DIAKONIE KOSOVA DIAKONIE TRAINING CENTER

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Mitrovica, August 2025

Friends letter

Dear Sir or Madam, dear friends,

The political and security situation

In my last letter to friends (April 2025), I began this section with the sentence:

"On February 9, 2025, we had elections." Now six months have passed, but we still do not have a new government. So far, there have been 54 votes to elect a new Speaker of Parliament. This election is necessary for the constitution of parliament and the confirmation of the head of government. The old government remains in office on an interim basis. Naturally, this paralyzes political action.



People often wait several hours at the border.

The security situation, especially with regard to the north of the country, is good. Whether due to the heat—sometimes up to 40 degrees—or the holiday season and its relaxed atmosphere, there have been no noteworthy incidents.

As every year, the country is full of visitors who come by the hundreds of thousands in the summer to visit their relatives in their old homeland.

The Diakonie Training Center

At the end of July, we concluded the training programs before the August summer break with 63 students. Among them, 43% were girls and women.
All graduates were well prepared to find a job in the Kosovar labor market. Student numbers have dropped significantly in recent years, especially after the pandemic. For the teachers, the smaller classes are a benefit, as they can devote more attention to individual students.



Trainee hairdressers

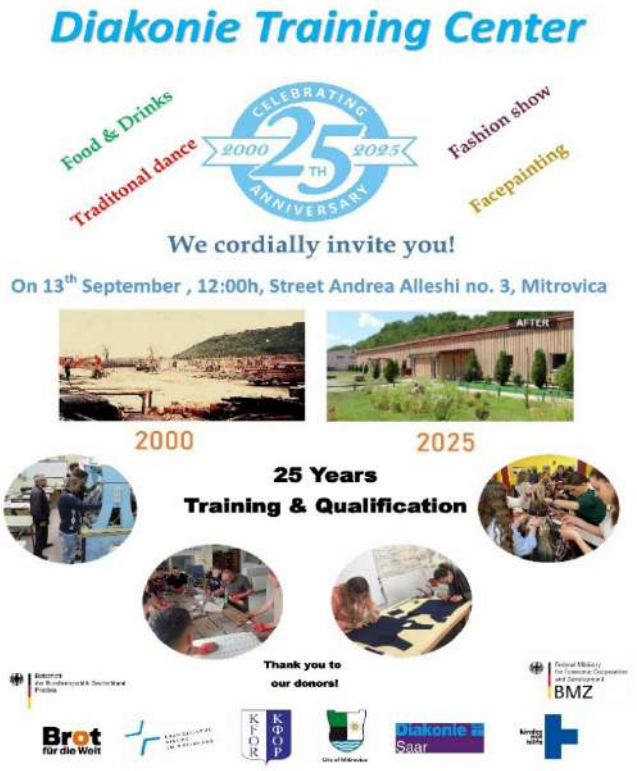
25 Years Diakonie Training Center

In the year 2000, shortly after the end of the Kosovo war, businesspeople from the Rhineland made a generous donation to Kindernothilfe in Duisburg (KNH) to expand a vocational training center in Kosovo. This center now exists for 25 years – an occasion to celebrate.

Thousands of students have completed courses here in heating installation, plumbing, electrical work, drywall, tiling, hairdressing, tailoring. With their qualifications, they have found work, founded families, and are able to support them.

Many have also emigrated and now work in European countries, mainly in Germany. One trainee from the hairdressing course went to North America/Florida after his training. His family owns a salon there.

Over the years, new training courses have been added: cooking, nail design, cosmetology, cameraman, disc jockey (DJ).



We thank Kindernothilfe for their support until 2024! We are now supported by Bread for the World and the Protestant Church in the Rhineland.



At the celebration on September 13, 2025, the German Ambassador, Mr. Jörn Rohde, Church Councilor Rafael Nikodemus, representatives of Diakonie Saar, and many guests, friends, and supporters will attend. We will have a fashion show, our dance group will perform, and many other surprises are planned. Teachers and students have renewed the frame for the swings on our playground. Once we receive the new swings, the playground will be complete again. It is always a special event when teachers and students work together to build or repair something for the Diakonie. Often, we then have lunch together, and the atmosphere is cheerful and relaxed

The Community Center in Fushë Kosova

Since the beginning of May 2025, our staff have been working in the new building in Fushë Kosova.
Most of the renovation work has been completed; the outdoor area is still pending.

The following programs are now taking place:

- Trauma therapy / psychological counseling
- Conflict resolution, de-escalation
- Literacy courses
- Dance groups for children and young people
- Group work against domestic violence and to prevent early marriages
- Cooking course
- Hairdressing course
- Women's tailoring
- Three times a week our family doctor comes, offering free examinations and providing medication.



The children are very happy – finally, there is dancing again.
In the background: Military Rabbi Ederberg, General Dr. Lange, and Ivana Perić.

We are receiving project funding from the German Embassy. This has enabled us to hire a psychologist who works there with many children.



The first hairdressing course in Fushë Kosova



The cooking course in Fushë Kosova

On August 13, the Director of the NATO Advisory and Liaison Team (NALT), General Dr. Lange, together with Military Rabbi Nils Ederberg and intercultural advisor Ivana Perić, visited us at the community center. They witnessed the poverty of the residents, the difficult living conditions, and acknowledged our commitment.

We thank all donors, especially the Diakonie Ochsenhausen, for their support in purchasing the building.

The Diakonie Youthcenter

he Multiethnic Youth Center has more and more children and young people from minority groups (Roma, Ashkali, Egyptians). Their families live in very precarious conditions, and often the young clients come hungry and in torn, worn-out clothing. In particular, we regularly receive clothing from members of the German Embassy and/or German Armed Forces (KFOR), which we distribute continuously.



The little one in the middle is me.

Together with our staff, the children play and do crafts – things they can never do at home. Many of them have to roam the city center every day, begging for money for their families.
The young guests, together with one of our staff members, created a picture made of river stones.

The Farm

It has now been about two years since we applied to the city of Mitrovica for the contract for the land. The city council approved the contract months ago, but we still have not received it. Last week I once again went to see the mayor, and he promised me the contract very quickly. Without the contract, however, we cannot apply for conversion into a social enterprise; and without the status of a social enterprise, we cannot apply for larger agricultural subsidies. As a result, we lose funding that we urgently need. One has to remain calm and patient.

The old tractor (Deutz) has been running for a long time without four-wheel drive. No wonder. After all, the old farmers' saying goes: *"With the Deutz, you carry your cross."* Now the axle has finally arrived from the company in Germany to Kosovo. If only it were already installed!

We currently have 130 goats and 400 chickens. There is now milk and enough cheese. Every Friday we deliver to the German Embassy. In addition, private customers regularly come to the farm to buy cheese, eggs, and milk.

The heat is hard on the animals, and the hens are laying fewer eggs.

We were able to harvest about 15 tons of wheat and 1.3 tons of oats. For the corn, it was too hot (no old farmers' wisdom this time). There was too little rain, and the corn is now drying up. It will be an expensive winter if we have to buy additional corn.

In June, a senior expert in milk technology and dairy processing (Mr. Wagener) visited us. We were able to learn a great deal! We even tried to produce Camembert, which is difficult because the ideal storage conditions are lacking. Mr. Wagener also gave us wonderful equipment for cheese production from Germany. Many, many thanks!

It only remains to be repeated: *"We love SES!"*



The German Ambassador, Mr. Jörn Rohde, with his mother, Mrs. Rohde, at the farm



Fehmi Hajrizi delighted with 15 tons of wheat

Sustainable Return and Reintegration for Returnees from Germany

Since January 1, 2025, we have had an office for returnees from Germany. It is co-financed by the European Union and the Bavarian State Office for Asylum and Returns.

With our experience in the reintegration of returnees, we help people in Kosovo to earn a living and support their families, whether as self-employed workers or employees. In this way, we avoid the revolving-door effect of returnees going back illegally to Germany.

By July, we had already handled 91 cases, comprising a total of 366 persons/returnees. Most recently, we had a returnee with a profession previously unknown to us: he can twist and braid thick ropes and lines out of several thin cords. We provided him with the necessary tools and materials, and now he works and sells the finished products.



Delivery of the cord



The rope-maker at work

We thank the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) for approving the project and for the funding from the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF). A special thanks goes to the Bavarian State Office for Asylum and Returns (LFAR) for its consistently good cooperation and support over the years.

The Psychosocial Center for Trauma Therapy

In 2010, 15 years ago, we started the first three-year training course for trauma therapists with child and adolescent psychiatrist Lutz Besser. Since then, we have trained several generations of trauma therapists, psychiatrists, and psychologists. This has been of great help to our country. According to official figures, in 2010 around 22% of Kosovo's population suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Now the figure is said to be 17.5%. Whatever the exact numbers, our work is bearing fruit. Today there are skilled trauma therapists across the country.

Even in the Kosovo Security Force (KSF), there are now five psychologists whom we trained.



The soldiers after the three-year training course, with their certificates

In recent years, Kosovo has also established nursing homes. Currently, there are five state-run and several private care homes.

To understand this, one must recall the so-called generational contract: parents raised the children, and in return the children cared for their elderly parents until their death. Sending parents away to a nursing home was virtually unthinkable, even forbidden by religion and tradition. The youngest son was expected to take in the parents, and his wife cared for them. But times and customs have changed. Many sons now live abroad, while their parents remain in Kosovo. Extended families are shrinking, and in small families there is little room for elderly or dependent parents. Modern women also work, raise children, and have no time to act as full-time caregivers. These and other reasons have led to a paradigm shift.

The head of our Trauma Center, Ms. Diellza Gllogu, is now spending several weeks in a care home in Prishtina. She offers group discussions, games, and various activities. Many residents suffer greatly from loneliness and from the fact that no youngest son has taken them into his family and cared for them.



The head of the Psychosocial Center at the care home

Family, the image and idea of family, is like a religion in Kosovo. Those in care homes had, and still have, to part with this idea, this dream. For some, this loss became a trauma. That is why our program is warmly welcomed by the residents as a much-needed distraction.

This work is financed by the **Ministry of Justice in Prishtina**. We thank the Minister and her very committed staff for their support.

Our Psychosocial Center is also supported by **Bread for the World and the German Embassy**.

The Kindergarten

For several months now, all four groups have moved into the new building. Children, parents, and teachers are very satisfied. The rooms are bright and spacious, giving the children plenty of space to play alone or in small groups.

The building was completed, but we lacked the resources to furnish all rooms appropriately for children. We received a generous donation from *Ein Herz für Kinder*. With this support, we were able to purchase furniture, equipment, and toys. We thank *Ein Herz für Kinder* most sincerely.

For years we have also received high-quality wooden toys from Mr. Deininger in Bavaria, who makes these beautiful items himself. Thank you very much.

At the moment, the children spend much time on the playground. The sandbox is especially popular.

Demand from parents is high, and we have a waiting list. We have now renovated two classrooms in the old kindergarten, so we can accommodate more children.



Playing in the sandbox



Breakfast on the playground

Various

We thank Austrian military chaplain Tom Stark, who brought us various collections from Protestant congregations in Austria.



(from left) L. Hofman, Military Rabbi N. Ederberg, B. Baumgarten, Protestant Military Chaplain T. Stark, and Colonel O. Fasching at the donation handover

We have had a close and good relationship with Mr. Marco Bünger from Adler Management in Berlin for a long time. He arranges for young people to come to Germany for training as nursing professionals. For each training candidate he places, he donates €300 to Diakonie Kosova. With this support, we can help many people here.
In June, Mr. Bünger visited Kosovo with clients and handed us a check in the amount of €7,800. We thank Mr. Bünger and his company for their generous help and support.



Mr. Bünger presents the check to Ms. Deda, assistant to the management.

We are supported by:

- Church congregations and church districts in Germany, Switzerland, and Austria.

Spenden können Sie an das Diakonische Werk der Kirchenkreise Trier und Simmern-Trarbach gGmbH überweisen, sie erhalten dann eine Spendenbescheinigung.



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Please let us know if you have received our friends' letter.

faleminderit, thank you, danke, merci, mille grazie

for your help and your donations.