

Article #12

COLLABORATIVE CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT: UNIVERSITY OF IOWA AND KOSOVA PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES PARTNER WITH INDUSTRY LEADERS

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Figure 1: Corporate Panel Workshop held at the Faculty of Electrical and Computer Engineering, University of Prishtina

Professors specializing in competency-based education at the University of Iowa have joined forces with their counterparts from public universities in Kosovo to lead workshops aimed at revising curricula in response to insights from the private sector. Commencing this December, the University of Prishtina, University of Peja, and University of Prizren, with the support of the USAID-funded activity *Private Sector Partnerships to Strengthen Higher Education* have extended invitations to representatives from leading Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Agriculture companies in Kosovo, fostering collaboration to enhance undergraduate study programs in these sectors. Private Sector Partnerships to Strengthen Higher Education is a USAID-funded activity implemented by the University of Iowa in partnership with Iowa State University and Kosova Education Center (KEC).

Professors from the universities in Kosovo leveraged strategies and practices acquired during a preceding workshop facilitated by the activity titled "Training of Trainers" which was designed to equip university academic staff with the skills to lead corporate panels. These corporate panels, overseen by the universities, are events hosted by each faculty regularly. Industry leaders from the relevant sectors are invited to contribute their insights, aiding in the continuous refinement of curricula to align with the latest market needs and trends.



Figure 2: Corporate Panel Workshop held at the Faculty of Life and Environmental Sciences, University of Prizen

Professors assumed a listening role during these workshops, allowing industry professionals to take the floor. The industry representatives presented their perspectives on the competencies requisite for graduates, offering a firsthand account of the skills demanded by the job market.

The corporate panel workshops held in December 2023 mark the beginning of a series of workshops facilitated by the activity, strategically planned to bolster curriculum revision and development efforts of partner universities. These workshops signify a groundbreaking partnership between universities and businesses, aiming to fortify the bridge between academia and industry demands.

Visar Jasiqi, Head of Product Engineering at Radix, a participating representative from the ICT private sector, emphasized the challenges faced by universities in aligning curricula with the dynamic trends of the ICT industry. *“In light of the rapidly evolving technological landscape, I think its important to cultivate resilient learners and establish a curriculum foundation that emphasizes adaptability, critical thinking, and solution development skills to ensure graduates remain competitive in the ever-changing field of ICT.”*



Figure 3: Corporate Panel Workshop held at the Faculty of Electrical and Computer Engineering, University of Prishtina

*"Today's corporate panel workshop featured engaging discussions, group activities, and highly informative presentations by private sector representatives. This collaboration with industry leaders provided valuable insights into the needs and challenges faced by ICT companies and the future requirements for our graduates. The practices and techniques learned from last month's corporate panel training for professors has been very useful, offering us refreshing ideas to adapt our consultations with private sector partners. Today was a great opportunity for us to put those lessons into practice and revise curricula in ways that are efficient, engaging, and effective for the best interests of our students' futures." **Dhurata Hyseni- Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Electrical and Computer Engineering, University of Prishtina.***

This collaborative effort between academic institutions and industry leaders exemplifies a proactive approach to address the evolving demands of the job market. The insights gained from these workshops will serve as a catalyst for ongoing improvements in university curricula, ensuring graduates are well-equipped to meet the challenges of the professional landscape.



Figure 4: Corporate Panels Workshop held at the Faculty of Agrobusiness, University of Peja