

IREX
Kosovo Independent Media Program
(CA no. 167-A-01-00107-00)

Quarterly Report
January 1, 2003 - March 31, 2003

IREX submits this quarterly report in accordance with the requirement of the Kosovo Independent Media Program (CA no. 167-A-01-00107-00). IREX feels the report provides sufficient detail to allow USAID to adequately monitor the program or ask follow-up questions. IREX/DC and field staff has maintained close contact throughout the quarter on program implementation. IREX welcomes USAID comments and questions on the report, directed to Tadd Eakin, Senior Program Officer (teakin@irex.org).

I. SUMMARY

This quarter the Kosovo Independent Media Program (KIMP) focused on improving the professionalism of television broadcast news, on specialty writing for print media, and on association development. Concurrently, IREX continued to assist television stations KTV and RTV21 to improve their business and programming strategies.

IREX worked with KosovaLive, the Association of Independent Broadcast Media in Kosovo, the Association of Professional Journalists of Kosovo, and the Kosovo Terrestrial Transmission Network to determine activities and budgets for the coming year. IREX also worked with a number of media outlets, including *Alem* magazine and Radio Peja, to process additional subgrant requests.

Training over the course of the quarter focused on features writing, research for television, and business reporting. Russell Peasgood, a resident media advisor with the IREX office in Serbia, also ran two-day training sessions in four regional television stations: TV Men in Gjilan, TV Liria in Ferizaj, TV Prizreni in Prizren and TV Syri in Gjakova.

Assistance to national television stations KTV and RTV21 moved forward following meetings in Budapest between IREX, USAID, and the Open Society Institute. Implementation of the resulting plan has included arrangements for engineering audits, the return of auditors KPMG, and the assignment of a marketing expert. The first audience survey of viewing habits was also conducted in March.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- **IREX, OSI, and USAID agree on plan for development of national television stations.** Senior IREX personnel met in Budapest with the Open Society Institute (OSI) and USAID to discuss how to proceed with the development of national television stations RTV21 and KTV. Subsequent meetings with RTV21 and KTV and the preparation of data on their business and production operations formed a blueprint for sustainability and the basis of a work plan. After review by USAID, IREX and OSI, this information has provided the foundation for further agreement between the stations and donors on a way forward.
- **KTTN keeps television services on the air despite harsh weather.** The Kosovo Terrestrial Transmission Network (KTTN) successfully struggled to maintain broadcasting facilities by restoring lost power lines and wooden and concrete poles that had broken or

fallen during severe winter storms. Personnel also ensured that fuel was delivered to generators through heavy snows, which in the previous year had to be carried on horseback due to poor road conditions.

- **Swift action saves Vushtrii station Radio Vicianum after eviction from its municipality-owned premises.** A small grant of \$7000, turned around within four days, enabled the independent station to quickly move into a new refurbished location and lose no more than two-hour's airtime. Without an alternative office, the eviction would have meant the closure of Radio Vicianum and would have left a gap in regional independent radio.
- **IREX consultant Janina Hrebickova runs extensive series of hands-on training in news research.** Hrebickova joined journalists in the studios of RTK, KTV, RTV21, TV Prizren, TV Syri, TV Dukagjini and TV Liria for an intensive course on the principles of research, focusing as well on approaches towards breaking news and longer features, visual research, and communication between journalists and cameramen.
- **Xana Antunes, former editor of *The New York Post*, leads three-day workshop on features writing.** Following the success of a first features writing seminar in September 2002, the training addressed the differences between feature writing and news reporting, highlighting the importance of research and planning and the use of special interview techniques. The workshop concluded with discussion and analysis of participants' work, followed by on-site consultations with reporters and editors in their own newsrooms.
- **Business reporting seminar offers news-making political presentations and discussion workshops.** The seminar, the third in a series, also included the production of a short film covering one of Kosovo's Socially Owned Enterprises at the top of the list for privatization. The film, which sought to demonstrate to television journalists how they might approach such subjects, showcased the continuing development of RTV21's Ganimete Shaqiri as a rising business reporter.
- **The Association of Professional Journalists of Kosovo (APJK) appoints Baton Haxhiu as its executive director.** This further step in the development of the recently established organization will be confirmed at the association's convention in April. The association also held its first journalism awards ceremony in January.
- **IREX Media Law Manager Filloreta Bytyci joins working group reviewing the law on access to official documents.** The working group met with the Prime Minister's Office in March to discuss their comments, some of which have been incorporated into the draft law, due to be discussed by parliament in April.

II. MEDIA ENVIRONMENT

In January, Kosovo President Ibrahim Rugova indirectly refused an invitation from Kosovo Prime Minister Bajram Rexhepi for a meeting between the three main local political leaders by stating that "Kosovo has its institutions and the contacts of the political parties among each other, functioning on a constitutional basis. Contacts of political parties are an issue of interest or need at a certain time." In media reaction, *Epoka e re* called Rugova's statement both a fatal refusal and a new crisis, while *Bota Sot* printed the statement on its own without further comment. The same day, *Zeri* published a report that Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) Michael Steiner would organize a common meeting with Kosovo's political leaders, in which the latest frictions among them would be discussed. In February, the Kosovo Parliament Speaker, Nexhat Daci met with the chiefs of Kosovo parliament's three largest groups in an effort to

harmonize their position and avoid a possible crisis with UNMIK, following an initiative by 42 deputies for the approval of a declaration of independence for Kosovo.

In early March, SRSB Steiner announced the establishment of a Transfer Council as a vehicle for the phased transfer throughout the year of substantial responsibilities from the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) to the Institutions of Provisional Self Government. In response, Serbia and Montenegro's Ambassador to the United Nations Dejan Sahovic said that the transfer of powers from UNMIK to Kosovo's interim institutions must not lead to the transfer of statehood elements. Talks with Belgrade were later put on temporary hold following the assassination of Serbian Prime Minister Zoran Djindjic on March 12.

In other news, the trial of the Llapi Group – Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) members Rrustem Mustafa-Remi, Naim Kadriu, Nazif Mehmeti and Latif Gashi – began in February. The first session was held without media presence due to a decision by the international judges that only six journalists could attend the trial. The journalists agreed among themselves that before each session, they would hold a blind vote to determine which of them would enter the courtroom.

Also in February, the Chief Prosecutor for the International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia (ICTY), Carla del Ponte, announced that an indictment had been issued against Fatmir Limaj, a senior official of the Kosovo Democratic Party (PDK). Limaj is also a member of the Kosovo Parliament and a former Kosovo Liberation Army Commander (KLA). He is charged, along with three other KLA members, with crimes against humanity and violation of war customs. Fatmir Limaj was later arrested in Slovenia, following confusion as to his whereabouts, and transferred to The Hague, where his first hearing was held in March. The Hague Tribunal also confirmed that Agim Murtezi, previously accused of war crimes, had been mistakenly arrested. The indictment against him was withdrawn and Murtezi was released from detention.

The privatization process in Kosovo, delayed for almost three years and scheduled to begin in February, was delayed again in March because the legal office in New York had not yet approved a Regulation on Land. Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General (DSRSG), Andy Bearpark, said that the managers of the Kosovo Trust Agency (KTA) would announce the first six privatization tenders shortly.

The Temporary Media Commission said it would continue to receive requests for broadcast licenses but would not issue any new permits for the moment. Discussions on the regulations of for the Independent Media Commission continued.

III. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

IREX reports on its activities according to the workplan approved by USAID.

INTERMEDIATE RESULT 1: Journalists Provide Citizens with Objective, Balanced, and Fact-Based Information

1.1 Journalists Follow Accepted and Recognized Professional Standards

Over the course of this quarter, IREX worked with Kelmend Hapciu of KosovaLive to develop a proposal for an ambitious training program for radio journalists, which will constitute part of the subgrant requests from the news agency. IREX worked with Hapciu on devising a coherent strategy and agreed to a schedule of grant requests compatible with developing a sustainable program.

IREX also met with a number of proponents of a radio network and collected additional information on stations to assess their suitability for inclusion. Five station owners have joined to establish a plan for the network, which seeks to share programming and boost advertising. IREX also met with Ridvan Jusufi, general manager of the Kosovo Terrestrial Transmission Network (KTTN), regarding technical cooperation with the radio network.

In January, Russell Peasgood, a resident media advisor with the IREX office in Serbia, ran two-day training sessions in four regional television stations: TV Men in Gjilan, TV Liria in Ferizai, TV Prizreni in Prizren and TV Syri in Gjakova. The sessions sought to assist stations to adjust to overall news and programming responsibilities in day-to-day operations; each of the four stations subsequently altered operating procedures to make each of them more efficient.

IREX consultant Janina Hrebickova ran an extensive series of hands-on training in news research for reporters at RTK, KTV, RTV21, TV Prizren, TV Syri, TV Dukagjini and TV Liria. Hrebickova joined journalists in their studios for an intensive course of skills development. The course focused on the principles of research – what is research, why is it crucial, and how is it conducted – as well as approaches towards breaking news and longer features, visual research, and communication between journalists and cameramen. Hrebickova's recommendations for developments in this area include encouraging reporters to suggest their own ideas for stories, increasing the preparation process before reporters go out to the field, instituting a review process of finished products, and offering audiences a constructive, future-oriented perspective.

Following the success of a first features writing seminar in September 2002, Xana Antunes, former editor of *The New York Post*, returned to Kosovo in March to lead an additional three-day workshop. The training focused on the differences between feature writing and news reporting, highlighting the importance of research and planning and the use of special interview techniques. A session on writing skills also addressed powerful leads, well-written anecdotes, direct quotes, description and narrative, and “boilerplate” methods of structuring features. Guest speakers Professor Pajazit Nushi, President for the Council for Human Rights and Freedom, and Professor Enver Hasani, of the University of Pristina Faculty of Law, offered material for practical feature writing exercises on issues such as missing persons and academic reform. The workshop concluded with discussion and analysis of participants' work, followed by on-site consultations with reporters and editors in their own newsrooms.

1.2 Independent Media Provide Comprehensive News and Public Affairs Coverage

IREX Media Manager Emine Berisha worked with DC Program Officer Cara Stern to identify a journalist, Blerim Xhemajli of *Koha Ditore*, to cover the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in The Hague. For the past year, IREX/Serbia, with assistance from USAID, has sent Serbian journalists to The Hague to provide professional, independent, objective coverage of the trial; IREX/Bosnia with USAID support has also sent journalists since last summer. A recent grant from the Mott Foundation now allows IREX to extend limited support to additional countries of the former Yugoslavia. Xhemajli, who was chosen following an open selection process among print media in Pristina, will travel to The Hague at the end of May.

Leslie Harnish, wife of the Chief of Mission of the US Office Pristina, Reno Harnish, accepted the invitation to be the first president of the Women's Business and Media Luncheon Club. An experimental effort first initiated by IREX last year with a four-hour discussion of national and international issues with a senior manager from Reuters, the club offers women in Pristina an innovative forum in which to tackle matters of importance to them. Some 40 women attended the March meeting, which featured an address by Mrs. Harnish and a three-hour debate on reconciliation.

Trainers Andrew Clayton, Adam Najberg of Dow Jones, and economics editor at the leading Kosovo newspaper *Koha Ditore*, Ibrahim Rexhepi, facilitated the third of a series of business reporting seminars March 17 and 18. The well-attended seminars have become an established feature of the media landscape in Kosovo, offering news-making presentations by politicians and officials, together with discussion workshops. The seminar also included the production of a short film covering one of Kosovo's “Socially Owned Enterprises” at the top of the list for privatization, the cooling systems manufacturer Termosistemi. The film, which sought to demonstrate to

television journalists how they might approach such subjects, also showcased the continuing development of TV21's Ganimete Shaqiri as a rising business reporter. The business reporting seminars have allowed IREX to play a useful role in building bridges in Kosovo between the international agencies who lead decision-making on the economy and the Kosovar journalists who write about them.

1.3 Facilities and Equipment for Gathering, Producing, and Distributing News are Modern and Efficient

Subgrant requests for spare parts and the APTN news service for RTV21 were submitted and approved, along with KTV request for spare parts and audio delay equipment.

Two requests by minority media were processed for Bosnian language magazine *Alem* and a Turkish publication by the NGO Shefkat. The Shefkat request was rejected after it was determined that it would be more appropriate for the organization to seek funding from a civil society initiative. Decision on the *Alem* request remains pending, following a USAID request for clarification of the magazine's political affiliations.

Swift action saved Vushtrii station Radio Vicianum from the threat of eviction from its municipality-owned premises for failing to fully observe a declared day of mourning. A small grant of \$7000, turned around within four days, enabled the independent station to quickly move into a new refurbished location and lose no more than two-hour's airtime. Without an alternative office, the loss of its previous lease would have meant the closure of Radio Vicianum and would have left a gap in regional independent radio.

Subgrant requests for the weekly newspaper *Java* and Radio Peja remain in progress. Requests from Radio Kent, Radio Prizren, Radio Vizioni, Radio Gjilani, and Urban FM have also been considered. Independent film maker, Albanian-American Ramazan Hajdini, also brought a project-proposal for a documentary film, asking to be financed in the amount of \$47,000. TV Mitrovica requested help in re-locating its transmitter on a KTTN site; review is subject to written agreement from the Temporary Media Commission that the move will not break the terms of the station's license. A request from the women's magazine *Teuta* was rejected.

Intermediate Result 1 – Results

- Swift action saved Vushtrii station Radio Vicianum from losing its premises, allowing the station to remain on the air.
- RTK, KTV, RTV21, TV Prizren, TV Syri, TV Dukagjini and TV Liria participated in an extensive series of hands-on training in news research for reporters.
- A three-day workshop on features writing offered additional on-site consultations with reporters and editors in their own newsrooms.
- The third of a series of business reporting seminars showcased the continuing development of TV21's Ganimete Shaqiri as a rising business reporter.
- Some 40 leading Kosovo women attended a March discussion featuring an address by Mrs. Reno Harnish and a three-hour debate on reconciliation.
- Blerim Xhemajli of *Koha Ditore* was chosen to travel to The Hague to cover the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.

INTERMEDIATE RESULT 2: Supporting Institutions Function in the Professional Interests of Independent Media

2.1 Broadcasters Association (AMPEK) Provides Training to and Representation for Independent Broadcasters

Ardita Zajnullahu, Executive Director of the Association of Independent Broadcast Media in Kosovo (AMPEK), joined IREX Media Law Manager Filloreta Bytyci in efforts to persuade officials in the town of Vushtrii to renew the lease of Radio Vicianum. Officials sought to penalize the station for failing to fully observe a declared day of mourning by refusing to allow the station to remain in its municipality-owned premises. The station received a grant from IREX to move to a new facility in order to stay on the air and remain independent.

Over the course of the quarter, Zajnullahu has also worked to establish the organization in its new headquarters, made progress on the administration of the association, completed budget requirements for monthly needs, and continued to develop an annual events schedule of training and other activities.

2.2 Transmission System Effectively Managed by Non-Partisan Kosovar NGO

The Kosovo Terrestrial Transmission Network (KTTN) successfully struggled to keep television services on the air by restoring lost power lines and wooden and concrete poles that had broken or fallen during severe winter storms. Personnel also ensured that fuel was delivered to generators through heavy snows, which in the previous year had to be carried on horseback due to poor road conditions. The line at KTTN site Golesh has been repaired, while work at the Zatriq site continued after a second round of damage. KTTN also secured an old transmission site at Gllobocica (near the Kosovo-Macedonia border crossing) that will help the network cover the area of Kacanik and Hani i Elezit with TV signal.

IREX worked with KTTN on a subgrant request for the network. Other discussions have included the possibility of restructuring senior management, forming a research/design team to expand KTTN's capabilities in providing services other than only transmission, and the difficulties of collecting fees from client stations.

2.3 Publishers Association Represents the Interests of Independent Media Outlets

Currently no formal publishers association exists in Kosovo. Print media presently competes to offer printing services and have been engaged in competitive struggles for competent staff. In order to focus resources and as indicated in the Cooperative Agreement, IREX will readdress this activity in year two of the project and offer USAID alternate, more effective ways to spend funding under this activity. IREX thus reports no activities in the development of a publishers association this quarter.

2.4 Journalists Association Provides Journalism Training

The Association of Professional Journalists of Kosovo (APJK) appointed Baton Haxhiu as its executive director in February, marking a further step in the development of the recently established organization. IREX has been working with Haxhiu to organize a convention that would confirm the decisions of the steering committee in April.

APJK has achieved a few notable successes this quarter. In February, the association stood at the forefront of protests against the decision of UNMIK to deny media access to the trial of the Llapi Group. The association also organized a small roundtable on the issue of collecting license fees through the Kosovo Electricity Corporation and held a controversial debate on new proposals for the Independent Media Commission. The latter caused considerable upset among broadcast owners -- raising charges of bias, inspiring a boycott of the session, and prompting discussions between the association's steering committee, executive director, and IREX. This situation is being monitored and IREX is offering assistance and advice to solve this problem.

The APJK convened a journalism awards ceremony, prior to the approval of an IREX grant for supporting funds, which caused some bureaucratic and practical difficulties. IREX did contribute financial and logistical assistance to the event, with the clarification of IREX's role as an advisor to the association and a reemphasis of the importance of following necessary procedures. The association was also compelled to seek compromise with the Temporary Media Commission, with which it had previously chosen not to cooperate, in order to help pay for the award prizes. UN Special Representative to the Secretary General (SRSG) Michael Steiner, Mission Director for USAID/Kosovo Dale Pfeiffer and IREX Chief of Party Keith Hayes participated in the awards ceremony. Honorees included: Augustin Palokaj, *Koha Ditore*, Journalist of the Year; Berat Buzhala, *Zeri*, Investigative Journalism; Ibrahim Rexhepi, *Koha Ditore*, Business Reporting; Milot Krasniqi, KTV, Best Cameraman; Hyre Tejeci, Radio Kosova, Womens Issues; Fatos Bytyqi, RTK, Electronic Media Chronicle; Anamaria Repiq, Radio BlueSky, Courage Shown in Journalism; Maksut Shehu, Lifetime Achievement Award.

Intermediate Result 2 – Results

- KTTN kept television services on the air despite difficult weather conditions and multiple damages to transmission sites.
- APMEK joined efforts to resolve Radio Vicianum's threat of eviction.
- APJK appointed Baton Haxhiu as its executive director.
- APJK held its first journalism awards ceremony.

INTERMEDIATE RESULT 3: The Legal and Regulatory Framework Supports Free Speech and Access to Public Information

3.1 Legal Framework Protects the Right to Gather, Produce, and Disseminate News

IREX Media Law Manager Filloreta Bytyci spearheaded efforts to resolve the threatened eviction of Radio Vicianum, including meetings with the local major of Vushtrri, as well as OSCE and TMC officials, and assistance in the eventual move of the station to new premises.

Over the course of the quarter, Bytyci reviewed the constitution of KTTN and advised on the legality of a board and management restructuring plan. Bytyci also worked with legal expert Jetish Jashari to develop a draft agenda for the first convention of the APJK, with particular focus on how resolutions should be presented and debated. In addition, Bytyci worked with both with APJK and AMPEK on a planned program for the next six months, including matters of Freedom of Information.

Bytyci was also appointed to the working group reviewing the law on access to official documents for Kosovo's Office of the Prime Minister. The working group met with the Prime Minister's Office in March to discuss their comments, some of which have been incorporated into the draft law. The law was due to be discussed in April.

3.2 Media Licensing is Fair and Apolitical

Over the course of the quarter, IREX Media Law Manager Filloreta Bytyci was involved in reviewing regulations and attending meetings on the Independent Media Commission.

3.3 Indigenous Non-Governmental Institutions Represent Rights of Media Outlets and Journalists

In January, AMPEK joined IREX in meeting with local Vushtrri officials, the OSCE and the Temporary Media Commission to attempt to resolve the revocation of Radio Vicianum's lease to municipality-owned premises.

In March, Radio Gjlani appealed to IREX to help protect their equipment, which is threatened with seizure by the municipality. IREX's Media Law Manager is examining the legal situation in an effort to protect equipment IREX has granted to the station.

Intermediate Result 3 – Results

- IREX spearheaded efforts to resolve the threatened eviction of Radio Vicianum.
- IREX Media Law Manager appointed to working group reviewing the law on access to official documents for the Office of the Prime Minister.

INTERMEDIATE RESULT 4: Publishers and Station Managers Manage Media Outlets as Efficient, Profit-Seeking Businesses

4.1 Independent Media Utilize Strategic Business Plans

Senior IREX personnel met in Budapest with the Open Society Institute (OSI) and USAID to discuss how to proceed with the development of national television stations TV21 and KTV. Following the discussions, IREX Chief of Party (COP) Keith Hayes prepared a paper to serve as a basis for further talks with the stations. Several meetings also took place with USAID in order to map a proper strategy.

IREX subsequently met with TV21 and KTV after preparing data on their business and production operations. A blue print for sustainability and the basis of a workplan was determined, with comment from the stations sought through one-to-one meetings. This data was reviewed by USAID, IREX and OSI and formed the foundation for further an agreement between the stations and donors on a way forward.

In March, a business consultant studied KTV's business plan and advised on how the station could be brought up-to-date to satisfy the grant awards board of OSI. IREX COP Hayes also organized meetings with the management of the two stations to begin initiating the agreement reached in Budapest. A number of steps have been taken, including arranging engineering audits, the return of auditors KPMG, the assignment of a marketing expert and the possibility of KBS advising TV21 on accounting procedures.

4.2 Independent Media Utilize Market Research

IREX business consultant Ramis Ahmetaj worked with consultant Helen Harrison and the Joint Industry Council to agree on a questionnaire and format for audience surveys on viewing habits. Ahmetaj also worked with Harrison to recruit a local partner and implement the first survey, held in March.

IR 4.3 Female Media Managers Achieve Parity in Professional Opportunities

IREX reports no activities this period that address female media managers achieving parity in media.

As with many sectors of Kosovo society, existing obstacles prevent the full equality of women in the media. However, given the large number of female journalists, editors, and business staff, there is reason to believe that women can achieve relative parity in media.

IR 4.4 Entertainment Programming Attracts Audience and Increases Revenue

IREX continued to process subgrants and payments for the acquisition of broadcasting rights to the series *The Sopranos*, as well as a package of 70 movies, for KTV.

IR 4.5 Local and Regional Radio Develop Marketing and Programming Networks

IREX continued to pursue its intention to start establishing links between stations (via KTTN links on KTTN towers), which will allow stations to share news and entertainment programming. IREX would in turn assist the network in developing marketing materials that would allow "one-stop shopping" for advertisers who wish to reach a province-wide audience. The network can guarantee ad placement on members' stations, allowing local radio to expand its ad base beyond its local market.

Discussions continued on how KTTN can set up a radio network, and visits have been made to television companies that might complement this endeavor with a TV network. IREX Business consultant Ramis Ahmetaj also conducted research on the radio stations that may comprise the network's core.

Intermediate Result 4 – Results

- Budapest meeting between IREX, OSI and USAID produced plan for proceeding with the two national television stations.
- Implementation of the plan began with arranging engineering audits, the return of auditors KPMG, the assignment of a marketing expert and the possibility of KBS advising TV21 on accounting procedures.
- First audience survey examining viewing habits conducted in March.
- Research into a radio network continued.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE AND OTHER ISSUES

Mark Whitehouse, Director of IREX's Media Development Division, and Tadd Eakin, IREX Senior Program Officer, traveled to Budapest to attend meetings with USAID and OSI on the national television stations. IREX staff also discussed personnel issues and a restructuring plan, which was later presented to and approved by USAID.

The reorganization of the IREX Pristina office saw three Kosovars promoted to management positions, the retirement of international advisor Tim Kenny, and the search for an additional media advisor to work with the two national television stations.

IREX also worked on local VAT and income taxes after UNMIK introduced new systems, and met with UNMIK over IREX's registration as an NGO with beneficial status.