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Kosovo's Hope: Stories of Renewal and Despair in an Independent Nation

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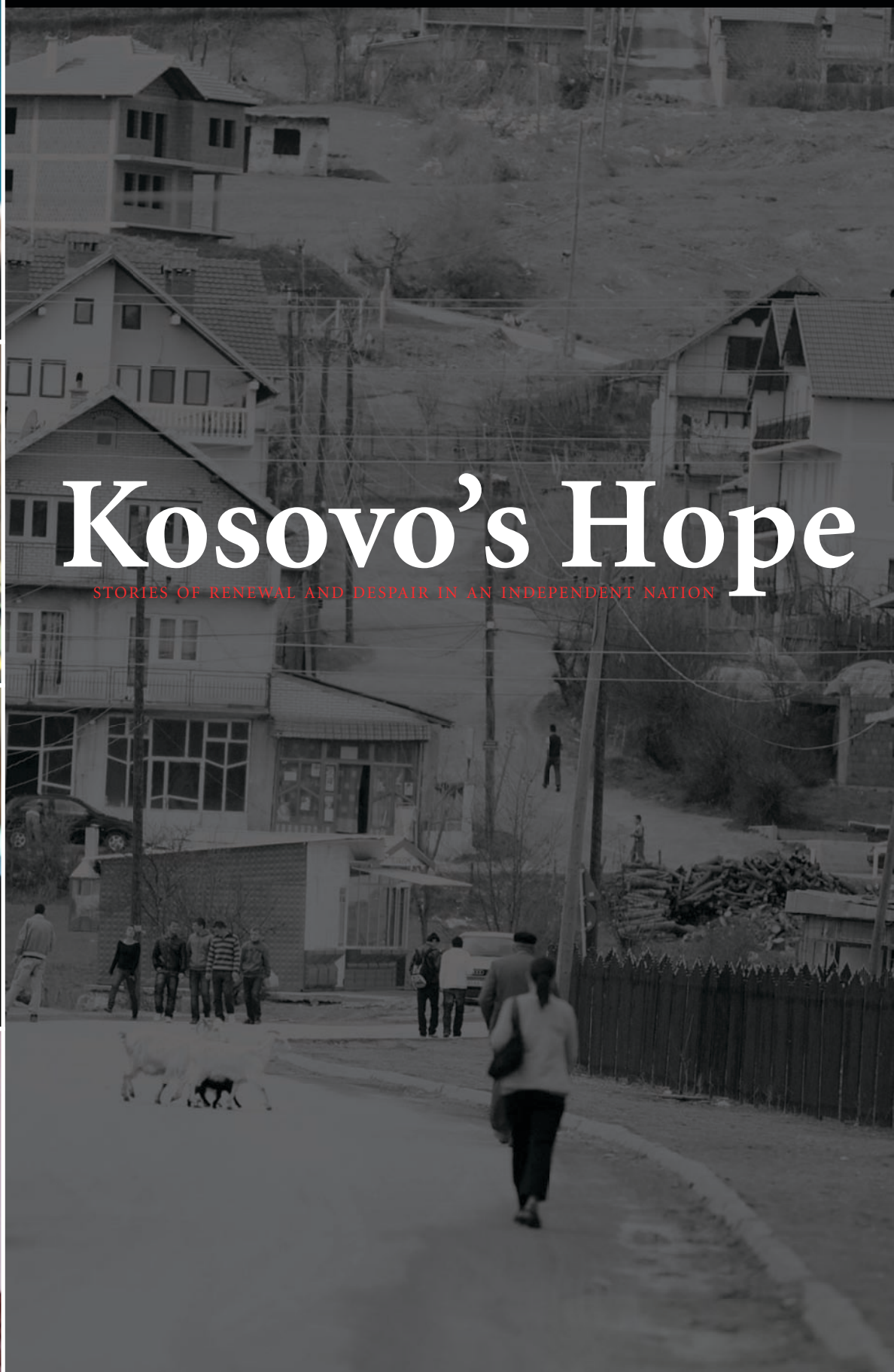
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Kosovo's Hope

STORIES OF RENEWAL AND DESPAIR IN AN INDEPENDENT NATION



THIS SHACK, part of the housing complex for University of Pristina food service employees, sits in front of the National Library, one of Pristina's nicest buildings. Photo by Karen Schmidt



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A SHOP OWNER shoos away one of the local puppies in central Pristina while getting ready for his daily sale of fruits and vegetables. Despite an economy that has over 40 percent unemployment, the dogs wandering Pristina's streets seemed healthy and well-fed. Photo by Bruce Thorson

The aircraft's wheels screeched as we touched down at the Lincoln airport after a long, interesting journey from half a world away. It was Sunday, March 23, 2008, and we had been traveling for almost 30 hours. We were back home after spending eight days in the newly independent state of Kosovo.

Our group totaled nine—two University of Nebraska-Lincoln faculty members and seven College of Journalism and Mass Communications journalism students—five photojournalists, one reporter and one videographer. A financial gift from Howard Buffett, Joel Sartore and Tom Mangelsen enabled the college to send us there. Armed with still and video cameras, audio recorders and notepads, we traveled to Kosovo to document the lives of its people.

Kosovo is a land of contrasts and conflicts. A stunningly beautiful country, with its warm summers, cold and snowy winters and high mountain landscapes, it has a per capita income of less than \$1,800 per year, an unemployment rate that exceeds 40 percent and an economy that is the most under-developed in Europe. The people of Kosovo, composed of about 90 percent Albanian and more than 5 percent Serbian, are scarred by the horrific genocidal massacres of a war from Serbia in 1998 and 1999. Since June 10, 1999, the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo has been the peacekeeping force. The country declared independence from Serbia on February 17, 2008.

There, at the Lincoln airport, as we each collected our bags from the luggage carousel, our "Kosovo family" (we had lived, dined, laughed and made new friends together) divided and left.

Clay Lomneth, one of the college's student photojournalists, needed a ride back to his dorm, and I told him I'd give him a lift. As we slowly strolled the short distance from the airport terminal to the parking area, walking mostly in silence, camera straps still tugging on our necks and shoulders, our minds grappled with all we had seen, smelled and felt in a country half a world away. Suddenly, being back in Lincoln made the trip feel as if it had all been a dream.

Lomneth, a lanky young man whom we nicknamed "Cat Man Clay" because he moved like a cat while taking photographs, slid quietly into the passenger seat of

my '99 Chevy Suburban. After spending eight days in Kosovo, crammed into cars the size of shoeboxes, the Suburban's interior seemed cavernous.

The car was silent except for the drone of the tires on the road that led us back toward Lincoln's all-familiar landscape. I interrupted the silence when I asked Clay how it felt to be back. He paused, stumbling over phrases to explain his feelings.

I asked him if he was having difficulty articulating his experience because he was back in a place where people have so much after being in place where people have so little. He nodded, saying that was his feeling exactly. "I hope that feeling never goes away," he said, "that I keep it with me all the time."

Before we departed from Lincoln, we spent what seemed like an eternity studying Kosovo. We began meeting once a week as a class in January 2008, and each week, until our March 14 departure, we researched Kosovo's history and current events. We tried to find and build contacts who would lead us to good subjects and even better stories. We brainstormed potential story ideas. We used all sources at our disposal—the Internet, cell phones, landline phones, friends, friends-of-friends and word-of-mouth.

Despite all the planning, our nerves were jumbled and our stomachs were in knots the day we flew to Kosovo. What greeted us was a dirty town with litter everywhere. Roads were pocked with potholes. The electricity goes out at least five times a day because the power plant is archaic, and residents living by the plant are dying from the pollution. The business district is made up of small, cluttered retail shops, many of which have electrical generators sitting out front in case the power goes out.

But we quickly discovered that Kosovo's people are wonderful—with their big smiles, their warm hearts and their plates of great, great food. They love Americans. The capital showcases a mural of Bill Clinton, who was instrumental in getting NATO to drive the Serbs out of Kosovo, ending the war. It seemed that more U.S. flags were waving there than in the States.

Kosovo's population is composed mostly of people 18 to 34 years old. We saw very few older people. We were told that during the war with Serbia many resi-

dents evacuated to escape the murders, rapes, bombings and massacres. When the war ended, many people, mostly the older residents, chose not to return because it was too difficult to uproot, return and start over.

Our students spent eight days crisscrossing Kosovo and Pristina, meeting people, finding stories and doing lots of journalism. Lomneth found a widow whose husband died in an accident while working at the power plant, which she sees every day out her front window. Lindsey DeMarco spent time with a Serbian family that feared for its safety living among Albanians. Karen Schmidt found a care home of mostly elderly men who no longer had any family to visit them. Vanessa Skocz stumbled upon a funeral for 13-year-old girl hit by a car; hundreds of mourners turned out to bid the child farewell. Kate Veik photographed a teenage boy making a living digging and selling potatoes. Videographer Michael Mason D'Croz came across a former soccer star who was forced to leave his home because of the bombing during the war. And Shannon Smith worked tirelessly, bouncing from photographer to photographer, story to story, to absorb and report on all that she could.

The stories of the people of Kosovo pulled at our hearts and twisted our minds as we tried to comprehend the stress, the tragedy and the heartbreak of the country. What we found were people with friendly smiles, heartwarming souls and welcoming hospitality; they became friends we will have for a lifetime.

So yes, we have stories to tell and share and enlighten about Kosovo, a land of contrasts and conflicts. But we also came away with something less visible but more lasting. The lives of our students have forever been changed for the better—by what they saw, by what they accomplished as journalists and by what they felt in their hearts—in Kosovo, our destination.

BRUCE THORSON, associate professor
College of Journalism and Mass Communications
University of Nebraska-Lincoln



PRISTINA became the capital after World War II and is home to the University of Pristina. Most of Kosovo's population lives in rural villages outside of Pristina, relying mainly on subsistence farming, which is highly ineffective due to a lack of technical and mechanical expertise. A river, which once ran through the city, now is tunneled underground because people used to put their waste in it. *Photo by Bruce Thorson*

Contrasts and Conflict

AMID CELEBRATION OF NEWFOUND INDEPENDENCE, KOSOVO STRUGGLES TO SURVIVE Story by **Shannon Smith**

The high-rise buildings of downtown Pristina gleam in the golden light of afternoon as the sun catches the steel frames and newly cleaned glass. Only an abandoned railroad separates the promising metropolitan area from desperate slums, rank with waste and unemployment. The tracks of the railroad sink into the ground as the mud slowly envelops them.

The world has forgotten these tracks, in the same way it has forgotten the people who live beyond them. Up until Kosovo declared independence, the international community had forgotten the people and the poverty in this region after the civil war and American intervention. On Feb. 17, 2008, Kosovo declared independence from Serbia, shifting status from province to country. The world paid attention. Within a few days, the United States, Great Britain and others had recognized Kosovo's independence, the same countries that supported the United Nations bombing of Kosovo in 1999 to stop conflict between ethnic Albanians and Serbs. Most Western nations have recognized Kosovo now, but despite the heightened attention for Kosovo politics, the attention and aid does not seem to be helping the masses in Kosovo. The individual faces of Kosovo, those who survived the war and now battle to survive the poverty afflicting them, still struggle daily.

The severe conditions of high unemployment, abandoned housing projects, ethnic tension, energy production problems and pollution within Kosovo make everyday life difficult for many of those within the capital of Pristina and in the rural areas. Just nine years removed from a Serbian civil war, villages that

were hit hardest, losing many men to the fighting and their homes and possessions to the fires, still struggle with the effects. With unemployment at 40 percent, according to the CIA factbook in November, most of the poorest within Kosovo live in these communities outside the capital city, but desperation still lurks hidden next to prosperity in the heart of Pristina.

Right next to the gleaming buildings and the railroad, dozens of families fill the only remaining, stable rooms in houses and buildings that were destroyed by the bombs and fires nine years ago. The railroad between the slum-like conditions in these buildings and the shining new part of the city is the barrier between past and future, leaving the present an uncompromising mess of contradictions. Throughout Kosovo one can see people without jobs buying a pack of cigarettes a day and visiting coffee shops for hours on end, and people without money for food wearing professional and fashionable clothing. There are broken buildings next to construction areas for new and mosques throughout the country despite a growing apathy toward religion in the country.

Islam Aliu and his seven family members live in the only intact room within the shell of a bombed building in the shadows of the high-rise buildings of Pristina. Aliu, 46, and his wife, Shubrie, 36, have stayed in whatever shelter they could find since the war, when they moved from Glogovica. Islam and Shubrie Aliu live in the single room with their four children, Kosovare, 9,

Teuta, 7, Besarte, 7, and Bujare, 5, and with Islam's sister Zylfie, 63, and his mother Arzie, 81.

Teuta and Besarte play soccer through the rubble and mud outside their door, avoiding the bits of concrete and metal littering the floor. They sleep on the couch and on the floor, relying on the heat of their coal-burning stove to keep warm.

Shubrie Aliu said she just wants stable shelter and water for her family.

"I do not even have a bathroom where I can bathe the children," Shubrie Aliu said (translated by Kosovo Institute of Journalism and Communication students Arianita Spahiu and Afrodita Margilaj). "I bathe them on the steps of the house outside or sometimes even inside the house."

Islam Aliu works in the market when he can, but the work is inconsistent and never pays more than two euros a day, which is comparable to roughly two and a half U.S. dollars. Two euros isn't enough to buy a cheap tourist lighter celebrating independence off the street, let alone a decent meal for a family of eight. With the structural instability and economic conditions, Aliu fears for the security of his family.

"Whenever it rains or snows we are afraid that the roof is going to fall," Aliu said. "We are jobless and suffer from different diseases."

The Aliu family qualifies as a social welfare case by the Kosovo Energy Corporation (KEK) and gets free electricity from the city. They cannot use more than 300 watts a month, which translates into a light bulb, a TV, and the use of a few appliances, but not heating. As a welfare case, the Aliu family is provided 60 euros



IN A SMALL, CITY-CENTER PARK in Pristina, tagged with graffiti, children spend their free time rollerblading. Most of Kosovo's population ranges in age from their teens to their thirties. During the war in 1998-1999 many residents fled to neighboring countries. Many of the older population chose not to return to Kosovo because the rebuilding process was too much of a burden. Photo by Bruce Thorson



Kosovo: At a Glance

AREA: 10,877 sq. km. (slightly larger than Delaware)
Borders Albania, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia in southeastern Europe.

CAPITAL: Pristina (Independence from Serbia declared Feb. 17, 2008)

POPULATION: 2,126,708

ETHNIC GROUPS: Albanians, 88 percent;
Serbs, 7 percent; other, 5 percent.

DOMINANT RELIGIONS: Islam, Serbian Orthodox, Roman Catholic

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES: Albanian, Serbian

GDP: \$4 billion

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE: 43 percent

POVERTY RATE: 37 percent

Source: CIA World Factbook. All figures 2008 estimates.

a month by the government.

The Aliu family is not alone. More families like the Alius live in the same area, next to the railroad in the broken buildings. These families are invisible to those walking by daily, passersby who are focused on shopping, picking up children from school, getting to work on time. Despite extreme hardship, families mentioned having optimism and hope for the future.

“We passed the war thing and now we are hoping for better,” neighbor Halit Bajoku, 54, said.

BLESSING VS. CURSE

Selvije Peqani watches the large black crows shriek in her yard as they careen toward the ground, shifting their angle only slightly to pick up a morsel of a rotten vegetable within a paper bag before rising again. Hundreds of the birds descend on the small community of Fushe Kosova, a small suburb of Pristina. The black birds fly all over Kosovo. Even the country's name originates from the Serbian word for black bird, *kos*. Within the suburb, the birds descend upon the fields and creek beds filled with food, plastic bags and clothing that build up due to the lack of a waste removal system. Peqani has grown used to the birds' constant presence in her life, in the same way she has gotten used to the smell of the waste, as well as the hunger and the pain of poverty.

Selvije Peqani lives in a small house in Fushekosova with her four children, 22 sheep and her pregnant cow. Fushekosova is home to many minority groups, such as Ashkali, Roma, and Egyptians.

The pregnancy of their cow will both help and hinder the Peqani family. Without the cow's milk, Selvije Peqani struggles to make food for the family. But the introduction of this one calf to her stock will provide her with money she can use to feed her family real portions of bread and fruit, or for her to invite visitors to more than the one well-lit room where guests must sit on stiff cushions surrounding her stove to stay warm.

Like most of Fushekosova, Selvije's husband is unemployed. He spends his time searching Fushekosova for scrap metal to sell. But through a World Vision and KosInvest loan, the Peqani family has been able to in-

crease the number of animals it keeps in a small shed outside its home.

“Somehow we need to survive,” Peqani said.

World Vision workers Arben and Nedge helped the Peqani family take out its loan and say they are grateful for people who try to change their situation. “They try to make something from nothing, rely on their own hands,” Arben said.

Selvije and her husband use the scraps of metal and the few animals they have to piece together a life for themselves and their children. Like the crows feeding off the land and conditions, the Peqani family does whatever it takes to survive.

ECONOMY VS. EDUCATION

As water drips down from the cracked roof of the schoolhouse in the village of Plementina, the bright faces of 68 students look to the front of the room and try to master Albanian personal pronouns. The students, mostly children ages 6-7, don't notice the cold or the darkness from the lack of sunlight in the room, with only one stove to heat the room and one flickering light bulb in the ceiling. The light bulb flashes on and off repeatedly before ultimately going out completely in one of the many power outages experienced regularly in the region. School supplies and clothing are only the beginning of problems for students like Suad Haliti, 7.

Suad Haliti doesn't have any books for school. The 75 euros a month his family survives on doesn't include money for education. Food and warmth come first. Suad lives in a three-room house in Plementina, a village of Ashkali, Egyptian and Roma minority communities with his two brothers, sister and parents. Fazra and Sheriffe Haliti, Suad's parents, along with Suad's 1-year-old brother, Orhan, survive on the welfare provided for families with infant children.

The Haliti family lives in the older section of Plementina, where the buildings have deteriorated and are close to the nearby power plant's pollution. Most of the rest of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian populations in Plementina have been relocated into newly built apartment complexes a few hundred yards away, where conditions are better. But the Halitis decided to

stay in their house on the barren landscape with nothing but trash and clotheslines surrounding them.

The school in Plementina started partially as a way to encourage education in the minority populations locally, but also as a safety net for the students, according to Dafina Paca, the school administrator. Poverty is uniform in Plementina. Possessions and appearances don't affect interaction with each other because poverty is a leveler for the students. There is no room to judge over circumstances and poverty level.

Later, if the children are able to leave Plementina to attend secondary schools, they will face severe criticism and prejudice from other non-minority students, said Paca. But very few students from Plementina make it to secondary schools. In 2007, only four out of 13 students continued on.

Paca said he is pleased with the school's proximity to the students but the school has many obstacles in its path.

“But at the same time I am unhappy with the level of education and the way the education is at the moment with this community, because not everybody is included in the actual education system,” he said. “There are people who still do not attend.”

According to the administrator, the economic quality of life holding back students like Suad is not new for minority populations, but rather a constant battle throughout the history of the area.

“If you go now to Obelic, as an example, and ask an Albanian also who has always lived here, ‘Who are the poorest people, before the war and after the war?’ The answer will always be the Roma, Ashkali, and the Egyptian,” he said.

He also said the most important thing for the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian in Plementina is education and the school.

Plementina and other villages have made education a priority for minority populations to try to change the current situation. In Plementina, a minority population with a high concentration of Serbs, he said everyone in the community has worked together to achieve success with the school, and that is a hopeful sign for the future.

“For me the 17 of February, when we declared in-



ZOLTAN IMEC, head of Hungarian diplomatic office in Pristina (left). Nikolay Kolev, head of Bulgarian diplomatic office in Pristina, Davor Vidish, head of Croatian diplomatic office in Pristina announced Thursday, March 20, 2008 during a press conference the three countries' recognition of Kosovo's independence as they met with Hashim Thaci (right), prime minister of Kosovo. Photo by Bruce Thorson

dependence, was a wonderful day and that is only a wonderful day for people who want to live together,” he said.

ECONOMY, EMPLOYMENT, AND WAR

Past the steel and glass skyscrapers of Pristina, the country of Kosovo opens up into a flat plateau leading up to the mountains. Mercedes semitrailers barrel down the highways and cows meander on the side of the roads. The sunlight lingers on the forms of half-finished buildings of brick and concrete, the barren shapes of rooms with no external walls, the remnants

of reconstruction attempts after the war, which began as grandiose mansions but ended as hollow structures when the families ran out of euros. As the houses spread out, and the country opens up, small village communities like Bask are revealed between the hills.

Even in the stillness of her village, Bask, Sela can still hear the sounds of gunfire in her mind, and she can still feel the fear and panic of soldiers coming to take away everything she loves. Her milky green eyes water when she describes the way her son Ahmet was beaten



MUSIC AND MOVIES, some local and some bootleg, are a few of the things that can be found in Pristina's market area. Photo by Clay Lomneth

“...you don't have time to be afraid because you have to fight for existence.”

Dardan Selimaj

during the war, to the point of permanent back and rib pains.

While Sela's feeble, small legs struggle to support her aged body, her grandson Muhamet, 26, struggles to single-handedly support their family of seven by working as a mechanic in an autoshop in the nearby town of Skenderaj.

Muhamet has meek hands but firm, tough skin. The rough wrinkles and calloused skin came from working the one-acre plot of land his family owns. The oil and grime embedded within the wrinkles came from working in the Skenderaj car shop everyday.

Muhamet had never had a job before the autoshop, and he spent six months surrounded by the grease of the cars and the persistent drilling of construction workers across the street. Muhamet feels fortunate to have a job at all. Muhamet relies on the UNDP, United Nations Development Program, a project designed to invigorate the working environment by placing youth in jobs across the country.

Muhamet's father wasn't the only one to be beaten during the war. Serbian soldiers abducted, beat and released Muhamet three times. Sela says this happened to most men older than 15 in the village in order to discourage any opposition.

Sela counts her and the families' survival as her proudest achievement. “The living must keep trying always to survive,” Sela said.

ECONOMY, HEALTH

Haki Jashari's hands are overly worn and withered for a middle-aged man. They are wrinkled like an old man's face would be after years of laughing, only Jashari's wrinkles come from the stress and pressure of his position. Jashari is the chief of the Emergency Unit in Obelic, the medical center operating as a checkpoint for the people of Obelic before they are sent to the hospital for more serious care. The Obelic clinic has

30 percent more cases of cancer than the other local centers in Kosovo, something Jashari attributes to the high pollutants spread by the nearby power plant Kosovo A. Jashari sees the effects of the pollution every day as he struggles to diagnose severe conditions like heart problems, lung failure, high blood pressure and deafness. Jashari is outraged at the plant and the way it is killing his town and his country.

During the war, Jashari volunteered to help soldiers and victims of collateral damage. After Kosovo declared independence, Jashari faced another challenge in treating his neighbors and countrymen, one far less tangible and more complicated than bullet holes and burns. Jashari is trying to save his hometown from the slow and assured death of living right next to Kosovo A, one out of two Kosovo Energy Corporation plants providing power to Kosovo.

Jashari walks through the long empty hallways dimly lit with a green hue as the setting afternoon sun filters through the dirty panes on the glass windows. He makes conversation with Fatmir Shala, a young man who just got out of a consultation with Dr. Bedri Osmani. Shala is a student who lives in Mazgit near Obelic and came into the clinic because he has been experiencing chest pains and pressure for the past two months and has been losing weight. Shala is 20 years old.

ECONOMY, WAR, FAMILY — HOPE

Three young Kosovars casually drift along the cobblestone at the end of Mother Teresa Way after just finishing a photo shoot to promote an upcoming music festival. An unnamed street is torn and broken, but BMWs and Volkswagens zoom by them anyway, honking and pushing through. In their 20s, the three talk about politicians' promises in Kosovo, the role of Islam in Kosovar life, TV shows like “Project Runway” and “America's Next Top Model.” Normal youth conversa-

tion. Until they talk about the war that ripped apart their families and country nine years ago. The bombs that blasted nearby villages. The soldiers who forced them out of their homes. And the choking grip that poverty still has on their country.

Dardan Selimaj was old enough to remember when he was forcibly removed. He was 14 when the war reached his family; they held on and stayed in the country through the NATO bombings until the Serbian soldiers came and forced them from their home.

Dardan said he was not afraid then because it happened too fast to think about.

“In these kinds of situations, you didn't live it. If you live it, you are afraid,” Dardan said. “When you are part of that, you don't have time to be afraid because you have to fight for existence.”

After the bombings stopped several months later, Dardan's family returned from Macedonia. When they came back, Dardan lived in a different Kosovo than he remembered.

“After the war, nothing was working. No stores. No bakeries. Nothing, nothing, nothing,” Dardan said. “Everything was rebuilding. We were rebuilding our new lives.”

Amona said the villages outside the capital of Pristina were most affected by bombing and fire. She said the community bounded together and helped rebuild many villages and now, nine years later, things are improving but aren't perfect. She is able to go to school without working, she doesn't feel threatened, Kosovo is independent.

But Amona said one wouldn't have to look very deep to see the evidence of poverty in Kosovo. Poverty is visible immediately through the children attempting to help provide income for their families in the midst of severe unemployment. Children are always on the streets or in the restaurants attempting to sell cigarettes and lighters to patrons at dinner. “It is bad. It is getting better, but it is bad,” Amona said. ☺



KOSOVARS are the poorest people in Europe, averaging about \$1,800 per year. Pristina's businesses are mostly small-scale retail shops. Unemployment is more than 40 percent. *Photo by Bruce Thorson*



KOSOVO'S ETHNIC POPULATION is about 90 percent Albanian, with Serbs comprising about 7 percent. The remaining are Bosniak, Gorani, Roma, Turk, Ashkali and Egyptian. Albanian and Serbian are the official languages. Bosnian, Turkish and Roma are also widely used. *Photo by Bruce Thorson*



A YOUNG BOY walks through rain on his family's farm at the foot of Ciciavica Mountain. The family fled into the mountains as fighting drew near in 1998 and returned to a destroyed home. It took six months to rebuild. *Photo by Kate Veik*



CHILDREN IN PRISTINA play soccer wherever they can — an abandoned concrete parking lot in the middle of the city worked for these children. *Photo by Clay Lomneth*



MEAT is very hard to come by in Kosovo, and not many people can afford it. *Photo by Lindsay DeMarco*



A WALL commemorating those who are missing or have been killed since the war in 1998 stands in the center of Pristina. *Photo by Lindsay DeMarco*



MANY KOSOVARs still feel indebted toward the Americans for their role in the war. *Photo by Karen Schmidt*

A YOUNG CHILD sleeps in his family's home in the Ciciavica mountain range. *Photo by Kate Veik*



TWO WOMEN Along the mall in Pristina, which is an area in Kosovo that used to be a street but now is open only to foot traffic, women frequently greet each other with a simple hug and a kiss on each side of the cheek. Kosovars have little control over their life, due to a poor economy. They do, however, take pride and control in how they dress. Overall, their style of casual dress is more stylish than in the U.S.

Photo by Bruce Thorson



A YOUNG MAN cheers during a pick-up soccer game in the valley of the mountains near Prizren, south of Pristina. *Photo by Kate Veik*

Sights and Stories



Energy and Pollution

Photography by **Clay Lomneth**

THOSE IN THE VILLAGE OF OBILIQ, population 30,000, have been living next to the worst polluting power plant in all of Europe for more than 40 years. Built in 1960, the power plant, called Kosovo A, now has only one working smokestack but bears half the responsibility for supplying power to Kosovo's estimated 2 million citizens.

Many health problems have been associated with the power plant. At a health center in Obiliq, Dr. Haki Jashari, the chief of the emergency unit, sees patients every day with breathing problems and high blood pressure. Symptoms such as these, he said, are likely the result of living too close to the plant.

Another cause for concern is how the Kosovo Energy Corporation (KEK) handles waste from the power plants. KEK disposes of the ash in open pits, some of which are now close to houses. For the next three years, KEK will be working to clean up the land on which the ash pits are located, creating a cleaner and overall healthier environment for those living nearby. ∞

WITH SPARKS FLYING, a worker for the Kosovo Energy Corporation (KEK) repairs a belt used to transport coal from the mines to the power plant.

WRENCH READY, a worker stands by while a broken conveyor belt is repaired.

KOSOVO A is Kosovo's oldest power plant. It was built in the mid 1960s and only has one working smokestack. It is situated right next to a small village called Obiliq.

KEK WORKERS repair a broken conveyor belt that takes the coal from the mine directly to a power plant.

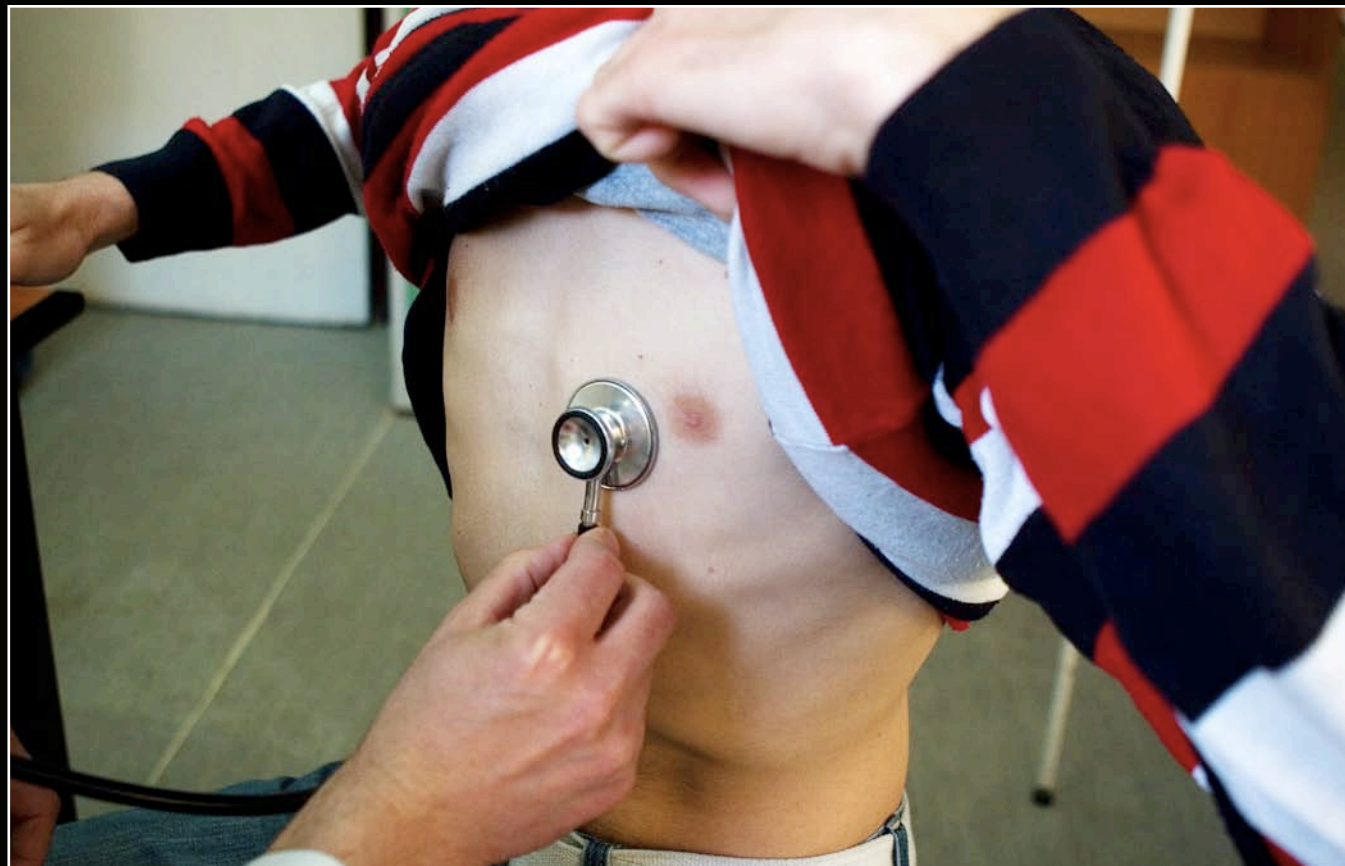
WITH REPAIRS FINISHED, KEK workers head inside for a tea and coffee break.



A SUPERVISOR oversees the repair of a conveyor belt at a KEK mine.



IN PLEMINTINA, a Roma village, children play in the shadow of Kosovo B, a newer and much more reliable coal power plant.



ASH from Kosovo A is likely why this young man felt short of breath, a doctor said. The young man is examined at a health clinic in Obiliq. The power plant is situated just outside of town.



THE FOCUS since independence has been more on a reliable source of energy than a safe one, a KEK spokesman said. As two coal power plants provide power to Kosovo, there is talk of building another one, called Kosovo C, which will displace some families from their homes.



POLLUTION from power plants is a major concern in some parts of Kosovo. In some areas, the ash in the air keeps people from leaving their homes.

Poverty and Happiness

Photography by **Vanessa Skocz**

INDEPENDENCE LEFT KOSOVO in high spirits — except in the community of Fushe Kosove, a suburb of Pristina. Here a community of ethnic minorities — Ashkali (478), Egyptians (14), Romas (100) and other internally displaced (78) — struggles to survive. These minority groups are not allowed to live within the thriving capital. Each ethnic group considers itself to have Albanian heritage, but the “true-born” Albanians consider these ethnic minorities to be of a Serbian heritage that doesn’t belong in Pristina.

With each family making an average of 52-62 euros (\$72-87) per month, making ends meet is a struggle. In the Peqani family, an Ashkali family, Halit, 35, works various jobs until late in the night while his wife Selviye stays home. Her job is to take care of the house, children, and sheep and she often worries someone will steal her sheep. At times like these, Selviye prays she and her children will stay safe until her husband returns. ☹️

HALIT, 35, AND SELVIJE, 35, PEQANI live in Fushe Kosove with their four children. The house was built by Halit’s father two years ago in order for the family to successfully raise cattle and sheep.

SELVIJE bakes homemade bread at least twice a week because the cost of bread is so high. The Peqani family doesn’t have a consistent income so they try to save money as often as possible.

WHILE HALIT WORKS, Selviye stays at home to take care of her four children. Most days her husband is gone all day while she cooks and cleans.

THE ONLY SOURCE OF HEAT in the Peqani’s three-room house is a wood-burning stove. When guests are over, they are invited into the sitting room so they can stay warm.

MURAT PEQANI, 11, does her homework when she gets home from school. When she finishes, she helps her mom with chores.





RAMADAN PEQANI, 7, watches television while his mother does chores. He is the only child in the family who doesn't attend school. He was kicked out for misbehaving.

MURAT, 11, Ramadan, 7, enjoy an afternoon snack with their cousins Mirjeta, 5, and Mevlinde, 3. The Peqani children usually stay indoors when it is too cold to play outside.

COLD WEATHER outside usually means the children easily get bored indoors. Inside, Ramadan Peqani plays with the ringtones on the family's only cell phone.



WITH A MOTHER'S LOVE, Selvije Peqani embraces her youngest son, Ramadan. Selvije's role in the Peqani family is to take care of the house and children, and she said she wouldn't trade it for the world.



WHEN SELVIJE IS ALONE with just her children, she often feels afraid that their sheep will be stolen. At times like these she prays for strength until her husband returns.



COLA IS SERVED in the last remaining light from dusk. Due to power shortages there are many blackouts within the city, leaving families with no power or water until further notice.



AS OFTEN AS POSSIBLE, Selvije Peqani tries to fulfill her children's wishes for fresh bread. Even though she is saving money by making bread instead of buying it, buying flour and eggs is still pricey.



OUTSIDE OF THE HOUSE is a shed where the Peqanis keep their livestock. They have sheep and a cow they raise to sell on the market. The family was given a loan from World Vision to buy more sheep to sell on the market. Before they received the loan they could afford only 10 sheep. Now they have more than 40.



Roma in the Republic

Photography by **Kate Veik**

IN FUSHE KOSOVE, Tahir Alili's family gets by. During the ethnic war between Serbians and Albanians, many Roma in Alili's neighborhood fled the country to seek asylum abroad. Alili and his family did not have enough money to make the move, so instead of moving to a new country, they moved into the abandoned homes.

Alili has eight children and a father to provide for. Everyone lives under the same roof, but no one is employed. Alili wishes he could seek asylum in another country. He sees no hope for his children's futures in Kosovo, but he has difficulty finding work elsewhere because he is Roma. ☹️

THE FATHER OF Tahir Alili sits in the main room of their home. He goes out everyday into Pristina to collect metal scraps to help support the family.

ANITA ALILI, 9, runs through the entrance of her family's temporary home in Fushe Kosove.

TAHIR ALILI is the head of his Roma household in Fushe Kosove. Alili has eight children and his father living in his home with him. No one is employed.

EIGHT SIBLINGS live in the Alili household in Fushe Kosove, Kosovo. No one in the house is employed, but the older children still attend school. "We don't even have shoes for all of the children," their father said.

DURING THE WAR in 1999, many Roma in the community sought asylum in nearby countries, abandoning their homes. The Roma families who stayed moved into the empty houses.

“ I want to seek asylum. ”

Tahir Alili



TAHIR ALILI explains his grievances with his family's situation in Fushe Kosove.



THE ALILI FAMILY is living in dire circumstances. They cannot afford enough shoes for all of their children, so their children go barefoot even in the winter.

TAHIR ALILI'S WIFE holds her 16-year old's newborn child. The daughter and her husband are getting divorced, and it is custom in their Roma tribe that the child goes to the husband.



TAHIR ALILI'S DAUGHTER warms her face as she leans against a wall in the main room of the family's house.

Young and Gone

Photography by **Vanessa Skocz**

RUBBLE OF BURNED AND BOMBED HOMES greets visitors at the village of Krusha e Madhe, a bitter reminder of the price of Kosovo's newfound independence. The civil war between Serbians and ethnic Albanians resulted in 80 destroyed houses and 207 deaths in Krusha, the most casualties among villages attacked from 1996 to 1999. A struggling economy has hindered rebuilding the homes destroyed after Krusha was attacked March 26 and 27, 1999. In addition, children have problems getting to school because of a lack of public transportation.

Nine years later, while walking to school through the developing village, Fjolla Gashi faced the unthinkable. A speeding car along the busy roads to school struck Gashi, 13, and three other girls. Fjolla went into a coma and died a week later. ♡

FIDUSHE GASHI, 37, and her mother mourn over the body of Fjolla Gashi. Before the body is transported to the cemetery only the women of the community are allowed to mourn over the body in the house of the deceased.

FJOLLA'S FATHER, Afrim Gashi, 41, and distinguished males from the community of Nagavc transport Fjolla's casket to the cemetery just outside the community. The men of the community carry the body to the cemetery while the women follow behind.

SCHOOL CHILDREN of the community attend Fjolla's funeral because she died so young. Her schoolmates carried flower wreaths to place at Fjolla's gravesite, expressing their love for her.

OUTSIDE THE MOSQUE, the men of the community wait to bless the casket. They have to wait for all of those in the procession to make their way to the gravesite before they can say the final prayer.

FAMILY MEMBERS dig the last of the dirt out of the grave in order to place the casket inside.





FJOLLA GASHI was struck by a speeding car while walking to school with her classmates. She immediately fell into a coma and died three days later.



THE WOMEN of the community wait behind the procession until it reaches the cemetery where they will attend the burial and final prayers.



THE MEN of the community say a final prayer before the burial of Fjolla. The prayer is said outside the mosque and then the casket is transported to the gravesite.



AS IS CUSTOM, the men place wooden planks over the casket so that no dirt will come in contact with it.

FJOLLA'S FUNERAL drew a large crowd because she was young and because of the way in which she died.





COMMUNITY LEADER and school director Fadil Dilova aids the school children in placing flower wreaths around Fjolla's grave. Many of the wreaths express their love for Fjolla and say how much people will miss her.




FJOLLA'S COUSIN says a final heartbreaking goodbye to her young relative, who died a tragic death. Car accidents involving school children are common in Krusha because of the lack of public transportation and the risk of walking on busy streets.

Close to Death

Photography by **Clay Lomneth**

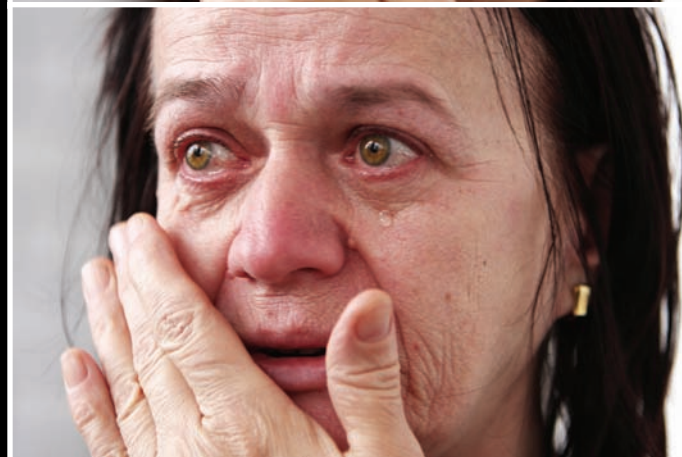
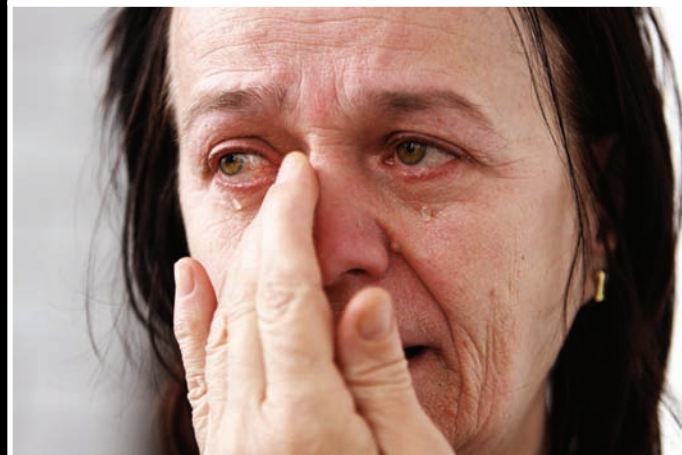
REFKA TERNAVA lives in the shadow of the power plant where her husband, Mustafa, worked until 2004, when he accidentally severed his leg at the knee and died from the wound. The Kosovo Energy Corporation (KEK), the company that owns both power plants and the coal mines in Kosovo, employs many of those living in the small village of Dardhishta. Refka's son, Basart, a husband and father, is one of them. He works in the same power plant where his father's fatal accident occurred.

After Mustafa's death, Basart said he was promised the same managerial position his father had, with the same pay. So far, KEK has not come through. Basart said he now worries about the stability of his job. His contract with KEK was to run until July, and he wasn't sure if they would keep him on. Both Refka and Basart's wife worry about him working at the plant. Some days he comes home with burns on his hands.

Refka would like to move away from a place where she is reminded daily of her husband's tragic death. In addition to seeing workers walk to KEK every morning, the house her husband started to build for Basart still stands unfinished in her backyard. With Basart earning 200 euro a month and reparations at 400 euro (half of Mustafa's salary), there just isn't enough money. 

REFKA TERNAVA cries while talking about her husband, Mustafa, who used to work for the Kosova Energy Corporation (KEK) until his fatal accident.

ALONE, Refka stands outside in her yard within view of Kosovo A, the power plant that claimed her husband's life.

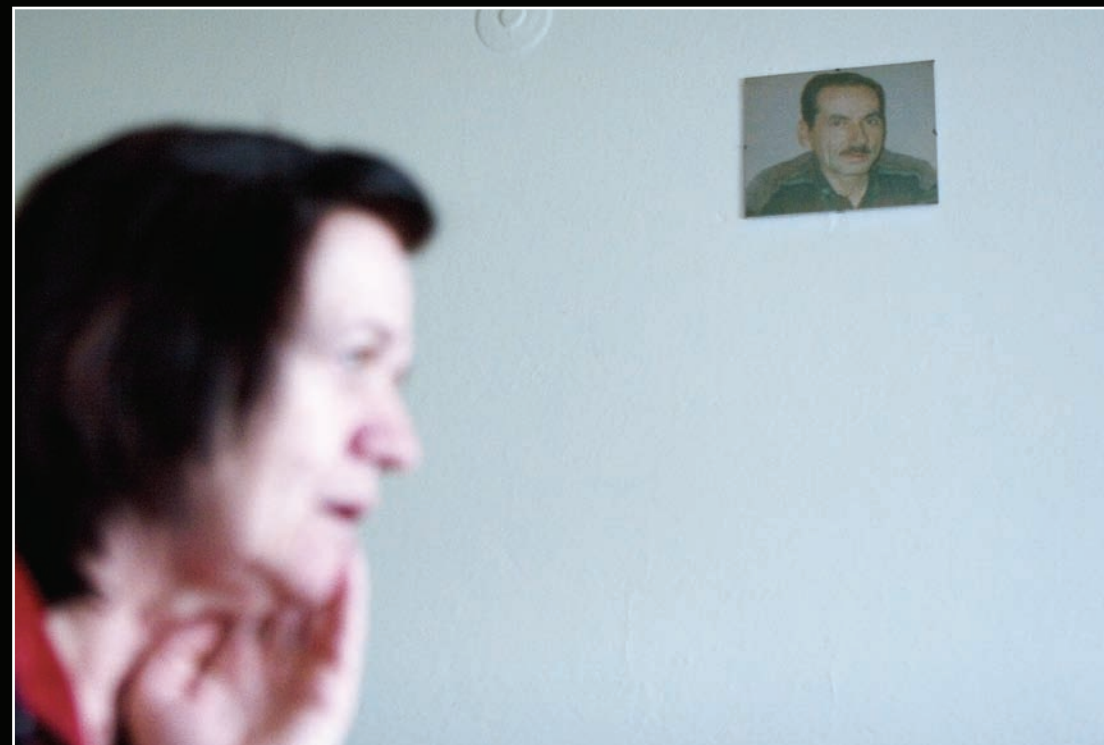


“ He used to say all the time, ‘I’m scared for the workers because it’s unsafe... I know how to take care of myself.’ ”

Refka Ternava



REFKA shows off a photograph of her husband, Mustafa.



MUSTAFA'S PRESENCE is still felt on the small property Refka owns. His photograph hangs in the living room, and a house he had begun to build for his son Basart's family is unfinished in their backyard.

BASART'S wife and son stay at home with Refka while Basart works at the power plant. After Mustafa's death, Basart now has to provide for the family.



KOSOVO A is Kosovo's longest running power plant, and time has not been good to it. With only one working smokestack, the coal power plant provides Kosova with unreliable power. There are rolling blackouts every day.

Living and Leaving

Photography by **Kate Veik**

ALEXSANDRA RAKIC lives with her husband, Gorat, and 8-month-old son, Dmitri, in Gracanica, a suburb of Pristina. The Rakics are some of the few Serbians left in Kosovo after the ethnic war in 1999 and the recent declaration of independence. They are moving to Serbia soon — for their son Dmitri's future.

“I don't want my child to grow up in a place where he does not know what is a school, what is a park, what is a playground,” Aleksandra said. “We have no playground here.”

ALEXSANDRA RAKIC waves away a stray dog while she and her 8-month-old son, Dmitri, walk outside of their home in Gracanica. The dog belonged to the previous owners of the house. They abandoned him when they moved, and the Rakic's have been caring for him since.

GORAT RAKIC holds his 8-month old son, Dmitri.

THE RAKICS HOME in Gracanica, a suburb of Pristina, has been surrounded by Albanians. Serbians and Albanians have a long history of fighting in Kosovo so the Rakics, who are Serbian, feel uncomfortable in their own neighborhood. “I don't have any friends,” Aleksandra Rakic said.

DMITRI RAKIC stretches while his mother, Aleksandra, changes his diaper in the morning.

ALEXSANDRA RAKIC pours coffee in her home in Gracanica, a suburb of Pristina, the capital of Kosovo.





THE RAKICKS are moving back to Serbia though Gorat's father's grave is nearby their current home and family is an important part of Serbian identity.




ALEXSANDRA RAKIC laughs as she dresses her 8-month old son, Dmitri.



DMITRI RAKIC is the only child of Aleksandra and Gorat. The Serbian family lives with Gorat's mother in Gracanica, a suburb of Pristina. One of the main reasons the Rakics are moving to Serbia is Dmitri's future. "We have no playground here," Dmitri's mother said.

Young and Jobless

Photography by **Karen Schmidt**

MOST OF KOSOVO'S unemployed youth have no job experience. So the United Nations Development Programme, or UNDP, started the Active Labour Market Youth Programme to enable youth integration into the labor market, serving as a link between young job seekers and employers. This program has given hope to 26-year-old Muhamet and his extended family. 

MUHAMET, 26, stands with co-workers outside the auto shop where he works as a mechanic. His job, arranged by the UNDP's Active Labour Market Youth Programme, is his first.

A BUCKET hangs from a well in front of Muhamet's home in Skenderaj, Kosovo. In this three-generation home of seven family members, Muhamet is the only one with a job.

MUHAMET looks underneath a car in an auto shop where he works as a mechanic. Six months ago, Muhamet had no job experience. Now he is gaining the necessary skills to continue working and supporting his family.

OUTSIDE THE AUTO SHOP, a red Albanian flag waves in a cold spring wind while a smaller blue flag, representing Kosovo, waves above it. The six stars on Kosovo's flag represent the nation's six ethnic groups. Albanians, who make up more than 50 percent of the population, are by far the largest of the six.

SEAL ZEQUINI, Muhamet's grandmother, walks out of her home in Skenderaj. Zeqini's son, who was kidnapped and beaten by Serbians in 1998, suffered permanent back and rib injuries and can no longer work. Muhamet was beaten as well, along with most men over the age of 15 in the village.





FELLOW MECHANICS teach Muhamet the basics of the job. Since the UNDP pays the salaries of young workers for the first few months, employers are willing to give time to training these young workers. Businesses then offer jobs to the employees they want to keep.

GREASE-LADEN TOOLS hang in the auto shop where Muhamet works.



SELA SITS in her living room, a simple and clean space, as she talks about the horror of watching soldiers take her son and grandson to be beaten. Though her son was left permanently injured and unable to work, she is proud of her family's survival.



SELA walks out of her home and onto the front lawn, wet from the morning's rain.

SELA'S BROOM, dust pan and shoes sit neatly outside her front door.


Energy and Peril

Photography by **Clay Lomneth**

DRIVING ON THE BACK ROADS of Zhilivoda, a small village about 20 minutes northwest of the capital city of Pristina, it would be hard to miss one of Kosovo's best-kept secrets.

Illegal mines have sprung up around the area of the village. The Kosovo Energy Corporation (KEK) has not yet touched the coal-rich land around the village. To earn an income, some of the villagers have begun digging for the coal themselves, sometimes right in their own backyards.

What makes the mines illegal is the depth. Anything found below two meters legally belongs to the government. The illegal mines are dug as far as a handful of men can dig with a pickaxe.

A spokesman for KEK, Nezir Sinani, said most of the talk about illegal mining in Kosovo is just rumors. He said some people dig a few meters down, but not much more than that. 

A MINER who would not give his name looks toward the surface to watch the coal being loaded in a tractor.


ABOUT 100 FEET BELOW the surface, illegal miners pack coal into a basket to be loaded up into a tractor and taken to a local market.

THE LAND in Kosovo is rich with coal, leading the government to use it as a main source of energy and some villagers to mine for it themselves.

A HANDMADE PULLEY system is used to haul the coal from the bottom of the mine to the surface.

AFTER LOADING a basket of coal, a miner who refused to be identified looks up at his fellow workers.





“ (On) a larger scale, there’s no illegal mining here in Kosovo. ”
Nezir Sinani, KEK spokesman



ILLEGAL MINES stand abandoned in a small village north of Kosovo.

HEAVY RAINS earlier in the week have flooded an illegal mine.



WORKERS load coal into a basket to be taken to the surface.

LOADED UP, a tractor pulls away with the day's coal, which will be sold at a local market for 60 euro, to be split at least four ways.





Comfortable and Lonely

Photography by **Karen Schmidt**



KOSOVO'S HOUSE FOR THE AGED PERSONS and Without Family Solitude is an institution in Pristina for people who have no one to care for them. Some residents have no family alive. Others have no family who care they are alive. Neglecting family is a shameful act in Kosovo. Though residents enjoy warm beds and warm meals, they must fight the tides of loneliness and rejection. ∞

RESIDENTS AT Kosovo's House for the Aged Persons and Without Family Solitude wait for lunch in the hallway outside the dining room. Though the residents have no family to care for them, many now consider friends they have made in the home to be family.

ANOTHER resident walks toward the dining hall to join his friends in line.

SEUCHIE ICOMUSHEFCI walks the quiet halls of Kosovo's House for the Aged Persons and Without Family Solitude. "I used to work just for food, for nothing more," Seuchie said of her job. But now her son works in the United States and sends money home. Seuchie continues to work because she enjoys talking with the residents. "Now I work just for myself because I don't need the money," she said.

NAZMRI JEMILU, right, spends his afternoon sitting with a friend on a bench within the compound. Many residents live in the home because their children will not care for them, but Jemilu has no family alive. "I'm alone in this world," he said. Jemilu was married once, but he and his wife were unable to have children. Now his wife is dead.

ONE WOMAN sits in a room full of couches, yarn and knitting needles. Many women in the home like to pass their time knitting, chatting and sitting in the sunlight, which shines in through the room's large windows.



BIBA, A RESIDENT in Kosovo's House for the Aged Persons and Without Family Solicitude, shows off a photo of her husband, who died of diabetes when the Serbians occupied the building in the '90s. "They allowed us to live in the same room, but Serbs didn't allow us to have a ceremony," Biba said. The two were deprived not only of a ceremony but of food as well. Biba's husband grew thin. "The Serbs didn't give us food here. We went to the basement looking," she said.



BIBA PROPS HERSELF next to the cosmetic table in her room. The 54-year old woman was brought to the home after her parents left her at the hospital when she was born. She has lived there ever since. "I had no father, no mother, no friends my age. I was the only child here. I didn't have anybody," Biba said.



NAZMRI JEMILU eats lunch in the home's dining hall. Though Jemilu enjoys hot meals and a warm bed in the home, he says he does not know what he is most thankful for. "I have friends, but they have lives," he said.



MOST RESIDENTS stand with their friends and chat while waiting for the dining hall to open, but others, like this resident, prefer to sit alone.

Health and Energy

Photography by **Karen Schmidt**

IN NEARLY EVERY HOME in Dardhishte, Kosovo, someone is dying of cancer. The village is located next to the Kosovo A power plant of the Kosovo Energy Corporation, or KEK. Kosovo A spews ash through poorly maintained filters, contaminating the village's air and water. In a country facing an energy shortage, residents who can't afford to move have no choice but to stay and suffer. ♡

FERIDE MEXHONI, a woman suffering from cancer caused by the power plants near Dardhishte, Kosovo, holds up X-rays of her lungs. Every day, residents in Dardhishte breathe air that is filled with ash. "The cancer is very painful," she says.

SHOES AND POTS stored outside become covered in ash. "Everything turns black from the ash; everything is full with ash," one resident said.

VALSA MEXHONI plays dress-up on her front porch, sliding on a pair of dusty high heels. Residents in Dardhishte say they worry about the health of their children.

RESIDENTS in Dardhishte, Kosovo, live just across the road from this power plant. They breathe air filled with ash and drink water with a high level of phenol, causing many in the village to die from cancer.

FERIDE MEXHONI stands in her yard, staring at the sky, her house, her village. Thanks to the power plants' pollution, properties in Dardhishte are worth literally nothing. Feride and her family can't afford to move because they can't sell their house.



“ I am sick from this environment. ”

Feride Mexhoni



FERIDE AND SEMIN MEXHONI sit in their home in Dardhishte, Kosovo, where they both suffer from cancer caused by the nearby power plants. Semin has already lost four brothers to cancer, and doctors in the village diagnose one new case of cancer each month.



EVEN BREATHING is painful, Feride Mexhoni said.

FERIDE MEXHONI wipes ash off her windows in Dardhishte, Kosovo. Residents say they are constantly cleaning ash off their homes. Even the red roofs of houses have turned black from the power plant's pollution.



VALSA MEXHONI lets the sunlight warm her back while she sits on her front porch. Going outside is a treat for this young girl, who must spend most of her time inside.

PHENOL, a highly toxic chemical from the power plant's untreated waste, finds its way into streams, eventually contaminating the wells used for drinking water. "We cannot use this water," Semin said.

THOUGH THE FAMILY has a nice yard and even a swing, they prefer to stay inside due to the amount of ash in the air. "We cannot go out from our houses; it's a lot of dust," Semin said.





DOCTORS IN THE VILLAGE have instructed residents not to drink milk from their cows, who are fed with straw that is covered in ash.




FOLLOWING DOCTORS' ORDERS, Valsa Mexhoni drinks only store-bought milk. Feride says she worries about the dangers Valsa will face living in Dardhishte. "I am afraid about the youth. What about the children, the next generation?"

KOSOVO A power plant emits ash through its poorly maintained filters, polluting the air those in Dardhishte must breathe. "No one cares how we are living here," one resident said. "They just care how to produce energy. And we still have energy reductions."

Selling and Surviving

Photography by **Lindsay DeMarco**

EVERY MORNING around 7 a.m., almost 200 sellers begin to set up stands full of flags, fruit, and other various trinkets. Many people believe, and hope, that since Kosovo is independent, more money will come into the market. 



A VENDOR prepares for a busy day by setting up his fruit and vegetable stand.

ABOUT 43 PERCENT of people in Kosovo are unemployed. Those who are lucky enough to sell in the market in Pristina only make about 200 euro a month, the equivalent of about \$280.

A SCOOTER whizzes by a fruit stand as people shop in the market.

BESIM PLAKAJ works to support family and pay for his son to attend university.

YARN hangs outside a sewing shop in Pristina's market.



ONE VENDOR supports himself and his wife by selling honey. A DOZEN EGGS costs almost four U.S. dollars.



BESIM PLAKAJ, 38, sells cigarettes to make ends meet. He started his business immediately after the war in 1999 to support his wife, two sons and himself.



FLOUR is an important cooking ingredient in Kosovo. A VENDOR sweeps outside his store, hoping to bring in more business.



COFFEE SHOPS and small cafes line the streets in Pristina. A meal in the area near the market typically costs between three and 10 euro.



Conflict in Caglavica

Photography by **Lindsay DeMarco**

CAGLAVICA is a Serbian enclave that serves as a refuge for about 200 Serbian families living in Kosovo. Many people moved there from Serbia in search of a home. As more Albanians move into the community, the once Serbian majority is becoming a minority. ∞

UERUT LECIC, 51, watches from the shadows as her husband, Dragan, fixes the generator outside.

FLI, a popular Kosovar food, is typically made of dough, cheese and either honey or vegetable.

AFTER A RIOT in Metrovica, Serbia, a UN security force member comes to ensure Caglavica is not experiencing riots.

UERUT LECIC does not feel threatened by her Albanian neighbors. "This neighborhood is safe," she explains, "We do not worry about the neighbors."

THE LECIC FAMILY, including Dragan and Uerut, Dragan's parents, sister-in-law and sister-in-law's daughter all live in a four-room house. They often experience power outages and depend on two wood stoves for heat.



DRAGAN (left) and Uerut Lecic live in Caglavica, a Serbian community where, as more Albanians move in, Serbians are becoming the minority.

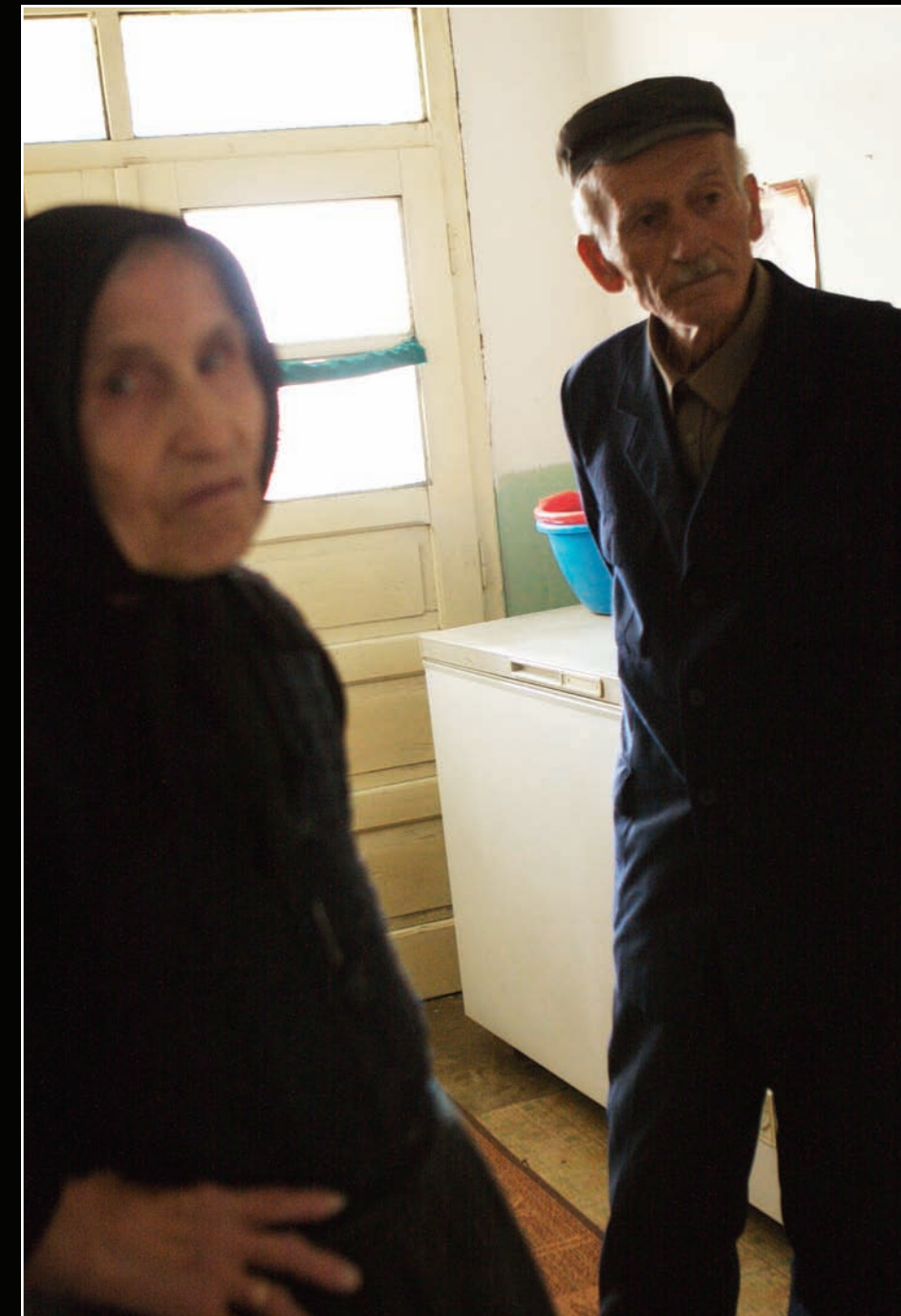
AFTER RECEIVING THREATS from Albanian coworkers, Dragan Lecic, 50, who has worked as a guard in Pristina's jail, felt it was best to retire early.



UERUT TELLS A STORY of a family whose house was burned by Albanians from Pristina. The fire from the house became so dangerous that many community members in Caglavica huddled together in the one-room schoolhouse in the center of the community.



THREE MEN return to their houses after visiting the only grocery store in the center of the community.



DRAGAN'S PARENTS, Ylatga, 83, (left), and Tomislav Lecic, 80, moved from Serbia to Kosovo in search of a home. Tomislav found a home after he built the house that the family now lives in.

A SCULPTURE made by Uerut's daughter sits on top of the family television, "It reminds me to think of her while she is at university," Uerut said.

DRAGAN RAISES chickens so that he does not have to spend money on eggs.



Contributors



Student Journalists

1. **CLAY LOMNETH**, photographer, is a junior news-editorial major from Omaha.

2. **MICHAEL MASON-D'CROZ**, online coordinator, graduated in December 2008 with a bachelor's degree in journalism.

3. **LINDSAY DEMARCO**, photographer, is a junior advertising major. She is originally from Willow Grove, Pa.

4. **KAREN SCHMIDT**, photographer, graduated in May 2008 with a bachelor's degree in journalism.

5. **VANESSA SKOCZ**, photographer, is a senior audiology major from Omaha.

6. **SHANNON SMITH**, reporter, is a senior news-editorial major from Hickman.

7. **KATE VEIK**, photographer, is a sophomore news-editorial major from Omaha.

JOEL GEHRINGER, (not pictured) page designer, graduated in December 2008 with a bachelor's degree in journalism and political science.



KOSOVO CREW: Front row – Vanessa Skocz, Karen Schmidt, Shannon Smith. Middle row – Lindsay DeMarco, Kate Veik. Back Row – Michael Mason-D'Croz, Scott Winter, Clay Lomneth, Bruce Thorson. *Photo by David Pittock*

Faculty

8. **BRUCE THORSON**

9. **SCOTT WINTER**

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