



Kosova Initiative For Democratic Society
Iniciativa e Kosovës për Shoqëri Demokratike



THE FUTURE AT STAKE

A study on the higher education in Kosova

Prishtina,

15 November 2002

This study was financially supported by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the International Peace Research Institute in Oslo (PRIO) and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.

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INTRODUCTION

University as an institution of higher education offers superior education for individuals who are determined to have a professional career, but it also offers conditions for scientific research as well as other services to the society. At a post war stage and in transition of systems, University of Prishtina, just like Kosovan society, has found itself at a crossroad. The fact that the University of Prishtina is the sole public institution that offers higher education in Kosova, means that the future of the whole Kosovan society is in a way at stake.

This is the reason why the Logical Solutions Group – LOGO decided to undertake a study on this particular issue.

This study and the recommendations herein do not reflect the view of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the International Peace Research Institute in Oslo (PRIO) and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.

Some information about LOGO

LOGO (Logical Solutions Group) is a project of an NGO called “Kosova Initiative for Democratic Society” (KIDS), that started in September 2002. This project gathers a group of young devoted people from Kosova, coming from different backgrounds, who work on research and write on issues facing the Kosovan society. The aim is to initiate a public debate on these issues, based on empirical research and analysis.

The reasons why this project started are manifold. There have been many developments in Kosova in the post war period, and many decisions were taken without any public debate, and in the rare

cases when there was a debate, the characteristic of these debates was one of complete lack of civic or intellectual courage. A big part of these decisions that were made will have an affect on the lives of Kosovans for a long time to come. The only written evidence and opinion of the Kosovans on these developments are the articles in newspapers and rarely some other sources, comments which in most of the cases were only a general statement, at times even without any factual basis.

Another issue is the fact that these data and analysis are deficient also in international circles. Some of the mistakes and wrong approaches of the international administration in Bosnia and Herzegovina were repeated in Kosova. This brings us to the conclusion that not much has been learned from past mistakes. Existence of a local group, such as LOGO, which would analyze issues and give a local perspective, would surely contribute to this process, and enhance the quality of communication and understanding between Kosovans and internationals. This would help greatly the improvement of interventions of the international community not only in Kosova, but also in other crisis areas in the future.

LOGO will make an effort to achieve this by publishing reports, which will focus on a number of issues. This group will not take any political stands on these issues, but will open the debate, by presenting relevant facts, the context and afterwards presenting some concrete ideas based on empirical research and the derived facts. Reports will be short, practical and oriented towards strategic suggestions. This will ensure an element of public debate that has been lacking in Kosova until now. Hence, it will serve as an aid for policy makers in Kosovan institutions, who have a limited experience in governance and need support with data and impartial policies, so they can make good decisions based on good information.

Some information about KIDS

Kosova Initiative for Democratic Society (KIDS) is an NGO established in 2000 with the help of the International Peace Research Institute in Oslo (PRIO) and Nansen Academy in Lillehammer, Norway. The mission of KIDS is to provide space for discussion on issues like: democracy, transparency, civil society, etc. KIDS main activities include seminars, workshops and debates on different issue facing Kosovan society today. Majority of KIDS projects are financed by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, through the International Peace Research Institute in Oslo (PRIO)

The aim of the study

Although with a very short history, but filled with turbulence, the University of Prishtina is now facing a great challenge, maybe the greatest in its history. After many years of struggle for its survival against external threats, the University is now facing the need for internal reformation.

In order for the University of Prishtina to reach a standard and quality necessary for the Kosovan society, a lot of work in many directions is needed, a reform in content as well as in form. "The Future at Stake" looks at different aspects dealing with the higher education, starting with the new law, attempts for reforms in the last few years, infrastructure, finances, labor market, private education, education for minorities and students' organizations. In its approach to these issues, this document discusses different possibilities and based on analysis recommends possible solutions.

For the purpose of this study a quantitative survey was conducted with students of the University of Prishtina (20-23 October 2002) as well as qualitative survey (focus group) with teachers of the University of Prishtina (5 November 2002). This survey

was conducted by a company called Index Kosova, based in Prishtina, a partner of BBSS Gallup International.

The aim of "The Future at Stake" is to analyze and offer alternatives for improvement of present situation at this decisive moment for the higher education in Kosova. The aim of LOGO is, through genuine analysis based on empirical research, to publish studies which would help key local and international institutions in their decision making process on respective issues. At the same time it aims to stimulate a healthy public debate on these issues.

A short history of higher education in Kosova

The first institution of higher education in Kosova is the University of Prishtina, which was established in 1970. Until the end of nineties, when the first private schools started, it was the sole institution in Kosova that offered this level of education. During its history, the University, like the Kosovan society, have undergone through some major transitions, from a monist system to a market economy, from apartheid and war to a completely new situation and circumstances, which oblige the university to reform in order to be able to meet the needs of the Kosovan society and be able to follow the trends.

Classes at the University of Prishtina were held in two main languages: Albanian and Serbian, but there was also a department in Turkish language. This made it possible for the Albanians to attend classes in their native language, which was the main reason behind the establishment of the University. The University of Prishtina is considered to be very successful, with more than 60,000 graduates until 1996, from which 38,000 Albanian. University of Prishtina (UP) was the lifeline in Kosova and helped a lot in its development.

The first time Serbs challenged the studies in Albanian at the University of Prishtina was after the 1981 demonstrations, which Serbs used to propagate that the University of Prishtina is a kind of hearth of Albanian nationalism that needs to be destroyed. Pressures towards the University of Prishtina continued in this way throughout the decade. During this period (1981-1990) the number of Albanian students at the UP decreased for 25%. This culminated with abrogation of the autonomy of Kosova in 1989, as a result of which started the most severe, up to now, persecution to the University of Prishtina, to be more precise, of studies in the Albanian language. In 1991 the Albanian teaching staff and students were expelled from the buildings of the University of Prishtina. This forced them to continue their activities underground, in private houses. At the same time, public funding for education in Albanian language was stopped completely. For this reason Albanians, in order to continue with their education, organized their own system of education known internationally as “the parallel system”.

Although under arduous conditions, attending classes in private houses in an illegal fashion, the University of Prishtina managed to survive and was one of the most prominent symbols of the resistance against the Serbian occupation. Difficult learning conditions and no possibilities for accommodation for students, but also nearly non-existent stimulation for teachers, caused a reduction in the number of Albanian students. But regardless of all these factors, in 1996 University of Prishtina had around 16,000 students.

In the meantime, classes in Serbian continued in the premises of the University of Prishtina, but now with a much larger number of students in the Serbian language. Majority of those, 2/3 to 3/4, were from areas outside Kosova (Serbia and Montenegro). During the nineties there were some attempts to reach an agreement between Albanians and the Belgrade

regime in order to allow the return of Albanians to the education premises. The agreement reached through the mediation of “Saint Egidio”, a Vatican based group, which was signed in 1996, foresaw the opening of the premises for Albanian students too, but the implementation of this agreement was not completed because of obstructions from the Serbian side.

After the war in Kosova ended (June 1999), Albanians returned to the original premises of the University of Prishtina. The University of Prishtina was one of the first institutions to start work in the post-war Kosova.

Now the university is faced with new circumstances it needs to address. With the aim of further development and a quick drawing closer to the education system of Western countries, very soon many initiatives were taken to reform the University of Prishtina. This study reflects upon these efforts and analyzes the current state of higher education in Kosova.

SUMMARY

Any way you look at it, from outside, from inside, from the perspective of a teacher, of administrative staff, of a student, or a visitor, it can be noticed that the University of Prishtina is not in a good condition. “How did it come to this?” The answer can be found in a great number of influential factors that can be identified as having started from the nineties, the time of “house-schools”, the mentality of managing and teaching staff, as well as the situation created after the liberation of Kosova.

After NATO forces entered Kosova there was a sort of general euphoria, which lasted for a very long time, and was helped by many external factors. The University of Prishtina and its personnel were not

immune to this phenomena in this most optimistic country in the world,¹ so with their return in the original premises there was an impression that it just continued from where UP left off in the eighties,² not taking into consideration the dark period of the last decade of XX century.

On the other hand, UNMIK appointed an international administrator for the UP, Mr. Michael Daxner, who did not stand a real chance in removing the diseases present since the beginning, as well as many other diseases created during the time of “house-schools”. The chances Mr. Daxner had decreased even further with the start of his autocratic rule in the University.

After the departure of Daxner, its now up the newly formed Ministry of Education, the old Rectorate of UP and the over-politicized Independent Students’ Union to carry the burden of producing results that would match the expectations of Kosovans for the future of their “most precious” institution.

We, the Logical Solutions Group – “LOGO”, want to use this study as a means to open a debate on different levels of Kosovan structures on the future of the University of Prishtina. For the moment we do not think that there can be any substantial and satisfactory move forward unless there are detailed and in some cases even radical plans to alleviate the consequences of poor management at UP in the recent years.

Thus, we address the following recommendations to: the Government and the Kosova Assembly; the Special Representative of Secretary General of

United Nations; leading structures of the UP; teachers at the UP; students and students’ organizations; international and local organizations dealing with the issue of education.

RECOMMENDATIONS³

I. The Law on Higher Education

1. Bearing in mind that the refusal of the SRSB to sign the Law on Higher Education creates a legal vacuum at a crucial moment for the development and reforming of higher education in Kosova, and could also have political consequences in the future, **we recommend that the Law on the Higher Education, adopted earlier by the Kosova Assembly, be signed by Mr. Michael Steiner.**

II. Reforms in the University of Prishtina

2. In order for the eventual reforms to match the needs of the University of Prishtina, **we recommend to have an assessment of staff capacities, offer supplementary training for this staff and the regeneration of teaching staff, even if this means the removal of a large number of older and not up-to-date teachers.**

3. Observing the overload of students in most of the faculties of UP and non-efficient methods of teaching, **we consider that the number of students in some fields of studies should be carefully decreased in a mid term period for rehabilitation of the university.**

4. Bearing in mind that there are difficulties in implementing the principles of the Bologna Declaration in the University of Prishtina, **we recommend a**

¹ Gallup International: “Kosova – the most optimistic country in the world”, January 2001 and January 2002.

² During the eighties, UP was going through the most successful period of this very important institution for Kosova, in a very complicated political situation, at the time that was to determine its fate once and for all in its relation with the Yugoslavia of the time.

³ Recommendations are classified according to chapters of this study.

creation of a working group that would modify the proposed reforms for an easier transformation of UP to a university of European standards.

III. Methodology, literature and the teaching staff

5. Observing the lack of quality and advanced literature in the University of Prishtina, **we recommend the translation of foreign literature, higher usage of contemporary literature used in other Albanian universities, as well as unification of scientific terminology for university texts in Albanian.**

6. Observing that University of Prishtina is applying old methods of teaching, which are not preferred by the students, **we recommend the application of teaching methods preferred by the students (group-work, interactive lecturing, exercise / seminars, projects / research) which at the same time are considered as contemporary methods.**

VI. Administration and students' administrative services

7. Taking into consideration the problems that arise and the inefficiency of overlapping double administration work, in faculties and the Rectorate, **we consider that there should be an information center created within the Rectorate, which would be a computerized service with the aim of providing information to the administration officials in faculties on any necessary issue.**

V. Infrastructure

8. Taking into consideration the fact that the current situation with infrastructure in the University of Prishtina does not completely satisfy needs for a normal education process, **we recommend to make a more rational utilization of premises of the University of Prishtina,**

but also their renovation and reorganization.

VI. Admittance of students in the University of Prishtina

9. Keeping in mind the problems arising at the University of Prishtina in the recent years concerning admittance exams, **we recommend that a working group be created at the University level, which would deal exclusively with the issue of admittance exams. The duty of this body would be to study all possible systems that can be applied for admittance exams, their reasonability and adaptability to circumstances in Kosova.**

10. With the aim of offering a better orientation with detailed information on fields of study and admission process, **a consultative service should be created that would be at the disposal of potential candidates.**

VII. Finances

11. Taking into consideration the fact that the University of Prishtina can not be sustainable without any income and can not depend only from the donations and the Consolidated Budget of Kosova, **we recommend to introduce a tuition fee, respectively, their payment for the education they receive.** In effect this would decrease the number of students, help increase the level of education and improve the financial welfare of teachers.

12. Bearing in mind that the bad social welfare situation in the Kosovan society can influence that students, who although satisfy all criteria for enrollment, are not in a financial position to pay for their education, **we consider that special funds should be created by the Government of Kosova, the University and other public or private institutions of Kosova, for scholarships for students chosen by a mixed government and university commission.**

VIII. Labor market

13. Taking into consideration the fact that the University of Prishtina does not meet all the requirements and needs of the labor market in Kosova for certain specialized fields, **we request that a more efficient and specific planning on such specialization be done in the University of Prishtina.**

14. Because it is necessary for students to be ready after graduation to find work and at the same time have some practical experience in a given field, **we recommend that students should be given possibility of internship in public or private enterprises, for a minimum period of six months during the course of their studies.**

IX. Private education in Kosova

15. Taking into consideration the need for certain fields of expertise, which are deficient in the University of Prishtina, and the fact that competition between education institutions would enhance the quality of work, **we recommend to the Ministry of Education and other governmental bodies to stimulate private education through more efficient licensing of private institutions and their financial support.**

X. Minorities

16. Since it is the objective of the Kosovan society and at the same time of the international community to develop the education system in Kosova in compliance with standards of Western countries, and taking into consideration the fact that, because of security issues, it is not possible to physically integrate Serbs into the University of Prishtina, **we recommend the formal integration of Departments in the Serbian language, which are in Mitrovica, into the University of Prishtina. This would at a later stage**

create conditions for their physical integration as well.

XI Students' organizations

17. Bearing in mind the need for depoliticizing of the Independent Students' Union, which, as a consequence, would create more space for this organization to deal with student and educational issues, **there should be a liberalization of students' organizing in the University of Prishtina. This could be done by creating other students' organizations, which would be chosen by the votes of students in a regular and transparent campaign, which would afterwards create the parliament and the government of students of the University of Prishtina.**

18. Based on the attempts by political parties to influence the Independent Students' Union (UPS), as a measure for de-politicizing the UPS, we think that it would be proper to allow the creation of political party clubs in the University of Prishtina, based on models from Western countries.

XII. Relations of the University of Prishtina and other Universities

19. Based on the needs for enhancement of quality of education in regions with Albanian population, **we recommend a broader cooperation with Albanian universities, in the area of exchange of teaching staff as well as students. In a mid term future this exchange could also be seen from the prism of expertise in particular fields built in certain Albanian universities. This rational approach would enable the enhancement of scientific and technological level in certain centers, which would be used by students to further their specialized studies.**

20. Based on the need expressed for the return to Kosova of staff that have

specialized in western universities, **we request from the Government of Kosova to create conditions for these individuals, allocating a part of their budget for providing support for different scientific institutions where these individuals would be employed.** These institutions would also present a great help for the governance of Kosova in general.

I. THE LAW ON HIGHER EDUCATION IN KOSOVA

The Law on Higher Education has been drafted by International experts from the Council of Europe. It is the first law in Europe to be drafted in the spirit of the Bologna Declaration, therefore experts consider it as one of the most advanced laws on higher education in Europe. Even more, experts consider this law as the best law on education in the region. But, the issue concerning this law is connected to the political particularities of Kosova. This law was adopted by the Kosova Assembly, but has not yet been signed by the SRSG (Special Representative to the Secretary General of the UN) Michael Steiner, which is why the law has not been officially enacted, never the less the Ministry of Education of Kosova has started to work in some fields based on this law.

The history of the Law

The drafting and discussion of this law date back to the time when Michael Daxner was the international administrator of the University of Prishtina. According to officials from the University of Prishtina (UP), UNMIK (UN Mission in Kosova) and Daxner – as supporters of the creation of a separate university for Serbs in the northern part of Mitrovica – had continuously interfered with the professional work of the experts of the Council of Europe trying to impose the legal base in the law to regulate the creation of a Serb public university, separate from the University of Prishtina⁴.

⁴ Interview with Arsim Bajrami, vice-rector of the University of Prishtina, conducted in October 2002.

After pushing this through, Daxner had insisted that the law be adopted before the Kosova Assembly was constituted, during the time of the existence of Interim Administrative Council (IAC). At the time, though, because of objections from the Albanian side, the law was not adopted and it was postponed until the Kosova Assembly was constituted. After its constitution, the Kosova Assembly discussed the law and adopted it only after the articles regulating the existence of a Serb university in the northern part of Mitrovica were removed.⁵

Nevertheless, even though this law was adopted, as such, by the Kosova Assembly, it has still not been signed by the SRSG Steiner, thus creating a legal vacuum in the higher education. Sources inside the University emphasize that Steiner has stated that he will not sign the law without the inclusion of a Serb university in the northern part of Mitrovica. Based on the resolution 1244 and the Constitutional Framework of Kosova, the SRSG can invalidate every decision of the Assembly and instead adopt a different one.

Discussions on the Law

The adopted Law, although of a high standard, has some space for discussion. In the first place, organs of the University of Prishtina were consulted, but their remarks were not incorporated that much. Officials at the University do not agree fully with such a high centralization of competences

⁵ In the Albanian version that was sent for adoption to the Kosova Assembly by the Ministry, the articles legally regulating the existence of this university were not present, while in the Serbian and English version these articles were present. Some Kosovar MPs considered this as a devious attempt to adopt this law, while on the other hand international officials interpreted this as a printing mistake. The Assembly members, after detecting this anomaly, adopted the law only after the extraction of the part regulating the existence of the university.

in the Ministry leaving very little in the hands of the University itself, let alone the respective Faculties. The centralization, to a large extent, has to do with the financial sphere, on which the Ministry has the biggest say. Article 17, paragraph 1 of the Law on the Higher Education says: "The Ministry shall set out in an administrative instruction the methodology to be used for the allocation of funds for education and research in the public interest"⁶. In comparison, according to the statute of the University of Tirana adopted in 2000, the faculties have financial autonomy in relation to the University. This autonomy in the financial sphere has been given to the faculties in order to improve the financial situation of the teaching staff and to further stimulate and motivate them. However, according to Prof. dr. Ylli Pango, "this victory achieved at the time through a great majority exists only on paper and the faculties and honored academics still have to go and get ration cards in the rectorate only to get petrol for their vehicles..."⁷.

According to the Law on Higher Education, the Statute of the University of Prishtina should be adapted to the law and a final green light has to be given by the Ministry and the Assembly. However, officials from the university think that the current statute of the UP has to change only a little since it was written in the spirit of the Bologna Declaration by the same experts that drafted the law as well. According to these officials, the part that has to change should include the removal of the competences of the former international administrator, who, based on the current statute, enjoys unlimited

competences, not to say authoritarian ones⁸.

Taking into consideration the current circumstances, it is questionable if Kosova is ready to implement this law. It can result that this law ends up as just a nice decor, while in reality not change substantially the situation in education. There can be a discrepancy between the real situation in the education sector (including here the elementary and secondary education) and the law. High ranking officials in the university consider that there will be problems in the implementation of this law for a transitory period of 3 years and afterwards its implementation will be easier since conditions will be created for its successful implementation. Based on the qualitative survey with teachers at the University of Prishtina it can be seen that in general the teachers are not that well informed about the Law on Higher Education, especially on its content. Nevertheless, their attitude is that it is positive that there is a law, which lacked before, based on which the work can be done.⁹

In the first years of its existence, the University of Prishtina operated based on the laws of the former-Federal Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia, laws which are not compatible with modern education systems that are applied in the West.

On the other hand, the new law written in the spirit of the Bologna Declaration proceeds the modern developments in Europe, thus ensuring the compatibility of the higher education system of Kosova to the ones in Western countries.

The biggest obstacle, as far as the law is concerned, is the refusal of the SRSB to sign it. This is delaying the reforming of the entire education system in Kosova and

⁶ The Law on Higher Education, Article 17.1, p.30

⁷ Prof.dr. Ylli Pango, "Disa arritje në Shkatërrimin e Universiteteve" (Some achievements in the destruction of the Universities), Koha Jonë, 7.11.2002

⁸ The Interim Statute of the University of Prishtina, Article 7.

⁹ Qualitative survey with teachers at the University of Prishtina, conducted by Index Kosova, November 2002.

leaves the students, who are currently doing their studies, handicapped.

There were some other technical remarks made on the law, mainly on the linguistic aspect of the Albanian version of the draft.¹⁰

II. REFORMS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF PRISHTINA

When the need arose to apply a western style reform after the period of the parallel education system¹¹, the University of Prishtina was not ready in the material, financial and staffing aspect, say teachers during a focus group survey conducted by Index Kosova for the needs of this study. In the same qualitative survey, seen from the 2002 perspective, the professors say that the past of the University and its consequences have not been taken into consideration.

The aims of the reforms

The reforms in the University of Prishtina (UP) were initiated based on the Bologna Declaration, which is obligatory for all the Universities members of the European Rectors' Conference (CRE), where the University of Prishtina is a full member. The reforms aimed at¹²:

- Reforming of the curricula and syllabus and its harmonization with those of European Union countries, as an imperative of the time;
- Improvement of the existing syllabus and curricula and their enrichment with the experience of similar faculties in the EU;
- Reform of the studying regime, creating possibilities for transferring, which is in fact students' exchange;
- Increase of efficiency and quality of studies by implementing contemporary methods of teaching and assessment of students' knowledge;
- Utilization of the existing staffing potential and the one currently studying abroad; and
- Removing the unnecessary overload for the students.

Looking at the aims and knowing, to an extent, the disputable results of the reforms by now in the University of Prishtina, it can be said that a very important factor has not been sufficiently considered – the teachers and their readiness for changes.

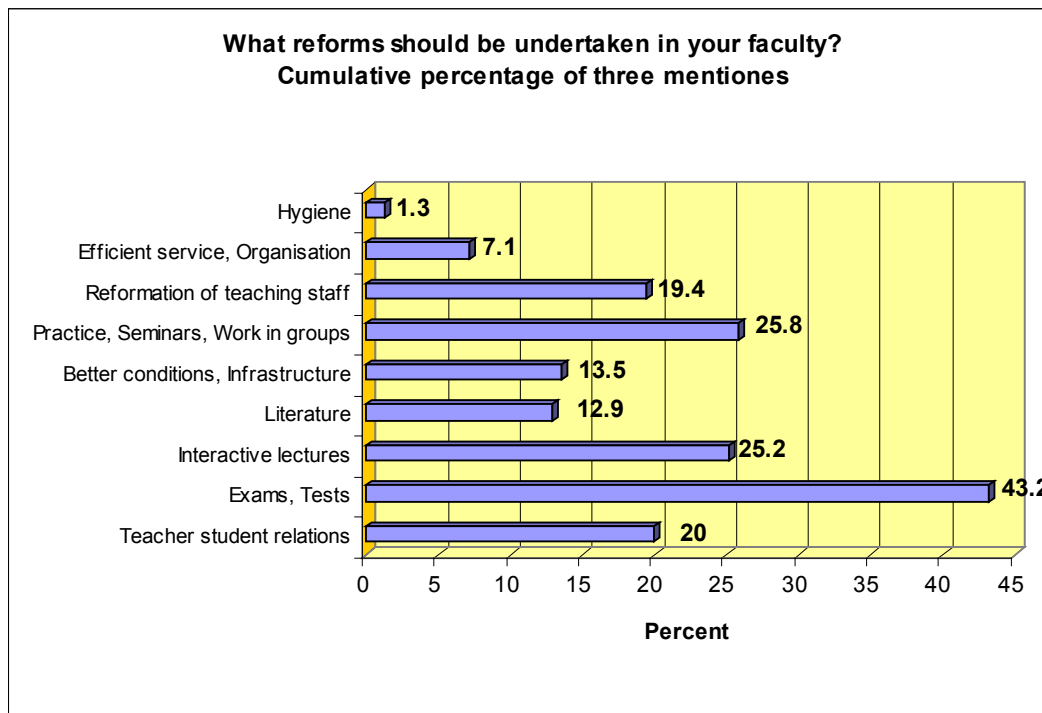
Taking into consideration what was said at the beginning of the chapter on the past of the University of Prishtina, it can easily be said that the teachers at the university use worn out working methods. In this context, there were frequent accusations towards the UP by the media, such as that it is a medieval university, and there were even assessments that the UP should close down for some years. "We are trying to mend a vehicle, which is on the move", said Michael Daxner, at the beginning of his mandate as an international administrator of the University, trying to portray the efforts for improving the situation in the UP¹³.

¹⁰ The Albanian language version of the Law on Higher Education, based on a test conducted with an electronic spelling check program, contains several hundred spelling and grammar mistakes.

¹¹ From 1991 to 1999, the University of Prishtina has used private houses as teaching facilities, since it was thrown out of its facilities by the Serbian regime. During these years, the level of the studies was very low.

¹² "Proposal for the model of reforms of Faculties and High Schools based on the Bologna Declaration", 2001, Commission on Academic Policies of the UP.

¹³ Interview with Michael Daxner, Koha Ditore, 2000, conducted by Bardh Rugova.



In order for the reforms to start well, the first thing that should have been done and still can be done is to assess the capacities of the teaching staff at the UP in order to make the University of Prishtina compatible to European universities and apply similar value norms. As a result, there is no doubt that there is a need for a complete reform of the staff before starting with a more substantial reform in the UP.

The reaction of the teachers and students towards the reforms

In all the individual interviews and qualitative surveys with teachers, a recurring note was that of the insecurity of older teachers linked to the proposal for reforms.

“At present, there is a tendency at the University to discharge professors, who were the founders and for 10 years were the carriers of the teaching process, which is painful since they are being discharged from the teaching process without any compensation, without the slightest financial security. There is also a lack of funds for supporting the new teachers”, said a teacher during a focus group

discussion¹⁴ with teaching staff from the university. Here, as well as in the individual interviews with the teachers, the initial skepticism expressed towards the proposed reforms is clearly visible and is a result of the fear from losing their jobs.

As a protective mechanism from these “dangers”, the more experienced teachers in the university have always expressed a measure of “collegiality”, where the teachers take care of each others position in the UP. A young teacher at the UP said in an interview that the decision makers very often justify giving academic titles and positive assessments for teachers as a form of aid. An Albanian proverb says: “a good deed is returned with a good deed”. The spirit created in the UP as a result of this phenomena makes the university look as a social welfare institution, rather than a cradle of the knowledge of our society.

On the other hand, there has been a completely different reaction towards the reforms by the young teachers as well as

¹⁴ “Arsimi i Lartë në Kosovë, roli dhe rëndësia” (Higher Education in Kosova, The role and importance) – A qualitative survey: Focus group, Index Kosova, 2001.

students, who were especially interested for a new spirit in the UP and thus expected the reforms with enthusiasm and perhaps even with elements of euphoria. This, it seems, is a result of their dissatisfaction with the current situation, and expresses their stand that any change is better than the status quo in the UP.

The reform process

It is true that the reforms in the University were more than needed; perhaps even the chosen reforms could have been successful if the international administrator, Michael Daxner¹⁵, had involved the local factor more in the drafting and implementation process.

The reform process in the University of Prishtina was fundamentally wrong, since the reform model came from the top, while the participation of the University bodies in this process was close to zero. There was an attempt to implement the reforms in a hasty fashion, which hindered the necessary process of adequate reviewing, testing and modifying based on the needs of the University of Prishtina.

The young teacher, whom we interviewed, by now disappointed with the success of the reforms, as most of the other teachers at UP, said: “Daxner, as a sociologist, should have been more empirical during the process of drafting and implementation of the reforms”, saying that Daxner should have come down “from his office high up in the Eximkos building”.

Daxner was not that interested to work in cooperation with the managing and teaching staff of the UP. A consensus exists amongst the teachers that the reforms “should not and can not be done

by one person”¹⁶. However, it is said that on the other hand also the professors did not make any efforts to come forward with proposals connected to Daxner’s plans or to join him in this process, since the majority of them automatically joined the opposing camp because of the initial skepticism.

As far as the reform process is concerned, it can be said with certainty that the non-inclusion of the local factor in this process has caused a lot of damage to the UP, but at the same time the teachers and other staff at the UP have been passive – the elderly as a result of the skepticism; the young because of the euphoria and somehow, both parties remained out of the game. As far as the Independent Students’ Union (UPS) is concerned: “How much has been done in order to contribute to this process?” In none of our interviews with teachers on the reform process, UPS was not mentioned. Perhaps they had more “patriotic” duties of high priority at the time.

The current situation in the University

Even with the discontent expressed by the teaching staff in the UP, it seems that students are more positive in connection to the reforms¹⁷. However, this might be the result of the decrease of obligatory study years needed to obtain a diploma, from four to three years, through the system 3+2+3. The teachers, on the other hand, emphasize a concern of their students, who with three years of studies (bachelor degree) will be a weaker contender when applying for the same job against

¹⁵ The person behind the reform process of the University of Prishtina until his departure from this position after the Interim Self-Governing Institutions of Kosova were constituted, at the beginning of 2002.

¹⁶ “Arsimi i Lartë në Kosovë, roli dhe rëndësia” (Higher Education in Kosova, The role and importance) – A qualitative survey: Focus group, Index Kosova, 2001.

¹⁷ Quantitative survey with students of the UP, conducted by Index Kosova, 20-23 October 2002.

somebody that has graduated in the old system, thus doing four years of studies.

In the same survey there is a part that gives a contradictory assessment, which perhaps is even more accurate because the questions are more specific – the students say that the method that is mostly used by the teachers is the classical ex-cathedra lecturing (73%), then come the exercises/seminars (47,5%), interactive methods (27%), team work / group work (22%) and the least used, or not even used at all are projects/research (2%). At the same time the students prefer the contrary to what is most commonly used as a teaching method. Students prefer the team/group work first (74%), followed by interactive methods (59%), exercises/seminars (54%), projects/research (34%) and the least preferred classic method, ex-cathedra, (6%).

It seems that the new methods of assessment and grading that are being applied in most of the Faculties of the University of Prishtina have found support from the students. Most of them (54,5%) say that the new methods of assessment, compared to the classic ones, are better for assessing their knowledge, while 8,5% think of them as the same to the old ones and only 4,5% say that the new methods are worse than the classical methods.

When asked to give recommendations on what reform changes should be conducted in the faculties, the issue of assessment and grading methods was emphasized. The first reform recommended by the students was the issue of tests and assessment (43,2%); then come the exercises, seminars and team work (25,8%), interactive lectures (25,2%), relations between the teachers and students (20%); reform of the teaching staff (19,14%) followed by general conditions such as the infrastructure, space, literature and

effective services, better organizing. From these questions it can be seen that the reforms did not touch, as much as they should have, the issue of admission exams, tests and in particular assessment.

Tuition for enrollment in a semester/year by the students has been characterized as the most important problem their appropriate faculties are facing. This problem has also been characterized as important by the teachers we spoke with. Students think that the tuition should be lowered or removed completely, while teachers think the opposite.

Finally, on the current situation, looked at from outside and from the statements of the teachers and students, it can be concluded that the reforms have changed some things, but it can not be surely said with what amount of success.

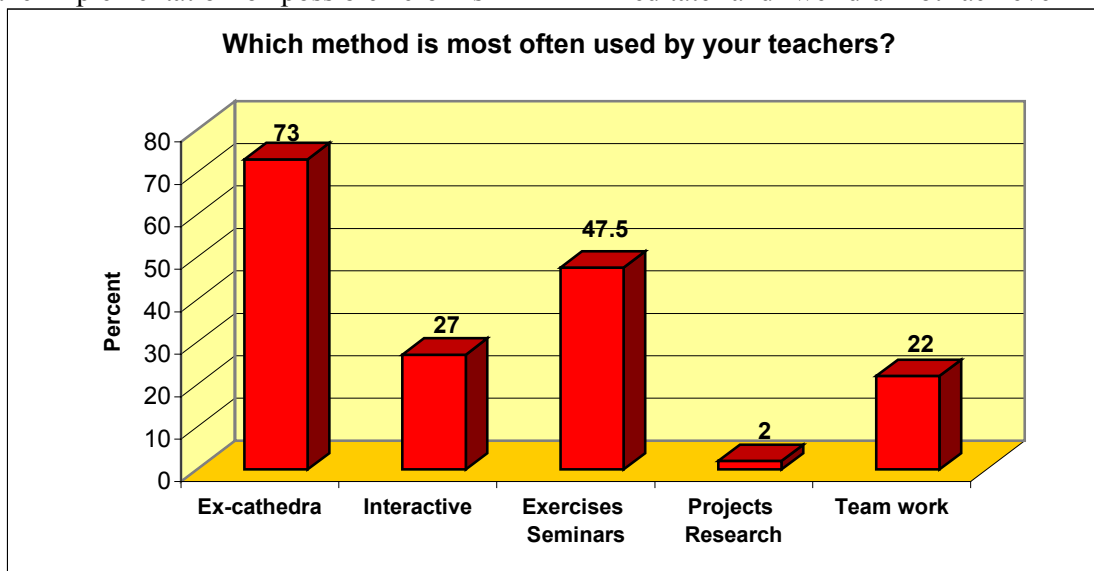
Continuing with the reforms

At the beginning, an assessment should be conducted on the capacity of the teachers to carry the reforms; additional training should be provided; also the renewal of the teaching staff are preconditions for making more suitable reforms.

After these preparatory steps, we think that a working group should be created, that would review the proposed reform and problems occurring during its implementation, which would ensure a smooth transformation of the UP into a university with European standards. The working group should analyze the Bologna Declaration through a critical eye by keeping in mind that the UP should neither be the first nor the last university in Europe to apply the principles of the Bologna Declaration. The working group should also look at implementing their proposals in particular faculties as pilot projects.

The proposed reforms by the working group should go through a detailed review from different actors in the UP. This would ensure largest possible participation of teachers, staff and students in the reform process, which would ease to a great extent the implementation of possible reforms in

the methodology and literature to the contemporary needs and requirements. “That’s why in our lectures at the University we did not achieve more than just a repetition of thoughts, we did not achieve more than to verbalize instead of meditate and we did not achieve more



the future.

then, as I would call it, be opportunist instead of having critical reviews.”¹⁹

III. THE METHODOLOGY, LITERATURE AND TEACHING STAFF

The methodology, literature and the teaching staff at the University of Prishtina do not always correspond with the contemporary developments in education.¹⁸ The changing of systems from a monist to a pluralist coincided with the expulsion of the Albanian teachers and students from the facilities of the University of Prishtina. During the nineties, there was little space for adapting

¹⁸ Opinion expressed in the focus group meeting of the qualitative survey with teachers at the UP, conducted by Index Kosova, on 5.11.2002 in Prishtina.

Methodology

Based on the quantitative survey of Index Kosova²⁰ it can be seen that the students are not as worried about the number of lecturers and academic and pedagogical criteria that they fulfill, as they are about the methodologies applied in the teaching.

We refer here to two elements: teaching methodology and assessing the students’ knowledge.

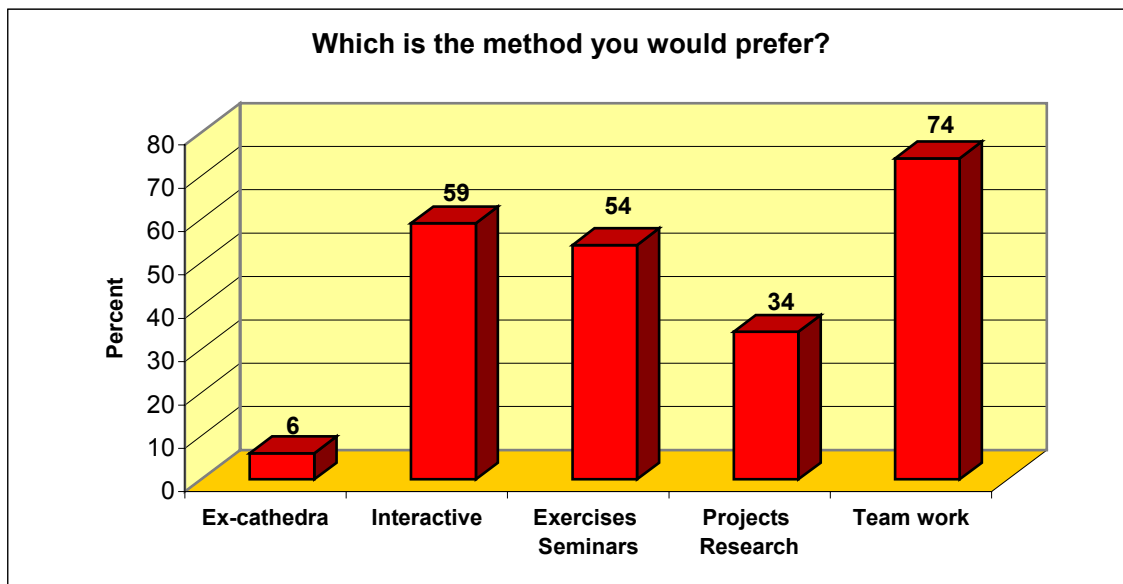
At present, teachers mostly use the classical method, ex-cathedra, while the most preferred, according to the students,

¹⁹ “Arsimi i Lartë në Kosovë, roli dhe rëndësia” (Higher Education in Kosova, The role and importance) – A qualitative survey: Focus group, Index Kosova, 2001.

²⁰ Quantitative survey with students of the UP, conducted by Index Kosova on 20-23 October 2002.

is team/group work. The second method, based on the preferences of students, is the interactive method. The implementation of the above mentioned methods, which are mostly preferred by the students, is made

element of the methodology. Until now, the teacher-student relation has not been equal. According to the teachers themselves²², usually the teacher is perceived as the carrier of knowledge, an



difficult for several reasons: high number of students as well as the willingness of students to participate.²¹ On the one hand, the students are insisting on the implementation of the new methods, but the question is whether they ready to take on the burden, which, without a doubt, will fall on their shoulder if they enter a race with the teachers. A method, that has lately started to be implemented in other countries, but has been absent from the UP, is community service, where the students are engaged in a certain field during one semester. This method is interesting for Kosova in particular because all the higher education (as well as the rest of the education system) is for free. This way, there would be an awareness rising amongst students on the investments the society puts in them as well as the experience of paying back to the same provider.

The quality of the relation between the students and professors is a decisive

authority and a “rule” in the University. Such a relationship, as it can be seen in practice, hinders critical thinking during the classes.

In some faculties/departments, the lecturers do not have any competition, and this is another problem linked to the methodology. That is why we have cases where the professors have created a sort of a factual monopoly. This makes the implementation of changes in the teaching methodology more difficult.

As far as the assessment system at the UP is concerned, it is based on grades from 5 to 10, where 5 is an insufficient grade, while 10 is the highest grade. Based on surveys, 43 % of the students think that the assessment methods are the first issue they recommend for reform.²³

²¹ Ibid.

²² Qualitative survey with teachers at the UP, conducted on 5.11.2002 in Prishtina.

²³ Quantitative survey with students of the UP, conducted by Index Kosova on 20-23 October 2002.

Literature

One of the biggest handicaps in the work of the University of Prishtina, beside the financial difficulties, is the lack of literature. Based on the study by Index Kosova, this problem is ranked as the second one by importance.²⁴ For a long time, there has been an attitude in the UP that every professor should write his own textbook on the subject that he teaches. Reading from the textbook of a particular professor was considered – and is still considered – a precondition to pass the exam successfully. What's more, in some more extreme cases, because of personal quarrels between two teachers lecturing the same subject in a particular faculty, the student is the biggest victim since he might have used the “anathematic” textbook of one and not the other teacher. Very often, instead of genuine literature, some teachers offer students some kind of notes based on which they have taught for years and years.

*“Unfortunately, there are still some teachers in the UP that give their students different notes and such teachers even use literature from the fifties and sixties”.*²⁵

Beside the fallback in new scientific achievements, this tradition concerning textbooks has very often had other negative consequences. One of them is that the teachers with lower professional qualities were obliged²⁶ to publish their own texts, which left a lot of negative

consequences, some times touching generations. It seems that the biggest gainers here are the owners of many photocopy shops, in which you can find even real fossils, very old texts, which for many years have been out of the market, but are obligatory for students if they want to be successful in many subjects.

One of the possible solutions for this problem is translation of foreign books, which in some cases are much more advanced than the ones used currently. From the qualitative survey with the teachers at the UP, it results that they agree in principle that the UP should offer its students literature in Albanian, but this does not mean that the texts should be by Albanian writers²⁷. In the past, translations of textbooks from Serbian were used (in some cases the second translation of the original language), but, today this is not done any more. Meanwhile, these translations, are evermore being substituted by translation in Albanian, done in Tirana, which are filling this space. But, there are some problems here as well, since the terminology used in these translations is sometimes fully incompatible with the one used in UP publications, a thing that creates serious difficulties in understanding the texts.

The literature problem, without a doubt, is connected closely to the lack in developing and creating new qualitative teaching staff.

The teaching staff

Faced with low wages offered by the University of Prishtina, as one of the public services in the country, a large part of the qualitative staff in the university were pushed to engage in work and projects other than the University, which bring additional financial income. This

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Qualitative survey with teachers from the UP, conducted by Index Kosova on 5.11.2002 in Prishtina.

²⁶ “There was a attitude once, that every professor should write his own textbook. This attitude was considered an absurd for the fact that professors with lower professional qualities were obliged to publish a text of their own” – quote from the survey “Arsimi i Lartë në Kosovë, roli dhe rëndësia” (Higher Education in Kosova, role and importance), conducted by Index Kosova on 6.11.2000 in Prishtina.

²⁷ Qualitative survey with teachers at the UP, conducted by Index Kosova on 5.11.2002 in Prishtina.

causes a fall in their concentration in the teaching process.²⁸

The total number of teaching staff at the UP is around 1.200, from which 50% have different academic titles²⁹. A teacher at the UP, during his everyday work, faces different problems: low wages, low investments, overloaded amphitheatres, social insecurity, etc. Besides this, there is no stimulation from the side of the society in this aspect, where a university teacher today faces an erosion of the social prestige, which this profession had in the past. As far as the organized support from the institutions towards the advancement of the knowledge and quality of the teaching staff, it only began in the last few years, after a decade when every effort for professional and scientific advancement was self-financed by the teacher.

A phenomena which is noticeable in the teaching staff at the UP is the slow pace of substitution of the staff, which one way or the other has not fulfilled certain standards. This is a consequence from the recent past, when the main aim was the survival of the University of Prishtina and not the genuine selection of the scientific staff. This is why a higher flexibility is recommended, because different times require different people.

“Times change and they require different people. Now, as we are on the doorstep of reforms, the staff should be chosen by

different criteria, they should have a reform spirit.”³⁰

But, this problem is linked with the social insecurity, which most of the almost retired teachers face.³¹ So in the beginning of the reforms, a large part of the energy and time was spent on ensuring the sufficient number of students for a subject or a sufficient number of classes for a teacher, in order not to discharge the teachers in case they do not fulfill the necessary quota (20 students per teacher)³². At the same time, there is a lack of funds for supporting the new staff. Practice shows that it takes a long time to create the new staff in the UP, and one of the reasons for this being that the system, which needs to be followed, is complicated. It is recommended that in the future new standards be drafted, which would be observed for nominating the staff at the UP, and then abiding precisely to these standards. A great help for this might be the coordination with different scientific and professional associations (i.e. the Historians Association, Lawyers Association, Doctors Association), which would help by offering additional education, re-qualification programs and other trainings for teaching staff. These associations, in cooperation with the faculties from the same field, should create an evaluation method, based on which every seminar that a teacher would participate in (regardless if as a panelist or participant in the auditorium) would provide him with a certain number of

²⁸ “One more thing that has a great impact, not only in the production of literature, but also in the education process in general, is the fact that professors are not physically at the university. Most of them, besides their faculty duties, work other jobs, and they go to the faculties only when they have a scheduled lecture or exams and this means that they are not there with all their being.” – quote from the qualitative survey with teaching staff at UP, conducted by Index Kosova, on 15.11.2002, in Prishtina.

²⁹ “Current Conditions in the University of Prishtina”, a study conducted by Index Kosova in 2001.

³⁰ “Arsimi i Lartë në Kosovë, roli dhe rëndësia” (Higher Education in Kosova, The role and importance) – A qualitative survey: Focus group, Index Kosova, 2001.

³¹ The Law on the Methodology for Setting the Basic Pension Level in Kosova, and Setting the Starting Date for Issuing Basic Pensions, adopted by the Kosova Assembly, June 2002, sets the pension rate at 28 Euro/month.

³² “Arsimi i Lartë në Kosovë, roli dhe rëndësia” (Higher Education in Kosova, The role and importance) – A qualitative survey: Focus group, Index Kosova, 2001.

points that would be calculated when applying for a new position. This way, scientific research in the UP and the teaching staff would be stimulated. Even though the teaching staff at the UP are facing all these difficulties and weaknesses mentioned above, most of the students (74.5%) think that their teachers fulfill the academic and pedagogical criteria for teaching, while the number of those that disagree with this is lower (25.5%).³³

IV. ADMINISTRATION AND STUDENTS' ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

While there were no substantial changes in the administration of the University of Prishtina after returning in the proper university facilities, there were a few changes regarding the responsibilities and hierarchy.

University administration implies all the services outside of the education process in the University, starting from administrative services for students, going to services for the teaching staff.

The administration hierarchy starts from the rectorate³⁴, continuing with the faculty deaneries and other faculty services.

The University of Prishtina functions through a centralist system, which includes the centralization of the administration.³⁵

The functioning of the administration in the faculties

The administration in the faculties starts with the students' administrative office. These services are realized through this service: applying for admission exams in the UP; filing the necessary documentation for enrollment in the faculty; registration of candidates; applying for exams; verifying the received grade; receiving certificates, diplomas as well as other documents; keeping registrar and students' files.

The administration, in most cases, still functions in a mechanical way, without computers, thus most of the data is hand written. In some faculties, such as the Faculty of Mathematical and Natural Sciences, the data is processed through specific computer programs dedicated for the students' administration. According to administration employees, working on computers makes the data collection much easier. But, most of the current administration employees, being people who have worked for a long time in those positions, are mainly elderly people, without qualifications for working on computers.³⁶

In most cases, for one administration worker there are 500-700 students. In the Faculty of Philology, there are three administration employees for the services of around 2000 students of this faculty.

The archives are kept in the faculties as well.³⁷

³³ Quantitative survey with students of the UP, conducted by Index Kosova, on 20-23 October 2002 in Prishtina.

³⁴ Before the war, the administration system was not centralized, but with the insistence of Mr. Daxner, the centralization of the University administration was carried out. This implies a hierarchic system of decision-making that starts from the rectorate, and not the deaneries, as it used to be.

³⁵ The Interim Statute of the University of Prishtina, 23.10.2000.

³⁶ Interview with Mr. Demë Fetaj, head of the students' administrative service in the Faculty of Philology, conducted in October 2002.

³⁷ Based on regulations and old laws, the Central Archive of Kosova should collect the documents from the faculty archives every ten years, but this has happened neither before nor after the war.

In the faculties' administration, besides the students' administrative service, there is also a clerk for education issues that deals with managing the documentation related to teachers – employment contracts and similar -; then the post-graduate studies clerk; secretary; accountant; archive clerk; treasurer and the deanery.

Work plans are rarely posted in the faculties, while the communication with the students is not done through a gazette, but, instead, the students are obliged to inquire in the students' administrative services.

At the moment, the administration services, mostly have to go through the central administration. This causes the existence of two parallel administrations that might pose a hindrance to one another. The faculty administration admits candidates, while their enrollment is done in the central administration in the rectorate. This is a cause for the two months delay in issuing students cards (“indeks”) for the newly enrolled students in the academic year 2002/2003. Earlier, the students cards were issued much quicker.

This situation could be improved by creating an information center in the rectorate instead of double administration. This service would inform the administration employees as well as students, on every detail that has to do with the university issues.

V. THE INFRASTRUCTURE

The University of Prishtina, for its educational purposes, currently uses 37 different facilities,³⁸ from which 30 are located in Prishtina and spread in different

parts of the city. The condition of these facilities is not that good, since most of them need additional investments with the aim of proper renovation. There was a series of renovations conducted in most of the faculties during 1999 and 2000. But, there is a lack of sufficient funds to address the needs in infrastructure, which come out as a result of a great number of students and teaching staff.³⁹

The number of computers, in general, is still small (1 computer per 55 students and 1 computer per 4 teachers and administration employees)⁴⁰. The biggest number of computers is located in the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences (in total 57)⁴¹. The increase in the number of computers and other equipment was greatly helped by the donations from different organizations and foundations such as: WUS-Austria, The German Government, University of Graz, European Union, University of Leeds, GTZ, Soros Foundation, etc. As far as the internet presence and usage in the UP is concerned, big improvements were made during 2000 and 2001, as a result of the engagement of an NGO called IPKO (Internet Project Kosova), which offered free services for a certain period of time for 5 faculties in the UP.

Based on the quantitative survey by Index Kosova, there are different opinions concerning the issue of sufficient and adequate space, which is needed for a normal educational process. About one third of the students think that their faculty has sufficient and adequate space for a normal educational process. However, around one third think that the space in their faculty is sufficient, but it needs to be re-organized and renovated. There is also a considerable number of students (32.5%) who are absolutely unsatisfied with the space, saying that the space in their faculty

³⁸ Current Condition of the University of Prishtina – Index Kosova, 2001.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

is neither sufficient nor adequate for a normal educational process. Nevertheless, most of the students (68%) declare that their faculties use rationally the available space, while 26% of the students say that their faculties do not use rationally the available space.

Besides the classrooms, students in the faculties of the University of Prishtina, also use other kinds of spaces for their studies. From the used spaces, the amphitheatres are the mostly used ones (71.5%), then come laboratories (33.5%), specific rooms (33%), clinics (9.5%), while studios, halls and libraries are much less used. Most of the students say that these spaces are equipped to an extent, while only 8.2% say that these spaces are not equipped at all.⁴²

Besides the above-mentioned problems, the situation is made worse by the very bad environmental situation in the University premises, as well as the lack of hygiene.⁴³

There is no doubt that adaptation, renovation and reorganization of the space, can greatly influence the efficiency of work and studies at the university.

VI. ADMISSION OF STUDENTS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF PRISHTINA

Just the number of students that finished secondary school in Kosova in 2000/2001

⁴² Quantitative survey with students of the UP, conducted by Index Kosova on 20-23 October 2002, in Prishtina.

⁴³ “The environment around each faculty is a big shame, what’s happening is terrible” – quote from “Arsimi i Lartë në Kosovë, roli dhe rëndësia” (Higher Education in Kosova, The role and importance) – A qualitative survey: Focus group, Index Kosova, 2001.

was equal to the overall number of students at the University of Prishtina. Based on this, their possibilities for enrollment in one of the faculties and continuing their education in Kosova are very small.⁴⁴ The competition in some faculties is so big, that 10 candidates apply for one position. This makes the process of enrollment in the University of Prishtina, a front-page issue.

The need for studying the possibilities of improving the enrollment process is more than evident. This would enable the qualification of candidates for studies at the university to become more fair and increase the quality of the product in the university.

The issue of admittance tests at the University of Prishtina has always been a hot topic surrounded by a lot of controversies, which has influenced very much in creating a reputation of the University – especially some of the faculties – as a corrupt institution.

There were many rumors in that past about big violations. Until late, the Faculty of Medicine was very much involved in this, this, most probably, because of the very high interest for this faculty. An example of this is the admission test for the Medical Faculty in 1999, when from the planned number of 100 students to be admitted, instead in the end there were 250 that were enrolled. At the time, even though this became a scandal, this case was never reviewed more extensively and no accountability was required from the then leadership of the faculty.

This case and many other similar cases have influenced a lot on damaging the image of the University, and especially the Medical Faculty. Many accusations for nepotism, bribing, were continuous, but none of the cases was officially solved.

⁴⁴ “Arsimi në Kosovë 2000/2001” (Education in Kosova 2000/2001); D. Pupovci, H. Hyseni, J. Salihaj; Albanian edition: December 2001.

As a consequence, all of this resulted with the overloading of teachers with students, and a decrease in the quality of work. In many cases, wrongfully enrolled students (“godfather” way, as is the term used in Kosova) are not interested to do their studies regularly and do not have the skills to study in the particular field. This is a factor that clearly influences the decrease in the number of students in a progressive way during their studies, year by year.⁴⁵

Such an effect is even more negative when you look at the number of enrolled students who manage to graduate from their studies. This number is in a big disproportion with the number of enrolled students. This has and still will come at a high cost for the Kosovan society in the future. If we take the example of the Medical Faculty as the main institution producing professional medical staff, and the current rate of staff production from this faculty and then compare this number to the population needs, based on WHO (World Health Organization) standards, it will take us 30 years to reach the sufficient number of medical staff.⁴⁶

We can see from this that the methodology used to select students plays a great role in the quality of students and teaching. This, thereafter, influences the achieved results at the Faculty and the fulfillment of the needs of Kosova. A wrong selection will have a negative influence in general.

In the years after the war, with many reform initiatives, a hope was created that this phenomenon would change. But, things are so deeply rooted in the system that is difficult to change them.

The newest example of lack of clarity, standards, accountability and transparency,

was the 2002 admission exam for the Faculty of Psychology.

As a new faculty, founded after the war, with a new program and attitude towards studies, Psychology had become a very attractive destination for the candidates applying for studies at UP. That is why in this years’ test, there were ten candidates applying per place.

The admission exam was held on 11 July and the results were announced duly. After the exam, because of many complaints from the students that had not passed the test, The Board of the University requested an enquiry into the preparation and implementation of the admission exam. This way, a commission was established to analyze the issue. After their analysis, there were many irregularities reported, which this commission reported to the University Board. These were some of the irregularities⁴⁷: commission for assessing the admission exam, in the beginning had five members, but by the exam day only two had remained, as well as one co-opted member from outside for controlling the tests. The second irregularity was that the exam, which had to start at 9 o’clock (on 11 July), did not start until 13:30. The test itself had technical mistakes (i.e. from 5 possible answer choices, one was exact and more precise, while there were a few other exact ones but not precise answer choices. The guidance was given orally to the students to surround only the most exact choice). But, here the commission has concluded the third irregularity, since the guidance was by the same person in a great number of classrooms, thus it could not have been uniform for all the students. The next issue bothering the commission was the assessment of the essays. Although, it was foreseen that the maximum points for an essay was 8, there were cases, when an essay, which was

⁴⁵ Current Condition of the University of Prishtina – Index Kosova, 2001.

⁴⁶ “Health Financing Kosovo”, a presentation from George Bolton, 6 July 2002, meeting of the STWG of the European Center for Minority Issues – project in Kosova.

⁴⁷ Information on the irregularities of the admission exam reported by the assessment commission, come from the interview by prof. Nait Vernezi, a member of this commission.

considered good, was evaluated with 10 points. According to the commission, this was irregular. Another irregularity concerning the evaluation of the essays was that essays written in English were evaluated in some cases with higher points. The third objection concerning the essays was that every essay was evaluated individually by the commission members, and not in a team fashion, thus leaving a lot of space to subjectivity during the evaluation. There were some more irregularities, an example was when candidates surrounded several answer choices in one question. Also, students were not told about the number of points gained by different parts of the test.

The Commission for assessing the exam sent its report to the University Board. The Board had to make a choice in this matter: 1 to review all the irregularities one-by-one; or 2 to annul the admission exam all together. The Board decided to annul the exam thus causing a great injustice to the individuals who passed in the first test and in this way also creating confusion in the public. Even though, it could be said that in the second exam, everybody would be still equal, the once admitted persons would for sure have a big disadvantage, because they were under pressure to keep their place, while the others had less to lose.

The admission exam was repeated, but the results were much different compared to the first time. 48 persons, who had passed the test in the first time, now were not in the admitted list, which represented the half of all those admitted previously. This is for sure an indicator on the injustice committed towards these individuals, a thing that caused a great revolt in them. This group, then, became very vocal in protecting their rights, and started to put pressure on the faculty and the rectorate, in order to get their voice heard. They were successful in this, so the rectorate created an ad-hoc commission to review the case. After the review, the commission proposed to enlarge the list and all the individuals

admitted in the first time (except for 6 cases, 4 that did not fulfill the conditions to be even in the first list as well as two individuals that did not reapply in the second admission exam), be admitted alongside the ones admitted from the second exam.

This decision, if nothing else, ensured some justice for all, but this decision now did not take into consideration the previous decision by the University Board to annul fully the first admission exam and this way the confusion surrounding the process was left unclear.

This case is now closed and the academic year has started successfully, but the case in hand shows the lack of standards at the university level. It also shows that the decisions for compiling the tests, the methodology used and so on are taken on an ad-hoc bases, based on the previous experiences, which does not mean necessarily that it was successful. At the same time, this shows the lack of coordination and uniformity in the University of Prishtina as far as admission exams are concerned.

Losers and victims in all of this were, first of all, the students, then the reputation of the university as the highest educational institution and as a consequence of this also the level of results deriving from of the work of the University.

The need to change such a situation is more than clear. This would influence in a fairer way the selection of candidates that would have as a consequence the increase of the work quality, better results as well as returning the good reputation of the university in Kosova and internationally.

It would be good if a working body was created at the university level, which would deal exclusively with the issue of admittance exams. The duty of this body would be to study all possible systems that can be applied for admittance exams, their reasonability and adaptability to circumstances in Kosova. Such a body

should have a wide support from the university and the government.

For now, there are a few initiatives for creating such a body. Amongst them is also the initiative by the Kosova Education Center (KEC)⁴⁸ in cooperation with teachers at the university as well as representatives from the Ministry. Also, the group is being supported by some international teachers at the UP, who are passing their experiences from their own countries. Representatives from the rectorate have still not joined this initiative.

However, such a group should take under consideration many different factors, as well as try and insert some new values into the admissions process in the University of Prishtina.

One of the possible solutions, this body should take in consideration, is giving the admissions management process to an independent body, an NGO, which would take upon itself the responsibility of the whole process. This organization would be completely transparent and would be criminally responsible for any misuse of position.

As far the admissions process is concerned, that is the methods of testing applicants, there are several methods, which are being discussed.

The first method is the **Test of Abilities**, which is a test of general intellectual abilities necessary for studying at the University. Such a test would be valid for all applicants and would not be specific for any of the subjects. For faculties with more specific needs, as is the Faculty of Arts, the test could be adapted/modified so it could include the specific requirements. Advantages of this method are that the test is the same for all and the exam could be taken simultaneously by all. The test could

be taken several times by an applicant. Its quality would be guaranteed as it would be subject to prior efficiency testing and not as the situation stands now, when admission exams are compiled ad-hoc by the faculties without any standardized quality control. Another advantage is that it assesses intellectual abilities necessary to study in the university. The disadvantages of such a method would be that students are not tested on the subject they wish to study and thus there would be a possibility that the students which are excellent in a given field could fail the test, just because they have specialized knowledge on that field only.

The second method mentioned is **admission at the university based on the success achieved in the secondary school**, taking into consideration the average mark from High School or focusing on the success in specific subjects. This method would be very inefficient for Kosova because of different customs and standards of assessing in different High Schools in Kosova. Thus, this method would favor or disfavor candidates unjustly.

More radical method, but a just and more humane one, which has been proposed, is **admittance of all High-School graduates** interested in university studies. They would begin their first year in the university in any field of study they choose and students would be in the position to choose the subjects they wish to attend within the first year. At the end of the year, based on the results, there would be qualification and admittance of the best students in given fields. In a way, this would represent a kind of a year-long admission exam. This way, students would be given the chance and time to choose their preferred field of study. This would also represent an efficient placement process based on objective evaluation of their work. At the same time, students who would fail to achieve results would at least have a year of studies which would prepare them for some basic forms of

⁴⁸ "Discussion paper on entrance exams at University of Prishtina", by Per Sonnerby, 9 September 2002.

work. However, this method is very expensive and there is not enough space at the University to take all these students.

Another method is the **combination of methods**, mentioned previously. This means combining points from success achieved in the High School, test of abilities results and the specific test on specific topics. This would give a chance to all categories of candidates – those with better High School marks; specialized candidates; as well as those with good abilities to stand a fair chance for admission. Nevertheless, implementing this method could pose problems similar to ones we are facing currently.

It is important to create an independent body on the university level whose responsibility would be to study possible methods and put them to practice. It would be a permanent body and persons engaged would be employed on a full-time basis focusing on this field only. Regardless of the chosen method, the duty of this body would be to continuously study the possibilities for further improvement of the admissions method, in order to make it more righteous.

The admission exam itself should be run by this body or any other body, which would be independent and would take upon itself the responsibility the whole examination process and scoring verification.

At the same time a Consultative Office has to be created for potential candidates, so they have better knowledge about the fields of study and be informed on the admissions process.

A clear recommendation coming out of the current situation and which would influence the admissions process in being more just and at the same time satisfy the needs of Kosovan society is to increase the number of students to be admitted for studying at the University.

VII. FINANCES

The state of financial affairs at the UP is grave. The financial conditions of the teaching staff are worse than miserable. Their wages are between 120 and 270 EUR. This severe financial situation has influenced the teaching staff to be less concentrated on their work with students. For this reason, majority of them put their work at the university in the third or fourth place of their priority list, as the payment they receive in the university does not ensure them existence.

Majority of them make an effort to ensure their existence by working outside the university, while the work in the university is more an issue of social prestige. Because of such financial motivation, they do not work seriously on their professional advancement, already handicapped by the severe conditions they worked under for 10 years they were expelled from the university premises. This severe financial condition is not only harming the UP through insufficient engagement of the present teaching staff. Such a situation does not create any conditions not only for new staff that graduated from international universities, but also for the ambitious youth finishing their studies at the UP. This way, great damage is being inflicted to the process of transition of UP from the old generation to the young one.

There are many question posed in this respect that require serious consideration and solutions. Commercialization of the services of the university and participation by the students is a special issue that requests for extensive analysis. In this aspect, if world trends are followed, then the University of Prishtina should immediately start applying tuition fees. Qualitative studies are expensive and it is not possible to offer this kind of service for free for a long period of time. When maintaining quality and improvement of quality is required, tuition fee is necessary and would serve as an aid in this respect.

Free studies do not oblige the student to give his/her maximum in order to achieve good results. When the payment of services is required, then the student feels compelled to work in order to achieve something, otherwise his/her expenses would be wasted. Free studies do not stimulate success, while paying for tuition would stimulate the student and there is a possibility that it would raise the quality of graduates. At the same time, this would create income for the University of Prishtina which would help its financial stability. Currently students at the UP do not pay tuition. Teachers think that tuition has to be introduced, instead of small contributions, currently in place⁴⁹.

However, taking into consideration the grave social situation of citizens of Kosova, not all standards that are applied in western countries can be immediately applied in Kosova. Thus, there should be caution in finding a solution on this issue. There is no doubt that if application of tuition starts, there will be students which would not be in a position to absorb the costs of administrative services of the university. According to the statistical data of the research, 70% of all students reject completely the idea that students with an average mark of 7.5 pay around 200 EUR to register a semester. On the other hand, the opinion of the teaching staff differs from that of students. They think that larger registration sums have to be applied. Some of the suggestions went as high as 1,000 euros, since, according to them, students can request quality for their payment⁵⁰. However, third parties can be of help by providing scholarships for excellent students who are not in a financial position to pay for their studies.

On the same note, there could also be a possible agreement between University of Prishtina with local and international banks. Through these agreements, the University would enable the students to take loans in order to cover their tuition expenses. Usually, such loans offer good terms for the students, with modest interest rates, with the return starting no longer than 6 months after graduation. The obligation imposed to them by the loan would be another form of stimulus for them to achieve success in their studies and to ensure a job after graduation⁵¹.

VIII. LABOR MARKET

In the present situation in Kosova, possibilities of employment after graduation are scarce. This has to do with the labor market in Kosova, which is in a miserable state and is closely linked with the economic conditions Kosova is facing today. At present this market is in no position to employ all the students who graduate the University of Prishtina. Kosova economy is in a very low stage of development, so many of the fields of expertise which were highly sought in the past have now become almost unnecessary.

Before the 90's, Kosova managed to develop a light and a heavy industry of its own. Therefore, technologists, mining engineers, electro engineers, engineers of machinery, etc., were experts very much in demand and necessary for continuous development of Kosova. But, many things happening since then have nearly completely destroyed the Kosovan

⁴⁹ Qualitative survey with the teaching staff of the UP, conducted in Prishtina by Index Kosova, on 05 November 2002.

⁵⁰ Quantitative survey with students of the UP, conducted by Index Kosova on October 20-23, 2002 in Prishtina.

⁵¹ A concrete and a successful example of application of tuition is the Turkish-American college where in the start students have to pay large amounts, but it is the duty of the school to ensure necessary literature, internet, law and order, and if the student is successful, his tuition will decrease the next year.

economy and, at the same time, have pushed education to the verge of its existence (expulsion of Albanian employees from their positions after 1990 and the war of 1998/1999). So, today, when the economy of Kosova is mainly concentrated in the field of commerce and the budget of Kosova depends largely on the income from customs taxes and Kosovan society is considered as a consumer society and not a producing one, these fields of expertise of education that had so much perspective now seem to have no perspective. This has also influenced the interests of youth for these professions to decrease each year⁵². Today, the most requested faculties are the ones that can easily and promptly ensure some employment, as are the faculties of foreign languages, Law, Economy, and the Political Sciences. There is great interest for these faculties because there is a growing demand for qualified staff who would work in local administration, which is being built. It should also be mentioned that the euphoria existing previously for the Faculty of Medicine has worn off, possibly because of the low wages of doctors working in public healthcare institutions.

Because of this situation, the number of students who graduated in different fields and have been unemployed for a long time or that are not in a position to find an adequate job in their profession, is continuously increasing.

The employment of those that have graduated, but also the enhancement of quality of education in the University will increase in proportion with the economic development of Kosova. The more

developed Kosovan economy gets, the higher the level of competition gets between graduates. The economic development of Kosova appears to be one of the most important factors for the development of the labor market and creation of greater number of possibilities of employment after graduation.

Parallel to the development of economy, another thing that could help in fulfillment of market requirements for professional employees in specific fields would be planning on necessary fields of expertise in the University. E.g. in a year there are 120 student in the branch of Albanian Language, while the number of graduates and unemployed in this field is very high. At the same time there is a great need for professional staff in journalism, professional interpretation/translation, etc. Evidently, if the majority of students have the same general profile of studies at the University, then none of the students will have any competing advantages in any specific field (compared to other competitors).

University of Prishtina has done very little in offering assistance to students for employment after their graduation. In the UP there is no genuine center for career planning and development, which would enable students to take practical advice on how to prepare for employment or certain specialization needed after graduation. Such centers have become a practice in many universities around the world and are a part of the education curriculum and syllabus. It is through these centers that University would be able to offer students professional counseling for seeking employment, technical assistance for compiling CV-s and letters of presentation; practical advice on employment interviews; as well as practical methods on how to negotiate the conditions stated in employment contracts.

University of Prishtina should also do more in offering possibilities to students for internship in private or public

⁵² 1,617 students graduate in the school year 1999/2000 in the University of Prishtina. If we compare this number with the number of available jobs, a large number of which require no academic qualification, we see that employment possibilities for these individuals are very low. – “Education in Kosova,” 2000/2001, Authors: D.Pupovci, H.Hyseni, J.Salihaj, Albanian-language edition: December 2001.

enterprises. Engagement of student as interns in existing enterprises would enable students to create contacts with these enterprises, which are possible employers for newly graduated students. This can be achieved through agreements between the University and possible employers. These agreements can also create an income for the University, as is the case with many western universities. A concrete case as to how this could be done is when an employer asks for an intern in a certain field, the University could engage in finding this intern from the list of its students. This would be a service which would require a certain fixed payment from the employer to the University, while the intern would be employed without payment. However, this employment would be for a set time, and with this practice, the student not only expands his/her knowledge and experience, but can also use this practice to take a loan in order to graduate from the University. Students currently graduating from the University of Prishtina cannot satisfy the market requirements from the aspect of a certain level of experience at work in the field of their studies. In some Central and Eastern European countries, universities are those initiators that offer students possibilities for internship during their studies for a certain period of time, 6 months to 2 years. These students are afterwards ready to immediately get employed without having to do a one-year internship after graduation.

It could be contemplated that in the future, the University of Prishtina would gradually decrease the number of students in certain fields of expertise, for which there would not be a great need in the labor market in Kosova. At the same time there should be better fields of expertise planning in the fields of studies, in order to fill the existing deficiencies in the labor market.

It is foreseen by the reforms of the University of Prishtina for every professor to have no more than 20 students. Such a

teacher-student relationship would encourage greater interaction between the two, thus enhancing the quality of studies. If the number of students per professor is high, then this will limit the potential of the professor to cater for the individual needs of students. A low number of students would remove University of Prishtina from the level/list of mass universities, where students are not given sufficient attention and care. The concept of mass education is a concept from the socialist era and has been overcome as such. The market economy can not absorb the level of mass production of personnel, but also the personnel can not be formed in a required professional level in a studying atmosphere where there is no teacher-student interaction possible, because of the overwhelming numbers of students.

IX. PRIVATE EDUCATION IN KOSOVA

In the years University of Prishtina was formed, a monist system existed, in which no private education institutions were allowed to exist. As a result, the history of private education in Kosova is very short. Still not adopted law on Higher Education in Kosova foresees private institutions of higher education and has created the complete legal grounds in this respect. *“A private provider of higher education may be founded by a private individual, organization or foundation, situated in Kosova or having registered office in Kosova”*⁵³

Although this law has still not been adopted, already some private institutions are functioning in Kosova, like: The High School of Journalism “Faik Konica”, The

⁵³ The Law on Higher Education, Chapter 6, Article 22.1, page 36.

Traffic and Communication Center for Higher Education and Studies “Tempulli”, The High School of Arts, managed by Enver Pterovci, etc.

These institutions are an alternative to the University of Prishtina. They have filled in an empty space that has existed in certain fields of expertise – journalism, traffic, etc. The competition created by private education institutions can also advance the level of learning within the UP. Private education is also bringing down some thinking patterns imprinted in the Kosovan society. Therefore, some kind of resistance can be noticed towards this sort of education, starting from the Ministry and up to the UP and some of its faculties. This resistance stems from the reasoning that education has to be free and public. It is only natural that there will always be a struggle of interests between public and private institutions of education. Professor Pango, from the University of Tirana, sees the neglect of the state and the bodies of the University of Tirana towards the bad financial situation of professors in the light of efforts certain individuals, influencing these bodies, make in order to transfer teaching personnel from public universities to private ones.⁵⁴

The first private school in Kosova is the High School of Journalism “Faik Konica”. Nonexistence of a branch of journalism in the UP and the emerging need for journalists, with opening of many new media companies, have incited creation of this school by an old journalist and writer – Ramiz Kelmendi. This school, nowadays with a staff of fifteen teachers of different qualification and fields of expertise, has produced a share of young qualified journalists who are working in Kosovan media.

The lack of a certain field of expertise in the UP was also used by the Center for Traffic and Communication for Higher

Education and Studies “Tempulli”, managed by Muhamet Krasniqi. Kosova has a great deficit of traffic personnel and this school has been conceived to fill in the emptiness in this field. This school is outfitted with a good level of education equipment and teaching staff. The studies in this institution are regular and last for three years. Studies are divided in three fields: road traffic, railway traffic and post and communication. Presently the second generation of students is studying there. There are 90 students per generation and, according to Krasniqi, the quality of the studies “is higher than in the University of Prishtina”. Tuition is paid by the students. The staff consists from UP staff, other experts from Kosova and at times international experts. This education institution has an official agreement of cooperation (a memorandum) with the University of Sarajevo – the Faculty of Communication. Except for the fact that personnel of the Kosova Railroads study in this school, they (the school) also believe that starting next year there will also be students from Albania and FYROM. For now, this school has the accreditation of the former Department of Education, Science and Technology and is now waiting for a license from the current Ministry. Article 22, paragraph 4 of the law describe one of the key conditions for a license: *“A condition of the grant of a license to a private provider of higher education shall be the submission to the Ministry of a business plan for the provider, including a guarantee by the founder of financial viability for at least three years. A rolling revision of the plan, including such guarantee, shall be submitted annually to the Ministry.”*⁵⁵

Although officials of this center claim they have fulfilled the conditions, including the business plan, the license was not yet granted. This issue is also being dragged because there of the existing legal vacuum.

⁵⁴ Prof. Dr. Ylli Pango, Some achievements in destruction of Universities, Koha Jonë, 7.11.2002

⁵⁵ The Law on Higher Education, Article 22.4, pg.36.

Krasniqi complained that he has not received any financial help from the Ministry, although the personnel produced by this center is useful to the society and the economy of Kosova.

The Ministry and other governmental organs should treat these schools, as well as other schools, positively and encourage them financially, as is foreseen by this law. This issue is regulated in the law with Article 23, paragraph 1: *“Accredited private providers of higher education may receive funding allocations from the Ministry for teaching and research in the public interest”*.⁵⁶ Help given to these institutions of higher education would be help to social development of Kosova, because these institutions produce the personnel Kosova lacks. Also, it is these institutions that will present a good direction towards reorganization of our education system and adjust the standards of this system to the advanced systems of the West (not only in terms of the law, but also in practice and content-wise).

Another possibility is the example of the Western states, where private businessmen invest in private schools and are this way exempt from taxes or have some other benefits.

Surely, at present, the main competitor of the UP will be the American College that is expected to open next year based on the highest international standards. Competition in other countries has proved to function in favor of improving the quality of education.

X. MINORITIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN KOSOVA

Kosova being a place where apart from Albanians also other ethnicities live, University of Prishtina since its establishment, has had education in three languages: Albanian, Serbian and Turkish. During the history of its existence, this University from the seventies, except for classes in Albanian for the majority population, also had classes in Serbo-Croatian. Classes in Turkish were limited to one department within the University.

A coexistence that existed, however scarce it was, started breaking after the demonstrations of 1981, when Serbs started viewing the University of Prishtina, more precisely the higher education of Albanians, as a threat.⁵⁷ Such an attitude started becoming more visible by the day and since that time the pressure on the University grew continuously. This culminated at the beginning of nineties, when, after the forced abrogation of the autonomy of Kosova by the government of Serbia, a apartheid system was introduced, in which the first victim was the education of Albanians. With this act they were denied not only superior education, but, in fact, education in general, and Albanian teachers and students were expelled from their school buildings. At that time almost all of the Albanian teachers at the University of Prishtina were expelled and at the end of the registration of Albanian students to attend studies in Albanian was stopped. This forced the education in Albanian to move into illegality, when a complete system of education was

⁵⁶ The Law on Higher Education, Article 23.1, pg. 37.

⁵⁷ Vujadin Milanović, “Univerzitet u Prištini u mreži velikoalbanske strategije” (The University of Prishtina in the network of greateralbanian strategies), published by “INP Knjzevne novine”, Beograd and “NIRO Jedinstvo”, Prishtina, 1990; f.23-25.

organized, a system to which we often refer to as the “parallel system”. This successful form of resistance towards the aggression against education of Albanians is also internationally recognized. However, this had a price. Classes were held under impossible conditions, using basements and rooms of private houses as premises. The results and the diplomas issued by this system were not recognized by the authorities of that time, thus it was very hard, even impossible, to get employment with such a diploma. Things were made even worse by the status of Kosova at the time, thus the diplomas were only recognized by a few foreign countries.

Regardless of many efforts during the nineties, this system remained such till the end of 1999, when the international administration was put in place in Kosova. Meanwhile, Serbs in Kosova, like in all other fields of life, enjoyed a special status. They were privileged, even beyond standards. During this time they were using the full space and equipment of the University of Prishtina, which until the beginning of nineties was used jointly by both, Serbs and Albanians (who at that time as well constituted the majority of students and teachers in the University).

This position and the immense support they had from Belgrade placed the Serbs into a position of an emperor. With the possibility to study whatever they chose, without having to follow any standards, and a sure employment after graduation, this gave the Serbs in Kosova great conditions and possibilities on the harm of majority population, the Albanians. Majority of students at the Serb University were Serbs coming from outside of Kosova (Serbia and Montenegro).⁵⁸

After the end of war in 1999, Albanians returned not only to their homes in

Kosova, but also to their jobs, their schools and their University. Because of great interethnic tensions created as a result of a ten years apartheid and a recently finished war, a large number of Serbs moved out of Kosova. At this time Serbs also withdrew from the University of Prishtina. Trying to keep a continuum of this privileged University, which they had enjoyed during the nineties, they opened some faculties in several towns of Serbia as a continuation of the University of Prishtina, which was supported by the Serbian government in Belgrade.

Meanwhile, in the summer, immediately after the start of the new academic year 1999 in the Albanian language, but now in its original premises, started the compensation for the lost classes, which was caused by the escalation of war in the beginning of 1999. At this time the teachers and the students returned to premises belonging to the University, but which they were denied of for so many years, and started rebuilding the education system.

Now it is the fourth academic year after the end of war and the education process in Albanian is continuously improving. There are also new departments in other languages, such as Turkish and Bosniak. However, for, security reasons, Serb teachers and students did not return to the premises of the University of Prishtina. Although there were some initiatives from the internationals, as well as from the University of Prishtina itself, that came out with proposals for their return, these have remained only proposals because of the security. On the other hand, Serbs themselves were not too interested in returning to the University, because of their aim to remain under the Serbian education system and be separated from the developments in Kosova. This was clearly seen by the nominations made by

⁵⁸ “The state of Education in Kosovo after the Cease-fire in June 1999”, by Elmar Pichl and Carolin Leutloff.

the Serbian party for the University leadership.⁵⁹

Meanwhile, the Serbs have moved their departments, which they consider as the continuation of the University of Prishtina of the nineties, from the towns in Serbia to the divided town of Mitrovica, and have placed them in the northern part of the divided town. The Serb request is that a Serb University of Mitrovica be recognized, which would be a university exclusively for Serbs and which would work with curricula and under supervision of the Ministry of Education of Serbia. Surely this stems from the privileged position they have had during the nineties, a position which is very hard to let go.

It seems that this idea of a separate Serb university had the support of some internationals in Kosova – it has to be mentioned that one of them was Michael Daxner, former co-head of the Department of Education and co-rector of the University of Prishtina. This also showed during the drafting of The Law on Education in Kosova, when Daxner was determined to also have the University of Mitrovica inside the law. But, the Albanian members of the Kosova Assembly, considered that it goes contrary to the new developments of the higher education in Kosova, which aims to develop in the spirit of the Bologna Declaration and be compatible to other systems in Europe. This is why the Law on Education was modified in the Assembly and as such

ratified by it. However, as any other law, this law as well needed the signature of the Special Representative of Secretary General of UN, Mr. Michael Steiner, before it would be enacted. For now this seems unlikely since the SRSB has refused to sign the modified law. Members of parliament are trying to argue that the approved law is open and it does allow the possibility of university education for Serbs in Kosova, but there is no explicit need to name a Serb University in Mitrovica as such in the law.

Common objective of residents of Kosova and the international community is to advance the system of education in Kosova and make it compatible to the Western standards. There are no disagreements on this respect. It is clear that the current security situation is such that it does not help physical integration of Kosovan Serbs in the University of Prishtina, thus such proposals have to be postponed for a later time. However, the formal integration of Serb departments, which are currently based in Mitrovica, in the University of Prishtina is absolutely possible and would be of benefit to all sides. In this way not only that the Serb minority would get higher education in their language in Kosova, but also they would be provided with higher education standards, which are underway in Kosova. In addition, the diploma attained would be the one of the University of Prishtina, and this way they would have a common treatment in further education as well as in the labor market and abroad. This would ensure a unified and jointly developed system of education throughout Kosova, which would guarantee higher education for all citizens of Kosova in their native languages. This would also help and contribute greatly to the integration of all ethnicities in the Kosovan society, including Serbs, which is one of the priorities set by the international community and the Kosovan society. An alternative to this would be the creation of two parallel systems of higher education in Kosova, one contemporary developed in

⁵⁹ “From Serbs, Belgrade has nominated the new rector (for the Serb University of Prishtina, v.j.), Mr. Jagos Zelenovic. Mr. Zelenovic has been a vice-dean at the Faculty of Economy and a federative minister of Science in the Milosevic Government. He was one of the persons responsible for the segregation in higher education in Kosova for the last years. As a continuation of this position, he and his colleagues continue to see the Albanian University – without taking into consideration the changed political circumstances – as a private university and still have an intent to be the only official University of Prishtina” – “The State of Education in Kosovo after the Cease-fire in June 1999”, by Elmar Pichl and Carolina Leutloff.

close cooperation with the international community and the other supervised by Serbia and which does not belong in Kosova and is not compatible with its system. In the long term this would have a negative influence on the Kosovan society and especially Serbs, which would later be in an unequal position of competing for future studying as well as in the labor market.

As a result, the prolonging of the ratification of the Law on Higher Education by the SRSG only makes the situation of university education harder and ambiguous. It would be good if the SRSG together with other representatives of the Ministry of Education, the University of Prishtina and Serb university teachers created a long-term strategy for the integration of the departments in Serbian into the University of Prishtina. This would stimulate a full integration – even physical integration – of the education in Serbian into University of Prishtina. This would also help in the overall process of integration of all ethnicities, including Serbs, in the multiethnic Kosovan society.

XI. STUDENTS' ORGANIZATIONS

There is a sole students' organization in the University of Prishtina that represents their interests in the UP. The Independent Students' Union (UPS), officially represents students in university structures, in faculties as well as in the rectorate.

In the first years of the University of Prishtina, the students' union functioned as the Socialist League of Students (as was with all other organisms of this model at the time of former SFRY), but with the decay of the monist system this union transformed into the Independent Students' Union. During the history of its existence this students' organization has been an

initiator of many changes in the Kosovan society.

For many years, students have been in the forefront of political and cultural changes the Kosovan society faced. This has made the Kosovan society perceive students as an avant-garde of the society, as a layer that starts all positive processes. The movements of 1968, 1981, 1989, 1990, 1997 and the war in 1998/1999, were carried by students.

Up to 1991, the students at the University were organized by the structures of the League of Socialist Youth, but also were present in the illegal opposition bodies. After 1991, the structures of the former system started to disappear, because the Milosevic regime started an assault on the Kosovan institutions, making the whole Albanian people his enemy. The UP, which was a thorn in the eye of the official Belgrade and was qualified since 1981 as "nest of Albanian nationalism" was continuously being attacked by the regime. After the expulsion of Albanian education system from the official premises, students and teachers continued their work in private premises, thus creating a parallel system of education in Kosova.

UPS was created in the beginning of 90s and was a part of this parallel education and a form of resistance towards the regime. When talking about the students' organization in the University of Prishtina, we usually mean the UPS (Independent Students' Union), because there has not been any visible success in the efforts made to organize another serious body of this form.

The activity that made the UPS internationally famous was the massive students' and popular protests against Belgrade regime in the autumn of 1997 for opening of education premises for Albanians. These protests at the time were not only posed an open and serious challenge to the authorities in Belgrade, but also presented a rebellion within the legal structures of the Kosovan society.

These protests were also used to prepare the grounds for a future armed resistance that culminated with the war of 1998/1999.

UP was one of the first institutions to start work after the end of war in Kosova. However, regardless of the change of social circumstances in Kosova, UPS as a students' organization continued to present itself as the protector of national interests. In the survey with students of UP conducted by the company Index Kosova for the purpose of this study, approximately 32 % of the surveyed think that the UPS is politicized.⁶⁰

Several times after the war this political activeness has put UPS in a critical crisis situation, it has even brought to the point when an interference from the internationals was needed to solve these situations within UPS (especially this was the case with the election of the UPS president in 2000) created by political activities of certain individuals that were under the influence of some political centers. This situation is still present, with UPS leaving students on the second plan and concentrating on their political engagements as a priority.

UPS also wants to keep the monopoly it has in UP, although the Law on Higher Education does not allow any students' organization to have this monopoly. One of the real problems stemming from The Law on Higher Education will be to regulate students' representation in the University and other faculty bodies. While, until now, UPS had the monopoly of representation of students, this now may change based on the new law and the statute of the UP. This law does not foresee UPS as a sole representative body, but only emphasizes that students should be represented in the University. Starting from the stand of the UPS that they should

continue to keep this monopoly, there is bound to be conflicts in this respect.⁶¹

The way students' representatives in the Independent Students' Unions of the faculties of UP were chosen up to now and the same applies for the central Union, puts under dispute the legitimacy or representation of students' interests by the UPS.⁶²

UPS should be one of the students' organizations to articulate and represent the interest of students. However, according to high officials of the UPS, they want to fight at all cost to keep their position of domination at the UP and continue to remain the sole official representatives of students in the bodies at the University of Prishtina. This could lead directly towards a conflict of interests between UPS and the Ministry of Education.

Work done by UPS in the post war period was not of the quality it should have been. In many occasions instead of being an opposition to the administration of the University of Prishtina, the UPS was more

⁶⁰ Quantitative survey with students of the UP, conducted by Index Kosova on 20-23 October 2002 in Prishtina.

⁶¹ The Law on Higher Education, Article 31, Paragraph 1. defines this issue as follows: *"The statute or other constitutional document of a provider of higher education shall provide for the establishment of one or more organizations to represent students and to contribute to the social, cultural, academic and physical recreation needs of students"*.

⁶² Elections are carried out without any prior campaigning, as a result majority of student get to know the candidates only on election day. Thus, majority of students do not participate in these elections. Recent elections were also followed by different affairs and manipulations and at time also with pressure for resignation of the winners of elections. In the elections 2002, in the Faculty of Medicine, there were some attempts to discredit votes and as the last resort pressure was put upon the winner to resign, which the person did and withdrew from his position. The same year, in central election for president of UPS, OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe – Mission in Kosova) had to interfere in order to rerun the elections because of the irregularities present.

of an implementer of its policies. Their participation in the debates on the reforms was also very weak, and usually, the stands of UPS officials corresponded to the official position of the rectorate and the international administrator. Not much intellectual creativity and a vision for the future was noticed in the work of the UPS during these post war years.

Depoliticizing of the UPS could leave more space for engaging in issues of education and studies. Such a thing could be achieved through greater liberalization of the official system of organizing students in the University, where there would be some other competing students' organizations, which would be chosen by the votes of students in a regular and transparent campaign. Such a system would be a kind of a continuous stimulus for the UPS and other organizations. Also, allowing the existence of political party clubs in the University, as is the case with some Western states, would influence the de-politicizing of students' organizations.

XII. RELATIONS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PRISHTINA WITH OTHER UNIVERSITIES

All through its turbulent history, the University of Prishtina has had limited possibilities for scientific cooperation and exchange with other Universities throughout the world. However, with the ending of the war in Kosova, the University finally gained almost the full liberty to cooperate with any University it needs or has a reason to cooperate with.

This cooperation between scientific and educational institutions is necessary in order to continuously enhance the quality of work. Even more when we take into consideration the facts that the University just emerged from war, from apartheid and

a long rule of communism. Exchange of experience with other Universities and other regions means a lot, especially for the University of Prishtina, but also for these other Universities. In order to be able to go through the reforms and improve the system of work in the University we need to learn a lot from the experiences of other Universities that have a longer tradition. These Universities can also learn about a successful survival of the University of Prishtina against continuous attacks with the aim of terminating it.

In the post-war period the University of Prishtina started increasing the number of contacts. In the beginning these were a result of individual initiatives of some of the teachers and students than of a structured cooperation from the University. According to Prof. Hajredin Kuçi, a third of the engagements of the rectorate of the University of Prishtina is now concentrated towards this cooperation. For the moment, this cooperation is focused in exchange of staff and students with international universities to get higher education. In this exchange also included are study visits of the staff working in the management of the university. There is also a good cooperation with external teaching staff and their engagement and contribution in the University of Prishtina.

Until now, the University of Prishtina has signed 32 bilateral agreements with different universities. Amongst those that are worth mentioning are the relationships that the University of Prishtina has with Universities in Austria, Germany, USA, etc. University of Prishtina is also a members of the Association of European Universities (former European Rectors Conference), then a member of the Danube Rectors Conference, and so on and so forth. University of Prishtina is also a participant of the TEMPUS programme, where it has been very successful. An indication of this is the example of the last year where from 9 submitted projects, all

were accepted at an amount of over 1 million euro.⁶³

One of the aims of the cooperation between the University of Prishtina and different international centers was to gain moral support and recognition for the University of Prishtina, which had been oppressed for years. This has been achieved to a considerable degree and now a large number of universities around the world accept diplomas issued by the University of Prishtina. Except for offering moral support and support in capacity building for the University staff, this cooperation also included the sphere of aid in infrastructure. Three years after the war a significant improvement can be noticed in equipment and conditions at the University.

As a result of this cooperation, apart from those that went abroad on their personal initiative, around 400 other people were sent for further studies to other Universities. The majority of these were from the department of social sciences, although all faculties were included in these programmes. There was also quite a high number of teachers and other staff from other universities that as a result of this cooperation had the chance to help the work of the University of Prishtina. In some of the faculties the system of co-lecturing was used, where one of the lecturers was from Kosova and the other a foreign lecturer. Although teachers are one of beneficiaries of this programme, students are the primary beneficiaries since they have gained the chance to listen to different experiences and also try out different systems of lecturing.

However, in the discussions of the teacher focus group⁶⁴ it was mentioned that a

negative element connected to this is lack of interest of staff for the projects offered on international cooperation, especially those projects implemented in Kosova. These projects include different trainings, seminars, consultative meetings between external visiting teachers, and staff and students of the University of Prishtina.

Except for the ones within the University, there are other schemes as well that offer possibilities to Kosovan students to do their studies in other international centers. Most of these offers are concentrated on post-graduate studies and mostly in social sciences. Amongst those are “The British Chievening” offered by the British Council in Prishtina, “Ron Brown” programme offered by the US Office in Prishtina, as well as other programs offered by other countries’ representative offices in Prishtina. It is worth mentioning that the “Fulbright” programme offered by the government of the United States, which had stopped in the beginning of nineties, has recommenced.

However, the number of beneficiaries to these programmes is quite limited. If, as an example, we take the “British Chievening”, it is offered to only 8 graduates from Kosova in the following fields: Economics and Finance, Law, Management, Media, governance, etc. Other offers for post-graduate studies do not differ much from this one.

Another field of cooperation worth showing special interest as well, is cooperation with Albanian universities in Albania and FYROM. Cooperation with Universities in Albania has been of a high level and of an immense importance, especially during the nineties when University of Prishtina operated under apartheid. But this cooperation has to be broadened by seeking new possibilities of cooperation, like exchanges of teaching staff and students. In a mid term future this cooperation could be viewed from the prism of taking studies in Albanian universities specialized in certain fields.

⁶³ Interview with Prof. Hajredin Kuçi, vice-rector for foreign relations at the University of Prishtina. The interview was conducted in October 2002.

⁶⁴ Qualitative survey with teachers of the University of Prishtina, conducted by Index Kosova, on 05 November 2002, in Prishtina.

This rational approach would enable enhancement of scientific and technological level in respective centers, which could then be used by students for further development in their studies.

Another problem is that persons graduating in Western Universities will have better opportunities and conditions if they chose to remain in those countries. This is a great loss not only for the University of Prishtina but also Kosovan society as a whole.

Thus, it is very important to provide those individuals with special expertise in certain fields with opportunities after their return to Kosova. Some of them could surely find employment at the University of Prishtina, but some of them will not be in the position to get this sort of employment. There is also a need to find for other means of engagement. In this

respect, the government of Kosova should foresee a budget to support different scientific institutions, which would offer employment or some sort of engagement for these individuals. These institutions would also show to be of a great help for the Government of Kosova in general.

Every faculty should have a consultative office for students and teachers in order to increase the level of information for interested persons. This would intensify the cooperation in different fields. According to University officials, it is important that the cooperation is a continuity of work earlier undertaken by the scientific staff at the University. This office would offer information on the possibilities of cooperation as well as practical information on the conditions and methods of applying.

ANNEX A

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