

CASS Connects to Kosovo¹

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Five years ago I retired. We had no plans set for the future. I knew that I'd like to do something internationally but had no clue or connections that would bring this dream to fruition. Then one evening in the fall of 2000, Dr. Bill Dickson, retired Deputy Chief Superintendent for CBE², called. Our lives took an unexpected turn. A memorable adventure began.

"I am calling on behalf of Dean Annette LaGrange. How would you like to go to Kosovo," chuckled Bill?

"Sure," I said, "what's up? "

"The University of Calgary's Faculty of Education is submitting a bid along with the Universal Management Group of Montreal to do a three year teacher education project in Kosovo," replied Bill. We wondered if you'd like to be the Project Director."

I thought to myself, "Well, this is a safe bet; it will never happen because I have no international experience." In truth, I told this to Bill but he said, "No, that's OK; we'd like to submit your name." I thought this could be the chance to open doors that would lead to opportunities in exotic places like the Caribbean or South East Asia. CIDA (the Canadian International Development Agency) would give us a decision by the end of November or certainly before Christmas. I filled in the obligatory forms and waited to hear. Typical of CIDA, the U. of C. did not receive a decision before Christmas. My safe bet was won.

Imagine the jolt when on a trip to central Alberta in mid January 2001 researching the operations of community centres I got an urgent message from my wife, Lynn. Please call home. When I am away from home, Lynn never calls unless a disaster has struck the family. You can imagine what was going through my mind. "David, Dr. Margaret Hunsberger, Associate Dean in the Faculty of Education, called. Margaret asked me, if I was sitting down. 'If you aren't you had better,' said Margaret to Lynn. 'We have won the contract.'" When Lynn relayed this to me, I was in shock. Now what do I do?

Filled with reservations and doubt, recognizing that the safe bet had been lost, I did the honourable thing. I kept my word and two weeks later found myself on a series of planes to Kosovo.

The Project and Its Challenges

It's early February 2001. I have read hundreds of pages of background materials on Kosovo. My briefcase is filled with hundreds more to read on the plane(s). I hopscotch across Canada and meet Dr. Gary Anderson, (hereafter referred to as Gary) a founding partner in Universal and the Executive Director for this Project. I get off the plane from

¹ This article was originally written for publication in CASS Connection, a professional journal for Alberta Canada's senior educational administrators. The author is a Past President of CASS and the former Project Director of KEDP.

² CBE stands for the Calgary Board of Education, the largest public school district in Alberta.

Calgary, wait two hours and get on a plane to Zurich Switzerland. Eight and one-half hours later we land there at 06:00 and wait six hours for our next flight. I am dying; at least, that's how I feel. The next leg is the flight to Skopje Macedonia. We are met by the leader of the Canadian Cooperation Office who is there to drive us in a dirty green SUV to Pristina. We drive the 100 kilometres, a two plus something hour journey, in those days. I have been awake for over 32 hours.

Pristina is where we will spend the next couple of weeks trying to figure out exactly what we should do with this Project.

My first impressions of Kosovo were not positive. The roads were bad, drivers were dangerous, there was rubbish everywhere mainly in the form of translucent grocery bags. From the window of a somewhat modern hotel in Pristina, I looked across the street to a half finished apartment building constructed of cement and bricks. The bricks they use are flimsy by Canadian standards. On many buildings, including the one I was looking at, there is no insulation. You could feel the wind blowing through the cracks in the wall. The TVs were on; perhaps for heat. Every apartment seemed to have a satellite dish attached to it. It was well below zero. Everybody wore black. We had been told that Kosovo was not very safe. Having been up 32 hours or more, my discomfort turned to fear. Had I known that the bus depot was a mere 500 metres away I would have been on the first bus home!

The United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) was acting as the government for Kosovo in 2001. Each department of government was supposedly administered in partnership between international administrators and local Kosovars. All of the latter were ex-politicians. In reality, the Department of Education was run by the Internationals. Dr. Michael Daxner was the international head. 'Daxner,' as everyone called him, is a brilliant man whose idiosyncrasies are a wonder to behold. In the first Monday Morning Meeting we attended, he verbally eviscerated the Kosovar Deputy Head of Education, Mr. Rexhep Osmani, for politically motivated malfeasance. I have forgotten the precise incident but I do remember that Mr. Osmani had made a commitment on behalf of the Department he had no authority to make and his decision had been motivated by partisan political interests. Osmani was the future minister of Education. There was no love lost between Daxner and Osmani. Incidents like this led to unintended consequences. 'The locals' as Kosovars are called by the Internationals, resented this type of treatment even if they disagreed with the action of their peer. The result of Daxner's treatment of 'the locals' was an outward attitude towards 'his' reform program of passive acceptance at best, antipathy at worst. From a Kosovar Albanian perspective, this was domination again with a different face. Interestingly, because a significant portion of the population had lived in Western Europe, there was demand that Kosovo's education system improve to meet European standards. Contradictions abound in Kosovo.

Daxner was the first international head of education willing to address the educational needs of Kosovo. He assessed the system well and drafted a massive, comprehensive reform program. The reform was to take place in a culture of transition from Yugoslavian socialist autocracy to a western democracy. The system was to shift from being ethnically exclusive to ethnically inclusive. The administrative structure was to be totally re-vamped in an environment where there was limited administrative capacity. Very few Albanian Kosovars had ever had management experience. Special Education was to be

developed and special needs children were to be introduced into the regular classroom. The philosophy of 'defectology' and the social shame associated with it was to be abandoned. The whole system for developing curriculum was to be reconstructed consistent with the best of western practice and all curricula was to be revised. Teacher education was to be totally re-organized from pre-service to in-service. Teachers needed the skills to move from a recall-information based system to one oriented to conceptualizing and problem solving similar to Western Europe or Canada. Our challenge was to re-organize and re-construct teacher education in circumstances where the quality was extra-ordinarily low. Its causes were egregious fragmentation. Its outstanding undesirable qualities included 27 different bodies in the business of teacher education with no coherence amongst the programs, a lack of concern for the quality of programs, no research in education, dated educational thinking, poor teaching at the university level and a complete disconnect from the school system teacher education was supposed to serve.

Kosovo is a tiny country (~10,000+ sq. km.) of approximately 2.0 million people. It is in a mountainous section of the former Yugoslavia with two broad valleys that run down its interior from north to south. While its main cities house 40% of the population, Kosovo is basically rural. It experienced the industrial revolution in the 1970s. It is bordered on the south by FYROM³ (Macedonia), on the west by Albania, on the northwest by the Montenegro portion of the new Republic of Serbia & Montenegro and on the northeast and east by Serbia.

The ethnicity of Kosovar population is 90% Albanian, 5 - 6% Serbian, 2-3% Bosnian, 1-2% Gypsies (a politically incorrect term that is coming back into acceptable use). The Gypsies divide themselves into Roma, Ashkileja and Egyptian; there is also a small population of Turks and Goranis. All of these groups claim deep roots in Kosovo.

In the early 1990s the Serbs dominated the government of Yugoslavia. They feared a Kosovar Albanian movement that divided itself along two lines of aspiration. A small group led by some university students and rural militia leaders agitated for independence. There were demonstrations and the killing of policemen, usually of Serb ethnicity. The larger group, quietly supported by the majority of the population, lobbied for republic status within Yugoslavia. They wanted the same constitutional rights as enjoyed by Serbia, Croatia, Slovenija, Bosnia, Macedonia and Montenegro. The Serb government would not consent.

Slobodan Milosevic along with 1,000,000 Serbs came to a site just outside Pristina in 1989 to celebrate the loss of a major battle in **1389** and declared that Kosovo would always be Serbian. When the war broke out with Croatia and Bosnia in 1992 many Kosovo Albanians refused the draft. Those who joined the Army were perceived as untrustworthy in battle. Serbia's grip on Kosovo tightened. Education was suddenly delivered in Serbian only. Teachers not fluent in Serb were expelled from the system whereupon the Albanian population created the 'parallel system.' Its creation led to the expulsion of all Albanian teachers from the school system. Parents withdrew their children from schools and sent them to the parallel system. Lessons were conducted in

³ FYROM stands for the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Greece claims ownership of the name Macedonia and managed through international law to force Macedonia to call itself other than by the name to which it wishes to be referred.

living rooms, basements, garages by anyone who volunteered to teach. If the Serb police were seen visiting the neighbourhood, the children slipped out of the home and headed for a different safe haven for their lessons. That's how education was conducted for the majority of the decade.

In late 1998 after losing wars in Bosnia and Croatia, Serbia turned its attention to Kosovo. It decided that military repression and ethnic cleansing were the answers to this troublesome territory. In early 1999 about 400,000 Albanians were forced out of their homes and made to leave the country. Nearly 1500 Kosovo Albanians were killed by the paramilitaries and police. The rural areas were devastated. There was not a house within sight of a major road that was left standing. Middle-sized cities like Prizren, a true multi-ethnic community, were attacked; Mitrovica and Peja were demolished. NATO, led by the United States, intervened. The Serb forces and paramilitary were bombed until they retreated behind Serb borders leaving sixty thousand Serbs in enclaves within Kosovo.

Two years after the retreat of the Serbs, Canada was asked to make a major contribution to creating an ethnically and socially inclusive education system that could attain European standards.

CIDA engaged two retired professors of education to study the system and report to CIDA recommendations for what our Project should accomplish. This occurred coincidentally with our first planning visit to Kosovo. Gary, with his restless energy and nimble mind, led the creation of the Project's framework. In that first stay in Kosovo we would visit schools, professors, internationals and those who had an interest in educational reform and teacher education in particular. After two days we got into a ritual. We would arrive back at the office from our separate meetings, debrief and Gary would begin writing furiously on chart paper that we pasted to the walls. "There, we have it!" he declared at the end of each day. Being a reticent innocent, I would quietly raise a question or suggest doubt but the chart paper remained on the walls until the next morning. Then, more quickly than they had gone up, Gary tore them down. "I have been thinking," he would say and another day of research would begin.

Eventually, it was determined that we should coordinate, develop, and deliver in-service training and administrative capacity building to Kosovo. We should work with the higher education sector and consolidate all Teacher Training into a single high quality Faculty of Education within the University of Pristina. And, we should help the forthcoming Kosovar government learn to use the policy process as a means to guide and govern teacher education. Incorporated into these three pillars was CIDA's social; development agenda that mandates attention to gender, the inclusion of youth and ethnic equality.

Our initial plan was set by late March. CIDA had yet to award the contract for delivery of the program. I thought we had the Project; we only had the first small initial stage. Suddenly in late May I received a call. Verbal assurances have been given: U. of C. and Universalia will get the contract for the Project. "How soon can you be on a plane to Kosovo," I was asked?

I arrived in Kosovo May 28, 2001. All we had was the name of the Project – the Kosovo Educator Development Project (KEDP). We had a young German scholar and aid worker who said she would help us get the Project up and running. Dr. Anette Wenderoth (Anette) had done short term contract work with the Department of Education. She knew all the important people and had established contacts across Kosovo. When I arrived

there was no infra-structure in place. We contracted a young Canadian aid worker who found office space for us in a house and he and our first Kosovar employee set up the office within five weeks.

Meanwhile, Dr. Daxner wanted in-service programming right away. We had to offer programs in July of 2001. Why? There are thousands of so-called 'unqualified' teachers. Normal development practice says you go out into the system; try to understand where it is before you prescribe interventions. There wasn't time. We want quality programs within five to six weeks I was told.

Anette and I immediately contacted Dean LaGrange and Associate Dean Hunsberger. We need three programs to offer this summer: Learner Centred Instruction (LCI), Basic Administration (Leadership) and English as a Second Language (ESL). Teams were assembled who developed programs and materials by mid-June. The materials were translated and ready for use by the first week of July. It was amazing.

In early July 34 Canadians descended upon Kosovo. Our trainers were housed in family dwellings or in hotels. The latter seemed to cater to weddings every other night. There was no time for a cultural adjustment; they offered KEDP's programs to Kosovar educators within days of their arrival.

The conditions for program delivery were basic: dusty school classrooms with decrepit pupil desks. The air is highly polluted because of the coal fired generating plant that emits effluent which covers the skies of Kosovo. The heat was intense. Kosovars don't like to have open windows; they fear drafts. Canadians were sweating to death. Power and access to water were erratic. And, none of the Kosovars had chosen to be in the workshops; someone had directed them to be there. In that first summer, like all international agencies, we paid participants to attend. Every single workshop was upset for the first few days because the participants wanted their money. Workshops were disrupted until the money issue was settled.

Within the first day we discovered three cultural characteristics that we assumed are a product of living in an autocratic society. Kosovars could not answer open-ended questions. We didn't realize how much we use this form of questioning in our teaching. Secondly, they didn't like to make mistakes and thirdly, differences of opinion about whether an answer is right or wrong led to voluble, and what seemed to us, aggressive arguments. Our trainers, Canadian teachers, administrators and professors adjusted very quickly. They dealt with the first problem very quickly and effectively. Within three to four days they had Kosovars responding to open ended questions. Secondly, by having the Kosovars undertake activities to which there were multiple correct answers; they broke down the notion of 'one right answer.' They also encouraged debate aimed at examining issues from multiple perspectives. The tone of the workshops changed. A small cultural step was made of moving Kosovo from autocracy to democracy.

By the first week in August we had trained about 1200 teachers in LCI, nearly 300 administrators in Leadership and 150 to 200 people in ESL. Workshop evaluations were highly complimentary. Canadians were liked and respected. KEDP was off to a good start.

During the subsequent ten months, retired CBE Associate Superintendent Louise Partridge and a few other colleagues worked with 90 of the best participants in LCI to develop them as trainers. All the materials were re-vamped and improved. The quality of

translated materials was not of a consistently high standard. This was exacerbated by the fact that opinion varies as to what is 'correct' Albanian. At the centre of the problem is a language that does not adapt as quickly as English to changes in conceptual use. We learned that meaning and consequent understanding were lost when translations or interpretations were literal. Our interpreters and translators needed to understand the concepts buried in the English language before they could make sense of them with the Kosovars. This was true with all languages in Kosovo. We moved on two fronts. Louise and her team worked with 90 of the best teacher-students from around Kosovo hoping to develop them into trainers. Meanwhile the same occurred with Leadership. By the summer of 2002 we had 32 LCI trainers ready to go and a similar number of Leadership trainers. We brought over a number of the Canadian trainers from the previous summer to act as coaches. The Kosovars did amazingly well. As two of our Canadian coaches said, "I think some of these Kosovars are being more effective as trainers than some of us were last year." This was high praise. Based on the nature of relationships we witnessed in 2001, we were surprised that the overall tone of the classes was positive and respectful. Challenges were mainly intellectual rather than personal. This we took as another small step towards democratization.

Dr. Tim Goddard of U. of C. our Leadership Program Coordinator has the courage to dream big. With the success of the summer program, Tim brought an idea to our fall 2001 planning meeting. "Let's have an international leadership conference," he said. And, so we did. Tim is extraordinarily well connected in Leadership circles in Europe. In February 2002 Tim persuaded, international scholars from Sweden, Denmark and Slovenija to be keynote speakers at the First Annual Leadership Conference in Kosovo. The concept of the Conference has continued. It is organized by Kosovars and now features mainly Kosovar educational leaders.

Another major initiative of KEDP was the establishment of the Summer Institute. CBE teacher Helen Siemens, our first In-service Coordinator, with Anette and Osman Buleshkaj, now my successor as Project Director, are credited with this. For the summer of 2002, we organized a cooperative effort amongst the 13 or 14 donors active in Kosovo to provide workshop programs across the country. This was so successful, that the Summer Institute has become a tradition. As of July 2005, over 15,000 teachers and administrators have participated in at least one substantive professional learning program. Leadership for the Summer Institute now rests with the Ministry of Education as does most of the funding. The number of donors is reduced to two or three. In-service programming in Kosovo has reached sustainability.

KEDP's role has phased into support for Kosovar trainers; their capacities have been extended. They are no longer dependent upon the Project. In the past four years over 9,000 teachers have taken LCI and over 900 administrators and teachers have taken Leadership. These programs have been offered every summer and on weekends during the school year.

The greatest challenge we faced has been the development of the Faculty of Education. Quiet, debonair Dr. Laurie Walker, former Dean of Education at the University of Lethbridge left the comfortable confines of academia to support the creation of this new, needed institution. It was acknowledged by most 'locals,' that the quality of teacher education in Kosovo is very poor. The programs were dated as was the professoriate.

Nonetheless, believing that people can change and also believing that they wanted to do things differently we started moving on this aspect of the Project.

Kosovo is a society where relationships are very important. Nothing happens unless the requisite positive relationship is in place. As we were to learn, having a positive relationship is no guarantee that change will occur. Laurie made countless visits to the Higher Pedagogical Schools, as the teacher training institutions were called, meeting professors, visiting classes and understanding how things work. Laurie's assessment was that folk wisdom was correct. Consistent quality was drastically lacking. These institutions operated independently of one another in four different cities. In Gjilan where pre-school education was their specialty, all of the professors were male and most had never set foot inside a pre-school. They were theorists who told the same stories in their lectures year after year.

Under Laurie's guidance, I helped research teacher education in Europe and discovered that the stronger programs, in terms of quality, are mostly in Northern Europe: the Scandinavian countries, the Netherlands and Britain, especially Scotland. We also learned that Slovenija, a former republic in Yugoslavia and now an independent state had worked assiduously since the early eighties to ensure it has a high quality education system. Laurie made contact with Dr. Pavel Zgaga, Dean of Education at the University of Ljubljana. Pavel agreed to lead a workshop on teacher education in late August 2001. He was an excellent resource. He was a former Minister of Education and Permanent Secretary (Deputy Minister) of Education in Slovenija. He became an excellent resource to the entire program but was the perfect spokesperson for this August conference. With the conference's 'success,' we thought the ground had been tilled and was ready for reform. Events overtook us.

In the fall of 2001, UNMIK established a government in Kosovo that had responsibility in eight areas including education. Dr. Daxner was forced to put much of the reform program on hold until there was a transfer to the local government. Elections occurred November 27, 2001. We were advised that it would take several weeks, perhaps up to a month, to establish the local government. It took almost five months. Pre-service was lost in purgatory.

In March 2002 the government was announced. Rexhep Osmani was named Minister of Education Science and Technology (MEST). He put the entire reform program on hold.⁴ The time seemed interminable then, but in retrospect, was quite reasonable. He appeared not to be convinced of the merits of the establishment of the Faculty of Education even though he was highly critical of the quality of the University of Pristina in general and teacher training in particular. When he did decide to move, he told us that KEDP's plans were too ambitious. We were offended but he was right. At Dr. Anderson's suggestion the Minister established a Joint Steering Board (JSB) of representatives from the University and Ministry. I had the privilege of chairing the Board and Laurie was the primary advisor. We shared our knowledge of European systems with this group and with the Board we developed a primary program of two parts: pre-primary (age 3-6) primary (grades 1-4). JSB developed a much better program of pre-service training for Kosovo. We were proud of our work.

⁴ We were to learn that he was not opposed to Daxner's reform program at all. He just wanted to tweak it so that he and Kosovars could claim ownership for it.

If this program was to be in operation by the fall of 2002, we had to have it prepared to University specifications and standards by July. We met the deadline. We soon learned that the University held agendas of its own. One of them was to cater to the current aged professoriate. Something else we discovered was that almost every faculty in the university considers itself in the business of teacher training. They feared the loss of students and the challenge of the new body on the block. While they weren't that interested in primary education, for the aforementioned reasons, the Senate began to undermine the University's newest Faculty. Improving teacher education was not a central goal of this body. The procedures to gain program approval were delayed. Once approved, the timing of advertisements for staff was stalled. By the time all the hoops had been jumped, the Faculty was ready to begin operations in late November 2002. It was supposed to have commenced October 1 like all other Faculties. Despite the late beginning the Faculty of Education commenced, determined to make up for lost time ensuring that within weeks, instead of four months, its students would access the number of lecture hours mandated for its programs.

The 2002-2003 Faculty had 350 students in four centres. It relied on the cooperation of the University and Higher Pedagogical Schools to provide classroom space. Games were played here too. It was an almost daily contest called "Find Your Classroom" for students. Class space was not consistently assigned. Frequently, students and professors would arrive to find the classroom occupied. Many lectures occurred in coffee shops as a result.

In the meantime Dr. Pamela Winsor of the University of Lethbridge joined us and started the practicum program. She developed training materials, trained professors and classroom teachers as well as student teachers. This helped as much as anything to create a momentum for change. Now there were interests besides professors in providing quality teacher education. Despite its challenges, the first year of the program was a significant success. One reason was the Faculty had been able to select the very best educators in Kosovo to deliver its programs.

Success has its own penalties. The Minister lost his restrictive focus which, in hindsight, he should have kept. He wanted us to extend the program to upper elementary – grade 5 – 9. In the winter and spring of 2003-2004 the JSB drafted programs for these grades. We had plenty of time to meet University deadlines or so we thought. We engaged more Kosovar academics in preparing the program. Most did a good job in a timely fashion; a few others did not and we struggled to meet the deadline, which in the end, we did. That did not stop the Senate from playing the same game with this program approval process as it had done the year previous. The program for upper elementary or junior secondary, as we would call it, started a week earlier in November 2003 than the Primary Program had started in 2002. 750 students were recruited. We had to hire some of the very professors previously eschewed because we needed bodies in front of students. This was going to get worse. The Faculty in its second year had a total of 1200 students. By the third year its population was up in the 2,000 student range. It was the largest Faculty in the University and was the only one to operate in four centres. Three major problems loomed.

Laurie Walker had to return to Canada after two years. He had done a fine job. We lost ground.

In the third year Gary directed me to do two sustainability studies. One was for the policy process; the other was of the Faculty of Education. It soon became apparent that I needed help with the latter and the Project hired Ms. Janyne Hodder, then Principal (President) of Bishops University in Quebec to do the study. Janyne's study was excellent. It was made public in Kosovo in March 2004. Unfortunately, the Acting Dean felt powerless to implement most of it. Elections for the office of Dean were forthcoming in the fall. Again the program stalled. From KEDP's perspective the worst of our fears was realized. An opponent to the Faculty of Education was elected Dean even though the vote amongst the professoriate within the Faculty had supported the Acting Dean. Things moved downhill quickly in the fall of 2004. The quality of leadership declined dramatically and there was a threat to return the program to the standard of previous teacher education programs. It was recommended to CIDA that it withhold its major support of this part of the Project until we saw action on Janyne's 2004 report. Janyne, now a Vice-President at McGill and Dr. Roger Slee, Dean of McGill's Faculty of Education, did a second sustainability study this past winter (2005). The University administration brought pressure to bear on Faculty leadership, changes have been made and CIDA's support has been reinstated. Fingers are crossed; the drama continues.

'COATS⁵' is a good idea. Having a cross stakeholder body develop and recommend policies to government has democratic cachet. KEDP decided it would help Kosovo develop a similar body. Democracy, let alone participatory democracy, is understandably a foreign idea within Kosovo. We formed the Teacher Training Review Board (TTRB) under the aegis of the former Department of Education. We held our first meeting in June of 2001. It included teachers, principals and members of the Department both internationals and locals. Our first task was to create an In-service Framework for Kosovo's teachers – a progressive chart designed to meet teachers' needs for modernization.

More interesting than the development of the chart was the dynamics of developing a Board where everyone's views were welcome. In Kosovo the tradition is deference to hierarchy, age, position and males. I was the initial chair of the Board. We experienced a pivotal event in the summer of 2001 that, ironically, caused change in practice to occur.

The Board included teachers, parents, administrators, women educators, one of whom was a Serb administrator, a Turkish administrator and an Ashkileja 'untrained teacher.' It included Rexhep Osmani. Initially Osmani did not like or respect this body. After all, it had been approved by Daxner. In our third meeting, for reasons I do not recall. Osmani unleashed a tirade against suggestions that were coming from the group. The suggestions were inconsistent with his view of how things should operate. He was aggressive and abusive. The other members of the Board cowered. His attack was vociferous. I had to curb an impulse to reach down the table and rip out his vocal chords. My anger was masked and my impulse curbed. Politely, I side-stepped his tirade and encouraged members to continue with their suggestions; however, most acquiesced to Osmani. A few timidly put forward new but minor ideas. Some changed their point of view but without conviction. We came back to the topic at the next meeting. The

⁵ 'COATS' is the Council on Alberta Teaching Standards. It recommends policies on teacher development and standards of professional practice to the Ministry of Education for the Government of Alberta.

members began to realize that their views were valued. Rexhep Osmani learned that he could not bully Canadians and that Canadians did not return his vitriol in kind. Oddly, it was the beginning of a positive relationship that served KEDP well. As Minister, Osmani gave strong support to the work of TTRB.

The first major policy TTRB worked on was Standards for Professional Practice. Alberta's KSAs was the first model we looked at. We researched similar statements from European, Australian and North American jurisdictions. We consulted teachers widely as we moved through the drafting process. This was a first for Kosovo. Ten months later we had a policy worthy of recommendation to government. It is the pivotal policy to all teacher education and development. It is also another step in democratization.

We took study tours to Slovenija and Western Canada to learn how teacher education is governed and managed. Within a year TTRB was a well functioning body

Slovenija has the most comprehensive high quality teacher education in-service program anywhere. It also has an incentive-reward based teacher licensing system that has teachers increasing their pay as they meet the requirements of the in-service and licensing policies. We took lessons from that and combined them with the Alberta practice of rewarding teachers for their years of university training in teacher education. Kosovo has developed a unique licensing system that combines these elements. Both the Standards of Professional Practice and the Teacher and Administrator Licensing policy now have legal status within Kosovo.

The Board has been operating for four years. Its membership has changed but its ability to function effectively has not diminished. This and the Faculty of Education Project became cornerstones in KEDP's relationship with Minister Osmani. After four and one-half years we can say that some of the seeds we planted have born crops and will do so in the future. Other areas continue to need more nurturing.

Incorporating youth in our project has been another real success. The major one is the establishment of the Student Association for Professional Development (SAPD). We didn't want to mix it up with the Student Union which is a politically partisan body in the University. One of the aims of the organization was to cultivate the notion of continuous learning - hence its name. It was designed to promote activities on each of its campuses and at least annually to hold a student teacher conference for all campuses. The first one was held in the spring of 2004. In 2005, with the support and leadership of KEDP, an international conference was held that included student teachers from most of the former republics of Yugoslavia including Serbia. It was an enormous success. Students from Serbia and Kosovo interacted and discovered that each other do not grow horns.

With respect to minorities, we have worked with them all. The Serb community because of Serbian and Kosovar politics has been the most frustrating. We have had Canadian trainers on the plane to Kosovo for summer workshops when the Serbs would decide we want these in August not July as arranged and agreed to. As I left Kosovo in June 2005, this experience was being repeated. We had arranged for Training of Trainers for the Serb community. I do not know if it is going to happen but Gavin Peat of U. of C. is there now to do the work.

A gender strategy has been developed and gender training within the Ministry has begun. It has been a long struggle but progress is being made.

Lynn, my wife, joined me in August 2001 and lived in Pristina for two years. She endured the long hours of work the Project demanded. She learned to cook full meals with one pot. Electrical power was not reliable in those days. We bought a single propane burner and on more than one occasion when we were hosting travelling Canadians or colleagues, internationals or locals for dinner, Lynn did her one burner trick. Unlike some foreign missions, there is not a lot to do in Kosovo.

In February of 2002 we saw a sign for a dance party raising funds to help Gypsy families. We decided to attend. The core group were Latinos from Spain and South America and Europeans who had a Salsa dancing club. We were invited to join. We gained friends from around the world and young people from Kosovo who loved the energetic rhythms. It didn't matter if the power went off. The dance club operated in the UNMIK building. It has a giant generator so if the power goes off; it is an inconvenience of mere seconds.

In our second year in Kosovo, Lynn worked at the UN Gym first as an employee then as a volunteer. She trained the locals in how to manage and host the gyms. Our friendship circle widened again. We began having lawyers and judges over for dinner telling us their stories of attempting to prosecute criminals through a criminal justice system that was a patchwork of new and old laws from old and new emerging systems. Their stories made us realize what innocents we are.

One is reasonably safe in Kosovo; on most days, as safe as one would be there. Lynn had her pocket picked one day right in front of our apartment. It was fortunate for the perpetrator that Lynn didn't discover it immediately because when she did she went running out into the laneway we call our street looking for the miscreant! There is danger. It rears its head erratically. One has to be watchful at all times.

Personally, I was only worried once by the violence of March 2004. It erupted without warning. Our Serb employee was returning from work in the remote regions of south-western Kosovo. She and an Albanian colleague seemed to precede the violence that skipped across Kosovo March 17 as they made their way back to Pristina. Roads were cordoned off. We lost contact with them. Their phones lost power. They arrived at the office just after 8:00 PM. I hid our female colleague in our apartment building until she could be safely whisked into Serbia.

David Young, another CASS Life Member, was lured to Kosovo to act as an advisor to the Minister. Lynn acted as his real estate agent and helped him find a beautiful new apartment. For the first several months of his stay he had little to do. It was really strange, for me, rushing from one meeting to another in Kosovo to find our former workaholic colleague wandering down Mother Theresa Street⁶ with a quiet relaxed smile on his face. Cledwyn Hadyn-Jones another CASS member was also in Kosovo as a trainer for Bosniak teachers in the summer of 2002. We have enjoyed trying to make their stays pleasurable.

One can't make generalizations from one experience. In concluding this article I'll try to avoid the clichés one normally hears from people like me telling you how wonderful the

⁶ Though she was born and lived in Skopje, Macedonia, Mother Theresa's parents were Kosovar Albanians.

people were etc., etc. (They were and they are!) But I have learned a lot and gained a lot.

The first thing I learned from other internationals is that Canada's education system is one of the most respected in the world.

Secondly, I have discovered that when deprived people thirst for knowledge and are provided the opportunity to gain it, they apply it. In the summer of 2002 we no longer paid people to come to in-service programs. We did subsidize travel if they lived beyond a certain distance from the place where a program was offered. Teachers came anyway and we didn't have fights over money. More importantly, when we visited schools we saw teachers applying what they had been taught. Even though the conditions for education are poor by Canadian standards, most teachers, even though they hold down two or more jobs, want to serve their pupils well.

Thirdly, I have been reminded that discrimination inhibits development. Most internationals told me how lazy and useless Kosovars are. In my experience this is not true. The Kosovar staff of KEDP is a case in point. We would not have been successful without their dedication, their willingness to match our long hours, their desire to learn and understand and their commitment to the project's success. A story of one of our employees exemplifies their dedication and capacity to learn and succeed.

Sherif Zeqiri (pronounced Zu-cheer-ie) is a young man whom we hired as a driver in 2001. He steadfastly maintained that he had had no ambition to do more. One day in August 2001 we were stuck for interpreters. Even with his limited education (and knowledge of five languages), he agreed to help us out. He was so good that he became an interpreter, then a translator (of written documents) and then a program assistant to Tim, an academic who became his mentor and friend. Sherif was the first Kosovar to ask questions making us explain what our jargon meant. He was able to translate meaning instead of just words. He has won the confidence of Kosovar administrators who look to him for advice, a man 15 to 25 years their junior with no post secondary education. Because of the quality of his contribution to the international student teacher conference held in April 2005, he was asked to represent Kosovo in an Education for Democracy Conference held in late June 2005 in Sarajevo, Bosnia. He travelled to Belgrade on the first leg of his journey to Bosnia. Others have impressed similarly.

Finally I learned that change happens. Dr. Steven Murgatroyd, Athabasca University's TQM⁷ guru, may have been right; one cannot cross a chasm in two jumps. But he was wrong; one doesn't jump a wide chasm in a single leap, either. One needs to scramble down the old slope and explore one's way to the top of the other. With persistence, it is eventually attained.

My involvement in Kosovo should end around Christmas 2005⁸. By then we will have completed the Senior Leadership Development Program, a two year program for senior ministry personnel that was the product of one of the sustainability studies. Sustainability, we learned, rests on developing people at all levels of the education system.

⁷ TQM stands for Total Quality Management, a high profile management theory of the late 80's and 90's.

⁸ The project was extended for a further three years in 2004.

Our project effectively ends in December 2006. Canada will have made a major contribution to Kosovo's teacher education system. In fact, we have influenced the entire system through our work with teachers, administrators and the Ministry. It has been a privilege to be part of this.