In Conclusion:
Emerging From Post-Conflict to a New Beginning

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Our original intent in this edition was to be broader in scope, but in the research, discussions, and writing that followed which produced the materials we have shared, it became both more narrow and yet deeper. In re-reading our own works this seems to be both a necessary and productive process. There were two key elements that influence what was essentially an emergent design for this edition; First a group of writers with a mixture of talents who produced some incredible results with little, or no resources – much like many underfunded reform initiatives in the rest of the world, but particularly pertinent to the resource starved realities of the Kosovo context. Second was that in reflecting the reality of Kosovo’s post-conflict educational reforms; the context of K-12 and pre-service teaching education seems to have drawn this process toward an eventual realization as to the central and critical importance of the closely intertwined relationships and organizational dynamic between key entities – the University of Prishtina (UP) and its new Faculty of Education (FE), the Ministry (MEST), and the work of the lead agency for reform in this area, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), and its funding of Kosovo based Kosovo Educator Development Project (KEDP). It is in these deeply influential, yet multi-faceted, elements that we would like to comment by way of concluding this special edition.

In recapping where we have gone in Section A, we feel we have looked deeper inside at some of the changes emerging, advocated, and resisted by the various actors responsible for teacher training in Kosovo. Edita Alo discussed teaching at the university and argued that newer teaching styles and related “democratic approaches tend to build the climate of tolerance, acceptance, [and] will create a safe environment in which students are empowered where teachers promote an atmosphere
of mutual respect.” Ilirana Tahiraj adds to this mix as she looks inside the university in search of gender equity for women involved in Kosovo education and in particularly those at the university. She asks the question about a familiar concern in the gender literature in a unique multi-ethnic and largely Muslim post-conflict context, namely that “while status in terms of opportunity and access to educational programs and roles for women have improved; is there still a gender imbalance present in education?” She emerged from this discussion and research to find that while things are improving there are disparities and much more needs to be done. Encouragingly in her research was the finding that women in Kosovo appear to be ready to step forward – indeed many of the writers in this edition are strong cases in point. Afredita Tahiri complements this discussion in arguing for the fostering of transformative learning as “professors and students are now somewhat more open to democratic changes and willing to adapt their educational system to contemporary needs,” although there is resistance as “there still exist a strong conservative faction among the professors who shy away from making or endorsing genuine and meaningful changes.” This resistance from a conservative faction is aptly captured in last article in section A and throughout section B as we went even deeper before we go wider into the reform context as it relates to the relationship between MEST, CIDA-KEDP, and the University. The article by Breca and Anderson provides real and sometimes visceral insights of the reform process; the views of resistors and advocates to reform, as well as considerable insights into the motivations of each.

Section B links teacher training and higher education in Kosovo from the present to the future. The current reality is comparatively narrower yet deeply centered around the relationship between the UP, CIDA-KEDP-MEST. This transition from the post-conflict world of today to the final status of tomorrow is of critical importance as the issues raised for the central roles each played. Again this debate seems to be part of a normative and democratic wrangling. The dispute may actually be a healthy sign of Kosovo as an emergent, not just an emerging democracy. As Kosovo education moves closer to a synergy with its European counterparts it is guided by European standards as reflected in the “Bologna Accord.” Juanita and Walter Epp described the growing influence of the Bologna Accord and aspirations Kosovo’s growing move toward greater inclusion with Europe. The impact of the Bologna Accord and aspirations of the European Union are a powerful influence which both motivates Kosovo educators to support reforms and ultimately sets the standards for success. Armend Tahirsyzai,