young people and we have no playground, no football fields, no sport halls," says a Kosovo Serb youth from Donja Bornica,

Prishtinë/Priština.

“It would be good to connect young people from the enclaves through sport competitions, because by socialising with other young people one could forget reality,” say students from Kusce, Gjilan/Gnjilane.

Facts about Youth and Sport

- The youth of Kosovo between 15 and 25 years of age in Kosovo, estimated to be a total of 500.000, is 25% of the total population of about 2.000.000 people. 50% of Kosovars are younger than 22 years of age (UNMIK/JIAS Department of Youth).
- There are more than 150 youth groups and 58 youth centres, over 30 international non government organisations, together with the UNMIK/JIAS Department of youth, UNDP and OSCE are working for and with young people in Kosovo (UNMIK/JIAS Department of Youth)
- Students commonly have lifetime experience of tobacco and alcohol use. Experience of cannabis use among school students is much lower (4.4%) than the use of the legal drugs (tobacco 29.7% and alcohol 24.5%). Lifetime prevalence of heroin use is 0.2% and the same rate is the registered for use of ecstasy. Of particular note are high levels of experience of pharmaceutical drug used by school students in Kosovo, a lifetime of 8.8% was reported (see Substance Use and the Young People of Kosovo”, Report of the WHO/UNICEF Rapid Assessment and Response programme (April/May 2001).
- Juvenile delinquency in Kosovo is still much lower than the average Western European countries. According to the UNMIK/JIAS Department for Social Welfare, the cause for the growing delinquency among young people are many, surely post traumatic stress disorder and disrupted families as consequences of the conflict. Young people are less afraid of the police and the judiciary system than they had been in the past, there is more money circulating than before, the society has become in very short time more permissive than it was. There is need for prevention programmes, social worker and educational personnel have to be trained. When the young people get out of prison there is no probation period to follow up. But a new law on juvenile justice has been drafted and is near to completion.

Interview with Driton Lajci ***CO-Head JIAS Department of Youth***

How is the Youth Department organised?

53 Kosovars work for the department and 3 internationals. Of the 53 local members of staff 30 work in the municipalities as Youth Officers.

What are the main areas of your activities?

I am a fanatic for defending the concept of youth, the youth is an intrinsic part of society. The first aim of the department was to develop its institutional capacity, only then, when we have the tools to work with, can we start to focus on the serious problems.

What are the problems for the Youth of Kosovo?

Youth and Employment, Youth and Health, Attitudes towards young women, Youth and Crime, Social integration of minorities in society

Social integration of minorities into society? How?

During the Youth Week in the year 2'000, Kosovo Serbs from Northern Mitrovicë/Mitrovica joined with Kosovo Albanians from the South in an activity to paint the bridge. Also, the directorate of Youth and Sport in the Council of Europe will be organising a seminar in October for all ethnicities.



Are the Youth interested in politics?

It is a passive participation. I would like to see the Central Election Commission considering having a 30% quota for young people on the candidates list. Why not? Especially considering the high percentage of youth within the population. There is not enough responsibility from the Political Parties to consider young people in their decision-making processes.

What legislation would you like to see adopted in the future government regarding Youth Policy?

There has to be a law passed which considers youth issues and provides sustainable allocation of resources. A decentralised institution for young people has to be formalised so that in all areas there is somewhere for the youth to go.

Where do you see the Youth in the next 5 years?

I think that in five years time, the young people of Kosovo will be having a difficult time. Currently, many are working within the UNMIK structure or other international organisations and have a relatively good life. As the Kosovarisation process continues and the international community leaves, the economic position of the Youth will change.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

“Filthiness must disappear. I wish Kosovo tidy.”

28-year-old women from Suharekë/Suva Reka

One of the first and most striking aspects for every foreigner coming to Kosovo is the amount of litter on the streets of every town and village, along the roadsides and in the fields. The countryside of Kosovo seems spoilt by garbage and the life in urban centres is made unpleasant by the tangible pollution and dust. It is surprising, therefore, that the protection of the environment was ranked only eighth among the community concerns and was in most meetings not even mentioned. However, those who take the issue on -- mostly young people and women — seem to be truly worried about the environmental future of Kosovo and often request extreme remedies.

Litter

What worries people most, when it comes to environmental damage is the aesthetic dimension, since, as a 21 year-old man from Suharekë/Suva Reka says: “It is self-evident that big towns, small towns, villages and rivers in Kosovo suffer from rubbish.”

“Rubbish is all over the place. There are no appropriate waste disposal locations. Even the rivers are dirty,” says a youngster in Štrpce/Shtërpçë. “There are no containers in Novo Brdo and the wind spreads the rubbish all over,” says another. These are some of the recurrent complaints. “We want to have a clean environment. No rubbish in the streets because we can get infections,” says a 19-year-old law student from Prishtinë/Priština.

Pollution

One only has to view the power plant near the town of Obiliq/Obilić to know that it does not come as a surprise that people living nearby suffer from it. “An urgent problem is the pollution created by the power plant in Obiliq/Obilić. I am only 20 years old and do not feel well, I have lung problems. Living in Fushë Kosovë/ Kosovo Polje is a disaster because of this pollution,” says one man.

Not only in towns and cities but also in the rural areas, people believe they are facing tremendous health problems due to the high level of pollution. Ground water and small rivers are polluted which affects inhabitants of rural areas directly, because often there is not proper drinking water and fields where veg-

etables grow are polluted lament farmers in a village near Dečan/Dečani.

Participants from the all corners of Kosovo complain about polluted drinking water. "Its dirtiness influences health of the villagers," says a woman in Malishevë/Mališevo.

"In the villages there are no official dumpsites, which is one of the most important issues for the municipality to handle. The uncollected and rotting rubbish and the dirty drinking water result in serious health problems for the population," state a group of citizens from the Suharekë/Suva Reka area.

Remedies

Perhaps many of the suggested solutions to repair the disastrous environmental situation in Kosovo seem obvious. Or not, since little seems to be done?

"No matter if in villages or town, people wish more containers distributed in inhabited areas and far from where children play," say women in Obiliq/Obilić, who want to see functioning collection systems, proper litter disposal sites, more street cleaners and to be appropriately paid to be better motivated in doing their job.

Residents in Novobërdë/Novo Brdo say: "The reservoir of the sewage system should be removed from the middle of the town to the periphery. The pipes are frequently congested and no one cleans them".

In Malishevë/Mališevo a woman would like the streets to be repaired and covered with asphalt, which would reduce significantly the dust in the air.

But what people want most is for others to take a real interest in their common homeland. "I am concerned because we don't protect the environment. Kosovo has a beautiful countryside and could be a paradise," says a 55-year-old teacher from Pejë/Peč. The first step to improve the environmental situation has to be a change in the behaviour of individuals. "This aspect has to be taken more serious by the people," say a 36-year-old technician from Gjilan/Gnjilane. "It should be much cleaner around us, we should not throw rubbish all around," states a 37-year-old mother from Rahovec/Orahovac worried about her children's health.

For the 34-year-old female driver from Rahovec/Orahovac "this our environment, we live and work in it. We have to protect it". She is supported by people like the 18-year-old student from Gjilan/Gnjilane who wants to "have a clean environment" and says "we must be ready to take this on."

"Citizens have to protect the environment. When the environment is healthy, all are healthy," says a 36-year-old financial advisor from Dečan/Dečani. Women from Istog/Istok say that to reach this level of awareness "people have to be educated about the importance of environmental protection and informed about the possibilities of their contribution."

Although it may appear obvious that the environment has to be protected through individual behaviour and action, much of the responsibility for a cleaner and less polluted environment is left with the authorities. "Actions should be taken by the government," says a 41-year-old women from Peje/Pec. A 27-year-old medical nurse from Suharekë/Suva Reka voices the ideas of many when she says "more work is needed to be done. Competent organs have to be appointed and those who do not respect the rules, and litter should be punished."

Fining those who do not respect the environment was suggested often: "We

have to be engaged as much as possible in maintaining our environment or otherwise we will be covered by rubbish. All those who do not take proper care of their refuse deserve punishment,” says a 43-year-old female worker in Prizren.

“We live in the most polluted environment in Europe. I want that as soon as possible serious steps to be undertaken by the authorities,” a 48-year-old female judge from Prishtine/Pristina states while an environment protection officer from Suharekë/Suva Reka recommends “regulations on waste management”.

A group of men and women from Zvečan/Zvečan discussing the environmental situation in Kosovo suggest that if the economic situation was more prosperous and the population was better off, the people would take more interest in the environment and its protection.

Facts on Environmental Protection

The state of health of the environment in Kosovo has been analysed by KFOR. According to these studies, the situation of the environment in Kosovo is extremely bad. The main problems are:

- Generally the garbage collection system needs significant improvement throughout Kosovo. Problems are the lack of garbage trucks in some areas, but also the underestimation of the importance of environmental protection and waste sorting among the general population. Inadequate management of solid waste
- Unauthorised disposal areas
- Presence of war rubble, car wrecks, refrigerators and similar solid waste
- No adequate regulations on urbanisation, sewage and water system
- Polluting industrial plants life and refuse nearby settlements
- Missing decontamination of military locations and material such as underground bunkers, unexploded ordinances, radioactive material
- Emissions of fumes, dust and gas by industrial plants
- Destroyed natural parks and green areas, uncontrolled cutting of trees
- Uncontrolled use of polluting fertilisers
- Radioactive refuses



RIGHTS OF COMMUNITIES AND THEIR MEMBERS

“They should be equal with us, because they are born here and should be able to live in their homeland.”

Kosovo Albanian Computer Technician in Dragash/Dragaš

It is not a surprise that all the meetings held with the non-majority communities, the “Rights of the Communities and their members” is ranked as the highest priority. Also, a certain number of majority representatives see the protection of minorities and granting all ethnic groups the same right as, as one young Kosovo Albanian woman voices it, a “sign of democracy”.

Some of the meetings with members of non-majority were held in a tense atmosphere. The OSCE Democratisation Officer was confronted with the many frustrations built up against the international community fuelled by unfulfilled promises or unmet expectations. However, most of the time the women and men enjoy discussing the issues which concern them and looking for possible solutions. Kosovo Serb, Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian participants constantly express their disappointment that their community was not involved in the drafting of the Constitutional Framework.

Kosovo Serb participants often stated their frustration with the Kosovo Serb politicians who they say have failed to represent truly the needs of “their people”. A woman in Zvečan/Zveçan says they “do not know how their people are suffering.”

Listening to the participants of the non-majority communities who live in enclaves or other restricting circumstances, it becomes clear that most of their concerns are linked to Kosovo Albanians accepting their rights. Even if in some rare cases the individual or the group has ranked another area of responsibility as the first, the issue is always intrinsically connected to the particular situation of being a minority. For example a Serbian youth group in Silovo, Gjilan/Gnjilane, selected “Youth and Sport” as top priority, stating that “more sport activities would help the young people to forget their reality”.

Freedom of Movement

Perhaps the gravest and most frustrating aspect of the current situation for many ethnic communities is the restriction in the freedom to move out of their

neighbourhoods, villages or enclaves. Besides the psychological effect of living in a ghetto and being in danger when leaving, it fundamentally affects all other aspects of these communities' life. As a man in Zvečan/Zvečan states: "It is unacceptable that a woman has to be transported to the hospital in an armoured vehicle to deliver her baby."

People do not feel safe entering an area where they are not the majority population. Travelling around Kosovo becomes an undesired adventure. An example for many similar situations is given by a woman from Zubin Potok: "Security is a problem since the road passes the Albanian village of Cabra and we are afraid that something might have been placed on the road. So we are always watching out. That is the way we travel – like fools. There is no problem with the Cabra residents, but we are afraid that someone else can access the road through the village".

Education, Use of Language and Culture

Parents are worried about the education for their children. In many smaller places the schools provide only for primary education. To receive advanced education would mean to commute into or through what many people consider as unsafe areas. For the Kosovo Serb children in enclaves, the alternative could be leaving for the larger communities in the north of Kosovo or for Serbia, while other non-Kosovo Albanian minorities have not such a possibility.

Any discussion about education leads inevitably to the use of the language. "The majority has the possibility of education in their own language, while our children don't enjoy the same right" is a very common statement among parents from non-majority communities. A woman from Glogovac/Glogovac agrees saying: "All communities should have the right to use their language." Both limited freedom of movement and the restrictive use of language make participation in the wider cultural life difficult, if not impossible.

Health

Health care is clearly connected to the broader field of freedom of movement and other basic rights, such as the use of language. In most enclaves the health facilities are basic, like in all villages. Specialised treatment demands that patients go to a larger city. Villagers and displaced members of minorities in the Dragash/Dragaš area explain, that for a member of the majority population this is merely an inconvenience, but for everyone else, neither the journey nor the stay would be safe. If they were to approach the hospital in Prizren, an inability to speak Albanian would make communication with the medical staff almost impossible. Access to proper health care is perceived as a fundamental right but also in many cases an urgency, especially for elderly people "who cannot go to hospitals or doctors when they need to," says a man in Zvečan/Zvečan.

Displaced People

Among the internally displaced communities the hope for a better future seems very low, especially for those who have now lived for more than two years in collective centres such as Plementina, Obiliq/Obilić. To return to their land, their houses and repossess their belongings is for many the pre-condition for any further discussion. Going back home and feeling safe at home is what many demand and see as their basic right and it has not been met.

Expectations from the Politicians

People do not expect miracles, but hope that politicians, will at least implement the written law. Nothing has to be invented, "everything is perfectly written in the Constitutional Framework but it is necessary to implement it," says a Bosniac from Istog/Istok. A woman from Leposavić/Leposaviq speaks for many others when saying: "We need a transparent and just legal system".

"The government has the power to isolate individuals and groups who violate the basic human rights of others," says a man in Zvečan/Zveçan while a Serb resident of Kamenicë/Kamenica says: "More effective laws have to guarantee order to enjoy freedom of movement. It is important that the new institutions comply with international standards."

Hope in the International Community

However, a lot of hope is placed with the international community to "help the process of reconciliation" say Kosovo Serbs in Rahovec/Orahovac and, according to displaced people in Plementina, Obiliq/Obilić, to "promote human rights amongst all" and to "guarantee order and functioning legal institutions according to international standard."

The international community should step in where the local politicians fail or are not ready to move ahead in a direction desired by people. "There should be more public meetings and more open discussions where issues can be raised with the international community," says an Ashkali, Fushë Kosovë/ Kosovo Polje; this he says should lead elected people to work more for all communities. A Serb teacher in the Gjilan/Gnjilane wants UNMIK to force the Albanian leaders to start a dialogue with the Serbs.

Hope in the Youth

It seems that people believe and hope that their children can do what they cannot. People from all the ethnic communities want to bring children of all ethnicities together, as the young have fewer prejudices. The school curricula should have programmes which explain "who the others are" in order to obtain better understanding of each others culture, to "present positive example of multi-ethnic co-habitation in other countries", say families in Zvečan/Zveçan. And because "a close understanding and inter-active relationship makes the understanding of the rights of the communities easier," say women in Glogovc/Glogovac.

Young people themselves gave these types of messages in several of the meetings; according to young women from Ferizaj/Uroševac, "each community should enjoy the same rights of free movement and free expression without considering their ethnicity."

Dialogue

"Albanians have to start communicating with us!" This from a man in Zvečan/Zveçan. In almost all the meetings with the non-Albanian communities and in many meetings with the Kosovo Albanian population, the hope for reconciliation is expressed. "We have to start talking to each other," says a woman from the Skenderaj/Srbica area. And a young Kosovo Serb man from Vrbovac, Vitina/Viti, says: "If we can live together we can reach everything".

But "it is necessary to set a new base" states an engineer from Zvečan/Zveçan. "In Kosovo there is enough place for all to live, no one single group should

endanger another. There are not good and bad ethnicities, there are only good and bad people,” says a Kosovo Serb woman from Gjilan/Gnjilane.

And the Majority?

To ensure equal rights for all ethnicities in Kosovo, would benefit the affected population and would also be an important achievement for the many Kosovo Albanians. “Equal rights for all is very important. I want to be proud of being a Kosovar when I am abroad,” states a Kosovo Albanian woman from Gjilan/Gnjilane. When this issue is discussed during the meetings interesting approaches were proposed. A village headman from Skenderaj/Srbica wants the “Kosovo police to be better trained and deployed also in enclaves to monitor that the rights granted to Kosovo Albanians are applied to all”.

CULTURE

“Without having your own culture you have nothing.”

Young man in Podujevo

Although culture, or rather the lack of it, was mentioned in most of the community meetings as a concern, it is seldom among people’s highest priorities.

Cultural Identity

Among the participants there were generally two main understandings of what is meant by “culture”. The majority of people understand this concept by activities and institutions where cultural activities are organised. But some refer to culture in the broader sense of “cultural identity” which “first of all has to be known and recognised as such by the people” and show concerns about losing what is perceived as the distinctiveness of the society. As a woman in Podujevë/Podujevo states: “We have to be open to other cultures without losing our own.” And a group of young people in Štrpce/Shtërpçë says: “Culture is something deep, in the broadest possible sense, comprising everything a person is. But people are losing it”.

Meeting other cultures and being exposed to people from other places in order “to learn new things” is what some want for themselves and their fellow residents. A young female tailor and a 20-year-old nurse from Malishevë/Mališevo want the local culture to be “more western” while an engineer in Zubin Potok says: “Being under pressure by western culture which is completely unacceptable for our people.”

Cultural Development – Development of Culture

The inter-dependence of the development of a society and the development of its culture is one of the aspects participants insisted upon. As a young hairdresser in Prizren says: “The culture in Kosovo should move forward.”

“To develop a society the culture is very important. In the future we will pay more attention to this,” says a 36-year-old worker in Podujevë/Podujevo.

Many people draw a parallel between education and culture, believing that giving people proper education will make them culturally aware. “Every healthy person needs culture” believes a woman from Podujevë/Podujevo.

Cultural Activities

Like in many other places, when there is a shortage of financial means, the cultural sector is often the first one to be neglected or investments for it cut. In the case of Kosovo, where there are so many pressing issues, the available resources perhaps do not allow for significant cultural activities and for a comprehensive re-building of the sector. The lack of cultural activities is felt in all communities of Kosovo, in the larger urban areas as well as in rural areas. The problem seems to be of even more concern to the inhabitants of enclaves or other isolated places. A young Kosovo Serb speaks of “no cultural events of any kind in Štrpce/Shtërpçë” and nothing leads to the perception that things will change.

In a community meeting in the village Ponore near Malishevë/Mališevo the cultural level is perceived as “very low”, therefore the participants ranked the need to increase cultural activities in the village as their first priority. A 22-year-old housewife says: “I personally give the greatest importance to culture, since it is very low in our village, and that concerns me most”.

Inherited from the socialist system, each community has its Cultural Centre. These often impressive buildings are nowadays without significant activities and not much has been done during the past two years to re-activate these centres. Many wish the centre to be brought back to life again, where theatre, cinema, exhibitions and concerts can take place, where the young people can learn about and be engaged in various aspects of culture.

The Future

Young people in enclaves and isolated communities ask the Department of Culture to show more interest in their realities and be prepared to invest more in activities. The financial aspect of the cultural sector is a realistic concern. People are aware that “culture costs money” and people working in the sector “do need appropriate salaries” as a young woman in Gjilan/Gnjilane says.

According to a mechanical engineer in Zubin Potok the future government should make an effort to provide money also for the maintenance of cultural traditions and historical monuments. Many young people desire more libraries in Kosovo, and would like to see more literature published in the local languages.

When it comes to cultural activities there seems to be a conflict between the young and the older generation. A young man in Štrpce/Shtërpçë complains that it is the elderly who are in charge and the youth are not given enough possibility to make their voice heard, and do not have enough autonomy over cultural activities for the younger generation.

The general desire is that the authorities understand the importance of culture for a “healthy society”.

Facts about Culture

- Art galleries, theatre groups and a host of special cultural events have been supported by donors and international organisations. The National Museum and Library still need significant support; main cultural monuments require restoration and the Kosovo performing arts institutions (National Theatre, Kosovar Phil-

harmonic Orchestra, Shota Ensemble of Song and Dance, National Museum) still struggle for basic resources (UNMIK/JIAS Department of Reconstruction).

- 65 of the public libraries were destroyed in the conflict and 70% of municipal cultural centres have been damaged or destroyed (UNMIK/JIAS Department of Reconstruction).
- Three Institutes for the Protection of Monuments (in Prishtinë/Pristina, Prizren and Gjakova/Djakovica) and five Archives (Prishtinë/Pristina, Prizren, Peje/Pec, Gjilan/Gnjilane and Mitrovica) are part of a network supported by the UNMIK/JIAS Department of Culture.



LABOUR AND SOCIAL WELFARE

“Social laws are not applied here, we have children working and we don’t have social insurance.”

Pensioner from Gjakovë/Đakovica

The high unemployment rate, the lack of job opportunities, the numerous households with no or very little income would pre-suppose that social welfare and labour related issues would be one of the rank highly during the community meetings. This is not the case, the two subjects ranked only on place eleven and in many community meetings they were not discussed at all.

Labour

For almost all who engaged in a reflection on social welfare, the immediate panacea to the many social problems among the people of Kosovo is employment. “Unemployment is the highest concern we have. It increases all social problems in Kosovo,” says a young man from Ferizaj/Uroševac. And a woman from Deçan/Dečani states: “When people work they have the possibility to pay taxes and with tax revenues social welfare programmes can be financed.”

The exact number of people in Kosovo with no income is difficult to determine, there are only estimates. People themselves give figures from 70% unemployment (a young man in Ferizaj/Uroševac) to 80 % (a technician in Leposavić/Leposaviq)⁵. It is a reality to assume that many people have lost their jobs in the aftermath of the conflict or because of the ongoing restructuring in the public and private sectors. Alternatives to mass employment in the public administration and giant state-owned enterprises are very rare, but for many still a dream. Like the group of Roma and Ashkali from Rahovec/Orahovac who are convinced that if they could get back to their “former working places, social assistance can be given to those who really need it”.

Quite a lot of young people have never had a job and “we want to work on our own and not depend on our parents,” says an unemployed 21-year-old from Suharekë/Suva Reka. His statement reflects the comments of many. And, as a young worker in Shipol, near Mitrovicë/Mitrovica says: “Since there is no unemployment subsidy many young people depend on their families.” This puts

⁵ The reality is less dramatic, but still very bad, since an average of 50% of the population is unemployed according to the UNMIK/JIAS Department of Labour and Employment

an additional burden on the families and humiliates the youth. A student in Skenderaj/Srbica expresses the fear of the uncertain future of the young generation in Kosovo when he says: "If an old man is unemployed he has his sons to take care of him, if a young man is unemployed, he will not become old".

In addition to the overall lack of gainful employment, members of non-majority communities feel left behind. "When we apply for a job, we present our papers which afterwards disappear, we are discriminated," says a Roma in Kamenicë/Kamenica. A 26-year-old Kosovo Serb worker says: "The majority of Serbs are unemployed, factories are mono-ethnic which is not the case anywhere else in the world. People should be employed according to their skills and not according to their ethnicity".

"Force Albanian directors of factories to hire non-Albanian workers," say Roma and Kosovo Serbs in the Gjilan/Gnjilane region.

Pensions

Each generation is confronted with a particular situation. While the young people cannot find employment, the elder generation has worked a lifetime but cannot enjoy the fruits of their labour. Their contributions paid to the Yugoslav social fund for decades are now, when needed, not coming back as pensions. A pensioner in Pejë/Peč says: "The government should put pressure on Yugoslavia to demand the payment of our pensions, since we paid over the years our contributions".

"We have not received pensions for the past three years and yet this is one of the human rights guaranteed by the UN Convention," states an elderly man in Gjakovë/Đakovica.

Socially Vulnerable Cases

As a consequence of the conflict, many women are widowed and bare the sole responsibility for the entire family, consisting often of children and elderly parents. There are no or very little provisions for single mothers. The income of the parents is usually not enough to "keep the family going"; many do not know how to continue life. To provide some income for the family, children are sent on the streets to sell cigarettes or other items. The fact that these children have dropped out of the school system and will later not have the chance to participate in the normal employment circle is a preoccupation many adults express. "[To] prevent or correct such degradation, more attention has to be paid to poor families," says an unemployed teacher from Gjilan/Gnjilane.

Another vulnerable group in society is the disabled. A young man from Shipol near Mitrovicë/Mitrovica states: "We need employment and education programmes for handicapped people. Their rights to social welfare has to be regulated and the development of education programmes for people with disabilities has to be encouraged, starting by making public buildings accessible through ramps".

The Systems

The people in Kosovo observe a transition from the socialist system they knew well, to an unknown and uncertain system. People are afraid of radical measures, of too much rationalisation, of "the application of too strict western criteria," says an unemployed man from Gnjilane/Gjilan. Rather they want to maintain a system, which currently provides 10 DM pension a month, as pen-

sioners say in a meeting in Prishtinë/Priština. For people of all ethnicities the only answers to the massive unemployment lies within the “old system”, meaning the reactivation of the state-owned factories and “re-employing everybody as before in the public administration”.⁶ Since “the closure of most of the factories has a direct impact on social welfare of pensioners, invalids, children and handicapped persons”.

What to do?

“The social welfare system is a catastrophe!” Certainly the Kosovo Serb woman from Kamenicë/Kamenica does not stand alone in her opinion. But what could be the solution to it? The issue is handed over to the government. People expect the authorities to deal with it. “To solve the pensioners and other people’s everyday problems, we have to solve the political and financial crisis,” says a 42-year-old man in Gjilan/Gnjilane. And a woman from Deçan/Dečani says: “The future government has to secure donations.”

A young man from Gjakovë/Đakovica suggests that accurate statistics on the social status of the residents of Kosovo should be produced. The government could then distribute social contributions and aid more in accordance to real needs. The reality of people is not well known amongst decision makers is also the assumption of a woman in Gjilan/Gnjilane. “We have social workers who don’t do their job properly. They don’t go out and assess the reality and that leads to wrong decisions”.

A school director from Kamenicë/Kamenica says that “all social welfare problems [are] deeply interrelated with economical development and employment, and therefore social issues are more within the competencies of the trade unions. But trade unions are paralysed since tens of thousand of workers are out of the employment process”. His neighbour states: “The role of the trade unions has to be strengthened”

The vicious circle is described by a man from Rahovec/Orahovac: “The lack of employment leads to a lack of education in the future generation which again lowers the employment possibilities and creates a further dependence on humanitarian or social aid”.

Bitterness and frustration is the common tenor. “Politicians have promised us social assistance, pensions, family allowances, but nothing has been accomplished. Kosovo’s income is too low to pay salaries and provide for social welfare. Customs are functioning, but nothing is in the budget concerning pensions. Salaries are very low. Electricity fees have tripled compared to the pre-war period. Public utilities are very expensive and people cannot afford it. People’s voices have to be heard more and political parties should not be the only ones to have a say. Because this brings us to a point where we will not vote for anybody,” says one woman from Gjakovë/Đakovica.

Only a few young participants in the community meetings saw the issue of social welfare as important, however a young man from Deçan/Dečani says: “We have to be more inventive in achieving what we need and work together.” And a 23-year-old student in Lipjan/Lipljan states: “Our people emerged from the conflict economically and financially destroyed. We need therefore special care

⁶ see the Chapter on Economic and Financial Policy

for the ones without shelter, the social cases, and orphans. Our society has a big responsibility for these categories”

Facts about Labour and Social Welfare

- The unemployment rate in Kosovo is estimated to be 50%. In urban areas about 43% and in rural areas 57%. Among the women the unemployment rate is slightly higher, at 53%. The estimated gainfully employed population is at 33%. A network of employment offices in 29 locations across Kosovo is helping people to find a job. The Department is building up the accessibility of the services of employment for minorities (UNMIK/JIAS Department of Labour and Employment).
- Six Employment Assistance Centres are functioning in the main towns, providing job referrals, training and evaluating the local market needs.
- 55.000 families benefit from the UNMIK Social Assistance Scheme, which aims to provide cash assistance to the poorest families in Kosovo (UNMIK/JIAS Department of Health and Social Welfare).
- Approximately 10.000 to 12.000 families are still in need of reconstruction assistance, not included in these figures are eventual returning (UNMIK/JIAS Department for Reconstruction).
- Pensions are not paid to 97.000 former contributors who have acknowledged entitlements to pensions, invalidity and survivor payments. There is no system of benefits for sickness, invalidity or unemployment.
- During 2001 the Department of Health and Social Welfare, with the technical assistance of the World Bank and other donors, will be developing a longer-term, more sophisticated and properly financed social welfare package which will be able to be sustained into the future by the citizens of Kosovo (Kosovo Consolidated Budget 2001).



DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN TRADE, INDUSTRY AND INVESTMENTS

“We are hungry for jobs, we don’t like to beg anyone.”

58-years-old farmer, Skenderaj/Srbica

The precarious conditions of industry — “we have many factories which don’t produce anything” — and the scarcity of internal products in Kosovo are some of the main concerns expressed by several participants in the community meetings. The old technology and the lack of adequate laws, to protect financial groups who would like to invest some capital in Kosovo, are considered important reasons of the current difficulties. Obviously many community meeting participants do not have a deep insight into the complex world of international trade and industrial investments. Accordingly, when these government competencies were discussed, people rely on their past experiences and what they perceive as common sense. Therefore the importing of foreign good is seen as a consequence of the lack of production, which could easily have been resolved: “we buy things from abroad while we can produce them here”. People want production to start as soon as possible in order to decrease dependence from outside. “If the fields are cultivated properly, the yield increases,” says one elderly man from Skenderaj/Srbica.

Strengthening domestic and foreign trade, as well as developing industry, should be considered a top priority for the next government is the clear message from the community meetings.

Investments

A woman in Kačanik/Kaçanik says: “If we have industrial development, then there is a great chance to establish foreign and domestic trade, thus we will have good conditions to attract foreign capitals, on which depends the future of Kosovo.” These investments will also create job opportunities and better infrastructures. A youth group leader from Kamenicë/Kamenica says “the creation of a Kosovo with freedom of movement and same rights for all communities, in compliance with the international conventions, will facilitate the investments

of foreign capital.” A woman from Deçan/Dečani is convinced that without foreign investments in Kosovo there is no progress, “the investments stimulate the industrial development, which dictates domestic and foreign trade.”

“Foreign and domestic investments in the industry, development of the domestic and foreign trade are important challenges for the elected candidates, who should work on bringing law and order, which will secure investments and give some privileges to the investors,” states a man from Ferizaj/Uroševac.

The voice of the people is urging the future leaders to contemplate how to attract investors from abroad in order to ensure a prosperous Kosovo.

Restructuring

An engineer from Suharekë/Suva Reka considers the restructuring of industry very important, because “without development of trade and industry we won't have any development of Kosovo. All the industrial capacities that are currently social properties have to be privatised; the investments have to be used towards new productive capacity and all this will result in the increase of employment in Kosovo.” A young man from Lipjan/Lipljan says the solution is quickly to start trade with other European countries and the Balkan region. Establishing these new economic relations, the industry in Kosovo will therefore receive new impulses and the effects are hoped to be significant. “Most of our population earns their living from trade, but it needs to be strengthened, what cannot only be done on an individual base, but needs the support of the authority.” According to many, the main proposal for the future government in connection with this competency should be to provide proper working opportunities, particularly for the youth living in the rural areas.

Facts about Domestic and foreign trade, industry and investments

According to the “Business Directory, Statistical Overview” International Organisation for Migration, April 2001.

- The total number of businesses is almost equally socially and state owned enterprises (49.6%) and individual private entrepreneurs (50.4%). The micro-enterprises (with 0 to 4 employees) have the largest share of businesses (77.4% in total).
- The southwest municipalities of Kosovo show a relatively high rate of employment, except for Deçan/Dečani. Most of Kosovo's employment and business opportunities are concentrated in Prishtinë/Priština.
- Compared to the total number of the population (both employed and unemployed) it is Pejë/Peç and Gjakovë/Đakovica that harbour the highest rate of business activities and self-employment, respectively 13% and 11%. Prishtinë/Priština, Deçan/Dečani, Istog/Istok and Podujevë/Podujevo show figures of 8 %.

DEVELOPMENT OF RELATIONS WITH EURO-ATLANTIC COMMUNITIES

“Integration with external world means development of the internal world.”

Teacher from Skenderaj/Srbica

Kosovo, under the United Nations Interim Administration, is a region where it is difficult to discuss in any objective way a possible future relationship with the Euro-Atlantic community. From most of the observations received in the meetings, it is evident that people place themselves economically, politically and even culturally dependent on western countries. “Further support is needed from western countries. After having established a government in Prishtinë/Priština, more investments are needed from the international community,” says a woman from Pejë/Peč. Due to the current situation this is an understandable mentality. At the moment Kosovo is dependant and not an international partner; co-operation largely means the support that Kosovo currently expects from the international community. “The co-operation with the European countries assures our economic, technical and cultural development here in Kosovo,” says a 28-year-old teacher from Podujevë/Podujevo. A worker from Skenderaj/Srbica considers it necessary to have good relations with the international community to be able to face the internal issues of Kosovo.

The development of relations with the Euro-Atlantic community is considered a fundamental condition to improve the economic situation and to bring more stability to Kosovo. “The prosperity of the Kosovo’s society is closely linked to the good relations with the Euro-Atlantic community,” says a teacher in Klinë/Klina. A journalist from Klinë/Klina states: “Balkan countries have always had problems guaranteeing stability, it is possible to maintain stability here in Kosovo only if we create a good relationship with USA and NATO”.

Purpose of external relations

“I would like to see this place integrated into the international process. Relations with the Euro-Atlantic community have to be even stronger. The members of Kosovo’s society have to work together so that we can show our great willing-

ness for good co-operation,” states a worker from Firajë, Štrpce/Shtërpçë. And as a man in Pejë/Peç says, Kosovo is geographically situated in Europe and “it would be absolutely natural to follow up and foster that relationship.” Many participants agreed with the opinion that it is extremely important for the future of Kosovo to establish a good relationship with other countries. “For the development of a place, such as Kosovo, you can’t imagine that it will go forward neither economically nor politically if it’s not engaged with the international community,” says a lawyer in Skenderaj/Srbica. However, people are optimistic about the future of Kosovo and do not have any doubt that the co-operation with other countries will inevitably become closer. “Becoming part of Euro-Atlantic community, Kosovo will develop fast and forwards. At the same time international laws, regulations, human rights and economic standards will be respected,” says a nurse from Suharekë/Suva Reka.

Participants in the community meetings also expressed their goodwill to improve the general living conditions of all people in Kosovo. A more active participation with the external actors was expressed in Kaçanik/Kaçanik for a definitive post-conflict rehabilitation.

AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

“You create a good foundation for your society by having advanced agriculture.”

Farmer, Klinë/Klina

Kosovo is essentially a rural region; therefore the development of agriculture should represent an important contribution to improve the general standard of life for people in the villages. It could especially offer the youth a concrete opportunity to start an activity, and take on the responsibility for the development of their villages. “Taking into consideration that I’m living in a village, agriculture and forestry are crucial and I don’t see any other possibilities for the development of this area,” states a farmer, from Brod, Dragash/Dragaš. Describing the situation in Dečan/Dečani, a farmer says: “Agriculture is essential, in particular in Isniq area, employing the majority of the labour force. The proximity of the Peja market could be an opportunity for the farmers to sell their products, but they often lack equipment and seeds to be more competitive”.

“Rural development is necessary, but there are only a few places where villagers can sell freely their products. The security situation should be improved so that people are able to go to the city and sell their products,” says another farmer, from Gjilan/Gnjilane.

Agricultural Development

A request that is repeatedly addressed to the future authorities is that they pay more attention to the situation in the rural areas, investing capital to renovate or to build some necessary infrastructures. A teacher from Suharekë/Suva Reka suggests investing more in agriculture, to protect forests and to cultivate greenness, “but real actions are needed and not only words”. A Kosovo Serb farmer from Gjilan/Gnjilane says that since the majority of Kosovo Serbs now live in villages, and every day there are people leaving Kosovo, conditions should be met in order to encourage Serbs to stay and the others that have left to return.

Agriculture is one of the areas where people are aware and are able to propose realistic plans, which could be achieved by them. A primary school teacher from Podujevë/Podujevo says: “The development of agriculture would enable us not to depend from foreign aid, solving the main problem of existence by ourselves.

The number of population is very high in rural areas and in Kosovo we have good circumstances for fast development.”

Factors for social and economical stability

Agriculture, forestry and rural development are “a very important branch of industry and are the only reasonable solutions for Bosniacs living in this part of Kosovo,” says an unemployed man of Recane, Prizren. “People are living inside rural areas and they don’t want to live there anymore: more work should be done for these places and new infrastructure intentions to support the development of this sector of the economy. “There used to be a cooperative in Isniq, but it has stopped working a few years ago. Elected officials should co-ordinate this assessment so that the municipality could just focus on the identification of donors in order for project proposals to be forwarded,” says a person from that village.

“People and the government should co-operate in order to guarantee good living conditions for all citizens,” says an unemployed man from Deçan/Dečani and agriculture represents a fundamental resource to achieve a vital development in the poor rural areas.

Facts about Agriculture, forestry and rural development

- The re-activation of the rural economy has made good progress with significant donor support. 15.000 tractors and 900 other items of agricultural machinery have been repaired, 3.000 cattle distributed and livestock sector has been supported with a large-scale vaccination project, 35.000 tonnes of fertiliser have been delivered to 48. 000 farming households (UNMIK/JIAS Department of Reconstruction).
- Together with the local utility companies, emergency repairs have been made which will allow over 25.000 hectares of land to be irrigated with the effect of doubling crop yields from this newly irrigated land (UNMIK/JIAS Department of Reconstruction).
- Compared to the other registered businesses in Kosovo, Agriculture, Hunting and Forestry show a very scarce number, 1.1%, mainly due to the low rate of registration of agriculture activities (Statistical Office of Kosovo).



FAMILY, GENDER AND MINORS

“All issues start with the family, if we have a healthy family, we will then have a healthy society.”

Woman from Podujevë/Podujevo

The competency of Family, Gender and Minors, although often appearing within the top ten priorities was not discussed very often in the community meetings. When it was discussed, there were four main strands of thought: the role of the family in a democracy, the role of women, the economic conditions needed to sustain a family unit and the access to education and cultural activities for the youth.

Role of the family in a democracy

All the ethnic communities are keen to point out that the basic unit of a society is the family. A society that has well functioning and healthy family units inevitably contributes to a civilised and democratic society. The way a family operates is a reflection of the society of which they are a part. “A family with democratic elements helps in creating a democratic society,” says an unemployed law graduate from Podujevë/Podujevo. This is echoed by a 38-year-old Kosovo Serb internally displaced person in Brezovica, “Sound Family – Sound Society”.

Role of women in the family

Equality for women in the family is a subject predictably mentioned by women when discussing Family, Gender and Minors issue. Lack of education and lack of autonomous decision-making within a marriage are the two key points that a group of women in Podujevë/Podujevo were very keen to stress. A 33-year-old civil society actor from Podujevë/Podujevo says that more attention should be paid to the role of women in the family as thus far this has been neglected. She states that gender equality within the family is not considered and that men neglect women. She says the new Assembly should “give more priority to women in the process of decision taking and give them more space to be involved in all spheres of life.”

A student at the same meeting agrees and highlights the serious problem of domestic violence. She says women were oppressed before the conflict and this oppression continues. “There are many cases where there is domestic violence inflicted on women. She is closed in the house and has no right to go to school

and be educated, has no right for anything. So, I ask from those elected to the government to help women!”⁷

Another young woman in Podujevë/Podujevo believes that women should be encouraged more to get a good education. As educated women, they would be less like to have obstacles placed in front of them by men. The problem with educating women is that often the education or career does not continue when they are married. “In many cases women that were educated and employed before getting married have been forced to stop their further education and have been made to leave their jobs and this is an injustice.”

A married Kosovo Serb woman internally displaced in Brezovica suggests that there should be more education and knowledge on gender equality within the family.

Economic Conditions

The poor economic conditions that some families have to contend with are placing a strain on family relations, especially if it is the woman that is working, as this is difficult for the men, the traditional breadwinner to deal with. “I work but my husband does not work. It is obvious that problems start. He is looking for a job but he cannot find anything. And I have three children,” says a woman from Rahovec/Orahovac. She states it is not that her husband does not want to work, he is able and wants to earn a living but there are no available jobs. “At least one person in a family should be employed, no matter if it is a husband or wife.”

The women at the meeting in Rahovec/Orahovac went on to explain that it is difficult for women to study and work at the same time, as men can work in coffee bars part time, whereas for women the “culture does not allow a female to work in the coffee bar or to clean flats like it is possible abroad. Such a female would have a bad reputation.” There are numerous families that need social assistance and the new elected authority should be considering and supporting them. It is clear that a stable and financial situation makes for more harmonious family relations.

Minors

A healthy and positive family scenario helps the children toward a safe future. People in meetings in the non-majority communities were concerned that the minors are in a difficult situation because they do not have proper conditions for education, which as a consequence affects the quality of their future. An Ashkali teacher from Rahovec/Orahovac states: “The juveniles should not be abused, we should give them a chance for education. There should not be any differences between communities of different ethnic backgrounds.”

As a young male Kosovo Serb from Leposavić/Leposaviq says: “Young people should be protected from unemployment, you can succeed this with education”. Another issue pointed out by a 45 year old male from Kamenicë/Kamenica is that there are many children without parents and that the new government should consider how best to care for these children.

A group of women in Štrpce/Shtërpçë highlight some of the problems that the minors in their municipality are facing. “Alcoholism has increased among minors, it is the biggest problem that should be solved in this municipality”. At

⁷ It is very difficult to obtain figures on domestic violence, since it is generally not considered a crime, and very few women report if it happens to them.

this community meeting they expressed a need to have more education for the youth to learn about alcoholism, drugs, AIDS, and family planning.

Facts about Family, Gender and Minors

- The average household size in Kosovo is decreasing. From seven members in the nineteen-eighties, it is now of an average of 5.6 members per household. In urban areas 4.9 people compose an average household, while in rural areas they are 6.3 persons (Basic Population Characteristics, International Organisation for Migration, IOM).
- Unemployment among women in Kosovo has risen to 75% (from 63% prior to the conflict of 1998/99). Only 35% of women worked outside the home before the conflict, currently 27% of the women are engaged in gainful employment. 34% of them in business activities and 23% are owner of a (small) business. Women in Kosovo are almost not represented at all in managerial and leadership positions (Women 2000 by the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, Vienna 2000).

TRANSPORT, POST, TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES

“We have no regular connections to the rest of the world.”

Woman from Zvečan/Zvečan

Although these issues were seldom ranked among the highest priorities, a functioning communication system through post, telecommunication or road transport is of concern to people, especially when living in isolated areas. “We have a phone but we have no signals, we have TV sets but no programmes to watch, we have cars but no roads to drive on,” is the depressing assessment by a woman in Zubin Potok. “Our telephones landlines work one day and are down for two days,” says a woman from Zvečan/Zvečan and her neighbour adds: “We only know that there are things like Internet or e-mail but we cannot use it. My son has a computer at home but he has no communication with the rest of the world due to the phone-line being cut.”

Bad roads and a poor public transport system preoccupied people last year to a great extent.⁸ A lot has been done and repaired in the meantime. Some areas however, are still not well connected and the roads can still be deficient, for example, the road from Lesak to Vrincevo, which is of concern to all the residents from these villages near Leposavić/Leposaviq. Many secondary roads are not paved as properly as they should be says an 18-year-old from Kačanik/Kaçanik, and a farmer from Leposavić/Leposaviq wants “new roads from villages to the towns.”

“The economy would improve if we had a better transport system and better communication,” says a technician from Zvečan/Zvečan.

⁸ See Voters Voices Community Concerns, OMIK Democratisation Department 2000

Facts about Transport, post, telecommunications and information technology

- Kosovo has a 1700 km network of main and secondary roads, a 330 km single track railway system and a busy regional airport (UNMIK/IAS Department of Reconstruction).
- A Recovery Plan for the Railways in Kosovo has been prepared which sets out proposals for developing the railway as a commercial operation (Kosovo Consolidated Budget 2001).
- Pristina Airport recommenced commercial operations during 2000. The airport enterprises earns revenue from a passenger departure fee, landing fees and aircraft handling charges. The airport currently handles up to 10 scheduled flights a day (Kosovo Consolidated Budget 2001).
- 110 Post Office are functioning around the region. People can send/receive letters up to 2 kg and parcels up to 20 kg. From 22nd February an ID cards distribution is going on, so far 700.00 are already been distributed. Post Offices will receive payment for Travel Documents (Post & Telecommunication Enterprise of Kosovo).
- Fixed telephone network has 120.000 users and expansion is aiming 450.000 customers. 365 card payphones will be installed soon in the main public areas of Kosovo (UNMIK/IAS Department of Reconstruction).



ADMINISTRATIVE AND OPERATIONAL CUSTOMS ACTIVITIES

Very few participants in the community meetings considered this competency. Only in the municipalities north of the Ibar River are administrative and operational customs activities of real concern, since the UN Interim Administration has introduced customs fees for goods transported into Kosovo⁹.

This provision is not welcomed by the majority of the Kosovo Serb population in northern Kosovo, but the people from Lesak near Leposavić/Leposaviq see it in a positive way. “The recent changes in the customs and tax regime should stimulate the local and regional economy rather than creating an obstacle to development. We need a better taxation system for transported goods, to get a hold on the informal economic sector, and to get access to micro credits. We have to negotiate better conditions for import and export of goods and services. The people have to be included in the decision making process. We should not strike against measures taken but seek the ideal solution for this community.”

As the villagers in Socanica near Leposavić/Leposaviq say: “The newly established customs and tax regime has affected the political awareness among the population.” They suggest: “Adapt[ing] the new taxation system to the needs and rights of the people” and “using different methods of protest than before when some expressed their negative attitudes by setting up road blocks.” The people from Socanica want a closer relationship with officials with “more frequent communications and visits before deciding issues”.

For a 41-year-old man from Peje/Pec administrative and operational customs activities are needed to “to protect Kosovo’s products”.

Fact

The Central Fiscal Authority’s customs services collects a 10% duty on virtually all imports (humanitarian goods accounting for most of the few exemptions). It levies excise on 15 categories of goods ranging from 10% on soft drinks to 50% on fuels and spirit.

⁹ UNMIK Regulation No 2000/55

LOCAL ADMINISTRATION

“They should know best our needs.”

Young man from Prishtinë/Priština

The municipal administration is the part of government, which is nearest to the people, and yet only very few seem to worry about it. Those who place emphasis on the responsibilities of the local administration appear to have a very developed sense of citizens’ participation. So, for example a group of villagers from Vacevo, near Leposavić/Leposaviq, state: “The local administration should include the communities in all aspects of the decision-making process and should provide institutional and financial support to their ideas and initiatives.

“The local administration should involve the citizens directly and more actively in the process of democratisation. The administration should seek more intensive co-operation with citizens”.

A lawyer from Kamenicë/Kamenica wants to see a more modern and proactive local administration. “Our local administration should be engaged in job finding activities for unemployed people. It should take on privatisation projects by providing credit to people and should show more flexibility and efficiency.”

The way to democracy, for an employee of an educational institution in Rahovec/Orahovac, is through transparency and accountability of the local administration, which “should work transparently. If the local administration functions normal it can modernise itself, but this can be achieved only without corruption”.

Facts about Public administration services

- Thanks to international emergency assistance most urban waste companies have been equipped with a variety of used machinery and a substantial number of containers which allow for a rudimentary regular household waste collection services (UNMIK/JIAS Department of Reconstruction).
- The amount of electricity provided to Kosovo from outside sources in October 2000 (280.000 MWh) was double of what was available in October 1999 (160.000 MWh). Nevertheless the programme of emergency repairs and fundamental overhaul of the electricity generation system will need to continue and while this happens Kosovo will continue to rely partly the provision of imported

power (UNMIK/JIAS Department of Reconstruction).

- The water pumping station has repaired at Badovc and thirteen municipalities pumps have been replaced (UNMIK/JIAS Department of Reconstruction. Since there is sufficient water available all shortages in the municipalities are caused either by misuse of drinking water or by technical deficiencies.
- The sewage system throughout Kosovo is underdeveloped, in many places not existing at all (CIMIC Report, July 2001).

TOURISM

In some of the community meetings tourism was marked as a priority. This might be also due to the fact that the meetings were held during the summer holiday period. Kosovo has very few recreational possibilities. Parents do not know where to spend their holidays or weekends with their children. Travel abroad is for many not an option, because it is too expensive or because of the need for valid travel documents or visas. It is therefore a legitimate request from the inhabitants of Kosovo to develop tourism and leisure time possibilities for the broader population within Kosovo; to value a place like the “outstanding natural resorts in the Deçan/Dečani area” as an inhabitant puts it proudly or like a 34-year old mechanic from Skenderaj/Srbica says: “To work hard in order to make Kosovo beautiful.”

And, who knows, maybe with time foreigners will come to discover the praised beauty of Kosovo.



THE FUTURE OF KOSOVO

“Democracy and electricity!”

22-year-old student from Lipjan/Lipljan

During the community meetings, the participants were also requested to express their thoughts about the future of Kosovo. For this purpose, two questions were asked: “What do you think the people of Kosovo and their leaders should accomplish in the next five years?” and “How, specifically, do you think this should be accomplished?”

Independence

As to be expected, the outstanding majority of the Kosovo Albanian participants answered that within the next five years they want to see Kosovo independent. The villagers from Hani I Elezit near Kaçanik/Kaçanik speak for many when they say: “We will be able to achieve all the good once we have obtained independence”. At the same time, independence for many means “to become a member of NATO and the European Union”, to “have a proper Constitution”, “to have economical prosperity”, “to have equal rights for all”, and “security and safety for all communities”.

The overwhelming answer to the question on how independence should be achieved is “through hard work” and by “being united”. “The people of Kosovo and their leaders should accomplish independence within five years and this can be done only through hard work,” says a 19-year-old woman in Malishevë/Mališevo. “The people of Kosovo and their leaders should make Kosovo stable, quiet and independent. This can be achieved only through tireless work for more security” states an economist in Gjilan/Gnjilane.

Young people especially, like a 19-year-old car mechanic from Lipjan/Lipljan, want to reach “independence in a peaceful way” and see it as a mean for achieving an “advanced state of development.”

The participants expressed the feeling that other countries observe them, and therefore they need to demonstrate to the outside world that Kosovo and its people are ready for such an endeavour. “We have to show the international community that we are able to govern independently and respect human rights, says an 18-year-old student from Prizren A 23-year-old technician from Ferizaj/Uroševac states: “Kosovo has to convince the world that we are capable of inde-

pendence and of observing human rights.”

Some are concerned that their politicians are being more than just observed, but that they are either influenced or guided into positions which do not represent their own ideas nor those of their constituents. It is not only the 23-year-old student from Kaçanik/Kaçanik that has the opinion “leaders should not be pushed from the outside in other directions, but to pursue independence.”

Numerous people think that to achieve independence, not only the population has to stand united behind this objective, but also all the political parties have to unite in order to reach this “perennial goal” says a student in Lipjan/Lipljan.

Independence not at all costs. The 97-year-old retired primary school teacher from the Sibofc I Eperm village, Podujevë/Podujevo, wants “independence without enclaves”.

Equal Rights for All

In almost all the community meetings attended by Kosovo Albanians, at least one person mentioned that an independent Kosovo has to grant equal rights to all its citizens regardless what their ethnicity or religion might be. “We have to prove to the world that we are able to develop democracy and to cultivate it, we have to build a state where everyone living in it will have equal rights,” says a young pharmacist from Prishtinë/Priština. While a 37-year-old worker in Lipjan/Lipljan is one of very many who answers the question “what should be achieved in the coming five years?” with simply: “Human rights for all”.

“Kosovo has to respect the minority rights. The future generations of all ethnicities have to have a perspective here,” says a nurse from Ferizaj/Uroševac.

Ethnic Communities

For the non-majority communities, the questions “What do you think the people of Kosovo and their leaders should accomplish in the next five years?” and “How, specifically, do you think this should be accomplished?” leads to quite different answers. The major objectives to be reached within five years for the non-majority participants are security and safety for all, as well as freedom of movement and peace.

A 20-year-old car mechanic from Štrpce/Shtërpçë simply wants “having people walking freely out of their homes” and a young police officer, also from Štrpce/Shtërpçë, asks for “the members of all communities to be able to live in Kosovo and freely travel around without fear.”

“They [the politicians] should accomplish for Kosovo, a place that resembles less of a prison. How? I have no clue,” states a 23-year-old faculty of arts student.

One of the goals for the Kosovo Serb community over the next five years is the complete return of all displaced people from within and outside of Kosovo. This was frequently repeated during the community meetings.

Some feel that it is either beyond their possibilities or they are too tired to be asked to contribute to political thinking or decision-making. “Let them [the politicians] sit together and solve these problems” says a young teacher from Štrpce/Shtërpçë. Inevitably, people are at the same time skeptical about the notion of leaving decisions to the politicians. “The degree of political responsibility is very low, the political courage of our leaders is minimal. We should guide

the leaders and the public opinion. However I am optimistic and I think that five years from now Kosovo will not resemble the Kosovo of today," says a lawyer from Globocica near Dragash/Dragaš.

"Regarding the Serbs in Kosovo, there is no hope for a better living." We do not know how many share this view of a Kosovo Serb teacher, but during the community meetings a more optimistic tone was prevailing. The hatred should be forgotten and we should "not look for the enemy in others but in ourselves" says another teacher. "First of all we should try to live together again. If there are no guarantees for our security, we at least, should come to some kind of compromise, so we should find our safe corner, to sleep in peace and to finally reunite families that are scattered like flocks," says a 51-year-old nurse from Štrpce/Shtërpçë.

From the future government the non-Kosovo Albanian minorities expect "to act equally towards each inhabitant of Kosovo, to punish extremists and to put weapons out of Kosovo. To establish contacts between the various communities through business, tourism and other economic activities" are the proposals of a 44-year-old entrepreneur.

A mechanic from the Serb quarter in Rahovec/Orahovac says he wants to see "peace for all" and "in five years from now the wounds of the war should be healed and people should return to normal everyday duties."

"First of all the communities should work on accomplishing a better inter-ethnic atmosphere in Kosovo. How? Probably in time, gradually, maybe in the beginning through mass media messages, insisting on inter-ethnic tolerance," says a young KFOR employee from Štrpce/Shtërpçë.

Kosovo and FRY

Obviously for many Kosovo Serbs the links to Serbia or Yugoslavia are strong and as a 46-year-old engineer says he wants: "All political leaders to work on a stronger relationship between Kosovo and FRY" and that they use "the coming five years to explain to Kosovo Albanians that life in Yugoslavia is possible if we all respect the laws." Though the "reintegration of Kosovo and Metohija in the political, cultural and other life of Serbia and FRY should be accomplished by democratic means," says a 26-year-old history teacher. And a music student in Štrpce/Shtërpçë says that "if any political groups show religious intolerance and striving towards secession of Kosovo, then severe and timely actions have to be taken, such as sanctions or dismissal".

In Globocica, Dragash/Dragaš, the community wants the status of Kosovo "finally resolved" and through the decision making process, the leaders will "consider the regional implications" says a medical doctor. "If the final status will be a multi-ethnic state and in Kosovo will prevail public order and peace, where people can live together, then it will develop towards Europe" is the firm conviction of a Gorani medical student. "Complete democratisation of the society, respect for human rights, the feeling of safety, rights and possibilities for all people to work, and education possibilities for all children" is what a medical nurse from Štrpce/Shtërpçë wants to be achieved in Kosovo within the coming five years.

And a citizen from Brod (Dragash/Dragaš) urges the citizens and politicians "Don't waste energy and time in chaos. Peaceful co-existence, right to work free-

dom of movement and education, this is what we need!”

“If the people of Kosovo from all sides have confidence, then the road to this aim is not very long, ” says a businessman from Dragas/Dragash.

Economic Development

When discussing the future of Kosovo not all the participants are concerned primarily with political issues. Frequently the current economic situation determines the priorities. Like the 70-year-old pensioner in Recane, Prizren, many expect Kosovo in five years to have achieved “improved living standards which guarantee everybody a decent life.” And the elderly man from village Sibofc I Eperm, Podujevë/Podujevo, is sure that “the politicians must work hard on the development of the country, to make Kosovo independent from international donors.”

“In five years from now, Kosovo should have solved the unemployment, restructured the infrastructure, and provided pensions. And be a place where law and order reigns” is what an agricultural engineer from Kaçanik/Kaçanik wants. And for a 19-year-old student in Prizren, “the development of industry, foreign trade, education and science, along with the development of institutions should be our main goal, all this will lead to Good Governance.”

“I think that the people of Kosovo and their leaders should in the near future concentrate on repairing roads, creating parks and a functioning sewage system and providing all with electricity” says the 24-year-old secretary in Kaçanik/Kaçanik and the villager from Prapaqan, Decani/Decan, hopes for Kosovo “economical prosperity will not remain only a dream.”

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