



The Challenger

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COVER PHOTO FIKRET AHMETI

**Projects launched,
activities
commencing!**

↳ **BITS AND PIECES**
An editorial by CEO Petrit Selimi, and a heartfelt reflection of Ambassador Jan Braathu on the energy and determination of the people of Kosovo.

↳ **TO HAPPEN SOON**
Gentiana Mahmuti sheds light to MFK's approach in designing a data driven and proactive communication of the justice sector. Know PAJI now.

BITS AND PIECES



QUARTERLY EDITORIAL

PETRIT SELIMI,
CEO OF MILLENNIUM FOUNDATION
KOSOVO (MFK)

PROJECTS LAUNCHED, ACTIVITIES COMMENCING!

Dear friends, partners and readers of this newsletter,

Millennium Foundation Kosovo is the implementing entity of the \$49million threshold program signed in 2017 between US federal agency MCC and Kosovo.

MFK now has 27 staff, superbly qualified to implement projects under threshold program, which are based primarily on tackling key constraints to growth in Kosovo, focusing primarily on piloting projects in energy sector as well as helping Kosovo institutions achieve a greater degree of transparency vis-à-vis the public through opening governance data.

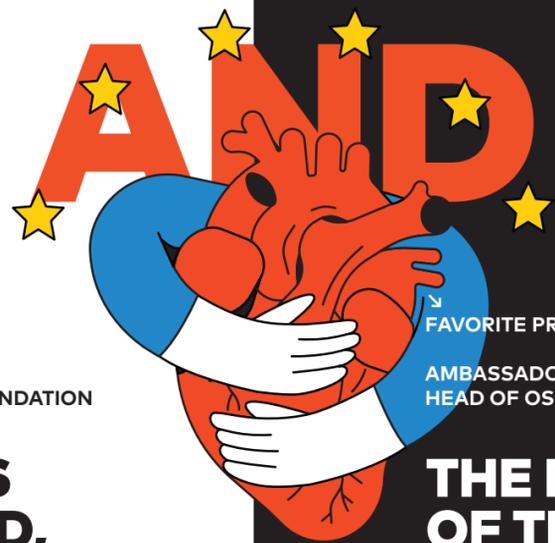
Our projects are designed in a way that provide Kosovo innovative and impactful interventions, always having in mind cross-sectorial interests such as gender and social inclusion, and support for the private sector.

We had busy few weeks, as we you will see from the news items in this newsletter.

Earlier in September we hosted a visit from U.S. International Development Finance Corporation, Washington DC and we signed a Letter of Intent with the Minister of Finance Mrs. Hykmete Bajrami and the head of Kosovo Credit Guarantee Fund in capitalizing the new bank guarantee window for the investments in independent renewable power generation and energy efficiency by the private sector in Kosovo. DFC may help the program with additional counter-guarantee, to ensure a secure way to unlock up to 25 million Euro of fresh capital in the energy sector.

Furthermore, MFK has also signed an MOU with the district heating company Termokos for investments in metering system. This \$10million investment will help Termokos achieve greater efficiencies and expand the network to more families in the city.

In our governance activities, we have also signed an MOU with the Minister of Economy and Environment Mr. Blerim Kuçi, to support the process of opening the data sets gathered by the environmental agencies in Kosovo for the wider public. We have invested in helping Kosovo rebuild a cutting-edge system for air pollution monitoring and we have now granted over \$200,000 to NGO's and companies with the best ideas to use the open data from these systems in project that address the challenger related to air quality in Kosovo.



FAVORITE PRODUCT

AMBASSADOR JAN BRAATHU
HEAD OF OSCE MISSION IN KOSOVO

THE RESILIENCE OF THE PEOPLE OF KOSOVO

I have read this corner of this newsletter several times before and I agreed with many choices put forth by various diplomats and heads of UN agencies when it comes to what Kosovo produces best: from asparagus to berries, from contemporary art pieces to silver ornaments in traditional style.

As the Head of OSCE Mission in Kosovo and former Norwegian Ambassador to Kosovo and Albania, I would like to propose for consideration another feature of Kosovo, rather than a product, and that is the energy and determination of the people of Kosovo.

History has not been gentle in this part of the world and Kosovo has yet to tackle many legacy issues from the years of communism and conflict. We foreigners often times underestimate the magnitude of the transition. It has not only been a transition from conflict to peace, as complex and fraught with tensions and suffering that has been. It has also been the transition from communism/socialism to a democratic, pluralist political system and from plan economy to free and competitive markets. None of these transitions is uncomplicated, neither on personal nor on societal levels. The Kosovo of today is a fundamentally different place from the Kosovo of two decades ago. Imagine what these transitions imply for the average Kosovan.

Consider also the establishment of fledgling institutions, initially with the help of UNMIK, OSCE, the EU and others. Of course, the international partners have provided unsurpassed assistance and support. However, the results are fundamentally the result of the dedication and determination of the people of Kosovo themselves. Not all is optimal, but not all is failure. This is "work in progress".

A case in point is in elections. We will soon commemorate 20 years of elections in Kosovo. In the first election in 2000, the OSCE did everything. We also established the Central Election Commission. Over the years, our role has become progressively less, and our colleagues in the CEC have taken steadily greater responsibility. Their results are impressive. The results are achieved due to the people who work in this and other institutions.

What I see in the time I have lived among the people of Kosovo is an energy, and determination to forge ahead. People are impatient. That is good. The population is young, smart, and demanding. The majority today were born after 1999. Their expectations are high. They set high standards. That is good.

Kosovo institutions are still young and there is a need for continuous dedication to improve rule of law, human rights, gender and minority inclusion, but there is also a will to strive for improvement. It is that will to improve that we foreigners should encourage and support!

FAVORITE NUMBER

20/200

Through the Women in Energy Internship Program we are offering another 20 paid internships in 11 municipalities for different careers within the energy sector. 200 young professionals will be accommodated in the energy sector in Kosovo, where only 4% of the employees are women.

IMPORTANT NEWS



WORLD BANK: KOSOVO GDP CONTRACTING 8.8% IN 2020

The World Bank is projecting an 8.8% contraction of Kosovo's GDP in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic, more than the 4.5% fall forecast in June. However, the World Bank sees Kosovo's GDP growing by 3.7% in 2021 and by 4.9% in 2022, it said in its Europe and Central Asia Economic Update Fall 2020.



KOSOVO AND ALBANIA WITH A JOINT POWER EXCHANGE

OST and KOSTT, the transmission system operators in Albania and Kosovo, signed a Shareholders' Agreement for the establishment of a joint power exchange operator (ALPEX), guaranteeing more transparency and competition in the electricity market. Recent investments in the coupling of energy markets were made possible with the support of USAID and EU donors.



MCC CEO SEAN CAIRNCROSS MET WITH KOSOVO PM AVDULLAH HOTI

On September 2, 2020, MCC CEO, Sean Cairncross, and the Prime Minister of Kosovo, Avdullah Hoti, met in Washington to discuss the cooperation and implementation of joint projects between the Government of Kosovo and MCC. MCC and the Government of Kosovo reconfirmed the strong partnership in working together to implement a successful threshold program and design a compact that will focus on economic development and aims to increase job creation in the country.

QUARTERLY QUOTE

"The Government of Kosovo is focused to both help the private sector obtain necessary capital and guarantees to create growth and employment, but to also promote innovative solutions in the financial sector. We appreciate hard work put forth by the KCGF and MFK to make this window a reality and we thank MCC for the financial support they have provided so far. Investments by MFK in the new guarantee window for the banking sector, will trigger more investments by the private sector."
—Hykmete Bajrami, Minister of Finance of the Republic of Kosovo

"We believe that this quadrilateral cooperation, which today has culminated with the expression of commitment from GOK and DFC, will give an impetus to our joint effort with MFK for improving business environment for private entrepreneurs, on investing in energy efficiency and production of energy from environmentally friendly energy sources. In the short history of our institution, this is another step, toward consolidation and strengthening of the institution. Especially, we praise the DFC interest, as a new partner of KCGF, to contribute for creating a better environment for private investment in the economy of Republic of Kosovo"
—Besnik Berisha, Head of Kosovo Credit Guarantee Fund (KCGF)



If you witness fraud and corruption during your interaction with MFK or the implementing partners report here ↓

mcc.gov/reportfraud

FAVORITE TWEETS



GRETCHEN BIRKLE
@GBIRKLEUSAID

In #Kosovo, more women than ever before are working in the energy sector, helping tackle challenges that will help unleash Kosovo's economic potential. @USAIDKosovo



**U.S. EMBASSY
PRISTINA**
@USEMBPRISTINA

Yesterday's \$10 million investment signing by @MFKosovo means 12k #Kosovo Termokos customers will get new heat metering equipment that will help them save money and become more energy efficient. #PristinaHeatSave



**AMBASSADOR
PHILIP S. KOSNETT**
@USAMBKOSOVO

These 50 newly manufactured, state of the art ventilators are crucial life-saving devices for the people of Kosovo. This contribution reflects President Trump's personal commitment to assist the people of Kosovo in combatting the pandemic.



**MILLENNIUM
FOUNDATION
@MFKOSOVO**

We've had great reactions to our #WomeninEnergy Internship Program for announcement across social media platforms across the world. Follow us also on @LinkedIn @instagram @YouTube to find out about this and other activities we implement under @MCCgov threshold.



Tracey Jacobson • 1st Ambassador, Mentor, Foreign Policy Advisor
Great initiative! I always found women in Kosovo to be focused, energetic, and committed to doing the right thing for their country. I wonder if some of the new interns will be graduates of our U.S. exchange programs.

TRANSPARENCY IN COURT NOW



↳ GENTIANA MAHMUTI
JUDICIAL & OPEN DATA MANAGER

THE CHALLENGER

INCREASING CIVIC TRUST BY SUPPORTING JUDICIAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

What is the key aim of the Transparent and Accountable Governance Project implemented by the Millennium Foundation Kosovo?

Transparency and accountability are the main pillars for governing democracies since they ensure the public availability of information that can be used to measure performance and contribute to good governance. This is also what our Transparent and Accountable Governance Project aims to achieve by improving the public availability and analytical use of judicial, environmental, and labor force data by civil society, business, and the Government, thus promoting data-driven decision-making.

Many international donors have been supporting the rule of law activities in Kosovo. What is the added value brought by the MFK planned activities?

Since 1999, many international donors have been supporting the efforts of the Kosovo institutions to establish a functional justice system and carry out the necessary reforms of in the rule of law. International stakeholders (USAID, European Union Office in Kosovo, Council of Europe, and Norwegian Embassy) for years now have invested in improving efficiency and transparency in the sector. However, the judicial system still faces challenges to improve data-based decision-making, making the judicial data publicly available, and ensuring a more proactive communication with the public, which would ultimately build greater public trust in the justice system. Thereof, the Public Access to Judicial Information Activity that is being implemented by MFK will bring added value by digitizing some of the services provided by the judicial institutions, making the judicial data publicly available, as well as creating a more data driven and proactive communication of the justice sector with the civil society, private sector, and media.

What are the benefits of the digitalization of the justice sector and how does MFK activities relate to the ongoing process of court digitalization supported by Norwegian Government?

Digitization of the justice sector brings many benefits for users and stakeholders. Some of those include improvement of data management, accessibility, visibility, system integration, and more efficient case administration in general.

One of the most important projects, the Case Management Information System (CMIS), supported by the Norwegian Government, entails the digitization of the judiciary, enhancing transparency and accountability of judges, and improving the overall efficiency and quality of justice in Kosovo.

The Public Access to Judicial Information (PAJI) activity, implemented by MFK, builds upon the ongoing efforts of the CMIS project and aims to take it a step further in providing citizens with access to their judicial cases. This project will also address problems caused by unequal access to justice; unequal access to judicial information and timely procedural data for the parties involved in court cases.

In the current state, the data generated through CMIS on court cases and cases that are under investigation is only internally available, specifically only for the users of the system that comprise of court and prosecution staff. While such data is useful for the public, the information is not made available, distributed or exchanged with external parties. Our Public Access to Judicial Information (PAJI) activity, aims to support the Kosovo Judicial Council (KJC) by building upon assistance provided by USAID and Norway to implement the CMIS and use that system to improve the administration of justice in Kosovo, through the following sub-activities:

- Creating an Online Data Platform for the public to access to statistical data generated by the case management information system (CMIS), as well as enabling disaggregation and analysis of data by meaningful categories, such as sex, region, income level or ethnicity.
- Creating an online Case Tracking Mechanism for authorized public users to access their individual case information, case status and procedural actions within the judicial system.
- Supporting the improvement of communication and outreach by the judiciary and other rule of law institutions to encourage new data analysis; establish and maintain a constructive dialogue with the public over judicial data and judicial performance.



—The Public Access to Judicial Information (PAJI) activity builds upon the ongoing efforts of the CMIS project and aims to take it a step further in providing citizens with access to their judicial cases.

How can the MCC-supported project help transparency in the court system and how can citizens be more involved through these activities?

MCC Public Access to Judicial Information project is focused on facilitating the availability and implementation of new ICT in the Kosovo justice system that will permit multiple interactions between social actors and justice sector, which will in turn translate into more transparent and collaborative relations between the citizens and the court system. This judicial openness and judicial transparency will in turn improve the justice service delivery which positively affects citizens daily lives. In addition, this project will also have an impact on judicial accountability and the capacity to provide an effective response from judicial bodies to the citizens.

Are Kosovo organizations and citizens ready to consume and use open data from the judicial sector in their work, either in the private sector, or academia or civic advocacy?

Open data has the capacity to allow citizens and other stakeholders have a better understanding of the work of judicial sector and participate in improving the efficiency of this sector. The civil society, academia, and the private sector must productively work alongside governments and institutions to address gaps where additional data would improve government, citizen, and private sector decision-making with respect to improved judicial information.

Although Kosovo's judicial institutions, government, civil society, educational institutions, and private sector have collected data on the factors associated with justice sector, this data is neither widely accessible, aggregated, interpreted, nor well-understood. This lack of clarity continues to compromise Kosovo's ability to plan and execute reforms and stimulate economic growth and citizen well-being.

On the other hand, are these stakeholders ready to use and consume these data when they become publicly available?

I can say that from what we have learned by running two different open data challenges in 2019 and 2020, which to mention have not been concentrated in judicial data, is that despite the fact that open data is a new concept in Kosovo, these stakeholders have the willingness to use and work with open data, yet, investment in building the skills of these stakeholders to use open data remains a strong need.

I'm basing this claim on the fact that from the pool of applicants we had, when datasets were published for use in proposals, we noticed a gap in skills of most of the applicants to do the actual analysis of open data. Therefore, I believe that while there is a willingness to use these data, some work has to be done in developing the capacities of the civil society, private sector, academia, and media when it comes to doing the actual analysis of open data and translating these data into insights.

MFK ACTIVITIES

MFK SIGNS FIRST 10 INTERNSHIP CONTRACTS AND 20 MORE TO GO THIS WEEK

Earlier this year, MFK signed the first of 200 paid internship positions for women in the energy sector, through the Internship Program for Women in Energy. This first cohort of women started working from distance, due to the pandemic. In mid October, MFK launched the second cohort of 20 more paid internships in different municipalities in Kosovo, for women of different profiles. This is the second wave of internship opportunities through MFK's Women in Energy Internship Program. 200 young women will be provided with on-the-job experience, throughout the program.

MFK SIGNS LOI ON THE NEW WINDOW OF BANK GUARANTEES FOR IPPTS

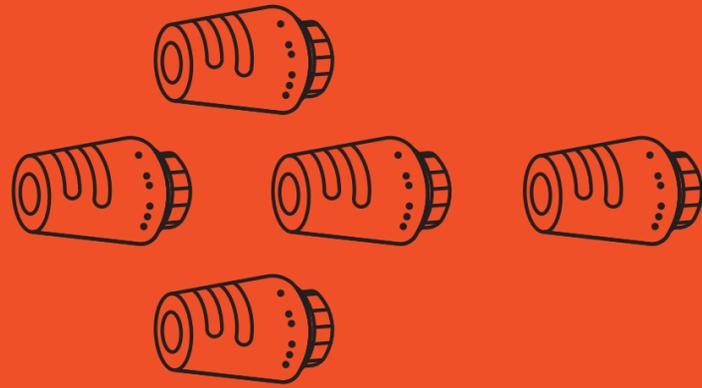
Following the agreement between MFK and KCGF to create a new window of guarantees for private sector to invest in independent power generation and other investments in energy, MFK, KCGF, and the Ministry of Finance (MOF) signed a Letter of Intent to unlock up to 25 million euros in commercial financing for renewable energy and energy efficiency projects. This activity will not only bring needed financial support to energy entrepreneurs, but also benefit the banking sector, which is expected to have broad benefits to economic growth and job creation in the future.

WE WE PROGRAM LAUNCHED TO EMPOWER WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN KOSOVO

In early October, MFK launched another program aiming to empower women and help them achieve their full potential. Women Energy Entrepreneurs-Business Acceleration Support Program aims to help women entrepreneurs through a combination of technical assistance and investment grants in energy efficiency measures and modern equipment that will help them grow their business and use energy efficiently. All women entrepreneurs, who want to grow their businesses through efficient use of energy, are encouraged to apply for one out of three different components designed to address different needs of women businesses: Smart, Advanced or Simple.

TERMOKOS WITH A SMART HEAT METERING SYSTEM

MFK, supported by MCC, is investing \$10 million in Termokos, the heating local supplier of district heating in Prishtina. This investment will enable smart measuring of expenditures, thus allowing its customers to be charged based on consumption rather than per square meter. More than 12,000 customers will be provided with smart meters which will allow them to save as well as control their heating expenditures. In this regard, on October 29, 2020, MFK and Termokos formalized their cooperation by signing a Memorandum of Understanding for the implementation of the Prishtina HeatSave.



1 INTERNEWS KOSOVA



PROJECT NAME
USING MEDIA TO RAISE AWARENESS ON THE MAIN CAUSES OF AIR POLLUTION IN KOSOVO

SOLUTION
Awareness raising on the causes, effects, risks and prevention of air pollution to the general public, with a focus on: adults with respiratory and other health issues, pregnant women, the elderly, children, students, journalists and other media outlets.

BUDGET
41,500 Euros

IMPLEMENTATION TIME
18 months

2 TARINA RUGOVA & RREZE GJAKOVA



PROJECT NAME
REA

SOLUTION
Creation of an app that will report the air quality in Kosovo through visualisations and maps.

BUDGET
47,350 Euros

IMPLEMENTATION TIME
15 months

DIGDATA CHALLENGE FINALISTS TO START IMPLEMENTING THEIR PROJECTS ON AIR QUALITY

MFK and the Ministry of Economy and Environment (MEE) of the Republic of Kosovo, signed a Memorandum of Understanding in support of the Dig Data: Air Quality Challenge Project. With the signing of this agreement, the finalists of DigData Challenge, will start implementing their innovative projects, aiming to provide pilots and solutions focused on causes, effects, risks and prevention of air pollution to the general public.

3 BONEVET



PROJECT NAME
BREATH DATA

SOLUTION
Creation of an educational platform for high school students to build small scale air quality sensors.

BUDGET
49,317 Euros

IMPLEMENTATION TIME
12 months

4 LLOGARITE



PROJECT NAME
AIRBOT

SOLUTION
Translation of all air quality data into an understandable format for the public, by implementing Machine Learning and AI.

BUDGET
46,800

IMPLEMENTATION TIME
12 months

General Procurement Notice (GPN)

Government of the Republic of Kosovo
Millennium Foundation of Kosovo (MFK)

The Government of the Kosovo has received grant funding of USD\$49 million (Forty–Nine Million United States Dollars) from the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) of the United States Government to enable the Government of the Republic of Kosovo to implement this program and achieve the objectives of the MCC Grant Threshold agreement, and it intends to apply parts of the proceeds of the funds to payments for contracts for goods, works and services.

MCC's funding is appropriated by the U.S. Congress and obligated to the compact up-front, with no incremental or partial funding. When a contract is signed with an MFK, money is already available to the MFK and, for most contracts, invoices are paid directly to Contractors/Consultants/Suppliers by the US Treasury. The procurement program for this period will include the following:

Procurements for period November 2020 – December 2020

Procurement of Goods

In the Reliable Energy Landscape Project including:
– DHM – Metering system supply & installing

Procurement of Works

In the Reliable Energy Landscape Project including:
– Household Efficiency Retrofits (HER) Intervention Package – EE materials and products
– AER – Apartment Building Efficiency Retrofits Sub-activity Works

Procurement of Services

In the Reliable Energy Landscape Project, Transparent Governance Project and Administration sector, including:
– Software, Hardware, and TA in Communications & Outreach for the Public Access to Judicial Information Activity (Case Management Information System "CMIS")
– Consultancy (Stakeholders workshops for Judicial Dig Data Challenge)
– Procurement of Consultant Services IPP and Energy Efficiency Project Accelerator and Pipeline Development
 Consultant: Demand-Side Training, Firm–Level Engagement, and Marketing Strategy
– Communication and Outreach for Judicial Data Challenge
– Event Management for CMIS workshops and promotional activities
– Consultants – Jury for Open Data Challenge
– Dig Data Air Quality Awards Ceremony & Promotion and Events for the Energy Dig Data
– Consultant to assist with activities WE Internship and Scholarship Program
– Liaise and manage with potential host institutions in the energy sector with activities WE Internship and Scholarship Program.
– Outreach activities and the launch event for the Internship Program
– Data Quality Review for Reliable Energy Landscape Project and Transparent Governance Project
– Consultancy (Open Data Training of Gov't/CSO's/Private Sector) for Energy Dig Data

Contracts for goods, works and services financed under the program will be implemented according to the principles, rules and procedures set out in the MCC Program Procurement Guidelines, which can be found at the MFK website.

The procurement is open to all bidders from eligible source countries as defined in the MCC Program Procurement Guidelines. Specific procurement notices for contracts to be tendered under the competitive bidding procedures and for consultant contracts will be announced, as they become available, on the MFK website: www.millenniumkosovo.org/, United Nations Development Business (UNDB): www.devbusiness.com/, Development Gateway Market (dgMarket): www.dgmarket.com/, in local newspapers, and other media outlets as appropriate.

Interested eligible contractors and consultants who wish to be included on the mailing list to receive a notice of advertisements should subscribe on the MFK website under the link: millenniumkosovo.org/subscribe/, type your email and select under the list Procurement, or those requiring additional information, should contact:

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The Challenger

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