



# KOSOVO AMERICAN EDUCATION FUND

*Quarterly Newsletter, December 2022*







# 2022: A YEAR IN REVIEW

As 2022 comes to an end, we are looking back at some of the highlights that made KAEF's year. From Prime Minister Kurti's visit to the U.S., to the graduation of KAEF fellows, the event honoring alumni contributions, and the launch of 'KAEF Business Breakfast' series, among others, 2022 was marked by activities which continued to promote the program as an impactful and transformative opportunity for talented Kosovars with potential to drive Kosovo's future.

March 2022: KAEF celebrates Women's History Month by highlighting alumnae success stories

May 2022: Graduation caps are thrown for the 2020-2022 KAEF cohort

May 2022: Kosovo's Prime Minister, Albin Kurti, visits American Councils' offices in D.C.

June 2022: KAEF organizes an event honoring KAEF alumni contributions

August/September 2022: KAEF cohort of 2022-2024 departs for the U.S., recruitment for the upcoming cohort continues

October 2022: KAEF founder and committee member, Mr. Dale Pfeiffer, visits Kosovo

November 2022: KAEF Business Breakfast series launch, with the CEO of ProCredit Bank in Kosovo, Mrs. Eriola Bibolli, as the guest speaker

December 2022: Second series of KAEF Business Breakfast is held, with the CEO and Board Member of Limak Kosovo International Airport J.S.C., Mr. Haldun Kakturk, as the guest speaker

December 2022: KAEF team, joined by alumni, attended AmCham Kosovo's Charity Gala Dinner, where 50% of the proceeds benefited KAEF

## ALUMNI UPDATE: RINOR GJONBALAJ

**Rinor Gjonbalaj** (Business Administration, Temple University '13) officially announced his new role as the President Country Director of Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC). As a senior representative and diplomatic attaché of the U.S. Government, Rinor will oversee MCC's compact investments in Kosovo.

Rinor will be the first United States citizen born in Prishtina to serve as a senior-ranking American official in Kosovo.



The MCC-Kosovo Compact, which totals \$236 million, seeks to transform Kosovo's energy sector to be more sustainable, inclusive, reliable and affordable. The MCC Compact focuses on addressing Kosovo's unreliable supply of electricity, a binding economic constraint for the country, through three projects: 1) American Catalyst Facility for Development (ACFD), 2) Energy Storage Project, and 3) Just and Equitable Transition Acceleration Project (JETA).

The Millennium Challenge Corporation is a U.S. government agency working to reduce global poverty through economic growth. Created in 2004, MCC provides time-limited grants and assistance to countries that meet rigorous standards for good governance, fighting corruption and respecting democratic rights.

# DALE PFEIFFER VISITS KOSOVO

In October, KAEF founder and committee member Mr. **Dale Pfeiffer** visited Kosovo. During his time in Kosovo, Mr. Pfeiffer, together with KAEF committee members and staff, held a series of important meetings with government officials, political leaders, private sector representatives, and members of the American Chamber of Commerce in Kosovo. During the week, Mr. Pfeiffer also had a number of media appearances, including a radio interview, and a TV interview where he was joined by a KAEF alumnus. These meetings were highly productive in that they elicited strong support from all the interlocutors.

During this visit, an informal gathering with the program alumni was organized, where in addition to networking, alumni had a chance to exchange ideas on sustaining the program, past its 18th year of operation.

The aim of Mr. Pfeiffer's visit was to emphasize the important role that the KAEF program has had, since its establishment in 2004, in transforming Kosovo's economic development through education, as well as to rally support for the continuation of its impactful work.





## ALUMNI UPDATE: SELIM SELIMI



**Selim Selimi** (Law/Development, International Development Policy, Duke University '10) started a new role as a Rule of Law Advisor for the U.S. State Department - Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) funded project in East Africa implemented by UNOPS. Selim is in charge of advising INL East Africa Transnational Organized Crime program (EA - TOC) and national-level institutions on Rule of Law matters. Selim is based in Port Louis, Mauritius and assists the Law Enforcement and Prosecution of Western Indian Ocean Islands of Mauritius, Seychelles, Madagascar and Comoros with advice and training to build their capacities to improve the interdiction, investigation, and prosecution of crimes.

# KAEF BUSINESS BREAKFAST SERIES

In November, KAEF launched its newest activity titled 'KAEF Business Breakfast.' KAEF Business Breakfast are series of monthly events involving the business community, contributing to high discussions on economic and other major issues facing Kosovo today. The inaugural event featured Mrs. **Eriola Bibolli**, CEO of ProCredit Bank in Kosovo, who presented an overview of the banking sector, before taking questions from guests, including KAEF alumni.

In December, KAEF held its second series of 'KAEF Business Breakfast,' featuring Mr. **Haldun Firat Köktürk**, CEO and Board Member of Limak Kosovo International Airport J.S.C. During this event, guests had the chance to hear from Mr. Köktürk talk about Limak's investment in Kosovo, along with the challenges and opportunities in the aviation industry, before taking questions from guests and KAEF alumni.





## FELLOW UPDATE: DREN KRASNIQI



**Dren Krasniqi** (MBA, Brandeis University '23) - "I have always wanted to pursue my master's studies because I am passionate about learning and want to further my business knowledge. KAEF scholarship offered me the unique opportunity to study at a prestigious institution and receive mentorship from experts in my field. The scholarship program also provided me with a generous financial package that allowed me to focus on my studies without worrying about the financial burden of pursuing a master's degree. Additionally, the program's emphasis on community engagement and leadership was highly appealing, allowing me to give back to my community through service. I am thrilled to be part of the KAEF scholarship program and am excited to see where it will take me in my academic and professional journey.

Brandeis International Business School offers a rigorous educational experience in the context of an inclusive, caring campus environment. Students and faculty are warm, engaging and will go out of their way to make you feel at home. Classes are interactive, informal and typically small, allowing students to get to know their professors and one another. At the same time, Brandeis International Business School has a global feel, as I met classmates and faculty from more than 20 nations.

As I approach the final semester of my studies in the U.S., the most valuable aspect of my experience has been interacting and networking with individuals from different cultures. Through this program, I have been able to make friends who will be my future connections around the world. The practical approach of the American education system has greatly enhanced my skills in data analytics, business dynamic, and public speaking. Moreover, it helped me in developing my professional skills, like working on my resume, cover letters, elevator speeches, and personal branding.

Having lived in the U.S. before, as part of a work and travel program, I understood the cultural difference between Kosovo and the U.S. However, one factor that can contribute to culture shock is the overwhelming number of choices available in the U.S. For example, there are numerous restaurants, stores, and entertainment options to choose from, which can be overwhelming for someone who is not used to such a wide range of options. Additionally, the fast-paced nature of life in the U.S. can be a source of culture shock for some students. Adjusting to these differences and navigating the abundance of choices can be difficult at first, but with time and patience, most students are able to adapt and fully embrace the cultural diversity of the U.S.

To be part of this wonderful experience, start the application process early since it will give you plenty of time to complete the application and gather all the required materials. It is also essential to tailor your application to the scholarship by showing how your background and goals align with the mission and values of KAEF. Lastly, if you have any questions or need help with your application, don't hesitate to seek support and guidance from KAEF alumni.



## FELLOW UPDATE: FJOLLA AZEMI



**Fjolla Azemi** (MBA, Bentley University '23) - "I am overjoyed to have graduated from the Business Analytics program at Bentley University. My experience there has been nothing but rewarding, both professionally and personally. I've always been interested in how data can be used to make better business decisions, improve operations, and gain a competitive advantage. This degree allowed me to expand my knowledge of data mining, machine learning, data visualization, and statistical analysis while also developing my business acumen. On the other hand, this experience allowed me to immerse myself in new cultures and learn from peers and professors about the field's rapidly growing trends."

*"I will be eternally grateful to KAEF for assisting me in achieving this goal, and I hope to give back to the community what was given to me!"*



# AMCHAM KOSOVO'S ANNUAL CHARITY GALA DINNER RALLIES SUPPORT FOR KAEF

On December 9th, the American Chamber of Commerce in Kosovo held its annual Charity Gala Dinner, the first one since the breakout of the COVID-19 pandemic. The event, attended by over 400 guests, including the U.S. Ambassador to Kosovo, Mr. Jeffrey M. Hovenier, and the Deputy Chief of Mission, Mrs. Alyson Grunder, had a special significance for the program, as KAEF was the beneficiary of 50% of the proceeds from the gala. On behalf of the KAEF program, the KAEF team, joined by alumni, attended the event and had a chance to thank AmCham members for their generous contribution.

The KAEF program is dedicated to continue its impactful work on educating talented Kosovans, and bring positive change to Kosovo's future!





# Kosovo American Education Fund

Learn more: [kaef-online.org](http://kaef-online.org)

To support our program, please visit:  
<https://www.mygiving.net/donate/KAEF>

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