

Analysis of World Bank student contest in Kosovo

May, 2019

Student today,
*un*employed tomorrow?

**BLOG & VIDEO
CONTEST**

We invite all university students in Kosovo to share their hopes, fears and aspirations about the future. Your views matter to us!

APPLY NOW!
www.worldbank.org/kosovo/contest2019

DEADLINE: March 17, 2019

1ST PRIZE
Win a trip to an international conference

#StudentVoicesKosovo

 **THE WORLD BANK**
IBRD • IDA | WORLD BANK GROUP

Join the conversation
on facebook and twitter

www.worldbank.org/kosovo

Agenda

- Contest description
- What students talk about
- Conclusions

Rationale



Kosovo has one of the youngest populations in Europe



The last decade has seen a significant increase in the number of young people attending university



Finding a good job upon graduation is an important milestone for young people, but the transition to the world of work often comes with many challenges

Objectives



- Learn more about students' aspirations, their hopes and fears about finding a job
- Bring young people's voices to the national dialogue on how to provide better educational and economic opportunities for Kosovo's youth

Guiding questions for contest participants



- **How optimistic are you about finding a job when you graduate?** Are you looking forward to or afraid to enter the world of work? Do you think your education is preparing you well for it?
- **What do young people need to find a good job and have a good career in Kosovo?** What matters most when finding a job – good grades, personality, contacts, or something else?
- **What kind of job are you looking for?** What's important to you in a job – job security, high salary, a chance to progress, making a difference, doing something you love?
- **Where would you like to work?** Would you like to work in the public or private sector, a big or a small company? Do you think you will find the job you want in Kosovo? If you had the choice between taking a job in Kosovo and a job abroad, what factors would you consider in making the decision?

EVENTS

Video/Blog Contest: University Students in Kosovo Speak Up!

February 26-March 17, 2019

Kosovo



CONTACT US

CONTACT: For questions regarding the Contest, please contact Ms. Bardha Ajeti

fajeti@worldbank.org

Kjo faqe është në dispozicion edhe në [shqip](#).

Kosovo has one of the youngest populations in Europe, and the last decade has seen a significant increase in the number of young people attending university. Finding a good job upon graduation is an important milestone for young people, but the transition to the world of work often comes with many challenges.

Against this background, the World Bank is launching a Blog/Video contest (the "Contest") on the following theme:

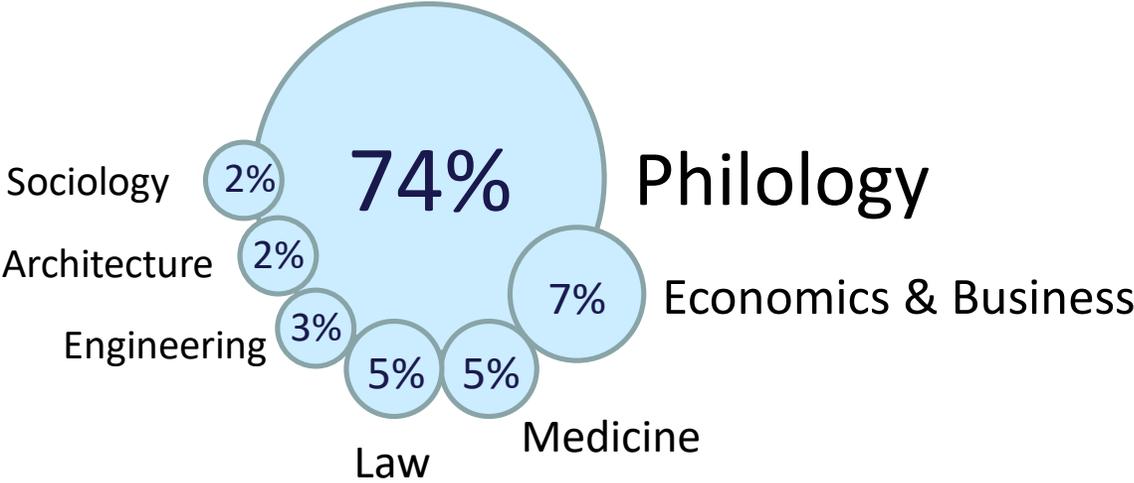
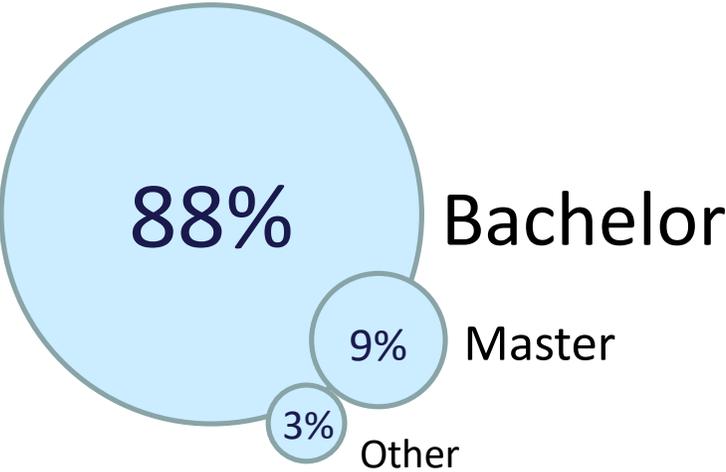
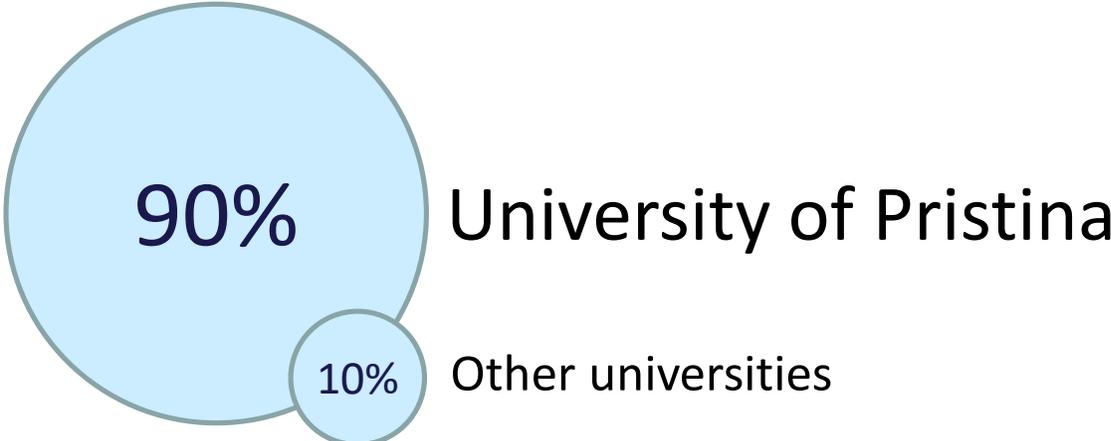
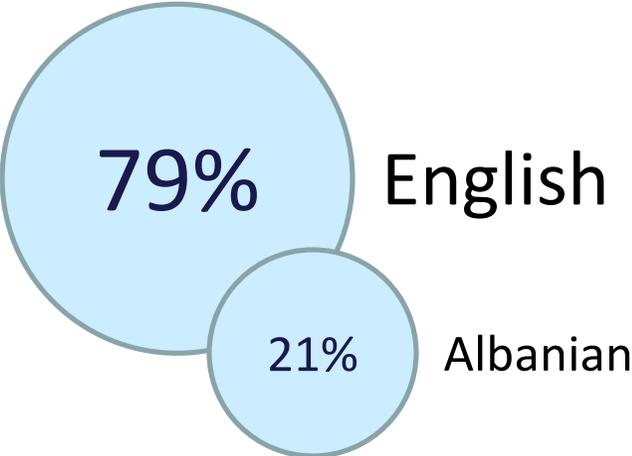
Student today, (un)employed tomorrow - What does your future hold?

Our goal in this competition is to learn more about students' aspirations, their hopes and fears about finding a job and to bring young people's voices to the national dialogue on how to provide better educational and economic opportunities for Kosovo's youth.

[Contest Details \(Download PDF\)](#)

- Contest open from February 26 – March 17, 2019
- Blog (400 words) or Video (2min)
- Open to all university students in Kosovo
- Submissions accepted in English and Albanian
- Winners announced during panel discussion at University of Pristina on March 26, 2019

The contest generated a total of 130 submissions (117 eligible). Findings are not representative for all university students in Kosovo.



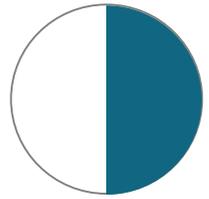
Agenda

- Contest description

- What students talk about

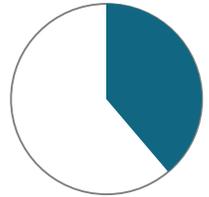
- Conclusions

Views of the future / about finding a job



44% Optimistic/hopeful

I am very optimistic in finding a job, not just a job but a good one because there are a lot of cases where students got a good job by working hard.



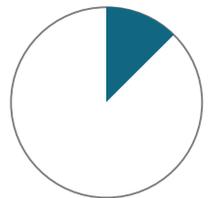
34% Pessimistic/fearful

Fear of unemployment after graduation is inevitable and it pushes students to take jobs in any field possible despite their study field.



21% Uncertain

The possibility that I might end up unemployed, especially after having worked so hard during four years of university, is a thought that leaves me feeling restless and uncertain.



9% Discouraged

Dealing with the inevitable stress of getting your college degree, and at the same time dealing with the disappointment you will most probably face when you go out and search for a dream job has a way of bringing you down and make you unmotivated.

Views of the education received

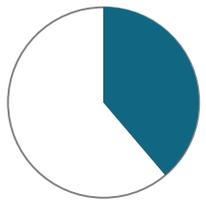


31% University prepared them well

As far as university preparation goes, I think professors are doing a good job with readying us (or me) for the job market.

My university education has generally provided me with the skills necessary to succeed. I feel that I am well prepared for real-life situations and jobs.

The teachers here are quite hardworking on trying to teach us modern methods of teaching, assessment, presenting and writing. So I must say that the staff is preparing us well for the job market.



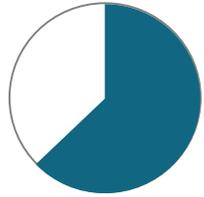
34% University did not prepare them well

Unfortunately many of us finish our studies without getting a lesson in our universities on how to write an email or properly present ourselves in an interview.

Unfortunately, practical classes in universities in Kosovo are minimal, and students learn predominantly from theoretic classes.

Every field needs internships to practice whatever they learned in theory, which our educational system highly lacks.

Barriers to finding a job



64% Nepotism / need connections

Being good at your field won't guarantee you a stable job and a career in Kosovo, mostly caused from the overwhelming corruption.

In every job that is in the public sector, the first thought that crosses everybody's minds is "Do I have any relative who could get me in?"

If one has connections than he/she probably will get the job even if he/she does not possess good knowledge or skills required for the job position

In our county in order to find a good job, one has either to be a genius or to have contacts, otherwise it is very difficult to find a job in the public sector.



24% Lack of jobs

The labor market is being competitive since a large number of graduates apply for a limited job opening.

The number of students looking for jobs does not coincide with the number of free job positions and this is the biggest problem in our country.

Kosova does not offer that many opportunities for the young people who just finish their studies.

Improving chances to find a job



36%

Useful personal attributes (e.g. personality, soft skills, dedication, language)

One's personality, confidence and persistence plays a major role in the process of employability, since these features are the ones who lead to winning the dream job.

A huge part of it is also having a good personality, being a hard worker, and a good team member.

I need to be a critical thinker, a flexible person and a problem-solver.



24%

What students can do to build skills and prepare for job (e.g. internship, study abroad, volunteering)

We go out, we volunteer, we get internships, we get any job and do anything we can to make the working experience we need to get a fulfilling job.

I consider it crucial for students to network and volunteer in activities outside of their schools.

Perhaps it will be too late to look for job opportunities after our graduation, therefore we should seek opportunities such as internships during our studies so that we gain work experience, develop our professional abilities and have something to write in our CVs.

Job preferences



35% Public Sector

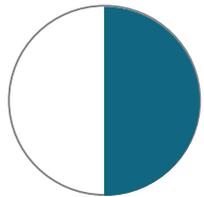
I would like to work in the public sector, because workers in the private sector are not treated properly and are often paid way less.

The public sector gives you more security in the workplace, better salary, insurance, and the average working hours are less than in the private sector, for that reason I prefer the public one.



3% Private Sector

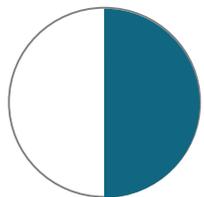
I hope I'll become a manager in a big company, or owner of a business.



51% Desired job features

The most important thing about the job is doing what you love

Job security, high salary and a chance to progress are important to me in a job

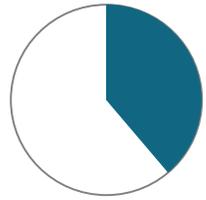


48% Wants to contribute to society

I want to help my country develop and make it a better place for the next generations.

My dream job would be to find something challenging which would allow me to contribute in my community.

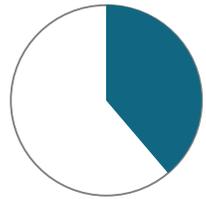
Migration preferences



30% Go abroad

If I would be given the opportunity to choose in working abroad or in Kosovo, I would choose abroad, only for a time, since working abroad would help me in developing my skills.

I often dream about going abroad, since I believe it could help in growing culturally as well educationally, and afterwards contributing to my country.



33% Stay in Kosovo

I can either run and leave my country in the hands of the people keeping it down, or stay and try my hardest to help create the safe place that our fathers died fighting for.

Choosing between working here or abroad, Kosovo for me will always come first.



37% Factors to consider

If I ever get a job opportunity to work abroad I would probably consider it and take into consideration the country, the job position and the lifestyle of that particular country, however, I believe that I would be happier in Kosova, the place where my family lives and the place where I feel like I am needed.

Other



35% Resilience

It is stressful, it is unfair, and it is difficult, but we are strong, hardworking and every day we try and built ourselves up to be the reliable and professional people this country needs.

We keep searching for ideas, for people who appreciate what we do, for schools and teachers that understand that memorizing the whole book does not bring quality to the education in Kosova.

Working hard should be everyones objective. My future may not be the one I always imagined, but no matter what I will not give up trying, until I finally get to work what I like.

It might be very difficult to find a job that we really want, but we should be persistent and work hard on our dreams

Agenda

- Contest description
- What students talk about
- Conclusions

Conclusions

- University students have a mixed outlook into the future. Optimism, pessimism and uncertainty are all common.
- Many students complain about the insufficient practice-orientation of their studies
- The biggest perceived barrier to finding a job is the lack of meritocracy. Nepotism in hiring decisions is a major frustration for young people.
- Many youth are looking for a job they love. The majority perceive working conditions in the public sector to be much better than in the private sector.
- Not all young people want to leave Kosovo. Migration preferences are shaped by a number of factors.
- Despite the challenges they face in finding a job, many young people show strong signs of resilience, believing that hard work and persistence can help them achieve their goals

Winning contest submissions

1st place

My mother was born and raised in a traditional family in Skopje. Being the oldest of 10 children and responsible for taking care of her younger siblings, her hopes and dreams didn't have much significance for her parents. They didn't allow her to go to school beyond high school or get a job. Today, she is 60 years old and one of her biggest wishes is to see her only daughter achieve what she wasn't allowed to dream of-get an education and be independent. As a fourth year student today, I still remember clearly why I chose to study English Language and Literature at the University of Prishtina. Sadly, it wasn't because I had had the opportunity to browse study fields and then decide for the faculty of Philology. Instead, it was a case of pressure from many friends and family who insisted that I study in such a field as it would be easier to get a job as a teacher. When it comes to a country like Kosovo, where unemployment rates are high, by the time you reach the age to study, fear of unemployment after graduation is inevitable and it pushes students to take jobs in any field possible despite their study field. Before starting university I began volunteering at local NGO's and managed to become a project assistant on a project by the time I finished my first year of University. Working in civil society was not something connected to the "teaching" job everyone had convinced me I would find, but it was an excellent opportunity to learn and grow professionally. That is why I consider it crucial for students to network and volunteer in activities outside of their schools. Opportunities may not be plenty but they do exist, and they are there for people who know how to use them. "Tomorrow" my dream job would be to find something challenging which would allow me to contribute in my community. However, taking into consideration that the high levels of corruption and nepotism in institutions are like a modern day plague in our society, individuals need to be equipped with exceptional skills to fight an unjust system back. I believe that it is pivotal for me to strive for a graduate degree abroad in order to be able to return and contribute here with skills and knowledge gained in a much more developed country than Kosovo.

2nd place (tied)

Being a college student has been the most exciting, but also the scariest part of my life. I say exciting because university is the very first big step towards success in your chosen career, but scary for it is possible that you will never get your dream job. Being a young adult in this century keeps getting more and more difficult with every year. Finding a job you like and that will also support you enough to have an enjoyable life is immensely difficult and thus it can be nerve-racking. Dealing with the inevitable stress of getting your college degree, and at the same time dealing with the disappointment you will most probably face when you go out and search for a dream job has a way of bringing you down and make you unmotivated. I live in a small country, we just got our independence and we are still recovering from the war. You'd think that in a developing country there would be countless opportunities for employment and getting a chance to help it grow and recover, but me together with my whole generation have found the exact opposite to be true. Being good at your field won't guarantee you a stable job and a career in Kosovo, mostly caused from the overwhelming corruption. It is upsetting to feel like your own country won't value you and that to have an enjoyable life you need to go abroad. However, I prefer to think of it this way: I can either run and leave my country in the hands of the people keeping it down, or stay and try my hardest to help create the safe place that our fathers died fighting for. So we stay, and keeping all that in mind and being realistic about our expectations we go out, we volunteer, we get internships, we get any job and do anything we can to make the working experience we need to get a fulfilling job. It is stressful, it is unfair, and it is difficult, but we are strong, hardworking and every day we try and built ourselves up to be the reliable and professional people this country needs. This is the state I found my country in when I was born, but this will not be the state I will be leaving it in, because now I have a choice, and I choose to be brave.

2nd place (tied)

Ever since I was a kid, I was told that the key to living a decent life is pursuing education, and that has held true to this day. Due to the field that I have chosen, I believe that I will be able to find a job, although nepotism worries me to a great extent. I personally believe that technology is the key to economic development, and every year the number of software engineers grows. I want to be an advocate of pursuing software technology. I am not afraid of transitioning from university to work, due to the fact that I believe that this is the first step to achieving my ambitions, and lastly, my current education has been providing strong fundamentals for further development, but it depends solely on one's motivation to achieve greater heights. Young people in Kosovo need to be fast, agile and have 'open eyes' to get a job, and even accept lower tier jobs in some instances. Due to the shortages in certain fields, there may not be jobs available at the moment and they have to cope with that. Furthermore, due to worrying levels of nepotism, young people are the victim of undeserved advancements of certain individuals, and this has been discouraging for many young people, including myself. Everything matters when finding a job, it is highly crucial to have the contacts, which are mostly achieved from the common circles of interest and high social-media interconnection, communication skills, personality traits, and patience, lots of patience. Good grades are a minor criteria for hiring. I am looking for a job that will allow me to achieve financial stability while steadily progressing further, and eventually open my own business. A steady salary that grows with one's progress, a chance to become bigger and the possibility to make the difference in the long run is what is important to me. What matters at a company is the vision and ambitions of it, the number of employed people is of little importance, small teams can achieve great things. While the undeniable reality that the public sector is short at jobs is at hand, the best opportunity for young people is the private sector. When confronted between choosing a job in Kosovo or a job abroad, I would take in consideration the salary, the location and the experience that can be achieved by taking the job. Money is not everything.