



# Facts about KAEF

## Purpose

The purpose of the **Kosovo American Education Fund (KAEF) Program** is to support long-term economic development in Kosovo by providing fellowships to promising Kosovars for top-level training at elite U.S. universities. Returning to Kosovo, program graduates assume leadership positions in business, non-profit organizations and the government, and use their technical knowledge to generate sustainable and positive change.

Created by the American people through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and administered by American Councils for International Education, the KAEF program is a perpetual education fund that allows eligible/qualified Kosovars the opportunity to increase their knowledge and skills in areas that would support economic growth and investment in Kosovo.

From 2004 through the end of 2009, the KAEF program has awarded 39 master's-level fellowships through a competitive, merit-based process. Three groups of alumni have returned to Kosova thus far, and have taken up leadership positions in the public and private sectors.

## Origin

Shortly after establishment of the United Nations Mission in Kosovo in 1999, USAID created the Kosovo Business Finance Fund (KBFF) to advance economic development and growth in Kosovo. This fund was used to establish the American Bank of Kosovo, a commercial bank that in the following years built up a loan portfolio and a successful level of deposits. The sale of these assets enabled the creation of the Kosovo American Education Fund. In open competition, **American Councils for International Education** was awarded administration of this endowment in April 2004.

## In Their Words

### Luan Dalipi

Monterey Institute of  
International Studies



"Kosovo needs a series of business success stories to break away once and for all from the image of a post-war country with limited investment opportunities. Kosovars with international MBA degrees will in the near future be the Kosovo Business Ambassadors to the rest of the world. Through investments and job creation, Kosovo will ensure economic stability, and with economic stability, the political stability will only be solidified."

### Edona Pacarada

George Washington  
University



"Returning to Kosovo and being part of the team entrusted with the mission of promoting sustained economic growth requires a vast understanding of business matters and all the factors involved in the process—social, political, international. I strongly believe the programs offered by the top-notch universities of the KAEF program will provide me with the theoretical framework and practical skills necessary to bring a significant contribution to the advancement of Kosovo's business environment."

### Dastid Pallaska

Yale University



"Growing up in a decade of constant change and turmoil has made me realize the importance of good leadership and the consequences that come from the lack of it. It was, in fact, this realization that influenced my decision not to stand idly by the processes that affect the future of my society, but instead to engage them proactively."



# KAEF Fellows in the U.S.

## Academic Excellence

- Thirty-nine Kosovars have received master's-level scholarships through the Kosovo American Education Fund as of December 31, 2009.
- Fellows have attended prestigious U.S. universities, including Columbia, Johns Hopkins, Duke, and Yale. The majority of fellows have studied Business Administration or Economics, but a large number have studied Law, International Affairs, Tax Administration, and Journalism and Mass Communication.
- Without exception, fellows have performed at an exceedingly high academic level. Through 2009, the cumulative GPA of fellows is **3.54**.

## Practical Experience

KAEF fellows receive an opportunity for valuable practical experience, including:

- **Summer internships** – KAEF fellows are required to intern with a business or organization working in their field of expertise during the summer months.
- **Practical training** – KAEF fellows are given the option of staying in the United States for up to six months after completing their degree in order to participate in a practical training internship.

KAEF fellows have served with, among other organizations: Dell Computers, the World Bank, Voice of America, the International Finance Corporation, the Duke Center for International Development, and the Xerox Corporation.

These opportunities to gain valuable practical experience give KAEF fellows the opportunity to test and refine their academic knowledge, learn from industry leaders, and network with professionals working in their area of expertise. KAEF fellows complete the program not only with an advanced theoretical education, but also with an understanding of how classroom knowledge can best be implemented in a fast-paced, real-world environment.

## In Their Words

### Luležon Jagxhiu

Pennsylvania State University



"Most businesses in Kosovo pay very little attention to business planning and analysis, because of the lack of business professionals with knowledge of and experience in a market economy. Unfortunately, the educational system in Kosovo does not have the capacities to create such a cadre. Investing in capacity building will help businesses create proper plans, which are a necessary foundation for a prosperous and sustainable business."

### Edona Nahi

Monterey Institute of International Studies



"Education is an essential tool for creating a prosperous society. I believe that getting educated abroad is one of the most effective ways to exchange economic, political and cultural ideas between individuals, societies and nations . . . After the determination of the status of Kosovo, there will be a substantial increase in the demand for professionals skilled in International Business Administration. International companies will enter the local market and local expertise will be in great demand."

### Besa Luci

University of Missouri at Columbia



"In today's world, journalism is a powerful field that unquestionably shapes not only global events, but the everyday lives of people. In Kosovo, the majority of journalists are not professionally trained, and most media remain connected to political parties. My intention is to put into practice the knowledge I gain at a graduate-level in the U.S. as a professional journalist in Kosovo."



# Selection of Candidates

In order for KAEF to be as successful as possible in generating change in Kosovo, it needs to identify and select the best, most talented candidates for fellowships. For that reason, KAEF expends an enormous amount of energy administering a **comprehensive, open, and fair** selection process for its fellowships. Five years after the initiation of KAEF, we're proud to say that our selection process is one of the most equitable, transparent selection processes **in the world**.

Candidates are selected with **absolutely no regard** to their ethnicity, religious beliefs, political affiliation, family connections, or financial resources. KAEF's selection criteria are simple: *do candidates have the talent, knowledge, desire and commitment to help Kosovo develop?*

## The Application Process

KAEF identifies talented, motivated Kosovars as recipients of fellowships through an open, merit-based competition that includes outreach components to every portion of Kosovar society:

1. Candidates apply via an online registration form.
2. In the months prior to the September application deadline, program staff advertise the program through print, radio, television and the Internet.
3. KAEF utilizes its relationships with the U.S. Embassy, the University of Prishtina, private universities, and private businesses to set up informational sessions about the program with groups of students and professionals likely to apply.

## The Selection Process

Once applications are received, KAEF initiates a rigorous and transparent selection process:

1. In October, applications are read and scored by a committee of representatives from admissions departments of U.S. institutions of higher education.
2. Approximately one-third of the candidates who apply become semi-finalists.
3. In the fall, KAEF program managers fly to Kosovo along with admissions staff from two of our partner institutions in order to interview each of the semi-finalists.
4. KAEF pays for semi-finalists to take the relevant standardized tests (TOEFL and either GMAT or GRE) in December or January.
5. Once all of the test scores are in, a final selection panel, consisting of admissions officers from U.S. universities, convenes and selects both finalists and alternates.
6. Finalists are informed of their status in the Spring.

Crucially, **all selection decisions are made by an anonymous, impartial panel** of university admissions staff from across the U.S. Selection is performed entirely in the U.S., in order to guarantee that there are no external influences on the selection process. **Not even KAEF staff** have the ability to alter the final decisions of the selection committee.

## Private Support

Although KAEF is supported largely by the interest from the KAEF endowment, it is also dependent on the generous support of numerous businesses, individuals and organizations. Without their charitable contributions, KAEF would not be possible.



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## American Councils

**American Councils for International Education** is proud to administer the KAEF program. American Councils is a not-for-profit organization with nearly thirty years of experience in administering graduate-level educational exchanges between U.S. universities and the countries of Eurasia. We believe that by investing in outstanding individuals and their educational journeys, we can create long-term, equitable, and sustainable development for societies around the world.



## Participating Universities

From the inception of the program to the current day, the following U.S. universities have hosted KAEF fellows: Bowling Green State University, Cleveland State, The College of William & Mary, Columbia University, Duke University, George Washington University, Harvard University, Indiana University, Johns Hopkins University, The University of Minnesota, The Monterey Institute of International Studies, Pennsylvania State University, Rutgers University, Tufts University, The Rochester Institute of Technology, The University of Delaware, The University of Missouri at Columbia, The University of Montana, The University of North Alabama, Williamette University, and Yale University.

## Initial Funder

