



Balance of Power: Kosovo

Topic A: Humanitarian Situation in Kosovo

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Introduction

Kosovo declared its independence from Serbia on 17 February 2008. Since then, the people of Kosovo have started engaging in many nation-building efforts to help build a strong and effective country. The ministers of the Kosovo Cabinet should work together to identify specific areas of humanitarian relevance that need improvement. These topics include, but are not limited to, development of educational systems, improving housing conditions, and increasing access to clean water and sanitation.

Humanitarian aid efforts aim to address various socioeconomic factors in order to improve the lives of civilians and help them become more self-reliant. This aid can combat many sectors in both urban and rural areas. Oftentimes these efforts are employed in regions that have recently suffered through warfare or natural disasters. The Kosovo War and regional flooding caused destruction in the region that still needs to be addressed.

A cursory examination of recent statistics regarding the humanitarian situation in Kosovo paints a grim story. As of 2003, 10% of households had houses made of mud and stones and 25% of people lived in overcrowded houses with no ventilation. According to UNICEF Kosovo's Acting Head of Office, Tania Goldner, 60% of schools currently do not have access to safe drinking water. Additionally, although Kosovo has received three billion dollars in aid over the past ten years, 15% of the population still lives on less than one euro per day.

While discussing humanitarian efforts, the Cabinet should consider the presence of minority groups, who are continually voicing their feelings of intimidation by the Albanian majority. The Ministers of the Kosovo Cabinet should also focus on what they view as the key areas that need improvement and what specific initiatives can be implemented to improve them. By drafting suggestions for future action, the Cabinet can help steer the nation's development and strengthen its self-sufficiency.



Background

Historical Overview



A father cries as his son retells the story of how his face got wounded in the war. *Photo taken by Gary Fabiano.*
<http://www.mediabistro.com/spotlight/archives/01/06/06/images/content/13.jpg>

The Kosovo War was actually comprised of two distinct conflicts: a conflict between Serbia and Kosovo and a conflict between Kosovo and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The former began in 1998 when Albanian residents rioted in response to a statement released by former Serbian president, Slobodan Milosevic, saying

Kosovo would remain a part of Serbia.

NATO launched a 4-month bombing

campaign on Serbia when Serbian troops

murdered 45 Albanians in Kosovo on 24 March 1999. The two conflicts caused major physical destruction to housing and water, transportation, and sanitation infrastructure. They also effectively eliminated public safety and other government services.

As a result, the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) was established on 10 June 1999, following clauses outlined by Security Council Resolution 1244. The resolution outlined several objectives of the UNMIK, including coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief of all international agencies, support of the reconstruction of key infrastructure and assurance of the safe return of all refugees and displaced persons.



A section of the destruction in Pec, Kosovo. 14 Oct 1999. Photo taken by Milton Grant.
<http://downloads.unmultimedia.org/photo/medium/789/78978.jpg>



In the months following the war, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) issued a series of crisis fact sheets concerning the humanitarian situation in Kosovo. According to reports issued in July 1999, the fact sheet, citing figures from the Food and Agriculture Organization, said some areas experienced a loss of their entire livestock (cattle, sheep, and chickens). Additionally, the World Food Program assessment found that 70% of rural families were expected not to have any agricultural production whatsoever in that year.

In addition to damage from the war, recent flooding has damaged houses, agricultural lands, and equipment in Kosovo. The floods affected the rural areas as well as the cities and major towns of Kosovo. In rural areas, the floods are further increasing the vulnerability of the population since prices for basic commodities are rising drastically. This was especially detrimental to the 44



People reach out for loaves of bread in the aftermath of the war. *Photo taken by Gary Fabiano.*
<http://www.mediabistro.com/spotlight/archives/01/06/06/images/content/11.jpg>

percent of Kosovo's population that currently lives in poverty. In urban areas, floods caused overflowing of the sewage system, which further limited access to clean water.

In April 2008, Russia sent humanitarian aid to the Serbs still residing in Kosovo. Russia has stood firm on its refusal to recognize Kosovo's independence. The country has a close alliance with Serbia and will not recognize Kosovo until Serbia does. In October 2009, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov even went so far as to condemn Albanian Prime Minister Sali Berisha for visiting Kosovo to improve relations between Kosovo and Albania.

United Nations Millennium Development Goals





Snapshots from an UNDP MDG ad, shown in public media outlets in Kosovo in 2008 to promote awareness of MDGs:
<http://www.ks.undp.org/?cid=2,60>

In 2004, the United Nations Kosovo Team (UNKT) issued its first baseline report on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). This report outlined where Kosovo stood in terms of achieving the eight goals outlined in the Millennium Declaration of 2000 by the United Nations. On 17 October 2008, the Assembly of Kosovo passed a resolution that endorsed the Millennium Declaration and affirmed its commitment to meeting the MDGs. Our Cabinet will focus on reviewing Kosovo's progress in relation to achieving MDGs One, Two, and Seven by 2015. MDG1 focuses on eradication of extreme poverty and hunger. Its specific targets include halving the proportion of people whose income is less than \$1 a day, achieving full and productive employment for all, and halving the proportion of people who suffer from hunger. MDG2 focuses on achieving universal primary education, and MDG7 strives to ensure environmental stability. Its specific targets include halving the proportion of the population without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation and significantly improving the lives of slum dwellers.

With regards to eradication of poverty, 44% of the Kosovar population currently lives in poverty and 15% live in extreme poverty. During the war, 27% of housing in Kosovo was destroyed or significantly damaged. The Second Millennium Development Goals Report for Kosovo recommends that the country should focus on rural development, promotion of exports, and implementing a social safety net. The report asserts that economic growth itself is insufficient to push a large percentage of people above the extreme poverty line.

To expand beyond the scope of the second goal, the Cabinet should consider ways to improve education as a whole. After the war, the Government of Kosovo initiated an education reform process that focused on rebuilding schools and facilities and improving the quality of education itself at the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels. In 2001, the Kosovo Curriculum



Framework (2001) was drafted with a focus on curricular reform and improvements in student assessment. From 2003 to 2005, the curricular reform was implemented and new textbooks were published. The Public Investment Program and Donor Designated Grants funded this reform. However, the funding for this reform decreased by 36 million euros, which has led to major challenges in continuing improvements in the Kosovar education system. The reforms made on textbooks and school curricula were also considered unsatisfactory. Additionally, many Kosovars end their education after completing primary school and do not go on to the secondary level. Kosovo currently lags behind other countries in the region in terms of percentages of students enrolled at each level of education. As a result of the small percentage of people who complete education programs beyond the primary level, over 200,000 jobseekers in Kosovo are classified as “unqualified.”

In terms of environmental sustainability, Kosovo’s environment currently faces severe problems with water quality, waste management, and air and soil pollution. The Second Millennium Development Goals Report for Kosovo suggests developing capacities at both central and local levels, building a reliable system for gathering data on pollution and other environmental threats, and creating an effective monitoring system on progress made. Additionally, the report highlights the need for improving access to and increasing the number of connections to the drinking water supply in the area.

Current Situation

Kosovo and the Millennium Development Goals

Concerning the first MDG of eradicating poverty, the Second Millennium Development Goals Report for Kosovo focuses on related sectors that the government should target for improvement. With regards to the housing problem, the Department for Housing and Construction at the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning (MESP) estimated that 26,546 families were living without shelter in 2006. MESP reports found that there were 41 Temporary Collective Centers (TCCs) in Kosovo. However, the living conditions in the TCCs fell below every standard of acceptable housing. One problem that the report addresses is the discrepancies that exist between available data. Therefore, it is difficult for organizations to design programs for improving conditions and policies. Additionally, the report highlights the fact that families with less well-



educated households are the ones most affected by extreme poverty. Thus, in order to attack the root of this problem, the government of Kosovo should focus on improving the educational system with regards to both accessibility and structure.

This ties into the goal concerning improved access to education. The number of students that complete grades 9 through 12 has gone down since 2003. One fact that the Cabinet should consider is disparities in ethnicity. In 2004/5, the RAE minority recorded an enrollment rate that was 20 percent lower than that of K-Albanians and K-Serbs. This may be because the RAE does not have its mother tongue as a language of instruction. K-Serbs also currently do not have an education system that parallels that of the K-Albanians. Another issue that the Cabinet should address is the low level of participation of residents living in rural areas, since it is harder for them to get to school. The lack of transportation has been identified as a main reason for students to drop out of school. An additional challenge that the Cabinet should consider is that there is no reliable method for tracking indicators of educational outcomes nationwide. There are a few possible steps that can be taken to improve the educational system; the organization and conducting of adult literacy programs, the development of a means by which to track educational progress at a national level, and the creation of a strategy to integrate the Serbian and RAE minorities into the education system are all worthy goals.

Finally, the Cabinet should consider the current situation with regards to environmental sustainability. Various organizations have reported high levels of pollution in both the air and water in Kosovo. One problem that environmental assessment reports identify is a general low level of awareness of the general public on the levels of pollution and how to address these problems. This may be due to the general lack of a pollution monitoring system that leads to many uncertainties in data. Based on a report submitted by a Technical Working Group for preparing the Water Sector Strategy (KDSP), the water supply in Kosovo suffers from a level of losses in the network that fails to meet acceptable norms. In addition to an overall lack of monitoring, there is also a lack of enforcement mechanisms for adhering to environmental standards. The government should consider ways to extend the water supply and sewage network across the country, including the construction of new networks and the repair and maintenance of existing ones.





Serbian Minority in Kosovo

At the time of this writing, Kosovo is home to over 100,000 Serbs. These Serbs are mostly geographically divided from the Albanians in Kosovo. The International Crisis Group (ICG) submitted a report in May 2009 that outlined the current situation. According to the report, the Serbian government is still opposed to having the Serbian population in Kosovo integrate with other ethnic groups, and the Serbian government sees isolation of Serbs from Kosovar institutions as a key to undermining Kosovo's independence. In order to promote this isolation, the Serbian

government has granted funding to Kosovar Serbs through various means, including salary supplements and appeals to the Russian government for humanitarian aid packages. The Government of Kosovo proposed a decentralization strategy as a way to integrate Serbs in Kosovo. This strategy, outlined in the Ahtisaari Plan, suggests the creation of Serb-majority municipalities. Belgrade could still provide support to the Serbs in Kosovo, but this should be transparent and coordinated with the Kosovar authorities. One problem decentralization faces is the Serbs' reluctance to take part in a process that they fear will be seen as acknowledging Kosovo's independence. To this end, the ICG report suggested that the Government of Kosovo work towards demonstrating the benefits of decentralization to Serbs through activities such as investment projects and active outreach campaigns.

Current Projects

There are currently a few ongoing projects in Kosovo that are aimed at improving



OXFAM worker installs a water supply system at Stankovac; *Photo taken by HJ Davies.*
<http://downloads.unmultimedia.org/photo/medium/763/76370.jpg>



water access and water quality in Kosovo. International Relief and Development (IRD) recently launched the Small Infrastructure for Water and Sanitation (SIWS) program to provide over 85,000 residents in four Kosovar municipalities with clean drinking water and sanitation by installing, rehabilitating, expanding, and upgrading systems that deliver them. Water For Life also started a project in November 2008 in the Skanderaj Province of Kosovo, training villagers to manage, maintain, and repair their own water resources and encouraging them to train residents of other provinces in the same skills. Finally, the British aid agency OXFAM has implemented rural water system projects that supply sixteen villages with water and constructed sanitation systems in five other villages.

In response to the recent floods, the Red Cross has provided immediate response efforts to those in affected areas. Many of the flooded urban areas are not accustomed to dealing with such problems and face problems with their sewage systems overflowing and an increase in shortages of water. The Red Cross distributed basic humanitarian aid packages to 714 families over a four-month period. These packages included blankets, food parcels, hygiene kits, and drinking water. However, the capacity of the project was limited due to lack of funding, and so it was only able to target the families who were determined to be the “most vulnerable.”

Police assist local people to evacuate them from their flooded houses in Pristina. www.kohavision.net



The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) branch in Kosovo has started various education programs to increase access to education. During the years following the war, UNICEF conducted an assessment after the war to examine the condition of school infrastructure in the nation. UNICEF then launched a six-year campaign to rehabilitate 116 schools and rebuild 22 others. The campaign helped retrain teachers and reform education policy. The organization has also worked to replace lectures with interactive discussion and organize parent-teacher associations to encourage community participation. In terms of ethnic disparities, most Serbian schoolchildren attend classes in private homes or in Belgrade that are paid for by the Serbian government, while



Albanian children attend Kosovar state-run schools. UNICEF identified the challenge of creating multiethnic schools, considering language barriers and different residential patterns. Many Serbs live in enclaves and lack the freedom to travel safely; although many years have passed since the war ended, sporadic waves of violence and casual threats still traumatize many schoolchildren.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, the Food and Agricultural Organization, and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development launched the Education for Rural People strategy in June 2004. The strategy was based on a three-stage capacity building framework. The planning stage formed a Project Team, a Strategy Formulation Team, and Local Task Teams. These three sets of teams developed a working outline for the implementation of the project and then assembled for a workshop to discuss issues affecting education and training in rural Kosovo. The needs assessment stage then looked at rural households, rural peoples' access to education, the retention and quality of education, and the education and training needs of rural people. The teams conducted subsequent review workshops to discuss the main findings. Finally, the strategy development stage worked off the findings found in the second stage and divided primary objectives for the program into five main intervention programs:

1. Improve management and leadership in basic education and increase community participation in school affairs;
2. Improve teaching, and contextualize the curriculum in rural primary schools so that education is adapted to the learning needs of children in rural areas;
3. Provide adequate teaching materials, books and equipment to rural primary schools;
4. Support community learning and awareness in rural areas;
5. Reorient secondary vocational education towards meeting the learning needs of rural communities.

Skat, a resource center and consulting company, has helped fund and oversee various humanitarian aid projects in Kosovo. Most recently, Skat has focused on the GTZ water project and the Caritas Switzerland slums project. The main objective of the GTZ Water Project in Kosovo was to strengthen the capacity of one of



A Slum in Gjakova, Kosovo.
<http://www.skat.ch/activities/prarticle.2005-09-20.1264594682/skatactivity.2009-04-17.2370742958/image1>



the regional water utilities through providing training in areas such as maintenance, asset evaluation, and customer services. Skat evaluated the project and stresses the need for a gradual transition in order to improve the project's sustainability. Skat also provided support missions to Caritas Switzerland to improve housing conditions in slums. These missions included an examination of the current situation and a review of potential for improvement. The organization then presented short-term and long-term options for improvement.

Minister Positions

Below are some descriptions of areas that specific ministries have been involved with over the past few years.

Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare

The Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare implemented programs that provided social assistance and basic pension to families. As of December 2005, 45,052 families were receiving social assistance. Both the social assistance and basic pension schemes targeted zero- and low-income families. The Second Millennium Development Goals Report for Kosovo suggests that given the budget restrictions, money for social welfare should be allocated to the extremely poor. When allocating this money, the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare should consider the creation of a monitoring mechanism to oversee transfers of funds. The ministry may also want to consider a database of sorts that gives information on income levels of families in certain regions.

Ministry of Education, Science and Technology

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) recently identified twelve vocational fields and prepared curricula in order to combat the decreasing percentage of people who are enrolled in vocational education programs. However, a few challenges that current vocational education programs face are weak links with the labor market, low level of inclusion of adults, and lack of partnerships with the private sector to receive funding. MEST is also working with UNICEF to launch local initiatives to promote women's literacy and modernize the school system through developing curricula for primary and secondary schools. In addition, MEST should also focus on developing education for different ethnic groups residing in the nation. They could do this



through organizing various multiethnic events or conflict resolution workshops to help them regain a sense of normalcy after the war.

Ministry of Energy and Mining and Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Rural Development

Air pollution is a direct consequence of many emissions from mining, agricultural, and transportation mechanisms. Specifically, thermo-power plants emit gases such as nitrogen and sulfur dioxide that exceed the maximum limits established by the European Union. Many residents in Kosovo have old vehicles that use low-quality fuel. Agriculture contributes to air pollution by burning biomass. These ministries may consider focusing on ways to lower these levels of air pollution through awareness campaigns and researching alternative machinery that serve similar purposes.

Questions to Consider

1. What steps can the Government of Kosovo take in order to help integrate the Serbian minority into Kosovo's institutions without making them feel alienated from Serbia? Additionally, how can this be done while still appeasing the Serbian government?
2. If the Government of Kosovo continues to allow the Serbian Government to supply aid to the Serbian minority, how can it reduce the current high levels of corruption (and, in turn, increase transparency)?
3. Given the Government of Kosovo's limited budget, what specific issues should be prioritized over others in order to make the most progress to increase the country's self-sustainability?
4. How can the Government of Kosovo monitor the progress of any project (new or already existing) and what standards should it use to deem a project "ineffective"?
5. What can the Government of Kosovo do to address the problem of discrepant and limited data with regards to current housing conditions in Kosovo?
6. What incentives can the Government of Kosovo provide to students in order to decrease the dropout rates in schools, particularly at the primary-to-secondary transition?
7. How can the Government of Kosovo improve access to education for children who currently reside in rural areas?



8. How can the Government of Kosovo increase public awareness of the levels of pollution and ways to reduce them?

Recommended Sources

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