



# **Kosovo Foundation for Open Society**

2017 – 2020 Strategy Paper

## I. Executive Summary

Over the coming four years the Kosovo Foundation for Open Society (KFOS) will maintain its focus on the two main challenges to open society in Kosovo: ethnic division and the culture of impunity. This strategy update, which was developed together with the foundation board, further strengthens those initiatives that have borne the most fruit over the past two years, while incorporating critical learning into the improvement of other aspects of this strategic agenda.

The foundation's four main goals are:

1. To gradually realize the reconnection of ethnic Serbs and Albanians in the deeply divided city of Mitrovica;
2. To effectively challenge the culture of impunity related to large-scale corruption;
3. To leverage the conditionality of Kosovo's EU perspective to advance a range of domestic reforms and to infuse European values into governance practices;
4. To depoliticize and reform Kosovo's corrupt higher education sector, both as an end in itself, and as a high profile example of challenging impunity.

Independent since only 2008 and unrecognized by nearly half the world's states, Kosovo harbors many insecurities. It wants to be recognized by more countries and institutions. It wants to be treated just like any other country. The foundation's theory of change takes into account the outsized role the international community still has over the country. It seeks to take advantage of foreign conditionalities and international conventions to stimulate positive change towards minority issues and governance standards. Equally important is the need for the foundation to build and sustain civic *demand* for better governance. All of the activities described in this proposal work towards these two ends.

The past two years have seen better than expected progress on some of the foundation's agenda. Foremost is the newfound civic energy the foundation has triggered in Mitrovica, the most difficult place to work across the region. This strategy builds upon these efforts. Previous fields and concepts related to transparency, accountability and governance reforms, which have made some progress, have been merged and sharpened. A new line of work on higher education has been added, while the foundation's previous investments in Roma will receive increased funding exclusively from the EU and its partners.

The foundation's four goals are mutually reinforcing. For instance, relaxing minority relations in Mitrovica increases the influence the EU integration process has on the state of reforms. A serious challenge to corruption and impunity improves the prospects of minority integration and regional stability. The higher education system, as currently governed, feeds into the culture of impunity while undermining the prospects of Kosovo's economy. In short, each branch of this strategy contributes to the health of the others. Each is also aimed at mitigating some troubling signs from across the region of growing radicalism (nationalism, religious fundamentalism).

The foundation's program staff of 4 is small when compared to its ambitions. Yet, more than any other actor in the country, the foundation has proved to be a consistent trailblazer, helping to channel the resources of others into bolder and riskier endeavors than they otherwise would have. The foundation aspires to continue playing this catalytic role over the coming four years.

## II. Notable Changes

The strategic vision articulated in the foundation's 2014 strategy paper remains the same. At the time, the foundation established a set of ambitious goals that it believed could generate, over the medium to

long-term, significant societal change. It has made strong, if not always consistent, progress on each of those goals.

This strategy has a few new features. Foremost is the adoption of a new line of activity that will challenge the persistent corruption within Kosovo's higher education sector. Taking on this goal has become increasingly urgent, as the wave of students reaching university age swells (Kosovo has the youngest population in Europe). The problem derives from a culture of nepotism and corruption maintained by the political class. The foundation and its field partners will launch a coordinated set of responses to this.

The more broad-based 'Transparency and Accountability' field from 2014 has been sharpened and renamed 'Challenging Corruption-related Impunity'. It will increase the risk for those involved in high-level wrongdoing. In addition, a former field and concept, both related to leveraging Kosovo's European perspective as a driver for domestic change, have been merged to ensure greater clarity and coordination.

The above-mentioned plans on higher education will be undertaken with resources freed up from the former Roma Self-Advocacy concept, which the EU and the Karl Kübel Stiftung are now supporting with \$2 million.

### III. Field Analysis

Two realities systemically undermine the development of genuine open society in Kosovo. The first is the division of the country, physically and socially, along ethnic grounds. The second is the undemocratic nature of governance maintained by the ruling class, which is characterized by large-scale corruption and impunity. These are the high-level challenges this strategy responds to.

Over the past two years there have been some improvements. The political dialogue restarted between Kosovo and Serbia in 2014 has offered modest hope that relations between the two countries will ease and that citizens will gain greater freedom of movement. Indeed, the Serb population in Kosovo's north is starting to show small signs of increased cooperation with other parts of the country, and is following the Belgrade line less strictly. The opening of new civic activity in the divided city of Mitrovica, led by the foundation, may eventually indicate a positive change in ethnic relations.

Paradoxically, this relaxation has created new challenges. Any move towards political dialog and compromise has been seen as blasphemy by Albanian and Serb nationalists. In Kosovo one of the political parties has repeatedly released tear gas in parliament to challenge the establishment of the Serb-populated municipalities to form a municipal association. This led to the arrest of several opposition leaders and to an acute crisis across the political spectrum, which has since abated. While international relations have somewhat improved, domestic governance has not. High-level corruption remains widespread, supported by a politicized judiciary and a civil society (including media) that is still, for the most part, going through its own growing pains. Far stronger than they were years ago, an important role for the foundation is to ensure that the civic and media sectors are far more effective at holding public authorities to account in five more years from now.

Much of the foundation's work is influenced by the conditionalities attached to Kosovo's EU perspective. While the foundation ultimately aspires to see Kosovo join the European Union, its immediate interest is in using that perspective to pressure public authorities and the broader society to improve issues related to minorities and governance.

The foundation coordinates and collaborates with all of the significant donors in Kosovo, including the EU, USAID, the WB, SDC, Norwegian Aid, SIDA and DfID. Its pioneering work on Mitrovica and Roma and other issues has helped channel significant international funds towards activities the foundation initially spearheaded.

## IV. Unit Positioning

KFOS is the only local grantmaking foundation in Kosovo. It is also among the very few that maintains the long-term trust of so many constituencies, including the government, civil society, the general population and ethnic minorities. Throughout its existence it has regularly had good 'offers' for each of them. For instance, it has been 'a friend' of government when interests aligned (visa liberalization, bridge building to Europe, capacity support for ministries and municipalities) but an equally strong adversary when interests diverged (corruption). The trust it has built has enabled the foundation to find success with the most sensitive of issues, such as Mitrovica, where others have tried and failed.

Continuity, in terms of long-term dedication to difficult issues, support to civil society strengthening, and the experience of a small but highly skilled staff, is another way the foundation has distinguished itself. For instance, there is no other actor that can so effectively engage with ethnic minorities. The program staff has worked in their respective fields, with partners and beneficiary groups, for 10 years on average, giving them the necessary skills and expertise to advance key goals.

The foundation has also established powerful advocacy platforms, two of which it manages directly in support all of its goals:

- Forum2015: Kosovo's most prestigious debate forum, through which the foundation regularly convenes the country's key decision makers and influencers. Events are live broadcasted and covered extensively by all national media outlets. Forum's activities have led to dramatic policy changes on a range of issues (e.g. environmental policy, visa liberalization, etc.).
- Open333: the foundation's provocative video series analyzes issues from three distinct points of view and generates novel forms of debate. Each edition is viewed by over 60,000 people, and has generated robust debate on visa liberalization, the crisis in higher education, and other issues.

The foundation is also supporting its principal grantee in the North, Aktiv, to design and manage its own advocacy platforms: the Center for Civic Energy and Empirica. The former has become the centerpiece for all civic engagement in Mitrovica while the latter has replicated the Forum 2015 model for the Serbian community, with live televised policy debates and standing room only events. Both have become brand names in northern Kosovo and have helped to influence the public discourse on important issues (e.g. the criminal code, the role of language in Kosovo, etc.).

Finally, the foundation collaborates with the other OSF foundations in South East Europe; for example, with the Bosnia foundation to overturn the restrictive visa regime and with the Serbia foundation to challenge the status quo in Mitrovica (the Serbia foundation assisted with citizen surveys and needs analysis in Kosovo North). The foundation recently held joint board sessions with the Albania foundation to analyze worrying regional trends of rising nationalism and fundamentalism, which informed this paper. In the forthcoming strategy period the foundation will work with HESP on higher education reform and will seek guidance from the Program on Independent Journalism with regards to investigative journalism.

## V. Categories of Work

**Theme:** Democratic Practice; **Sub-Theme:** Civic Engagement and Inclusive Participation in Democratic Governance; **Approach:** Concept; **Budget:** 27%

**Goal 1: Reconnecting Mitrovica** – The foundation’s 2014 strategy featured a number of ambitious Concepts, but none more than its intention to ‘reconnect’ Kosovo’s Serb-majority North with the rest of the country. Mitrovica, in northern Kosovo, remains one of the most divided cities in the world<sup>1</sup>, as symbolized by a NATO-guarded bridge over the River Ibar separating the two sides of the city. Until recently, sixteen years of high-level political negotiations resulted in little progress. Many had observed, as we noted in 2014, that ‘as goes Mitrovica, so goes Kosovo’. Simply put, there is no more transformative issue in Kosovo, with so many implications for open society, than the future of Mitrovica.

Since the end of conflict in 1999, Mitrovica’s citizens have been separated from their neighbors, their neighborhoods and their properties. During this period the North became an increasingly closed society. Absent the rule of law, organized crime flourished. And with Belgrade providing a monopoly on information, plurality of voice weakened. Civil society remained restricted.

The 2014 signing of a political agreement between Kosovo and Serbia, brokered by the European Union, gave the foundation an opportunity to address this difficult issue. Since then, the foundation has been steadily working to foster a more open society in the North while simultaneously reconnecting Serb and Albanian institutions and people across the city’s dividing line. Given the complexity of the situation, the foundation recognizes that there will be no linear path to success. Our change hypothesis is based on the notion that it is essential to: 1) cultivate the North’s civil society; 2) establish new links between civic, academic and community-based groups on both sides of the River, and; 3) reconnect ordinary people around issues of mutual interest and concern.

In the last two years, more progress has been made than originally forecasted. As such, the foundation intends to continue to strengthen this line of work. Below are some of the major interventions the foundation has undertaken thus far:

- Together with the Open Society Foundation Serbia: a) opinion polling to establish a baseline of public perception and to help shape project activities, and b) joint support for activities that bring together artists, students, and academics to meet/perform in Prishtina and Belgrade.
- The establishment of the Center for Civic Energy (CEC) in the North, which has become to civil society what Rick’s Café was to Casablanca—the singular meeting place for all civic activity in town. The Center now hosts at least two NGO events per day, sponsored by many donors;
- The generation of well-grounded policy analyses, through think tanks and civic groups, which has directly led to the creation of the debate forum called ‘Empirica’ (based on the foundation’s Forum 2015 model), which regularly convenes high-profile, televised discussions on policy issues;
- The launching of a bi-weekly TV talk show, ‘Agreement’, broadcasted from the Center for Civic Energy by all five Serbian-language media outlets;

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<sup>1</sup>The North extends beyond Mitrovica to three smaller municipalities, but Mitrovica is representative of the North as a whole. The River Ibar is the dividing boundary between Mitrovica’s Albanian-majority south and its Serbian-majority north.

- The introduction of the European Integration School in the North, through which 70 students—far more than the foundation anticipated—have already deepened their knowledge and understanding of EU values, standards, and institutions.

Each intervention builds off one another. Graduates of the European Integration School increasingly participate in the NGO and debate activities. The TV shows and policy debates have stimulated newfound interest in the work of the NGOs and the School. The opening of the Center for Civic Energy has created more space to engage with students and to host more professional policy debates.

In addition to stimulating civic energy in the North, small steps have already been taken on the ‘reconnecting’ front. Some of these are more symbolic than substantive; but symbolism is a powerful driving force: 1) in 2015, Serbian students at the European School traveled to Prishtina and entered the Ministry of European Integration for the first time, which would have been blasphemous in years past; 2) The foundation organized a roundtable with participants from both sides of Mitrovica to debate the future of the Trepça mine; 3) more and more NGOs from the North are seeking partnerships with counterparts from the South, and 4) some Serbian NGOs have begun publishing in Albanian language and undertaking advocacy activities in Prishtina for the first time.

Over the coming four years the foundation will seek to incrementally transition the Center for Civic Energy from an NGO activity hub into a more focused research-based advocacy platform. The European Integration School’s curricula will be progressively dedicated to deepening EU knowledge, with specialized elective courses. Students will be exposed to Balkan-level events, where they will meet EU leaders from across the region. The media and talk show programs, as well as the policy debate series, will be broadened and further professionalized. Engagement with media will become more important over the coming years, as the foundation will work to channel the civic activism into advocacy toward increased transparency and accountability. In this regard, the foundation will pair media outlets with NGOs to jointly investigate issues of public concern. The foundation will also partner with media outlets to expand the number and quality of investigative journalists on both sides of the river.

The intermediate expectation for this series of interventions is that the civic sector in Mitrovica North will continue to grow, professionalize, and engage on issues of importance. These organizations will not only seek to make the North more open and accountable, but to increasingly collaborate with their counterparts in the South to improve the lives of ordinary citizens. The foundation’s interventions are designed to stimulate civic life beyond NGOs, and to expose more young people to European values and the notion of a future in Europe.

The foundation has a strong comparative advantage in taking on this role. Until this effort started, the North was characterized by an absence of strong field partners. The foundation, unlike its donor peers, is well grounded in local knowledge and contacts, and has been able to deploy a wide variety of tools and patiently build from the bottom up. Over the past two years its investments have had a multiplier effect, in that they have created a better ‘offer’ for the other donors (e.g. the EU, UNDP, USAID) by giving them a more fertile civic landscape in which to invest. But the foundation is the dynamic driver behind all these changes. Indeed, among its next steps will be to identify prominent civic actors (probably individuals) capable of spearheading new activities in the domains of arts & culture, education and environment. In supporting them to mount and consolidate their efforts in the community, the foundation will also be opening additional avenues of reform for others to back.

Despite the promising results to date, it would be overly ambitious to predict a straightforward path to success. There are strong political forces in Prishtina and Belgrade opposed to increased cooperation. Criminal networks could become more aggressive, even threatening, toward the foundation's civic partners in the North once they begin investigating sensitive matters. But Kosovo as a state remains threatened by the status quo in Mitrovica, which has perpetuated a climate of fear and instability for the past 15 years. The prospects of continued success make this endeavor worth continuing, even if short-term turbulence may be expected along the way, for which the foundation will continually adjust.

The foundation's key milestones to track progress over the coming two years are: 1) positive change in citizen perceptions on EU integration in the North (an indicator of the North's overall evolution) compared to the baseline polling assessment the foundation did in 2014; 2) a 50% increase in the number of cross-river initiatives with genuine commitment from locals (debates, other activities).

**Theme: Economic Governance & Advancement Sub-Theme: Anti-Corruption**  
**Approach: Field; Budget: 30%**

**Goal 2: Challenging Corruption-related Impunity** – Kosovo remains the most corrupt country in the region. This has deeply undermined trust between citizen and state, weakened public services, and contributed to the country's underdevelopment. Yet, public sector leadership, at national and local level, operates with impunity on this matter. Their crimes are rarely investigated and, even when they are, perpetrators are rarely held accountable.

In response, the foundation is building from, and sharpening, its former 'Transparency & Accountability' field, and renaming it 'Challenging Corruption-related Impunity'. It will support a diverse set of the country's strongest organizations working on two objectives. The first is the continued strengthening of the transparency and accountability *framework*, with a focus on international standards. The second is mounting pressure on those misusing public money most flagrantly. The foundation's change hypothesis reflects this approach. It helps introduce new standards, such as Open Data and EITI (Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative), while aggressively pursuing specific cases of high-level wrongdoing. In short, the foundation builds public sector ownership and capacities to implement standards, while at the same time supporting civil society to hold them accountable.

The foundation is investing in those actors which best combine the following characteristics: they possess the country's greatest research and investigative skills; they serve as serious and important counterparts to the government, media, and international institutions, and; they have the most sophisticated means of conveying their findings and messages to the broader population. In addition to financial support, the foundation provides its partners with professional mentorship and, most importantly, access to its in-house policy advocacy platforms, e.g. Forum 2015.

The foundation's principal partners to strengthen the T&A framework are CiviKos and Riinvest Institute. Each brings its own strength to the table. CiviKos is a platform of Kosovo's 130 most important civic organizations. It has the convening power and potential to both *assist* and *pressure* government to make public information more public. It is leading the introduction of Open Data, and is building awareness and capacities of its members to effectively use the platform. Riinvest is among Kosovo's leading economic and investigative think tanks. It is helping to educate Kosovo's civic sector about natural resource governance in general, and the EITI platform in particular. Its goal is to create a body of well-informed stakeholders positioned to *assist* and *pressure* government to be transparent as it pursues its ambition to exploit the country's natural wealth.

At the same time, the foundation will expand its investments in individuals and organizations investigating and challenging wrongdoing. These groups, notably Cohu, a top watchdog organization, and Riinvest will focus primarily on issues of capital investments, public procurement, and privatizations—the areas most vulnerable to large-scale misuse of public resources.

Since 2014, the foundation’s partners have undertaken a series of investigations concerning the airport privatization, the highways to Albania and Macedonia, the post & telecoms privatization, and others. Each of these studies resulted in high-quality reports and public debates. The set of investigative work uncovered several common irregularities undermining the integrity of major public transactions, such as absence of feasibility studies, bypassing of the parliament, and high transaction costs compared to other regional countries, etc.

The foundation plans to intensify its efforts with the forthcoming round of major public finance transactions, which include enormous investments in the energy sector, the possible privatization of the Trepca mines, and the selling of a ski resort. The foundation’s aim, through its civic partners, is to increase pressure on public sector actors through the deployment of a set of tools, while simultaneously introducing a more creative, fact-based discourse into mainstream society about how public money is misused. These interventions will challenge impunity by further threatening the power elite’s personal reputations, material wellbeing, and electoral chances. To accomplish this, the foundation will:

- Support its partners to harvest lessons from civil society’s successes and failures working to improve public procurement processes in the Czech Republic, Lithuania and Slovakia;
- Support fact-based analyses and deep investigative reporting by Riinvest, Cohu and others;
- Amplify the quantity and quality of related investigative journalism through targeted support to media outlets;
- Intensify the publicity and advocacy of the above-mentioned findings, through such platforms as Forum 2015, Open 333, and the production of televised documentaries/investigative reports, and participation in talk show debates;
- Leverage the largely ignored law on citizen participation which mandates the involvement of citizens in key public decisions, to encourage public debates, discussions, and events on the topic of public finance and capital investments.

The culture of impunity has a long history in Kosovo and breaking it won’t be easy. Nevertheless, the foundation believes that this long-term, complex approach can yield positive results. The foundation’s key milestones to track progress over the coming two years are: 1) the adoption of the Open Data platform, and the introduction of an increasingly well-educated and active set of organizations addressing natural resources governance for the first time, and; 2) at least 10 public discourses on major instances of high-level corruption that are extensively debated in Kosovo and impose a higher cost than ever on those responsible for wrongdoing.

**Theme:** Democratic Practice; **Sub-Theme:** Civic Engagement and Inclusive Participation in Democratic Governance; **Approach:** Concept; **Budget:** 25%

**Goal 3: Anchoring Kosovo’s public institutions to EU standards and policies** – the foundation has merged a former Field and Concept to more strategically leverage the EU integration process as a driver for domestic governance reform. This initiative contains two mutually supportive pillars. The first seeks to sustain the country’s fragile European perspective; the second uses the conditionalities attached to that perspective to press for domestic change. This approach is the foundation’s theory of change, and is

grounded in the fact that EU integration remains the unifying goal of both the political class and the average citizen. It is the platform from which to drive a range of reforms.

Kosovo is recognized by 111 countries. Relations with 7 of those states (5 EU members—Cyprus, Greece, Romania, Slovakia and Spain, and 2 neighbors—Bosnia and Serbia) are crucial for its EU perspective, effective regional cooperation, and for full-fledged membership in the international community. Eventual EU accession, or the abolishment of the restrictive visa regime, for instance, requires unanimous approval in the EU. Taken together, the EU accession process heavily influences Kosovo's willingness to undertake domestic reform.

The first pillar leverages the integration process to constructively push for domestic reform in key governance areas. The foundation will cooperate with specialized civil society organizations in three integrated ways: 1) by providing direct feedback to the EU on Kosovo's progress on target areas (corruption, rule of law, security, etc.), 2) by undertaking domestic advocacy to improve the identified shortcomings, and 3) by educating young professionals interested in further engaging on those respective themes at the foundation-supported School for European Integration.<sup>2</sup>

Through its partners, the foundation has been effective over the past two years at infusing governance concerns into the EU's annual progress reporting as well as in mounting evidence-based advocacy at home on such issues as the misuse of cultural heritage sites, employee rights, and procurement. These activities will be continued.

The second Pillar, which the foundation leads as a concept, focuses on keeping Kosovo's EU perspective alive. The foundation leads an effort called 'Connecting with Europe', which intensifies communication between Kosovo and the 5+2 countries through various civic channels. With official channels largely closed, the foundation has established a network of organizations in the 5+2 countries which serve as its partners. These institutions foster increased cooperation between Kosovo and their respective countries through academic, media, cultural exchanges, civil society/think tank linkages, and parliamentary visits. They also undertake direct advocacy by convening public debates, writing Op-Ed articles, laying out position papers and speaking with parliamentarians about Kosovo.

Over the past two years, the foundation has exchanged delegations with the 5+2 countries, held public events and organized cultural exchanges. The foundation contributed to the annual 'Miredita-Dobardan' festival, which reconnects Serbs and Kosovars, by sponsoring mixed groups of artists, performers and theatre presentations, as well by translating certain books from Albanian into Serbian. Together with the Open Society Fund Bosnia-Herzegovina, the foundation is leading an effort to reduce mobility barriers between the two countries and to improve citizen communication, which have been devastated by the new visa regime. Activities in Greece, Slovakia and Romania have contributed to the approval of the EU Stabilization Association Agreement (SAA). Two years on, the 5+2 countries have considerably softened their stance on Kosovo. The foundation intends to sustain these efforts over the coming strategy period, with a renewed focus on Cyprus and Spain (the most challenging of the countries).

Unpacked together, the two pillars of this initiative are intended to apply robust pressure on Kosovo's public institutions to adhere to the obligations it has towards the European Union and, moreover, to its own citizens.

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<sup>2</sup> Not to be confused with its namesake in Mitrovica, which was modeled after the School in Prishtina.

The foundation's key milestones to track progress over the coming two years are: 1) none of the 5 non-recognizing EU countries block the passage of either the visa liberalization campaign or subsequent steps in the SAA process, 2) by 2018 there should be a sufficient number of Kosovar CSOs mounting high-quality advocacy, at the Prishtina and Brussels levels, to keep Kosovo anchored to EU standards, 3) EU Progress Reports seriously take into account local CSO inputs. The foundation has established an increasingly meaningful cooperation plan with OSEPI to coordinate these efforts, particularly with regard to the 5+2 efforts.

**Theme:** Higher Education; **Sub-Themes:** Policy Reform & Support; **Approach:** Field; **Budget:** 18%

**Goal 4: Challenging Kosovo's Corrupt Higher Education System** - Kosovo has the youngest population in Europe. With half of its citizens under the age of 25, the number of students participating in higher education has tripled over the past decade. Yet by every analysis, the higher education system, intended to serve these students and lay the foundation for an open and democratic society, is a mess. This stems from a culture of nepotism and corruption supported by the political class. As the wave of students reaching university age swells, there has never been a more important time to challenge this status quo. The foundation plans to cooperate closely with HESP, which will convene and link the Armenia, Georgia and Ukraine foundations, all of which are wrestling with similar higher education challenges.

The list of problems associated with the university system is long. Broadly speaking, they fall into two categories: quality and governance. While deeply connected, the EU and other donors are struggling to address the quality issue (e.g. academic content). Governance, however, has been largely overlooked, perhaps viewed by donors as too political or difficult to solve. Some of the findings of a recent analysis into Kosovo's largest and best university revealed that:

- Academic administrators and instructors are political appointees who are not accountable to those they serve, and often have dubious qualifications for the positions they occupy;
- There is a cartel of academics that has created a system of layered payments for themselves at the expense of everyone else, making it difficult to attract or retain skilled professors;
- Seventy percent of students noted the ability to pay for grades, while industrialized cheating on exams is frequently aided by the professors themselves;
- There is an extremely high incidence of professor absence, although they do show up the first day of class to oblige students to buy their own textbooks, irrespective of the quality.

The result of these governance failures is manifold. Students enter the job market without the skills they need to compete (even by local standards, let alone in global markets) and employers regularly complain about a skills deficiency even among 'educated' Kosovars. Most worryingly, however, is that the one thing students do absorb through their higher education experience is that if you play by the rules of the game, i.e. corruption and nepotism, you are more likely to be 'successful' in Kosovo. In essence, the higher education system is a fertile ground for the country's largest employer, the state.

The foundation's change theory posits that it must stimulate significant and sustained demand for change from multiple constituencies to ultimately pressure and alert the political parties to stop interfering with the University's autonomy. The foundation will help to create and unite those forces calling for reform, while incrementally transferring ownership of the campaign to those groups. It will initially focus on the University of Prishtina—the largest and most prominent in the country.

In early 2014, the foundation witnessed the power that engaged citizens can have to bring about change in higher education. After days of student-led protests against the University of Prishtina's corrupt rector, the University Board succumbed to popular demand and replaced him with a reputable successor. Civil society helped select the new rector, who had a reputation as a champion reformer. But he was immediately resisted by the cartels. Since then the Government has been trying multiple ways to remove him. Whereas this civic momentum should have been channeled into robust calls for systemic reform, it instead evaporated. The foundation plans to re-ignite the flame. To initiate this campaign, the foundation will:

1. Invigorate this issue through sustained think tank and investigative journalist analyses and through a series of televised talk show debates, policy forums and multimedia platforms, including Forum 2015 and Open 333;
2. Through civic partners, convene, empower and mobilize various constituencies with a particular interest in higher education reform, including non-political student groups, alumni associations, parents, and businesses/chambers of commerce which suffer because of the poor skills transfer. The foundation will help position these groups to use the investigative analyses for energizing broader segments of the country's voting block; indeed, almost every family has children in, or about to enter, higher education. Building on the success of the recent student protests, the foundation will seek to leverage specific cases of wrongdoing to initiate broader change. The 2014 protests highlighted the tendency of citizens to engage far more effectively around a concrete issue than a set of values.

The foundation is launching this initiative with the aim of stimulating and uniting a diverse set of constituencies who, over time, will sustain these efforts on their own. The foundation's principal partners will be the Kosovo Education Center (KEC) and Democracy for Development (D4D). Both have deep expertise in higher education reform and have contributed much of the research on the sector, including the joint study "Reforming the University of Prishtina" that sparked the establishment of this line of action.

Over the coming four years, the foundation defines success as the formation of a well-organized, highly capable set of constituent groups who, on their own, are enthusiastically monitoring the higher education sector and deploying a range of tactics to pressure the political parties, as well as the opportunists within academia, to halt their corrupt practices. Two year milestones toward this end include: 1) the emergence of a strong movement of student groups within the university working to address this issue; 2) the emergence of other constituency groups getting involved in this campaign, and; 3) sustained media interest in the issue, measured by at least 10 new investigative reports on the state of governance affairs within the university system.