



Challenges and Opportunities of Women Professionals in their carrier path

PUBLICATION Vol.2



Leadership and Growth Council

About us

Leadership and Growth Council (LGC) is a non-profit organization established in July 2014 which seeks to induce growth and enhance leadership throughout sectors in general and specially in education and economy. LGC is dedicated to advance the understanding, practice and development of leadership and increase civic participation for the benefit and the development of the society.

Leadership and Growth Council (LGC) is the successor of the Hope Fellowship Program as a result of spin off process in July 2014 which was created and sponsored by the USAID since 2001. The main driving force of LGC is its Professional Women's Network (PWN) of more than 400 members and continuousness of its institutional partnerships in country and in the region.

“Career Development for Young Women” – Supported by the US Embassy in Prishtina

“Career Development for Young Women” is a project which aims to provide assistance for career development to young women in order to enable them for engagement in institutional and social life after graduation. Women in Kosovo continue to remain the most marginalized structure within economic sector and unemployment continues to be the biggest challenge that women face especially the inexperienced ones. At the middle and end of the project implementation LGC will design and publish two publications to promote the culture of the mentoring and guidance on career development for young professionals.

This project was funded through a U.S. Embassy, Pristina grant. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed herein are those of the Author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of State

The purpose of publication

Through this research Leadership and Growth Council aims to identify main obstacles and opportunities that young graduates face here in Kosovo. This publication serves as a modest contribution to the gap between the post-graduation and labour market. Leadership and Growth Council seeks to analyse the importance of this particular transition, starting from Higher Education studies to the Labour market in Kosovo.

[Related to the previous publication]

The main questions of the previous quantitative research were not particularly related to the Labour Market analysis as a detached part from the Universities, but rather presented the cycle of transition from being a student to an employee. The aim of this project is the professional development of the students, opportunities provided, and the importance of Higher Education policy reforms to meet the conditions required by the Labour market, and the professions young graduates wish to perform.

[More on the first publication www.lgc-ks.org]

Those two publications serve as a simple research on the main obstacles and opportunities students face after graduating in Kosovo. With qualitative research, this time, LGC provides success stories from now professional women in their careers.

It is important to put the spotlight to now educated successful women, so we can understand and most importantly learn through their first-hand experience, the transition from being a student to an employee, how they maintained and developed their current careers, and to share a light on how difficult this journey can be.

We wanted this publication to be of use for anyone who aims to build a career on different areas and spheres here in Kosovo, whether that be an engineer, journalist, an economist, or any of the professions of choice. We have chosen those three successful women of different age and studies, stories which seek to better understand the obstacles, opportunities that they as young graduates faced after they finished their studies.



Florentina Grubi

“I remain optimistic and truly believe that there is always a way to grasp into the career advancement and succeed in each profession”

University of Prishtina / University of Maastricht

Field of Study: Advanced LLM in Intellectual Property and Knowledge Management

1. *When/Why did you choose the profession you hold?*

I was grown up in a family of lawyers, as both my parents were lawyers. Initially I embraced the idea of becoming a lawyer as a unique opportunity to help others, work with fairness and abide to rules. Being a lawyer entails more than that. It consists of different practice areas whereas requires particular analytical and problem-solving skills, which are crucial for a successful career. I decided to specialize in intellectual property, since we live in such a dynamic and innovative world whereby intellectual property rights constitute a valuable intangible asset for individuals and companies in today's global market economy.

2. *What was the importance of the University you studied to enhance you on preparative professional field?*

I finished my bachelor studies at the University of Prishtina, where I graduated in law. Further, I studied Intellectual Property and Knowledge Management at the University of Maastricht in Netherlands, as a very intriguing and meticulous field of study. Especially for Kosovo, this is a relatively new but rather advancing area of law. We see every day different brands and benefit from inventions that have facilitated

our life. The university where I obtained my master degree gave me the opportunity to gain comprehensive knowledge and specialize further in such area. The international master programme consisted of various lecturing classes, study visits, mock trials and many more activities that intensively combined legal studies with legal practice in European and international law in general, by preparing the students for a promising career in parallel.

3. Your experience on the after graduation period (trainings if included, internships, the search for a job), how was this experience in Kosovo?

Fortunately after my graduation I came back to work at the same law firm where I worked before leaving for LLM studies, so in this aspect I did not have to go through job hunting.

4. *In your opinion, how much does a University degree prepares you professionally to meet the needs of the labour market in Kosovo?*

Certainly the university degree establishes the academic background for a future career, but the work experience has definitely its significant impact. Undoubtedly, these two are conjoined. The labour market in Kosovo is facing many unpredictable challenges and high obstacles so the labour force has to adjust to the labour market needs, sometimes there is not so much space to excel the talents, but I remain optimistic and truly believe that there is always a way to grasp into the career advancement and succeed in each profession.

5. *What were your main challenges and opportunities to enhance your career in Kosovo?*

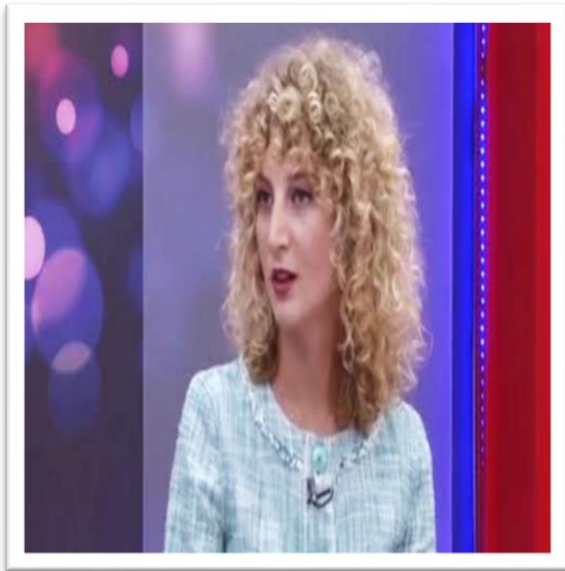
Personally, I was very persuasive and stubborn in enhancement of my career and I benefited from several opportunities that have shaped my legal education. Despite my bachelor and master studies, I was part of the VIS Moot competition, which is an international moot court competition in commercial law and arbitration whereby more than 300 law schools are part of it. Further, I attended the Leadership development programme organized by College of Europe and I am also a former fellow of Hope Fellowship Programme and many other activities that have had a valuable influence in my career. The main challenges that I faced include moving into another country for a year and studying in another language. Even returning back in Kosovo and consistently trying to adjust and focus on latest trends and struggles in Kosovo faced by daily work was not that easy-going.

6. *Why it's important to develop and hold this profession?*

It appears to be quite appealing and thought-provoking, because you will have to constantly follow and diligently expand your knowledge to progressively succeed further, perhaps same as with many other professions. Consequently the legal framework has been changing in Kosovo during last years and the market is becoming more demanding for substantial changes. As a consequence, legal services are a must for an accurate development. Particularly, in the intellectual property area there is an immense necessity for advancements in terms that many local and international clients are interested to protect their rights in Kosovo, so we have to create a strong legal environment for foreign investors in general. Moreover, there are many ongoing projects that require specific legal expertise so this profession is unquestionably a critical commitment.

7. *Why should young girls pursue this career?*

Young girls should undoubtedly be highly encouraged to pursue this career as a promising profession. By commencing from a college degree, females should be motivated to study hard and develop their academic skills and be equipped for labour market. We notice large gender gaps in several professions and this should be another incentive to fulfil such gaps with professional females and contribute for a better equal society.



Majlinda Aliu

“This profession is tough, but it is the best one for those who love to challenge the system and want to make the changes for the good of their society”

University AAB - Prishtine

Field of studies: Mass communication and Journalism

1. *When/Why did you choose the profession you hold?*

The decision to study journalism came to very spontaneously. After finishing the high school, my plans at that period were to study Art design at Faculty of Fine Arts at the University of Prishtina. However, I didn't succeed to register, then, at that year Academy of Fine Arts-AAB was established in that year (2002) offering studies in the field of Mass communication and Journalism, and I was among the first students to begin studies at AAB University.

2. *What was the importance of the University you studied to enhance you on preparative professional field?*

During three years of studies at AAB University, I have learned the basic of journalism, and it has helped me to get prepared to become a journalist, I would consider it as a guideline for the further steps I have taken.

3. *Your experience on the after graduation period (trainings if included, internships, the search for a job), how was this experience in Kosovo?*

I was fortunate to begin working in my profession, in the third year of my studies. In April 2005, I was employed at Koha Vision Television-KTV, as TV reporter on the news desk. That was my first work experience. Then, I moved to morning program to work as TV reporter for feature stories. During ten years work experience at RTK, I have had the opportunity to attend many seminars and training which have helped me to develop my professional skills. It's worth to mention that I was alumni of "Hope Fellowship" program, organized by Albanian American Council, and it took place in Washington DC in May 2014, the main purpose of this one-month seminar was to enhance women's capacities for leadership.

4. *In your opinion, how much does a University degree prepares you professionally to meet the needs of the labour market in Kosovo?*

After more than ten years work experience, I decided to take some time-off from my work place and to continue with my Master studies in the UK in the field of journalism. I believe that, it was necessary to invest more in my Academic level, to be able to give more in the profession of journalist. Having said this, I want to emphasize that it is very important for all of those who want to develop a bright career in journalism or any other profession, to specialize in specific fields of their profession, because we (Kosovo) are facing a lack of experts in each field, therefore, the University helps the people to become specialized in any profession.

5. *What were your main challenges and opportunities to enhance your career in Kosovo?*

The beginning for me was a challenge, as it is for everyone else, however, at the same time it was very exciting for me, because I was putting into practice everything I have learned during my studies. The main challenges were, first being young and second being a woman journalist; nevertheless, after a while these facts became irrelevant, because by being a hard worker I managed to overcome the obstacles. Today, after ten years, I believe that these obstacles doesn't exist, now the biggest challenge for the journalists is to prove that they are good journalists and they are different from their colleagues who don't apply any ethics or professionalism on the work they are doing. And unfortunately, they manage to be more "appreciated" than those who continue to do their under professional principles.

6. *Why it's important to develop and hold this profession?*

Good journalism and freedom of media are crucial elements to help a country to become sustainable and developed countries, therefore, if we can manage to improve the level of reporting and if we as a society can avoid the political and economic pressure toward media, then, there is a hope that we can build a democratic country.

7. *Why should young girls pursue this career?*

I would strongly encourage young girls who are passionate to work for civil rights and to raise public awareness to continue their work as journalists, but before taking that decision they should learn about the professional principals. This profession is tough, but it is the best one for those who love to challenge the system and want to make the changes for the good of their society.



Pranvera Dobruna-Kryeziu

“No profession is either male or female, professions are unisex.”

University of Prishtina

Field of Study: Faculty of Electro Engineering

1. When/Why did you choose the profession you hold?

My logic behind choosing this field of study was the potential Kosovo had/has with respect to its energy sector, in line with the need it had/has for guidance and management of its potential for countrywide benefit. We're all aware that Kosovo has an abundance of coal resources up for s, which is why it has the opportunity to develop its potential and invest in Energy as a key factor in the economic development for Kosovo.

2. What was the importance of the University that you studied to enhance you on preparative professional field?

Of primary importance to me, when choosing my University, were the people I would have the chance to cooperate with and learn from. Hence, by choosing the University of Prishtina I chose to work with the professionals of the Industry from the very beginning, thus getting to know them well and understanding the workings of the industry from bottom-up.

Moreover, the University of Prishtina offered a program of theory and practice which made all the difference for me. Being able to implement what you have learned so far is of great value when you are in the beginning of your professional path. You face the real world and bring yourself to a reality-check with in turn aids your understanding and you're planning for the future.

- 3. Your experience on the after graduation period (trainings if included, internships, the search for a job), how was this experience in Kosovo?*

Times have certainly changed, together with the opportunities that women face straight out of the college. I am thankful for the opportunities that my University offered, which was tight knit connection between University and Kosovo Energetic Corporation (KEK) that made possible for me to start my career at the onset of my graduation. However, during my studies I also had the opportunity of internship every year at KEK in different departments. This helped me in further engaging my education to real life work. Moreover, the University was also granted projects for KEK in R&D (Research and Development) for which they chose us, the students, to implement them and receive benefits for our work.

- 4. In your opinion, how much does a University degree prepares you professionally to meet the needs of the labour market in Kosovo?*

Regardless of the field of study, it is key importance that a University try to combine both theory and practice, in an effort to prepare students for the labour market. In this regard it must be noted that state plays a lead role in establishing national priorities, for which students and the labour market must be a first. Policies which work towards developing the labour market even before graduation works as a chain, from national level all the way to specific Universities and their departments, which is why it is the key that student employment and student opportunities are held as a priority in addition, the state must invest in R&D as an opportunity for students to implement what they have learned throughout their University education.

- 5. What were your main challenges and opportunities that enhanced your career in Kosovo?*

Electro engineering as a field in that time, was viewed as being very manly, where the abundance of students were in fact – men! This presented an obstacle for some, but for me was merely seen as an additional push in trying to balance out the gender imbalance. No profession is either male or female, professions are unisex. Furthermore, in an effort to better myself and continue to advance professionally I participated in numerous local and international leadership/movement/professional workshops and trainings. These helped me to also strengthen my networking abilities which are also of value in the professional sphere. In my work towards eradicating my obstacles, I managed to become the Managing Director of KEK and hold a seat on the KEK Board of Directors.

6. *Why is it important to develop and hold this profession?*

Any and all professions hold their individual and societal importance. However, what is of higher importance is knowing yourself and understanding that what in fact, you will love and wish to invest in for years to come. If you believe in something you will tailor it to your needs and standards. Nowadays it is even easier to combine professions you respect and try to come up with unique interpretations of what you are and what you do. You must first know what you want.

7. *Why should young girls pursue this career?*

Energy is and will continue to be national priority of Kosovo, which is why it is important as a field of study will not decrease. Though the focus of Energy and the study of it changes year after year, continuously focusing efforts more on policy making rather than the engineering aspects of it, the University of Prishtina must be willing and able to adapt to such changes in order to produce what the labour market needs. Young women are able to choose from a wide array of possibilities these days, which makes their choice easier and harder at the same time. However, energy will remain an important pillar of economic development and will have multiple opportunities for employment.

