

Voters' Voices
Community Concerns

September 2000

Pristina, Kosovo

A joint effort of the OSCE Democratisation Department,

Edited by:

Peter Collier and Brett Jones

Translators:

Leon Malazogu, Flamure Selimi-Lahu and Aleksandra Simonovic

Layout and cover design:

Driton Kamberi

Published by:

"INTERPRESS R. Company"

In co-ordination with:

**The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Democratisation Department**

With support and assistance from:

**US Agency for International Development (USAID)
The Mother Teresa Society**

Other data provided by:

United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK)

The European Agency for Reconstruction

The World Health Organization (WHO)

International Organization for Migration (IOM)

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

The Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe

The International Crisis Group (ICG)

The International Management Group (IMG)

Contents

1. Executive Summary.....	5
2. Forward.....	3
3. Introduction.....	9
4. The Voter’s Priorities.....	11
· Health.....	12
· Education.....	16
· Economic Development/Employment.....	20
· Water.....	23
· Social Services.....	26
· Electricity.....	29
· Housing.....	31
· Roads.....	33
· Environment.....	35
· Garbage.....	37
· Sewage.....	39
· Minority Protection.....	40
· Telecommunications/Post.....	42
· Culture.....	43
· Public Transportation.....	45
· Additional Issues Raised.....	46
6. Minority Perspectives.....	48
7. Appendix: Priorities by Region.....	51

Foreword

As we publish this report - *Voters' Voices, Community Concerns* – Kosovo stands on the brink of its first truly democratic elections. For the first time, the people of Kosovo have the opportunity to participate in a free, fair and open electoral process, and a truly proportional and representative local democracy. Power will be devolved, decisions will be decentralised and the process of establishing meaningful self-government in Kosovo will have begun. And it will start where it should always start – at the community level. For if democracy is about anything, it is about responding to the concerns of local communities and the needs of the people who live in them. It is their concerns, their hopes and their problems that should drive politicians and dictate the course of political campaigns. After all, it is the voters who “call the shots” in a democracy. It is the governed, not the government, who ultimately decide.

It is in this context, and in this spirit, that this report should be read – as part of the wider effort to highlight local issues and draw attention to the electorate’s views. But, more specifically, to draw the attention of Kosovo’s political candidates to the electorate’s views. When the idea for this report was conceived in the spring of this year by the OSCE Democratisation Department, it was intended, first and foremost, as way of initiating a discourse between the electorate and the politicians. It is our hope that such discourse will bring the two groups, and their agendas, closer together. If we are successful, the parties will begin to respond to voters concerns with specific programmes, and voters will be offered a substantive choice in the ballot box as a result.

In addition to expressing gratitude for the assistance from USAID, Community Improvement Councils and the Mother Theresa Society, OSCE would like to extend its thanks to all the people who contributed to this project and who volunteered their voice on behalf of the people of Kosovo. OSCE hopes this publication will be widely read and of use to members of all political parties, local and international organisations, and of course the people of Kosovo.



Daan Everts, Ambassador

DSRSG/Head of Mission, OSCE Mission in Kosovo

Executive Summary

This publication is the result of the *OSCE Voters' Voices Project* and presents the community concerns, perspectives and priorities expressed by over a thousand people across Kosovo. The goal of this project and publication is to encourage political parties and candidates to focus on concrete and specific issues of direct concern to Kosovar voters, and to give the electorate a tool with which to engage political candidates in discussions and debates that are informed, focused and constructive.

To achieve this end, OSCE conducted over seventy community meetings throughout Kosovo in which people were asked to prioritise the fifteen issues determined by the *UNMIK Regulation on Self-Governance of Municipalities in Kosovo* to be the competencies or areas of responsibility for elected municipal leaders, and then discuss in detail the five issues they identified as most important. With few exceptions, the meetings were effective and the results clear and satisfying to those who participated. At times, broader political issues, such as the final status of Kosovo and the responsibilities or failures of the international community, did enter into discussions; however, most participants proved eager and able to discuss in concrete terms how they wanted their elected municipal leaders to address their community concerns.

Overall, the results convey a strong sense that the people of Kosovo are anxious to move forward, to become free of fear and violence, to see their society progress and to achieve a level of modernisation comparable with the rest of Europe. They are impatient and frustrated by the constraints they believe Kosovo's damaged and dysfunctional infrastructure have imposed upon the opportunities for economic and social development. More urgently, they describe the need to move beyond the daily struggle to get by with limited access to health care, education, employment opportunities, social and other public services they believe essential to leading a normal life. Accordingly, the issues most often identified as "extremely important" are health care, education, economic development and employment, water and social services, in that order.

The issue most frequently raised as a top priority is health care. Specifically, people state there are not enough hospitals or health clinics to serve the population, and that this problem is most urgent in rural communities which frequently have none at all. Where there are health care facilities, they are overcrowded, improperly staffed, and lack adequate hygiene, equipment and medicine. There is great concern about the rising cost of medical treatment, particularly drugs. Issues of women's health are also

considered an important priority. Among the solutions proposed are the construction of more clinics in villages, subsidies to pay for drugs, increased levels of vaccination and health education programs.

Education is the second highest priority and viewed not only as vital to conveying knowledge and skills to the young, but also as a foundation upon which modern, democratic and civilised societies are built. People consistently perceive a direct relationship between current problems with education and both unemployment and criminality among youth. People acknowledge progress in school reconstruction, but state that the remaining destroyed schools should be rebuilt, new schools constructed, and all should be provided with the equipment, supplies and facilities thought necessary for a proper learning environment. There is also great concern about young people who are discouraged or lack access to education, particularly students denied entrance to secondary school, children living in isolated rural communities and women. There is consensus that educational standards should be raised to those of Western Europe, the performance of teachers improved, and the curriculum reformed, depoliticised and professionalised. Raising both teacher salaries and accountability is identified as a first step to improving the quality of education.

The need to increase employment opportunities and improve conditions for economic development are central among the concerns of Kosovars. As with education, unemployment is often viewed as a cause of a number of social problems, including crime. Most people see economic revitalisation as essential for Kosovo to progress further. Factories exist, they state, but most are not operational and falling into decay, and while Kosovo has natural resources, they are not being exploited. Privatisation, taxing foreign imports to protect local enterprises and attracting foreign investment are viewed as key solutions; however, a better-functioning banking system, power supply and other improvements in the overall infrastructure are frequently identified as necessary to attract foreign investment.

The lack of drinkable water is raised as a serious problem throughout Kosovo. People, particularly in villages, describe the daily struggle to get by with limited access to water. Others observe the importance of water for animals, food production and industry. Contaminated or unclean water is also a major problem, which is often believed a cause of illness. A common understanding is that the problem is not a lack of water, but rather a lack of the systems needed to convey the water where it is needed. The completion or construction of such systems, including those for irrigation, are the most common solutions identified.

The matter of social services, the fifth priority, elicits straightforward responses: "reinstatement pensions, provide social assistance for widows, invalids, and orphans." People note the efforts UNMIK has made to provide those in need with some assistance, but universally state that they are inadequate. The restoration of pensions and improvement of social services are thought to be an urgent priority. In addition to support provided through the UNMIK Centres for Social Work, many suggest taxes should be levied to gather necessary funds.

Electricity is sixth among the list of priorities and a matter of concern to virtually everyone in Kosovo. People offer two general arguments why a reliable energy supply is essential: first, it is thought necessary to lead a normal life; second, people see it as fundamental

and a prerequisite for economic development and attracting foreign investment. To solve the problem, people state that large investments must be made to restore the power plants and power grid, experts employed to maintain the system properly, and that people must pay their electricity bills.

Housing remains high on people's list of concerns, and there is a general belief that the pace of reconstruction is not what it should be. With winter approaching, the issue is discussed with urgency, particularly in the region of Peje/Pec where wartime damage was greatest. Those without homes of their own describe the uncomfortable and often unhealthy conditions they endure and the difficulties involved when large families are housed in one small dwelling. They express eagerness to rebuild their homes but are frustrated by a lack of materials or the means to purchase them. Therefore, they believe that the international community and elected municipal leaders should place greater emphasis on reconstructing homes before winter.

The eighth priority is roads. The general sentiment is that without better roads people cannot easily get from one place to another, and they cannot easily transport the goods, materials and resources upon which they and the economy depend. Thus, like electricity, many believe economic development depends heavily upon the development and maintenance of an adequate road and transportation network. People also express concerns about increasing traffic problems. The solution identified is to have the roads repaired and for this work to be funded through taxation.

After roads follow environmental protection, garbage collection and sewage, respectively. Concerns raised about the environment are often connected with public health risks, and solutions mentioned include increased public awareness programs and greater acceptance of personal and collective responsibility for protecting the environment. Garbage collection ranks tenth, but the issue receives a surprising number of written comments from people concerned about the issue. The key problems identified are use of communities as dumps, lack of garbage disposal or recycling options, threats to health and hygiene, and again, people's lack of environmental awareness as well as damage to the environment itself. Sewage problems are likewise perceived as threats to health and the environment, and the solutions identified are better methods of disposal and construction of treatment plants.

Minority Protection ranks twelfth among the fifteen community issues. While the issue ranks fourth among minority participants, after health, minority perspectives are addressed in a separate section. The primary emphasis in most discussions about minority protection is generally placed on the moral and ethical responsibility of all members of a society to safeguard the rights and security of everyone, particularly those most at risk. Many identify the freedom and security of all as a prerequisite for the development of a democratic society, and a number of people describe a sense of emotional exhaustion from the years of hatred and violence endured and express a wish to escape past tragedies and to embrace the idea of all people living in freedom and security.

Although telecommunications and post, cultural activities and public transportation receive lower priority ratings than the other fifteen issues, it should be noted that many people often insist all fifteen issues are extremely important and that rating any as "less important" is difficult. The shortage of telephone lines and lack of a widely-functioning

Voters' Voices

Rank	Issue	Score (1-3 scale)
1	Health Care	2.67
2	Education	2.62
3	Economic Development/Employment	2.50
4	Water	2.35
5	Social Services	2.31
6	Electricity	2.30
7	Housing	2.21
8	Roads	2.02
9	Environmental Protection	1.81
10	Garbage Collection	1.67
11	Sewage	1.55
12	Minority Protection	1.52
13	Telecommunications and Post	1.50
14	Cultural Activities	1.38
15	Public Transport	1.24

postal system is a particular concern to those in villages as it makes contact with other communities difficult. Many people who address the topic of culture emphasise the life-enhancing and therapeutic value of activities such as sports, music and dance. These were thought to be of particular importance in guiding young people to develop in positive directions. Finally, public transportation is an important concern particularly to some who live in rural areas and who are frustrated by erratically functioning services.

Introduction

On October 28th of this year the people of Kosovo will have the opportunity to select their municipal leaders in a democratic election. Where democracy means government by the people, a representative democracy is where the people select members from their community to serve their collective interests. For such a system to work, the people must be informed about those who would represent them and what they would do once elected, and those elected must be committed and able to serve the interests of the people. Thus, the hope and challenge which accompany the birth of democracy are equally great.

The purpose of *Voters' Voices* is, accordingly, to present candidates for municipal office as well as the general public with the community concerns and priorities expressed by the people of Kosovo. More broadly, the intent is to encourage people to hold politicians accountable to their will, and, conversely, to challenge politicians to answer the people they would serve with clear and concrete proposals describing how they would address the most pressing concerns of their communities.

To accomplish this goal, the OSCE Department of Democratisation launched an effort at the start of this year to gather information about issues of concern to voters and throughout the summer conducted over seventy community meetings across Kosovo. With generous assistance from the USAID Office of Transition Initiatives, the affiliated Community Improvement Councils, the Mother Theresa Society, and a number of international and local organisations, more than a thousand people attended these meetings. Among those who participated were people of different ages, backgrounds and professions as well as groups of women, youth, farmers, Roma, Ashkali, Turks, Serbs and Bosniacs.

The methodology for gathering information was reasonably straightforward. In each community meeting people were asked first to prioritise or rank into three categories of importance the fifteen issues determined by the *UNMIK Regulation on Self-Governance of Municipalities in Kosovo* to be the competencies or areas of responsibility for elected municipal leaders. After determining the five issues selected by the group as highest priority, participants then discussed each of these five issues in greater depth and identified existing problems and possible solutions. Each person was also given the opportunity to raise concerns not listed among the fifteen issues and to provide written comments about his or her three top priorities. The fifteen issues, or competencies, as presented by the UNMIK regulation are as follows:

Voters' Voices

- | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|--|
| 1. Health Care | 6. Cultural Activities | 11. Electricity |
| 2. Education | 7. Water | 12. Telecommunications / Postal System |
| 3. Social Services | 8. Sewage | 13. Environmental Protection |
| 4. Garbage Collection | 9. Roads | 14. Economic Development / Employment |
| 5. Housing | 10. Public Transportation | 15. Minority Protection |

The general response of those who participated in these meetings was extremely positive. People exhibited a high level of civic involvement, appreciated the chance to be heard and were eager to participate in the process of building their democracy. Participants sometimes addressed larger political concerns, such as the final status of Kosovo, or discussed the responsibilities or failures of the international community, but most were eager to describe the specific problems and concerns in their communities and what they wanted their elected leaders to do about them.

As the title suggests, *Voters' Voices, Community Concerns* expresses the ideas, opinions and perspectives of the people of Kosovo, and not those of OSCE or the editors of this publication. It should also be emphasised that while considerable effort has been made to gather a range of views that are broadly representative of the population and to present these views in a manner that is balanced, accurate and fair, this is neither a scientific nor demographic study, and the findings presented are not intended to resolve debate about community priorities; rather, they are meant to contribute substance, focus and weight to the importance of continuing such debate.

The Voters' Priorities

Below are listed the fifteen community issues in order of urgency and importance to the people of Kosovo. To create this ranking, participants in *Voters' Voices* meetings rated each issue "extremely important" (3 points), "important" (2 points), or "less important" (1 point). All ratings were then calculated together to produce a Kosovo-wide average score for each issue from 1 to 3. Thus, health care is highest with an average score of 2.67 and public transportation lowest with 1.24.

Rank	Issue	Score (1-3 scale)
1	Health Care	2.67
2	Education	2.62
3	Economic Development/Employment	2.50
4	Water	2.35
5	Social Services	2.31
6	Electricity	2.30
7	Housing	2.21
8	Roads	2.02
9	Environmental Protection	1.81
10	Garbage Collection	1.67
11	Sewage	1.55
12	Minority Protection	1.52
13	Telecommunications and Post	1.50
14	Cultural Activities	1.38
15	Public Transport	1.24

1. Health Care

In the villages and even in towns, people are suffering from diseases which have been forgotten by the civilised world.

Doctor, Prishtina/Pristina

Health care is the issue most often identified by the participants as a top priority, and, more broadly, as a prerequisite for a functioning society. Because of the great importance people place on health and health care across Kosovo, they are extremely vocal about the shortcomings they see in the current health care system, and improvements they would like to see implemented. Specifically, people are concerned about the inadequate state of Kosovo's hospitals and clinics – outdated or non-existent equipment, poor hygiene and overcrowded facilities – as well as the difficulty of accessing health care services in villages. Participants feel unable to pay the high costs of medicine or visiting doctors during their private practice hours. They also believe that doctor's salaries are too low in relation to the vital function they perform.

Preventative medicine and more health education are also raised as important issues. Individuals feel that many of the health problems in Kosovo are caused by inadequate sanitation; they want higher levels of vaccination for their children and public information campaigns on disease prevention. Additionally, the issue of unwanted pregnancies is raised. It is estimated that only one percent of Kosovo's population uses modern contraceptive methods, and some hospitals are reporting as many abortions as births each day.¹ Many women believe there is a need for increased women's health education in general and outreach programmes targeting rural areas.

Hospitals and Medical Equipment

An issue frequently raised is that regional hospitals and clinics are missing basic equipment, and when it is available, it is often thirty years old or more. General maintenance, people in Gjilan/Gnjilane agreed, is poor and there are few spare parts when equipment breaks down. As an economist from Peje/Pec notes, "there is a dire need for more modern hospitals and equipment. I don't want to be forced to leave Kosovo every time I need anything more than the most simple treatment." These

¹ Helene Lefevre-Cholay, "Maternal, Child and Reproductive Health in Kosovo," World Health Organization October 1999.

concerns are reflected in all municipalities. A lawyer from Peje/Pec adds, "there is a need for more specialists in order to increase efficiency within the health care system." On the matter of equipment, a nurse in Prishtina/Pristina states that the ancient x-ray machines are "a disgrace" to Kosovo's healthcare system. Additional concerns are the sporadic nature of water and electricity in some clinics and hospitals, which, people maintain, make it impossible to sustain an acceptable level of hygiene. A woman in Gjakova/Djakovica is explicit about the problems in the health care system:

Often the hospitals and clinics are infested with insects, and the food is not fit for human consumption. Too many patients are crowded into one room. They must be looked after continuously by their families because the nurses are over-worked or don't care. Sometimes people who go into the hospital for treatment come away sicker than when they entered because the hospitals are unhygienic, and so they catch illnesses inside.

Clinics and Rural Communities

People across Kosovo agree that there are insufficient health services in the villages. While there are 381 "ambulantas" (clinics) and 42 health centres in Kosovo in addition to the hospitals, people are concerned about the long distance they have to travel to access health care. "We need more clinics in the villages," a man from Viti/Vitina writes, "because it makes life hard without a doctor or a nurse in the village." Residents of the smaller, more isolated villages complain of having difficulty reaching the nearest health centre in winter. The residents of Ferizaj/ Urosevac are concerned about the more isolated villages, saying, "healthcare in the mountainous regions is a serious problem in winter. If a person is sick and cannot walk to the nearest health clinic, it can lead to his death." In Podujeve/Podujevo residents worry that the distance between the villages and the hospitals could be their undoing, that "many people cannot make it all the way to the hospital because of their sorry state, and instead they must stay home and suffer." This sentiment is echoed in the village of Magure, where an inhabitant mentions that to get

Facts about Health Care

- An independent study done on the damage to hospitals and health clinics found that of the 465 health facilities (hospitals, health centres and clinics) in Kosovo, 246 (52.9%) were damaged and 61 (13.1%) were completely destroyed.*
- At present there are five regional hospitals in Prizren, Gjakova/Djakovica, Peje/Pec, Gjilan/Gnjilane and Mitrovica/Mitrovica and one tertiary/teaching hospital in Prishtina/Pristina.
- There are 2.2 beds per 1,000 residents in Kosovo, compared with the EU average of approximately 7.3 beds per 1,000 residents.***
- Approximately 400 clinics and health centres provide supplementary health care services across Kosovo.*
- 75 ambulances are operating Kosovo-wide, an insufficient number to cover the needs of the population.**
- 13,200 people are working in the health care sector, of which 2,300 are doctors and 6,000 are nurses.***
- An estimated 70 –75 % of the population of Kosovo has been vaccinated against common childhood diseases, one of the lowest immunisation coverage rates in Europe.****
- Kosovo has the highest infant mortality rate in Europe, at 27.8 per 1,000 live births, as well as the highest birth rate at 22.1 per 1,000. However, within the province there is only 1 paediatrician for 30,000 children under 5 years old.*****

* "Kosovo Building Assessment." International Management Group, April 2000.

** "Kosovo: Reconstruction 2000" European Union/UNMIK Department of Reconstruction, April 2000 pp 63.

***World Health Organization Pristina

**** "Strengthening Epidemiological Services in Kosovo; A mid term Action Plan 1999 – 2002," World Health Organization.

***** Helene Lefevre-Cholay, "Maternal, Child and Reproductive Health in Kosovo." World Health Organization, October 1999.

Voters' Voices

a blood test, villagers, many of whom have problems with transport, must travel twelve kilometres to Lipjan/Lipljan or twenty kilometres to Prishtina/Pristina. In Kamenice/Kamenica the residents are concerned that "the doctor only comes to the clinic once a week. Illness doesn't only happen once a week here, but every day," while inhabitants of Srbica/Skenderaj worry that the only health centre which covers the town and its outlying 52 villages is not equipped to handle even the most minor trauma cases.

Access to health care services in areas of divided population is also an issue. In Mitrovice/Mitrovica an older man notes that "from North Mitrovice/Mitrovica I have to go to the south side to make a medical appointment. I am an old person and for me these appointments are very important. I am afraid that one day it will be something more urgent, but help will be too far away." The people advocate building more health clinics in the villages "so that only the most serious cases will have to travel all the way to town hospitals," and so "each city will have its own hospital, each village will have its own clinic." They also request that clinics have full time staff, instead of a doctor once or twice a week, and suggest that more doctors and nurses come out to the smaller villages.

Treatment Costs

The high cost of treatment is frequently cited as a cause of frustration. People feel they are being charged exorbitant prices for medicine; some hint at corruption and question whether medical staff may raise drug prices to supplement their own low income. A man from Podujeve/Podujevo remarks that "hospitals are over-crowded and we have to wait in line for many hours. Many people end up paying the high prices of the hospital doctor's private practice because they cannot be seen during hospital hours." High costs and overcrowded hospitals are important issues in many municipalities. A group in Gjilan/Gnjilane concludes that "health care should be free for people who cannot afford to pay," while in Dragash/Dragas residents note that the health clinics rarely have the medicine needed, and when they do, it is too expensive."

Preventative Medicine

Preventative health care is another issue people believe should be a higher priority. Specifically, they want to increase vaccination levels and run a public campaign to raise awareness about health issues. "More weight should be given to prevention and health education," states a Prishtina/Pristina dermatologist, adding that, "the future municipal leaders should create a fund for preventative treatment." A teacher from Prishtina/Pristina suggests "building special institutions for the prevention of diseases and negative habits, such as drug addiction."

Women's Health

The issue of women's health surfaces frequently, particularly in reference to rural areas. A woman from Podujeve/Podujevo states, "the situation in the villages is very difficult, especially the lack of education about contraceptives." Women feel that doctors are not addressing their specific health concerns. They also note that in the past there has been a lack of open dialogue about issues such as contraception and women's

health and feel that as a result, segments of the population are hesitant to actively seek out either treatment for their ailments or advice about contraceptive methods. A group of women in Prishtina/Pristina suggest that many doctors are not especially knowledgeable or interested in disseminating information pertaining to women's health, family planning clinics are virtually non-existent in the villages, and women traditionally feel discouraged from inquiring further about such matters.

Another concern is the high infant mortality rate in Kosovo – estimated by WHO to be 27.8 per 1,000 live births – and the concern that pregnant women are not receiving any systematic treatment before or after pregnancy. A lawyer in Podujeve/Podujevo writes that “in Kosovo there is a high birth rate, but there is also a large mortality of new-born babies, which is why we must give special attention to the health care of mothers and children.”

Conclusion

There is general agreement that maintaining access to health care and consequently, a healthy population is one of the key foundations upon which Kosovo will stand or fall. “Healthy body, healthy mind” is a refrain often repeated, as maintaining health is believed to be a pre-requisite for “a good society.” There is a

World Health Organization

Hospital	Beds per Hospital	Beds per 1,000 people
Prishtina/Pristina	2,377	4.1
Peja/Pec	487	2.1
Gjakova/Djakovica	523	2.1
Prizren	651	1.6
Gjilan/Gnjilane	488	1.6
Mitrovice/Mitrovica	470	1.5

Kosovo-wide sentiment that the development of society is vitally linked to its health, and that future municipal leaders, in order to ensure Kosovo's wellbeing and progress, must concentrate on improving the population's health and health care system.

2. Education

Where there are no schools, there are prisons.

Teacher, Podujeve/Podujevo

Education is identified as a top priority more often than any other issue except health care. In people's written comments it frequently ranks number one, and throughout Kosovo people insist that the fundamental importance of education cannot not be overemphasised. Where health care is understood as prerequisite for human life, education is believed not only prerequisite for development of the human mind, but, indeed, as prerequisite for the development of a modern, democratic, and civilised society. Repeatedly, people describe a direct correlation between the current educational situation in Kosovo and the increasingly high levels of unemployment, alienation and criminality among Kosovo's youth.

Accordingly, on the issue of education the voice of the voters is loud, clear and unified: Kosovo must dedicate itself to rebuilding, expanding and modernising its school system at every level, from kindergarten to university and beyond. It must rebuild destroyed schools, build new schools, and provide them all with the equipment and supplies necessary for a proper learning environment. It must ensure that all are provided access and encouraged to attend these schools. The people state educational standards need to be raised to those of Western Europe, the performance of teachers improved, and the curriculum reformed, depoliticised and professionalised. Overall, elected municipal leaders must act upon the understanding that a society stands or falls, develops or decays based upon the capacity and commitment of its people to educate themselves.

School Construction, Renovation, and Equipment

Many people believe the most immediate priority is the construction and renovation of school buildings and facilities. In a number of rural communities people state their "schools" are nothing but tents. As a man from outside Glogovac/Glogovac observes, this makes classes difficult in good weather and basically impossible in winter. In other communities, including several in Dragash/Drage, people stress the need to build a kindergarten. Others often describe how children are denied the chance to pursue a secondary education simply because there is not enough space for them in existing high schools. As people at a meeting in Podujeve/Podujevo explained, overcrowding

is a serious problem: "the two primary schools in town serve between 4,000 and 5,000 students," they said. "In one of the schools the number reaches 3,000, and students must attend classes in three shifts, so the overload we are dealing with is obvious."

Consistently, people throughout Kosovo describe the lack of school equipment and facilities, notably cabinets, furniture, libraries, science laboratories, computers, playgrounds and sports facilities. Lack of water and hygiene within schools is also a serious concern. The importance of such facilities is often linked with a perceived need to make the educational process more engaging and enjoyable as well as more practical, applicable to future professions and less theoretical and tedious. As a worker in Mitrovice/Mitrovica writes, "There are so many kids here. We as parents want to be sure our kids learn the importance of knowledge, and that they will have a great place to attend school because these are moments that people carry with them until the end of the lives."

Administration, Operation and Reform of the Education System

There was also apparent consensus in meetings throughout Kosovo that the education system needs serious reform, that it must increase its capacity to educate all sectors of the population, and that its administration and curriculum should attain Western standards. When asked how such improvements are to be made, some, including a group in Podujeve/Podujevo, emphasise the need for parents and teachers to institutionalise methods of co-operation to ensure student needs are met. Others offer ideas such as exchange programs between schools within and beyond Kosovo. Most often, however, people address the importance of a well-trained, professional and highly motivated teaching staff. Simultaneously raising both pay and accountability for teachers is the method most often identified to accomplish this.

"Increasing teachers' salaries," says a woman from Decan/Decani, "is the best way to encourage them to dedicate themselves to helping our children." It is not that teachers care so much about money, adds a man from Peje/Pec: "I have a friend who is a teacher. He is bright, hardworking and dedicated, but right now he is reduced to selling fruit on the street just so his family can survive. He cares about his students and wants to do a good job, but in these conditions he cannot dedicate himself fully to his true profession." Others at the meeting suggested the situation of this teacher was typical. "Pay increases for teachers are essential," agrees a man from Suhareke/Suva

Facts about Education

- There are 1,220 education facilities in Kosovo [45 nursery schools, 1044 primary schools, 97 secondary schools, 10 high schools and 24 higher education faculties], around 66% of which have been severely damaged from years of neglect, or from the recent conflict and 5% of which have been destroyed.*
- Currently, there are an estimated 400,000 students enrolled at all levels of school, and 23,000 teachers.** This is equal to one teacher for every 17 students in Kosovo, although the student to teacher ratio can vary widely from school to school. However, only 86 % of those of student age are currently attending school.***
- In 1981, the illiteracy rate in Kosovo was around 18% (9.4 for men, 26.4 for women).****
- Illiteracy among the present population of ten years and older is 6%, (2% for men, and 9% for women).*****

* "Kosovo Building Assessment." International Management Group, April 2000.

** UNMIK Department of Education

*** Kosovo Consolidated Budget 1 January- 31 December 2000.

**** "Kosovo-United Nations Partnership for a Human Development Strategy." United Nations Development Group, November 17, 1999.

***** "Basic Results: Kosovo Demographic, Socio-economic and Reproductive Health Survey." IOM, May 2000.

Voters' Voices

Reka, "but such raises and also their contracts should be based upon performance. In this way, we can promote the quality of their teaching."

When confronted with the need to make difficult choices, given the limited funds to address the many problems in their community, people insist that education must be a top priority if their communities are to progress. According to an economist with the Women's Association of Gjakova/Djakovica, "Education needs reform, and we need professional, well-trained teachers, so they must be better paid. Education is a long-term investment but the rewards are great." Moreover, states a man from Decan/Decani, "Education solves other social, economic, and cultural problems, and is required for society to function." According to a group of people from Ferizaj/Urosevac and Kacanik, "There is only one way to go forward, that's education."

Conversely, people equally perceive serious consequences in failing to educate their youth adequately: "Lack of education," believes another group in Glllogovc/Glogovac, "increases unemployment, crime and violence." Continuing the point, an agricultural engineer from Viti/Vitina writes that "without education, youth will remain jobless, roam the streets and do only things that bring trouble to our society." Many suggest that such consequences are already apparent: "Youths are abandoning education," states a teacher from Gjakova/Djakovica, "they are choosing the wrong path in life but believe it is right. The number of students in classrooms is very small."

People also address the need for school curricula to be modernised, depoliticised and, as mentioned above, made more practical. Course offerings should be expanded to include more choice and provide greater opportunity for future employment. Specifically, people mention computer courses, increased foreign language instruction, business administration and technical coursework. "More practice, less theory," demands a pithy group in Skenderaj/Srbica. In Prizren a group of journalists discussed how removing partisan politics from the schools is not only essential to maintaining objectivity in the learning process, but that it is fundamental to the development of civil

Illiteracy in the population of 10 years and older:

Illiterate in rural	8%
Illiterate in urban	4%
Female illiteracy	9%
Male illiteracy	2%
Of illiterate, percentage female	83%
Of illiterate, percentage male	17%

Illiteracy by age group:

Ages 10 – 29	6% illiterate
Ages 30 –59	1% illiterate
Ages 60 +	32% illiterate

Highest level of school completed	Total	Urban Areas	Rural Areas	Albanian Predominant Areas	Serb Predominant Areas
Population 7 - 14 Attend Primary School	91 %	92 %	90 %	91%	85 %
Population 15 - 18 Attend secondary school	70 %	82 %	58 %	70%	68 %
Population 19 - 28 Attend Higher school	15 %	23 %	8 %	15%	10 %

"Basic Results: Kosovo Demographic, Socio-economic and Reproductive Health Survey." International Organization for Migration, May 2000.

society. "Too often," states one journalist, "teachers have abused their influence and trust to serve the interests of particular politicians and parties. This must stop if education is to move forward." Another concern is the need to better safeguard teachers' independence, freedom from harassment and ability to grade students objectively and fairly. Finally, it is frequently suggested that Kosovo's education system should borrow from successful models already in place elsewhere, notably those of Germany and other Western states.

Access to Education

Even where schools are fully operational, many raise concerns about neglected groups with limited access to education opportunities. Minorities provide one example. Often the issue is related to language; the right of official use of one's native language in school is stated to be of considerable importance to the Turkish and Bosniac communities. For instance, a Turkish gentleman from Prizren notes that "Education is a big problem for minorities in Kosovo. The better solution for us would be to make the Turkish language official." Others struggling with limited access to education are children in isolated, rural communities that lack adequate transportation to the nearest school. Other children still are compelled by the economic conditions of their families to leave school and begin work. "All children," states a man from Kline/Klina, "should be required to complete at least primary school."

Reviewing all the meetings held across Kosovo, it is women who are most frequently mentioned as suffering limited access to education. Both men as well as women connect the need to improve women's education opportunities, and by extension their capacity to contribute to the development and progress of Kosovo, with an urgent need for women's emancipation. Traditional values, according to meeting participants, have led families and often the young women themselves to give up on the promise and hope that comes with a quality education. Therefore, it is stated, leaders must work to raise awareness of the fundamental importance of educating all members of the community. "There will be no progress without the education of women," writes an engineer from Prishtina/Pristina, who concludes with the following proverb: "Give me an educated mother, and I will give you a healthy nation."

Conclusion

Consistently, people perceive education not simply as a means of transferring knowledge and skills to the young, essential as this is, but also more profoundly as a civilising and enlightening force with the power to shape a society's destiny. "Education," states a businessman from Istog/Istok, "is the first step towards democracy and the development of society." In nearby Kline/Klina another man adds that a "better education for our children can help lead toward the full integration of people within our society." A professor of the arts in Prishtina/Pristina suggests that "with education different mentalities become more moderate and reason begins to prevail," and a kindergarten tutor also from Prishtina/Pristina writes that "Taking into consideration the circumstances in which school has been carried out in recent years, and which have been very difficult, we would like this year to be a peaceful one, so the minds of our children are not dominated by the political situation, but rather by books full of knowledge, wisdom and hope."

3. Economic Development / Employment

Don't give us fish, bring us the nets.

An inhabitant of Suhareke/Suva Reka

Economic development and employment rank extremely high on the list of priorities of the people in Kosovo, and are the most frequently commented upon issues. With high unemployment rates and a slowly developing economy, the economic situation is another pivotal point around which people feel their future revolves. The main issues raised in the Voters' Voices meetings are the lack of employment opportunities in Kosovo, stemming from the fact that many natural resources are not exploited and that factories are not working to full capacity. Privatisation and the resumption of taxation are often raised, as are the need for more employment opportunities for women. Improving the economic climate in general and boosting employment levels in particular are seen as an overall solution for many of Kosovo's problems, from easing the political tension to decreasing crime and improving inter-ethnic relations.

Reactivating Industry

The issue of non-functioning factories or unused natural resources is frequently raised. In Kacanik residents point out that "factories in our town and in almost all of Kosovo don't function, and that makes unemployment worse." Residents of Karaceve in Kamenice/Kamenica add that while they have two clay mines, and they have experts available to work in the mines, they do not have equipment. "Don't give us fish, bring us the nets," states a resident of Suhareke/Suva Reka. The people want their municipal leaders to make contact with foreign investors which they believe would improve the overall economic climate, and with working factories, allow people to help themselves.

Privatisation and Taxation

While some people indicate that they would like to receive more aid from the international community, many others see privatisation and attracting foreign investment as the key to bolstering the economy. A Turkish man in Prizren notes "it is important that we begin privatising state enterprises. Only then will we attract foreign investment," an idea

echoed in communities across Kosovo. People also note that rehabilitation of the infrastructure and resumption of a banking structure will set a positive note for foreign investors. Frequently, people remark that they envisage both the leaders and the community working together to foster an environment that will invite foreign capital. A typical comment made in Kacanik is that "the community must work closely with the municipal leaders to create a safe and stable atmosphere for potential investors." To successfully court outside investment, people note, there is a need for privatisation, infrastructural improvement and the creation of a secure environment within their communities.

Other solutions proposed are the resumption of taxation. People are frustrated at the amount of goods floating around - unregulated and untaxed - in Kosovo's "grey economy." They want more taxes on hereto unregulated goods, suggesting taxing "night bars," foreign beer and cigarettes. A man in Ferizaj/Urosevac asks, "why do people buy Macedonian milk when Kosovo has dairies of its own?" He, like many others, wants people to support their own economy, to buy local and tax foreign goods.

Unemployment and Crime

The link between unemployment and crime is discussed in all corners of Kosovo. A man from Ferizaj/Urosevac notes that "if we can get more people employed, they will not have time to be so inclined towards violence," while residents of Malisheve/Malisevo are concerned that "everywhere in Kosovo, unemployment is creating new problems in our society, including drugs, prostitution and criminality." A woman from Ferizaj/Urosevac observes that "young people may choose immoral directions in life if they do not have the option to be employed," and a group of teachers in Prishtina/Pristina agrees, asking "why should young people today bother with education or work when they see that there are few honest job prospects, but so much money to be made from dishonesty?"

Improvements to the economy are seen as one of the key factors to improving life in Kosovo for this generation and the next. "It is a great pity that a large number of people, especially young people, are

Facts about Economic Development and Employment

Economic Development

- Kosovo's economy, in recent decades, has centred on the production of raw materials, extracting raw materials (70% of Kosovo's GDP was estimated to come from minerals from the Trepca mines), semi-finished products (lead, coal zinc) and agriculture.*

- The European Agency for Reconstruction has budgeted 35 million Euro for investment into Kosovo's economic development in 2000.

Employment

- In 1987 the GDP of Kosovo was on the level of the Ivory Coast and Honduras.** In 1995, Kosovo's GDP was estimated at \$400 per capita, with an unemployment rate of 70%, and 53% of the population living in extreme poverty.***

- Today, the GDP is estimated to be slightly higher, but Kosovo still has a 50% unemployment rate; 43% in urban areas and 57% in rural areas.****

* "Kosovo Within: Strategic Environmental Analysis of Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Kosovo and Macedonia." The Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe, June 2000, pp 10.

** Michel Roux, *Les Albanain en Yougoslavie. Minorite nationale territoire et development*. Paris: Editions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme.

*** "Towards Stability and Prosperity – A program for Reconstruction and Recovery" European Commission/World Bank November 1999 pp 37.

**** "Basic Results: Kosovo Demographic, Socio-economic and Reproductive Health Survey." IOM, May 2000.

Voters' Voices

wandering around idly," states a teacher from Podujeve/Podujevo, "but they are not to blame. The cause is lack of work opportunities." A student in Malisheve/Malisevo adds that she "would like everyone to be employed and not only wander aimlessly in the streets" while a sixty seven year old man from Suhareke/Suva Reka observes that "while the young generation is hanging around the streets, unemployment is causing crime, and other vices grow bigger."

The lack of jobs is a pressing issue for almost all participants. An economist in Mitrovice/Mitrovica remarks that while times are hard, unemployment makes them even worse. "Too many people in Kosovo don't have work," he says, "and it makes the situation even more difficult than it is." A related problem is that people are not able to work in the professions they are trained for. In Malisheve/Malisevo, a resident expresses his frustration at economic situation, stating, "the professions are currently in a confused state: foreigners who know nothing of our communities are serving as police, our police are working as teachers, the teachers are selling fruit."

Women and the New Economy

Women are concerned that they will not find employment in the new municipal structures, a worry expressed by an unemployed woman from Istog/Istok: "I want the new government to be more progressive and employ more women, not like before when women were discriminated against in the municipal structures." Many women feel that now, after the war, the brunt of the economic burden falls on women's shoulders. A woman, recently widowed and now head of the household, adds "women are not included in the working world, even less now after the war. A lot of women have lost their husbands and are looking after their children, so they need to work and must have wages simply to survive." While economic prospects are grim for many residents, women often feel they receive the worst end of the deal.

Conclusion

A well functioning economy is perceived as the cure for many of Kosovo's problems, and is cited as a factor that will "improve relationships between Albanians and Serbs," "create conditions for democracy," and improve the quality of life in general. "Without increasing employment," writes a professor from Podujeve/Podujevo, "the society will stagnate. It will bring violence and corruption. It will increase crime, general lawlessness and poverty. It will divide the population into rich and poor." Consistently, people link the myriad of problems in Kosovo with the current economic situation and identify them as the catalyst that will lead the population towards crime and more violence. They do not, however, see handouts as the ultimate solution. People want employment, not charity, states a man in Gjakova/Djakovica. "The population should not depend on aid for the rest of their lives," he continues, "we want to start working." Despite some misgivings about the economic situation, many are optimistic about the resilience of the people in Kosovo: "Every Kosovar is a native born businessman," states a man from Suhareke/Suva Reka. Like this man, people indicate they are willing and eager to work and want their future leaders to help reopen the doors of employment and bring economic growth to Kosovo.

4. Water

In my village you can smell the water coming up through the pipes before it arrives.

A man from outside Ferizaj/Urosevac

Asked about the water situation in his community, a farmer from Suhareke/Suva Reka responds simply: "Water?" Indeed, judging from the responses of the people, the situation is serious. Water is the fourth priority among the fifteen issues presented, falling in just after economic development and employment and before social services, electricity or housing. In areas where problems of access, quality and supply are more acute, the issue frequently ranks either first or second. The problems identified most often are lack of access and poor quality or contamination. People are often specific about the consequences to economic development, food production, sanitation, health and overall living conditions that result from lack of water. When discussing solutions, many state that adequate supplies of quality water do exist; however, the necessary reservoir, pipeline and irrigation systems have either fallen into disrepair, remain unfinished, or have yet to be constructed.

Water and Daily Life

Foremost in the minds of many is the simple hardship of living, raising a family and carrying on from day to day without adequate access to clean water. A typical statement from a shop assistant in Istog/Istok is that "there is no drinking water at all, and all the wells are very dirty." Likewise, people in Dragash/Drage say "the water is not drinkable." In reports from a meeting in Karaceve/Karacevo, Kamenice/Kamenica, one man states how glad he is "that the water system was chosen as the top "extremely important issue," because it is the most important and most prob-

Facts about Water

· Prior to 1999, 64% of the population used wells as their sole source of water, a figure estimated to be the same in 2000.* While 50 % of the population, largely in urban areas, has access to running water, only 8.4% of the inhabitants of rural areas have access to running water. Approximately 85% of private wells were found to be contaminated.** Some 35,000 wells have been cleaned and are being maintained.***

· The European Agency for Reconstruction has budgeted 10 million Euro for investment into Kosovo's water system in 2000.

* World Health Organization

** European Agency for Reconstruction

*** "Kosovo Within: Strategic Environmental Analysis of Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Kosovo and Macedonia" The Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe, June 2000, pp 9.

Voters' Voices

lematic issue in our village. The biggest problem,' he continues, 'is the lack of drinking water; it is one of the most important reasons why people are leaving the village. In Upper Karaceve/Karacevo only 10% of the houses have no serious problems with the water supply.' At a meeting in Ferizaj/Urosevac, people explained how "the wells in the villages are drying up, and in many cases polluted, making access to clean drinking water difficult." One man described the situation in his village:

Water is a very serious problem. I'm from the village of Greme, and in this village the water problem is a life issue. Some time ago we launched a project to bring water from the mountains, gather it in a water cistern and then distribute it to houses, but because of financial problems we were unsuccessful, and so we are left with the contaminated wells of our village . . . but still we must take water from these wells and boil it.

Others describe the hardship children endure because "some village schools are in remote areas, so, for example, where schools are high up in the mountains and have no water the children have to bring water from their homes up to school every day." In the village of Varosh, "the conditions are catastrophic," states one man. "The main problem in the village is connected with sewage. Before we used to buy fruits and vegetables there but now we don't because the sewage seeps into them and they taste horrible."

Hygiene, Health and Water Contamination

Sickness and poor health are the concerns most often raised in connection with the lack of adequate water. "Without water there is no health or hygiene," writes a kindergarten tutor from Prishtina/Pristina, "and those who suffer most are the children who often become sick because there is not enough drinkable water." "Here in Malisheve/Malisevo," writes a nurse from the town, "people, and especially children, are drinking straight from the river. The river is very dirty and we believe contaminated. No one has tested the water, but I am certain it is causing many illnesses."

Additional Needs for Water

People describe the basic need for adequate water in a variety of endeavours. "Water is very important for human beings," writes an agricultural engineer from Suhareke/Suva Reka, "but it is also important for animals and crops," and, concurs his colleague, "very important for both farmers and industry." A good deal of this meeting in Suhareke/Suva Reka was devoted to discussion of a planned irrigation system for the region which, if completed, they believed would not only improve the living conditions for all residents, but also dramatically improve the productive capacity of this agricultural area. Other people often remark on the simple difficulty of staying clean, washing dishes and clothes, and disposing of waste. "Water is an issue of life importance," writes a man in Podujeve/Podujevo. "There has to be enough water to drink and for hygiene. The issue is also connected to that of sewerage and cleaning of the area, which would protect our streets. In general water would preserve health." Furthermore, concludes an expansive thinker from Istok/Istog, "Water is the source of life and connects all life forms into the single life system of the earth."

Solutions

On the topic of what needs to be done, people are often specific and concrete. In Prizren a journalist states that water scarcity is not the problem – there is plenty. The problem is building delivery systems to convey the water where it is needed. “We have a lot of water resources here,” he says. “We only need to invest in gaining access to these resources.” Accordingly, in many communities the priority is the construction or completion of such systems. “All organisations that are working to set up water systems should be helped,” writes a businessman from Istog/Istok. The farmers in Suhareke/Suva Reka believe assistance from the World Bank would be the most effective means of completing the planned water and irrigation system for their region. In Karaceve/Karacevo the gentleman quoted above was quite specific:

As for Upper Karaceve/Karacevo, a solution here would be to get experts to assess the water situation, to explore and locate the ground water, and then we have to find donors who can help us with equipment: water pumps, pipes. We need pumps, and a reservoir to cover the rest of the village. Concerning Lower Karaceve/Karacevo, that's a different story. There we have enough water close to the mines. But what we need there is a reservoir and new water pumps to replace those destroyed by the Serbs. Those pumps were used in the mine. The mine would have capacities to provide Lower Karaceve/Karacevo with water. The water quantity is sufficient. The quality of the water is very good according to an analysis made in the Prishtina Institute.

Despite a prevalent tendency, many people do not look only to the outside for solutions to their problems. As a man from outside Ferizaj/Urosevac observes, “I think that the biggest problem is the drinking water. I would like to solve this problem by taking money from the citizens.” In Viti/Vitina people believe “the municipality’s water resources should be used more wisely to improve the current situation. Next, water systems for the villages should be introduced and maintained. Any project that will help to improve the quality and availability of the water should be prioritised.” People also propose “an awareness campaign to get people to pay for public services, including water. The funds raised could be used to finance water system improvements.” In Gjakova/Djakovica, one man outlines a plan for progress: “Start construction of the water system for rural areas. Educate the people how to conserve and make good use of water. Organise and collect contributions from the population to construct these systems.”

5. Social Services

All these years we have been giving part of our salary for pensions, and now you want us to believe that there simply will be no payment? Was it all for nothing?

A resident of Kline/Klina

Social services is a pressing issue in Kosovo, fifth among the fifteen issues presented, and people are unambiguous about the changes they want: re-establishment of the pension system and a more far-reaching system of social assistance. Lack of welfare benefits to Kosovo's large unemployed population – estimated at 50%² – is one of the many concerns people voice. Widows, orphans and invalids are another vulnerable group whom, people remark, have a challenging time surviving without social assistance. Finally, people worry about the non-payment of pensions after years of work, money people had relied on to support them through old age, and an income they feel lost without.

Addressing Vulnerable Cases

A doctor from Prishtina/Pristina sums up the general perception: "The condition of the pensioners, unemployed, women and children is close to a humanitarian catastrophe. Improvement of social conditions must be made a priority. When these improve, the level of health and education will also increase. The improvement should be initiated with the creation of funds from the government for social services. Every private enterprise that has the financial ability should provide a fund, and taxes should be taken from them and their employees."

The scope of these problems is emphasised by participants throughout Kosovo. For instance, an unemployed man from Skenderaj/Srbica states, "In the past ten years, more than 80% of the population lost their jobs. Now, after the war, houses are burned, women are widowed, children are orphaned, and no one receives support from the municipality, so how can they lead normal lives?"

An unemployed man in Gjilan/Gnjilane adds, "We should pay attention to the issue of

² "Basic Results: Kosovo Demographic, Socio-economic and Reproductive Health Survey," International Organization for Migration, May 2000.

social services because we have many people who live in very bad conditions and are left without any source of income," while an economist from Viti/Vitina suggests, "The most vulnerable cases like the disabled and widows, should be taken under consideration. We should first visit them and then talk to them and ask what their needs are."

Widowed and single mothers find themselves in a vulnerable situation, where sources of income and job possibilities are even harder to find than for other population groups, making them particularly reliant on a social welfare system. As a kindergarten teacher from Prishtina/Pristina says, "I think social services are very important because there are a lot of women whose husbands have been killed during the war and who have children to support, so they need help in order to stay independent and to be able to raise those children." A tailor from Prishtina/Pristina elaborates, "We as mothers without spouses need more attention and social services because most of us do not have homes and need to support our children, but we do not have the opportunity. For example, I have to travel non-stop with my daughter in my arms. I can't leave her anywhere."

People frequently discuss the social assistance administered by the Centres for Social Work, concluding that while it is not sufficient to cover their needs, it offers some help. They also look towards their future municipal leaders to address the problem. In Malisheve/Malisevo a man states, "we have a lot of traumatised individuals, and the aid they receive is not enough. The future politicians should try to give these people more help." An unemployed man from Viti/Vitina suggests "building shelters for mentally ill and homeless," while another proposal is to open rehabilitation centres for "social cases" throughout Kosovo.

Facts about Social Services

· As of September 2000, social assistance is being provided to 37,000 vulnerable families through the 27 Centres for Social Work, operating in 25 municipalities. Following a strict criteria for beneficiaries, these are families where there is no income, and no one in the family is able to work. In September or October, the department plans to conduct registration for "category two" beneficiaries," that is families who are able to work, but where no member is currently working. At present no pensions, invalid benefits or children's benefits are being distributed and none are expected in the immediate future.*

* UNMIK Department of Health and Social Welfare

Pensions

Before the conflict, by far the largest part of the population spent their working lives paying a substantial part of their incomes to Yugoslav state pension funds. As a result of recent developments, pensions are not being paid to people who would otherwise have been eligible. This leaves people, already in a difficult situation because of advanced age, in even more difficult circumstances, not receiving the income they had taken for granted and had planned on for their old age. As a result, many people are embittered. As a would-be pensioner from Kline/Klina says, "We have been working hard for forty years, and for all these years we have been giving part of our salary for pensions, and now you want us to believe that there simply will be no payment? Was it all for nothing?" A doctor from Prishtina/Pristina agrees, saying that, "40% of our salaries used to go into pensions and social services and now we receive neither social services, nor is our pension paid. I've been a doctor for twenty-eight years and my salary is 400 DM per month. A person who doesn't have enough to eat, how can he

Voters' Voices

think about democratisation?" This issue appears to be a source of general consternation. A Gjilan/Gnjilane technician adds, "We have many people who need support from the pensions. They worked all their lives so they could have a future and some money when they grow old. Please do something."

Solutions

The call to address the lack of social services and the pension issue is uniform throughout Kosovo, and is presented as a matter which the political parties should do everything in their powers to solve. People advocate the resumption of taxation to establish a fund for social services, and widening the criteria for social assistance. They want payment of the pensions for which they had worked for years and believe that comprehensive social services is necessary for Kosovo to move forwards.

6. Electricity

It is a problem that preoccupies us all.

A shopkeeper from Malisheve/Malisevo

Electricity is a matter of concern to virtually everyone in Kosovo. Although the issue is identified as the sixth priority among the fifteen issues, coming in just after social services and before housing, virtually none placed it among the five “less important” issues. People are ready to describe the problems of poor electricity supply and suggest solutions, but there is a sense that these problems and solutions are so obvious and known to everyone that further discussion is almost superfluous. The problem of electricity was exemplified in several evening Voters’ Voices meetings when the room would suddenly go black, leaving the participants to express their electricity concerns in darkness. People offer two general arguments why a reliable energy supply is essential: first, it is thought necessary to lead a normal life; second, people see it as fundamental and a prerequisite for economic development and attracting foreign investment. To solve the problem, people state large investments must be made to restore the power plants and power grid, experts employed to maintain the system properly, and that people must pay their electricity bills.

Electricity and Daily Life

Meeting participants frequently speak of the hardship that comes with a poor supply of electricity. “These power cuts,” writes an economist from Gjakova/Djakovica, “are bringing a lot of problems in all areas, in schools, in families. If we could resolve this problem our life would be much easier.” Many people describe how almost all human activity has become dependent upon electricity, and so without it life becomes near impossible. “Without electricity,” states a man in Podujeve/Podujevo, “you cannot eat, drink, listen or see. So that is no life. Electricity has its impact everywhere, you cannot even learn without electricity or read anything. . . . People must pay their bills.” In Dragash/Dragas an engineer agrees that “Because we have lots of problems with electricity, normal life is paralysed. We need to invest in repairing the power stations.” An unemployed woman in Prishtina/Pristina says that “When there is no electricity for three or four days everything in the fridge goes bad and has to be thrown in the garbage.” In Malisheve/Malisevo people describe how “the electricity network is very damaged, especially in the villages, so the electricity that we get can only be used to provide dim light and nothing more.” Many people are particularly worried about

Facts about

- Kosovo's supply of energy is drawn from two lignite-fired thermal power stations, Kosovo A and Kosovo B and domestic hydropower. Pre-1999, Kosovo exported 40% of the electricity it produced to Bosnia and Herzegovina, FR Yugoslavia, FYR of Macedonia and Greece. The province now relies heavily on power imported from Bulgaria, Romania, FYR of Macedonia and FR Yugoslavia. *
- Virtually all households have connection to electricity in Kosovo, but the power demand far exceeds the supply.
- For 2000, the European Agency for Reconstruction has budgeted 60 million Euro for repair to Kosovo's power sector.

* "Kosovo Building Assessment"
International Management
Group, April 2000

getting through this next winter. "I live in a place where everything works on electricity," writes a woman in Magure. "There is no equipment for heating with wood, and frankly I don't know how we'll survive this winter without food and heat." A young hairdresser in Prishtina/Pristina copes with the same fear: "It's very hard to survive the winter without electricity."

Electricity and Economic Development

People believe a stable and reliable power supply is a basic need for economic modernisation and development. "Electricity causes big problems especially in developing the state economy," writes a man from Viti/Vitina. In Sunny Hill, Prishtina/Pristina an agronomist states "the energy problem should be solved in order to create an environment where all citizens can dedicate themselves to their professions and contribute to the development of our society." In Peje/Pec a group describes how factories and industry in general require reliable energy in order to function, but that at present, several factories which could employ a great number of people in the area remain

non-operational. "A society's superstructure, including education, social services, and culture, follows and develops out of its infrastructure," explains a man from the group, "and electricity is an essential component of the infrastructure." In Suhareke/Suva Reka a group states "We are eager to attract foreign investment, but without an adequate energy supply, foreign companies will just invest their money somewhere else."

Solutions

Many people say the first step towards improving the electricity situation is for people to pay their bills. "Maybe," writes a woman in Gjakova/Djakovica, "the problem will be solved if we start paying the bills regularly." A man in Ferizaj/Urosevac, likewise, says he "would like this important matter to develop towards normality, and for every user to pay their electricity bills." In Dragash/Dragas a man agrees that "People have to pay for their electricity regularly," and adds that they should also "conserve electricity to help improve the situation." Other people suggest that the poorest people do not have enough money to pay their bills, so they should be helped.

Most people also believe improving the situation will require a lot of investment. The conclusion of a group in Ferizaj/Urosevac exemplifies the views of many: "Experts should work to improve the situation at the Obiliq Power Plant. To accomplish this investments are needed. Also, the electrical network and transformers are very old or they are overloaded, so the network should be repaired and new transformers provided." As for municipal leaders, "Elected officials must work to employ experts who will deal with this. Also, they should pass a law so that everyone who is not paying their electrical bills regularly must pay a fine. Individually or collectively we must pay electrical bills if we want enough electricity."

7. Housing

I see people living in tents, and with the winter so close, it must be very hard for these people, because they're going to suffer so much.

Farmer, Viti/Vitina

Kosovo's housing situation has many people wondering what will befall them this winter. An estimated 36% of the province's houses were damaged or destroyed, many of which have not yet been repaired. Housing therefore remains high on people's list of priorities.

The main concern is that as winter approaches many people still have not been able to move out of tents. People criticise the uncomfortable and often unhealthy conditions they are forced to endure without a home of their own, the difficulties when large families are suddenly housed in one small dwelling and the slow progress of reconstruction so far. They indicate that they are eager to start rebuilding; however, most lack the materials or means to purchase them. Overall, people see housing as a basic right some are being denied. They feel that reconstruction must pick up its pace and believe this is an issue on which both the international community and the municipal leaders should urgently concentrate.

Rebuilding Before Winter

In Decan/Decani, where some 65% of the houses are severely damaged, residents unanimously raised housing as their first priority. Many houses have been reconstructed, but many residents maintain that compared to the level of destruction suffered, housing is still a huge problem. In one village, states one man, there are still 586 houses to be rebuilt before winter. "The poorest families in the villages still live in tents and have no means or adult men to rebuild their houses," says a chemist from Gllgovc/Glogovac. His comment, like those from many other municipalities, reflects people's fear that they will be caught unprepared for winter. A villager in Magure expresses similar feelings: "We have

Facts about Housing

- Kosovo wide, 36% percent of the houses have been damaged or destroyed (120,000 dwellings out of an estimated 333,000) in more than 1,100 villages.*
- The European Agency for Reconstruction has budgeted 55 million Euro for housing repair in 2000.

* UNHCR Pristina

more than sixty families without roofs over their heads," she says, "and winter is coming. Something must be done for them."

Overcrowding

People indicate that they are willing to take in entire families, but often experience severe hardships when they do. A man in Kline/Klina expresses his frustration at the situation, exclaiming, "There are big families of fifteen to twenty people living together, and they have no money to buy bread or fuel to keep warm. How can they remain healthy?" This problem exists in many municipalities, where people state houses are bursting at the seams with the extra people taken in, but there is no other solution at hand. A worker from Mitrovice/Mitrovica describes his situation: "I have a very small house. After the war my brother came and brought his family. Their house is completely destroyed, but my house is too small. Thousands of families are living like this. What should we do?" Like this man, many of the people are wondering what to do. "Reconstruction of the houses is also the means of reconstructing the community," said a man in Ferizaj/Urosevac. "Many communities have surplus labour, but few have the material or the money to rebuild their houses from scratch. An unemployed man in Lipjan/Lipljan states, "We have lost twenty five innocent people from our village and 220 houses have been burned. What a great opportunity it would be for all inhabitants of our village to get involved in reconstruction."

"Wild" Construction

Another concern of the people is the lack of building regulation and the chaos which ensues. In Gjilan/Gnjilane a resident comments that rules are needed to "prevent wild construction," while in Prishtina/Pristina residents complain that the rapid reconstruction is destroying any semblance of urban planning, "creating a mess in the town and ruining the infrastructure." Another resident adds that if unlicensed construction is not reigned in, Prishtina/Pristina will soon "resemble a ruin where it will be very hard to live."

Conclusion

People's reaction to the housing issue is fairly direct; they are eager to continue reconstruction and re-establish a sense of normalcy throughout Kosovo. While some people turn towards the international community for assistance in rebuilding, others indicate that there is no shortage of labour in Kosovo, only a shortage of material. They indicate that the municipal leaders should actively address the reconstruction issue, should re-establish urban planning and should make full effort to ensure that those without a solid roof over their heads will at least find some place warm for winter. "We ask the political leaders to help people who are without houses," says a man from outside of Gjilan/Gnjilane, "to build their houses and go back to their homes."

8. Roads

We don't need to tell you about the roads. You drove in on them.

A man from Kline/Klina

Among the issues presented, roads rank eighth. Most people see the need for an adequate system of roads as reasonably straightforward. The overall sentiment is that without better roads people cannot easily get from one place to another, and they cannot easily transport the goods, materials and resources upon which they and the economy depend. Many people also comment upon increasing traffic problems.

Roads and Daily Life

"In Dragash/Drigas," says a teacher, "the connection between the villages is very poor, so it is difficult to travel from one village to another. Also, during the winter the roads are blocked, leaving us isolated and locked in. This becomes a very serious problem when there is a medical emergency." An unemployed man from Glogovc/Glogovac echoes the sentiment: "Reconstruction of streets is very important because some rural areas are isolated, particularly during the winter. Their construction should be done through taxing private enterprises." The poor condition of roads is a frequent point of emphasis: "The road in my village is destroyed," writes a man in Mitrovice/Mitrovica, "and I hope that it will be reconstructed soon." A machinery technician also from Mitrovice/Mitrovica agrees and adds to the point: "Our roads are very destroyed. First, we should reconstruct them, and then we should put more importance on creating sidewalks and electric lamps. This would prevent many negative phenomena," such as accidents and crime. Others add the problem of traffic. "Roads should be a high priority because they are very destroyed," writes an instructor in Gjakova/Djakovica, "and we have a lot of problems with the traffic." A number of people mention the potholes and the narrowness of many roads as traffic risks. In Vushtri/Vucitrn an economist writes that "Roads are destroyed, and people drive very fast," and adds, "we should think about greenness too."

Roads and Economic Development

Facts about Roads

· Kosovo has a 3,800-km network of roads, including 623 km of main roads and 1,300 km of region roads.*

· Of these roads, approximately 6% are in good condition, 46% are in medium condition, 29% are in bad condition, and 18% are gravel roads. Roads within the cities are general in the worst state of disrepair, due to heavy traffic.**

· The European Agency for Reconstruction has budgeted 15 million Euro for repair to Kosovo's roads in 2000.

* "Kosovo Within: Strategic Environmental Analysis of Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Kosovo and Macedonia." The Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe, June 2000, pp 14.

** "Transport Damage Assessment." International Management Group, November 1999.

One statement made too often to attribute is that "Without good roads there is no development." In Istog/Istok a man writes that "Without repairing the roads, the economy of Kosovo can go no further," and his neighbour adds that "Without urban development, including the roads, every country is backward." In Ferizaj/Urosevac one group agrees that "Existing roads should be reconstructed and new roads built to improve communication and economic exchange between the municipalities and surrounding villages." A journalist in Prizren suggests that "The development of our infrastructure here in Prizren requires that we develop good connections with other municipalities. The roads must reach the same standard as those in Western Europe."

Solutions

The solutions proposed were equally straightforward. "Since roads are in very bad condition," suggests a woman from Viti/Vitina, "I think we should build new ones." A man in Dragash/Dragas suggests "Collecting voluntary contributions to rebuild roads," and in Ferizaj/Urosevac a group of people agrees that "each municipality should employ impartial experts who will work on municipal-wide projects of road reconstruction." An unemployed man from Glogovc/Glogovac echoes the sentiment and suggests that road "construction should be done through taxing private enterprises." Others see donors and local community members working together: "Donors," suggests a clerk from Istog/Istok, "should invest in road repair and at the same time employ labour from the villages."

9. Environmental Protection

We should think about greenness too.

Economist, Vushtrri/Vucitrn

Protection of the environment is identified as the ninth priority, not only in its own right, but also because of its link to basic health issues. Villagers in Malisheve/Malisevo sum up their concerns by concluding, “the protection of the environment also effects the protection of health.” The main issues people raise are the environment’s link to the population’s health, the issue of personal and Kosovo-wide responsibility for its protection and the desire for more public campaigns on environmental awareness and protection.

Health and the Environment

Kosovo’s mining and other industries have not been subject to a high degree of environmental regulation. Because of this, people express concern about the effects pollution may have on their health. In Mitrovice/Mitrovica they worry about the high level of pollution and the subsequent risks it poses to their health. A machinery technician in South Mitrovice/Mitrovica observes that environmental protection “is very important for us because Mitrovice/Mitrovica is very polluted. We need help to prevent this big catastrophe, or we will have even more diseases to deal with.” “The environment is one of the main issues in our village,” adds a student from Magure, “as the land is becoming very dirty and thus dangerous for our health.”

The general consensus across Kosovo is that environmental protection is an essential step to improving the health situation, and that people should take more active measures towards its preservation. “The destruction of natural resources must urgently be stopped,” writes a woman in Gjakova/Djakovica. The pollution produced by Kosovo’s factories is a cause for concern. A geologist in Obiliq/Obilic suggests “taking concerted steps with the relevant factories to resolve these issues,” while a businessman in Istok/Istog states that “more public information on how the environment should be protected should be widely distributed.”

Facts about Environmental Protection

· Kosovo is approximately 11,000 square kilometres. 54% of the land is used for agricultural production while 42% is forested.*

· The area is one of the most densely populated in Europe (210 people per sq. km), putting a great strain on the environment and Kosovo's natural resources. Woodcutting has not been controlled, and according to the Department of the environment, 30% of the forests have been damaged due to disease.**

· The main pollutants in Kosovo stem from its previous mining activities, its energy production and heavy automobile traffic, as well as solid wastes which cause soil and water pollution. There are an estimated 300,000 cars in Kosovo 100,000 of which are in Prishtina/Pristina. In addition to the high amount of lead from leaded fuel, untreated waste discharged into main water sources and unregulated emission from factories have also greatly contributed to the level of pollution in Kosovo.

* "Kosovo -United Nations Partnership for a Human Development Strategy." United Nations Development Group, November 17, 1999.

** "Kosovo Within: Strategic Environmental Analysis of Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Kosovo and Macedonia" The Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe, June 2000.

Taking Responsibility

In Kacanik a group believes that "communities should work closely with their municipal government to protect the environment from pollution and to support laws which will stop pollution," while in Magure a student adds that "we must take concrete actions to protect the environment, starting from the village and the municipality." Environmental protection rates highest in Ferizaj/Urosevac, Kamenice/Kamenica, and Prishtina/Pristina, where despite other persistent problems, people strongly advocate "planting trees in towns and on hills," "preserving forests and rivers" and "creating more green areas." People throughout Kosovo agree that while there are many other pressing problems, they must both take a level of personal responsibility and push the factories to assume more responsibility for the environment.

10. Garbage

We should organise ourselves to collect the garbage and protect the environment we live in.

A woman from Prishtina/Pristina

Garbage collection ranks tenth in the order of community priorities. Nonetheless, the issue receives a surprising number of written comments from people concerned about the issue. The key problems identified are use of communities as dumps, lack of garbage disposal or recycling options, threats to health and hygiene, people's lack of environmental awareness and damage to the environment itself.

Garbage Disposal

There is a perception that people are throwing their garbage wherever they can, and that frequently this results from a lack of waste-disposal options. A businessman from Istog/Istok writes, "There is need for garbage collection. People are throwing out their garbage everywhere because there is a lack of collection." His neighbour agrees that "the issue is very important because people throw their trash right out in front of their doors and in other unsuitable places, which is because there is a lack of transportation." For some the problem appears so overwhelming they feel paralysed. In Gjakova/Djakovica, a woman says, "It worries me too much just walking around the streets, running into garbage all the time and not doing anything about it."

Garbage and Public Health

Many people express concern about the risks that garbage poses to public health. "In my village," explains a man from Mitrovice/Mitrovica, "we have a problem with garbage, and we are afraid of diseases. I hope everyone will do something to solve this issue." A student in Istog/Istok agrees that "If the garbage is not collected it can cause different diseases, which can be fatal." Likewise, a man in Glogovc/Glogovac believes that "Garbage collection is a really important issue. Most of the population is throwing garbage in inappropriate places, bringing us different diseases, so we appeal to all the people not to throw garbage everywhere." Thus, writes a man from Gjakova/Djakovica, "We can maintain health and hygiene only if we collect the garbage on a

regular basis." Many are also concerned about more dangerous kinds of waste. In Podujeve/Podujevo one man writes, "I am concerned by the fact that we are living in the most polluted place. We are polluted not only by the daily garbage, but also by the garbage left from the war, the dangerous garbage such as ammunition parts, projectiles and rockets, mines, and so on."

Solutions

People offer a number of solutions, including improved garbage collection, landfills, recycling, and increasing public awareness. "As we know," writes a man in Rahovec/Orahovac, "the garbage problem in Kosovo is very big. We need to change our strategy because it is very important for us to preserve our health. We need to educate everyone about this issue." In Prishtina/Pristina a woman suggests, "We should organise ourselves to collect the garbage and protect the environment we live in." In Gjakova/Djakovica an educator states that "Garbage has to be collected, so we need garbage collection vehicles," and a man from Prizren suggests that "waste should be collected in one special place, not just in our municipality but others as well. We need to create landfills for this." According to a woman in Malisheve/Malisevo, "Life in a healthy environment is a necessity for the people of this planet, so collecting garbage in a well-organised way and then recycling it would be a step in the right direction." A farmer from Suhareke/Suva Reka concludes that "If we do not take care of this, life will become terrible for us."

Facts about Garbage Collection

· 40% of the population has access to garbage collection services.*

* "Kosovo: Reconstruction 2000" European Union/UNMIK Department of Reconstruction, April 2000 pp. 114.

11. Sewage

Before we used to buy fruits and vegetables from the village but now we don't because the sewage seeps into them and they taste horrible.

A resident of Ferizaj/Urosevac Municipality

Sewage is the eleventh priority among meeting participants as they see untreated sewage as both a threat to their health and to the environment, and want new methods of disposal and construction of treatment plants.

A student in Magure states that “the sewage from the village is next to the windows of our classroom, and we’re afraid of infection,” while a resident of Kamenice/Kamenica municipality notes that “I know that sewage is bad for our health, and the dry weather makes it smell terrible.” Other people note that sewage is not only a risk to health, but to the environment. In Viti/Vitina residents complain that sewage from the villages is released into the Morava River. “It is destroying the environment,” they state, and they want to introduce new treatment methods rather than dumping sewage in the nearest stream or river. In the villages of Dubrave and Saradran in Istog/Istok residents are particularly concerned with the sewerage issue, and urge the community to be “careful about the elimination of sewage in the villages so we can avoid infections.”

Facts about Sewage

- About 24 – 30 % of the total population of Kosovo, largely in urban areas, has access to a sewage system. Most of the sewage systems are in extremely bad condition and approximately 20 –30% of the sewage systems are in need of urgent repairs*
- Kosovo-wide, approximately 30% of all wastewater is discarded directly into the main rivers. The rest of the wastewater is either absorbed directly into the soil, and seeps into drinking water, or indirectly ends up in the larger rivers.* None of the wastewater in Kosovo is treated.
- Of the approximately 2,300 villages in Kosovo, only 7% of the rural population has access to a sewer system, the rest relying on septic holes.* Only 32% of the population of Kosovo has access to a flush toilet.

* “Sanitation Damage Assessment” International Management Group, October 1999

12. Minority Protection

When we dedicate ourselves to the security of others, we are also protecting ourselves

A farmer from Suhareke/Suva Reka

Minority Protection ranks twelfth among the fifteen community issues. It should be noted, however, that at a number of meetings participants indicated uncertainty about how to address the issue: they believed the issue was important, but thought there were no minorities in their own community, or that relative to other communities the minority population was living with reasonable security. Since all participants were asked to focus on their own community rather than Kosovo in general, this point may warrant consideration in evaluating these findings. That said, when the issue is discussed or written about, people often speak with feeling and eloquence about the need to protect and respect all the people of Kosovo. Finally, this summary does not include the specific views and comments gathered from the Serb communities that participated in this project, which are presented later in this report.

The primary emphasis in discussions and comments about minority protection is generally placed on the moral and ethical responsibilities of all members of a society to safeguard the rights and security of everyone, particularly those most at risk. Some, including a man from Viti/Vitina, express confidence the situation will improve: "We are known as very peaceful people," he writes, "and that is why I believe we will protect and respect the rights of others." Many identified the freedom and security of all as a prerequisite for the development of a democratic society. "All people must live in freedom," writes a person in Malisheve/Malisevo, "and only in this way can we have a democratic state." Another person in Istok/Istog believes that Kosovo could earn statehood "only if the minorities who live there are respected. Kosovo should be multiethnic." In Prishtina/Pristina a nurse writes that "We must have tolerance and understanding for a democratic life."

A number of people feel emotionally exhausted by the years of hatred and violence they have endured and express a wish to escape past tragedies and to embrace the idea of all people living in freedom and security. "After all the things which have happened to everybody," writes a man from Istog/Istok, "we should all have the same rights." "Minorities should be protected wherever they are," adds an economist from

the same town. A journalist in Prishtina/Pristina writes that "Circumstances should be created so that people do not feel left aside only because they belong to a minority."

Population Estimates	1991 Yugoslav Survey	UNHCR/OSCE Estimates, Nov 1999 Jan. 2000
Albanian*	1,596,072	-----
Serb	195,301	100,000
Croat	8,161	500
Bosniac (Muslim Slavs)	57,408	35,000
Turk ***	10,833	20,000 - 35000
Montenegrin	20,045	-----
Roma**	45,745	30,000 Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians
Egyptian	5,984	
Gorani	12,000 15,000	-----
Others	3,444	-----

* A number of Albanians boycotted the 1991 Yugoslav population census.

** This number is thought to be far too low. A more representative figure is that of Paul Polansky who estimated there were up to 150,000 Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians in Kosovo in 1998.

*** This figure is also thought to be too low. A closer estimate for the Turkish population in 1991 is 20,000 - 40,000.

Facts about Population Statistics

· According to the 1991 Yugoslav census, there were 195,301 Serbs in Kosovo, 10,833 Turks and the number of "Gypsies" (Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians) was recorded as 45,000, although this figure is thought to be far too low. It is estimated that there were in fact some 20,000 – 40,000 Turks and up to 150,000 Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians in Kosovo in 1998.

· Today, there are an estimated 30,000 "gypsies" left in Kosovo. The other minorities present are an estimated 100,000 Serbs, 35,000 Bosniacs and Torbesi, 20,000-35,000 Turkish, 12,000 – 15,000 Gorani and 500 Croats.

* OSCE/UNHCR Assessment Nov. 1999 – Jan., 2000

13. Telecommunications and Post

We are a long way from Gjilan/Gnjilane and Kamenice/Kamenica, but with the reestablishment of telecommunications and a postal system, we could live closer to the civilised world.

Resident, Karaceve, Kamenice/Kamenica

The shortage of telephone lines and the lack of a widely functioning postal system in Kosovo concerns many people who see post and telecommunications as primary way of maintaining contact among villages and with the rest of the world. While this issue is thirteenth in the list of people's priorities, it is particularly important to those living in more isolated villages.

Maintaining Communications within Kosovo

In Istog/Istok a villager mentions the distance some people must travel to make a phone call, saying, "We are four kilometres away from the city, and we would like to have phones in our village." Inhabitants of Rahovec/Orahovac want to re-establish

Facts about Telecommunication & Post

- 91 of the 130 post offices in Kosovo are operational. Stamps in denominations from .20-2 DM are available to send mail in Kosovo or internationally.*
- Before the conflict, Kosovo had the second lowest phone penetration rate in Europe with an average of six lines per 100 residents.**
- At present, there are 120,000 fixed line subscribers across Kosovo,* equalling an estimated sixteen lines per 100 residents.
- Eight million Euro has been committed to restoring the post and telecommunication system, including 2 million for the postal system and 6 million for telecommunication services.

* UNMIK Department of Post and Telecommunications

** "Kosovo: Reconstruction 2000" European Union/UNMIK Department of Reconstruction, April 2000 pp79.

lines abroad so they can keep in touch with relatives, and an inhabitant of Istog/Istok municipality says, "there is a need for a phone network in the villages, so we can communicate with the world."

Youth and Telecommunications

The importance of re-establishing a regular telecommunication system is also highlighted by youth groups who see it as the path towards regular Internet connection. A young man from a Kamenice/Kamenica Youth Round Table writes, "Establishing telecommunications is the third most important issue to me because then we can develop by having connection to the Internet," while a fellow participant believes that "concerning telecommunications, the only problem for now is the Internet." Another young man from Istog/Istok wryly notes that it would be good to establish landlines again because "we are tired of people with mobile phones!"

14. Cultural Activities

Cultural activities must be given special attention because of the need for physical and mental relaxation after all the mischief the people of Kosovo have been through.

A professor from Prishtina/Pristina

Perhaps given the immediacy of so many other more concrete concerns, coupled with the fact that five issues had to be prioritised as “less important,” cultural activities ranks fourteenth. Many people, nevertheless, feel the issue is important enough to include it among their top three “most important issues.” In general, they suggest that an emphasis on cultural activities is inherently important for the development of a society, that it would have a relaxing and therapeutic effect upon those who have suffered in past years, and that it would have a positive impact upon restless youths.

Advancing Culture

Many people emphasise the importance of cultural activities in advancing Kosovo society. “Culture is above all,” writes an electro-engineer from Prishtina/Pristina, “so if we do not take up cultural activities then we will lack in many fields, including health and fitness.” In Peje/Pec a woman agrees, “There is a need for authentic cultural development.” According to a man in Prizren, “there were not many sports associations or dancing groups, but we would now welcome activities of physical and mental relaxation.” Likewise, a professor in Prishtina/Pristina writes that cultural activities “have to be given special attention because of the need for physical and mental relaxation after all the mischief the people of Kosovo have been through.”

Cultural Activities and Youth

Young people are often mentioned as needing additional cultural facilities and events in which to engage themselves. “Over the past ten years,” writes a man from Mitrovice/Mitrovica, “this issue hasn’t had great importance for us, which is why we should now put greater emphasis on this. Our youth need some cultural activities and a place in which to conduct them.” A biologist also suggests that “youths need more places to engage in activities, such as places to play sports.” An agronomist in Suhareke/Suva Reke also writes, “we need more sports halls in this region.” In Viti/Vitina one man

Facts about Culture

· Kosovo currently has 14 museums, 56 libraries, 176 cultural centres, 3 theatres and 12 cinemas, approximately 53% of which have been damaged and 6% destroyed.*

* "Kosovo Building Assessment" International Management Group, April 2000.

writes that "The youth of Kosovo can forget their war traumas only if they get involved in different sports and musical activities." In Prishtina/Pristina a dermatologist suggests, "We should introduce sports and cultural activities more to our children so they do not go out to discotheques so often. We should lead young people toward activities that will contribute to their health and welfare. We also need more debates between student associations to discuss the present problems, and also to teach them how to communicate through the Internet and not spend all of their free time in cafes."

15. Public Transportation

We need buses for teachers, students and workers.

A resident of Kamenice/Kamenica

Public transportation, while not a top priority, was nevertheless particularly important to some individuals. Those living in rural areas cite transportation as a problem because it functions erratically at best, while those in urban areas are frustrated by its lack of co-ordination. Public transportation in Kosovo is operating at 20% capacity of what it was before the conflict³ and many people living in more isolated locations are feeling the effects. As a man in Dragash/Dragas argues, "there is simply no regular public transport in our municipality and we would like to do something about it." Likewise, an economist from Skenderaj/Srbica notes that lack of buses makes the daily trip to school extremely difficult for some students. "We have students coming here from many outlying villages," he says "and they have no public transport. Should they then walk every day?"

In the cities, residents do not criticise the lack of public transport, but rather its confused and chaotic nature. A resident of Prishtina/Pristina says that "public transport should be more organised, not in the wild way it is here," while another Prishtina/Pristina resident complains that the traffic is getting worse due to unregulated mini-vans and polluting buses. Those who feel public transport is a problem want their leaders to establish a more regular system to reach the villages and to regulate public transport.

³ Kosovo Consolidated Budget 1 January – 31 December 2000.

Facts about Public Transportation

· Buses provide the primary form of public transportation in Kosovo. Currently 'Kosova-Trans' is operating a fleet of 200 buses out of 12 regional centres. 80% of the company's buses were destroyed during the conflict, so it has not been able to provide sufficient Kosovo-wide services.*

· Prishtina/Pristina is serviced by 'UrbanBus Prishtina' which has 20 operational buses (compared to its pre-war figure of 115 buses). An estimated 500 private buses are also operating in Kosovo, along with a number of informal mini-van and bus services (estimated at over 1,000).*

· Kosovo has 330 kilometres of railway, consisting of two main artery lines running north to south, and east to west. The damage suffered to the railway as a result of the recent conflict is minimal. However, the railway system requires extensive repairs due to the lack of maintenance. Pre-conflict, there were 20 trains transporting some 8,000 people a day. Today, two passenger trains operate from Fushe Kosove/Kosovo Polje to Zvecan, carrying only 800 persons per day.**

* "Kosovo: Reconstruction 2000" European Union/UNMIK Department of Reconstruction, April 2000 pp. 103

** UNMIK Department of Transport and Infrastructure.

Additional Issues

Security, Safety and Law Enforcement

We are tired of living in fear of violence. It is time for Kosovo to be governed by the rule of law.

A resident of Malisheve/Malisevo

Among the issues not covered in the *UNMIK Regulation on Self-Governance of Municipalities in Kosovo* but raised by people as a serious community concern, security, public safety and law enforcement were mentioned most often. The need to “stop the violence” is spoken of frequently. While UN Civil police will maintain responsibility for these matters, people believe that the situation in their communities must be improved. Many suggest that crime is increasing, the criminals are rarely caught, lawlessness is becoming endemic, and people’s safety is at risk. “Crime increases daily,” states a woman from Gjakova/Djakovica, “and the police are unable to do anything. We need our own police who know the communities, can find these people and bring them to justice.” Others agree: “For security,” states a man in Malisheve/Malisevo, “we need to institute the rule of law and to have Kosovar police. With all due respect, police from many countries do not know us, our communities, our language, customs or culture. It is therefore difficult for them to help us or to effectively investigate crime.” Another man agrees, and adds that “To move forward, we require the rule of law, which in turn requires that Kosovo have a constitution and functioning courts and police.” People want to remove the element of fear which many state is part of their daily life, “To be safe, to stop the killings, looting, kidnapping, - that is to have a quiet and safe life – without any fear” as a pensioner in Prishtina/Pristina says.

Women's Emancipation

The progress of Kosovo requires the emancipation of women.

A man from Glllogovc/Glogovac

Related to the issue of security and rule of law is the frequently mentioned issue of violence against women and women's rights. "At the present time," write as professor from Gjakova/Djakovica, "the violence is increasing. We don't have laws that can protect women, and women don't have adequate rights. My request to our leaders is to work more in this direction." Others agree, and believe the status of women in Kosovo must be critically examined. Some women relate stories of discrimination against women entering the workforce, and ask that they be given equal consideration by employers. An extremely vocal group of men in Glllogovc/Glogovac note that "traditionally, women have had a low standard of education in Kosovo. We are aware that without women's emancipation, the society cannot move forward" Progress must be made on this issue, they add, in order for "women to have equal rights with men."

Minority Perspectives

Our movement is limited to twenty feet in front of our building.

Serb resident of Prishtina/Pristina

Approximately 15 % of the *Voters' Voices* meetings were made up exclusively of members of a minority group. While a difference of interest is apparent in some of the additional priorities they raise such as security, freedom of movement and safe and equal access to schools and health care, a number of concerns raised by minorities are similar to those voiced by the rest of the population. Health care is the top priority raised by minority groups, followed by economic development and employment, water, minority protection and electricity. While these priorities, with the exception of minority protection, are comparable to the ranking they were given Kosovo-wide, they are often approached from a slightly different angle, explored below. This section is intended to convey a sense of the minority perspectives not represented elsewhere in this publication. It cannot claim to be an exhaustive survey of minority priorities nor is it intended to be representative of all Kosovo's diverse and distinct minority populations. Instead its function is to highlight issues upon which minorities have a different perspective, or to mention issues not falling under the competencies listed by the *UNMIK Regulation on Self-Governance of Municipalities in Kosovo*.

Health Care

Health care is listed as the first priority by minorities for many reasons similar to those of the rest of the population. People cite overcrowded hospitals, poor hygiene, expensive drugs and treatments and outdated equipment as concerns. The primary difference lies in their comments about access to health care. The most frequent remark about health care is that its coverage is poor and the distances some minorities must travel – some as far as Serbia – to obtain medical treatment. A Serb from Rahovec/Orahovac writes “we must improve health care by opening clinics we can use, to employ every kind of specialist and to have enough medicines for all patients,” while a Roma resident of Gracanica states that, because of the current security situation and his fear of going in to Prishtina/Pristina, he must go all the way to Nis (Serbia proper) for a hospital visit.

Minority groups also call for sufficient security to visit nearby hospitals, or the establishment of more village clinics which they feel safe in using.

Economic Development and Employment

Like the rest of Kosovo, minority members identify the economy and lack of jobs as an important priority which should be addressed. Members of the Roma community in Gracanica are concerned by the large number of Roma who are unemployed. "We Roma who have stayed in Gracanica," states an inhabitant, "will accept any kind of job. We need to feed our families." Other Roma firmly maintain that they are discriminated against when seeking employment. Serbs in Rahovec/Orahovac are concerned about the lack of employment opportunities for their community while a Serb resident of Prishtina/Pristina states "economic renewal is our first task."

Security and Freedom of Movement

Additional issues which minority groups raise and rank very highly are security and freedom of movement. Security is mentioned as a very high priority among the Serb and Roma participants. Even when they have the opportunity to walk outside of enclaves, they mention feelings of everyday insecurity and fear; fear while walking on the streets, fear while visiting friends, fear while performing every day chores such as shopping for groceries or picking up prescriptions at the pharmacy. In Ulpiana, Prishtina/Pristina they mention incidents such as stoning or being pelted with garbage within their apartment complex, while in Rahovec/Orahovac people are afraid of violent assault. Rising levels of violence are a concern across Kosovo; however, the minority groups in particular fear the continued ethnically motivated attacks and kidnappings. "The numerous abductions and arsons," states a Serb from Orahovac/Rahovec "have caused Serbs to move out on a perpetual basis because they do not feel safe." Security issues are also a concern for members of the Roma population: "Increasing police can minimise crime and violence," writes a man from Klina/e and others agree, listing security as one of their main priorities.

Freedom of movement is another issue stressed by the Serb participants in particular. "Serbs in Rahovec/Orahovac," writes an inhabitant "live in a ghetto in an area of less than 1000 square meters. Any attempt to leave can result in abduction so the only way to move from the territory of the ghetto is with an international escort." They ask to be able to move freely on the streets, to visit relatives and friends in Serb enclaves as well as relatives in Serbia. "Our movement is limited to twenty feet in front of our building," writes a Serb resident of Prishtina/Pristina. "We want to be able to leave and return to Pristina/Prishtina in safety." A Roma from Pristina/Prishtina adds, "we need to have freedom of movement, to be able to move without fear and caution." Freedom of movement for some translates into freedom to use public transportation within Kosovo and some minority members remark that they are wary of using local public transport for fear of ethnic intimidation. Serb residents of Ajnovce maintain they lack freedom of movement because the bus from Kamenice/kamenica will not continue on to the Serb area. One man claims however, even if it did, "the people are too scared to take public transport anyway because they have experienced provocation, and the fees are

they mention feelings of everyday insecurity and fear; fear while walking on the streets, fear while visiting friends, fear while performing every day chores such as shopping for groceries or picking up prescriptions at the pharmacy. In Ulpiana, Prishtina/Pristina they mention incidents such as stoning or being pelted with garbage within their apartment complex, while in Rahovec/Orahovac people are afraid of violent assault. Rising levels of violence are a concern across Kosovo; however, the minority groups in particular fear the continued ethnically motivated attacks and kidnappings. "The numerous abductions and arsons," states a Serb from Rahovec/Orahovac "have caused Serbs to move out on a perpetual basis because they do not feel safe." Security issues are also a concern for members of the Roma population: "Increasing police can minimise crime and violence," writes a man from Kline/Klina and others agree, listing security as one of their main priorities.

Freedom of movement is another issue stressed by the Serb participants in particular. "Serbs in Rahovec/Orahovac," writes an inhabitant "live in a ghetto in an area of less than 1000 square meters. Any attempt to leave can result in abduction so the only way to move from the territory of the ghetto is with an international escort." They ask to be able to move freely on the streets, to visit relatives and friends in Serb enclaves as well as relatives in Serbia. "Our movement is limited to twenty feet in front of our building," writes a Serb resident of Prishtina/Pristina. "We want to be able to leave and return to Prishtina/Pristina in safety." A Roma from Prishtina/Pristina adds, "we need to have freedom of movement, to be able to move without fear and caution." Freedom of movement for some translates into freedom to use public transportation within Kosovo and some minority members remark that they are wary of using local public transport for fear of ethnic intimidation. Serb residents of Ajnovce maintain that they lack freedom of movement because the bus from Kamenice/Kamenica will not continue on to the Serb area. One man claims however, even if it did, "the people are too scared to take public transport anyway because they have experienced provocation, and the fees are in DM instead of Dinar."

Other issues raised exclusively by the Serb participants are the return of displaced Serbs, and the freedom to sell or use their property. Finally; all minority groups express the feeling that inter-ethnic relations must find some sort of balance within Kosovo. "First of all," writes a man from the Serb quarter of Rahovec/Orahovac "we must establish respect for human rights in Kosovo for all ethnicities." The call for ethnic tolerance and general weariness of the current tense situation is evident in many people's remarks, as they look towards a more hopeful vision of the future. "In my opinion," states a Serb from Rahovec/Orahovac, "we should work with the Albanians to do everything possible to bring life back to normal."

Priorities by Region

	Prizren	Mitrovice/Mitrovica	Prishtina/Pristina	Peje/Pec	Gjilan/Gnjilane
1	Health Care	Health care	Health care	Education	Education
2	Education	Education	Education	Health care	Health care
3	Economic Development/ Employment	Social Services	Economic Development/ Employment	Economic Development/ Employment	Economic Development/ Employment
4	Water	Housing	Water	Housing	Social Services
5	Social Services	Economic Development/ Employment	Housing	Social Services	Electricity
6	Electricity	Water	Electricity	Water	Water
7	Roads	Electricity	Social Services	Electricity	Environmental Protection
8	Housing	Roads	Roads	Roads	Roads
9	Environmental Protection	Garbage	Environmental Protection	Environmental Protection	Garbage
10	Sewage	Sewage	Garbage	Minority Protection	Housing
11	Telecommunications and Post	Environmental Protection	Sewage	Garbage	Culture
12	Minority Protection	Culture	Minority Protection	Telecommunications and Post	Telecommunications and Post
13	Garbage	Telecommunications and Post	Telecommunications and Post	Culture	Sewage
14	Culture	Minority Protection	Culture	Sewage	Minority Protection
16	Public Transportation	Public Transportation	Public Transportation	Public Transportation	Public Transportation