

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

Quarterly Report
July 1, 2003 – September 30, 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 Jill Jarvi, Senior Program Officer (jjarvi@irex.org).

I. SUMMARY

This quarter the Kosovo Independent Media Program (KIMP) focused on offering business reporting training, releasing a second television audience survey, and assisting association activities. Concurrently, IREX continued to work with national television stations KTV and RTV 21 to improve their business and programming strategies as part of an agreement between the two stations and USAID/OSI/IREX as a result of a meeting in Budapest in January 2003.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- **Kosovar Journalists Undertake Intensive Training at Dow Jones London.** In July, four Kosovo journalists spent a week of intensive business reporting training with the London bureaus of Dow Jones News Wires and CNBC. The journalists had the opportunity to work one-on-one with their Dow Jones colleagues to develop an understanding of the wire service's five main sections as well as learn the techniques of market-based business writing. The training was organized by IREX/Kosovo in cooperation with Dow Jones, whose participation in this endeavor was offered pro bono.
- **AMPEK and AJPK Finalize Strategic Plans.** The individual boards of the Association of Independent Electronic Media of Kosovo (AMPEK) and the Association of Professional Journalists of Kosovo (APJK) approved strategic plans for the respective associations. AMPEK's plans for the period through September 2005 include advocacy initiatives for the rights and interests of independent media, legal assistance to association members, and a media professionalism training program for media owners and editors. APJK will focus on activities that include an assessment of media capacity in Kosovo, the establishment of a media resource center, a training of trainers program in journalism, and the establishment of a set of professional standards for journalists. The strategic plans were developed with the assistance of IREX's Media Law and Association Manager Filloreta Bytyci and IREX consultant Delina Fico.
- **Broadcasters' Association Meets with Kosovo Ombudsperson to Discuss Independent Media Commission.** AMPEK representatives met with Kosovo's ombudsperson, Marek Antoni Nowicky, in early August to discuss issues relating to draft legislation on the establishment of an Independent Media Commission (IMC). AMPEK and Nowicky also discussed an apparent conflict between Kosovo's constitutional framework and the founding legislation of the public broadcaster Radio Television Kosovo (RTK), legislation that excludes RTK from the domain of the constitutional

framework. AMPEK's meeting with Nowicky was one of a number of lobbying activities geared towards representing the rights and interests of its members with regard to the IMC.

- **Audience Survey Reveals Increased Viewership for KTV and RTV 21.** In September, IREX released the results of the second of four television audience surveys, conducted in July by the London-based Helen Harrison and Company in conjunction with the Kosovar research agency Prism, in an effort to provide key data on the viewing habits of Kosovo's three national channels: public broadcaster RTK and private stations KTV and RTV 21. The results indicate that average weekly viewing for KTV and RTV 21 has risen 3.7% and 3.1%, respectively, while RTK viewership has dropped 8.1%. KTV viewership has particularly increased during the station's morning program and continues to show strength in the early evening, despite a dip in audience during its 7:00 pm newscast. In the later evening, RTV 21 has moved to the number one position for most of the 9:00-11:00 pm period, due to the popularity of two soap operas in its nighttime line-up.
- **APJK and AMPEK Initiate Campaign to Decrease VAT Paid by Media.** APJK and AMPEK met with representatives of local media outlets to discuss their current obligation to pay value added taxes (VAT) of 15% on transactions such as newsprint and advertising. The associations are joining local publishers, as well as the office of the Temporary Media Commissioner (TMC), in formulating a campaign to persuade UNMIK to lower VAT, arguing that neighboring countries have instituted concessions on the tax as it applies to media. APJK and AMPEK continue to gather related information and are working together to organize a follow-up meeting in order to draft a request for the decrease of taxes for Kosovar media starting from January 1, 2004.

II. MEDIA ENVIRONMENT

Michael Steiner left his post as the Special Representative to the Secretary General (SRSG) after 18 months as the head of the United Nations Interim Administration in Kosovo (UNMIK). He was replaced in August by former Finnish prime minister Harri Holkeri. Holkeri officially assumed the post one week after two Serbian teenagers were killed and six others wounded while they swam in the Bistrica River near the village of Gorazdevac/Gorazhdevc. The incident was one among a number of violent episodes over the summer, including explosions in Pristina, Mitrovica, Prizren, and Cernica, and the sniper shooting of a UNMIK police officer on the Mitrovica-Leposavic road.

The death of the teenagers ignited renewed focus on Kosovo in Belgrade, which in August passed a declaration calling Kosovo an indivisible part of Serbia. In response to the declaration, Kosovo Prime Minister Bajram Rexhepi said would be valid only for Serbia and Montenegro, but would not apply to Kosovo. Holkeri called the decision of the Serbian parliament "irrelevant," adding that only the United Nations Security Council will determine Kosovo's final status.

Talks between Belgrade and Pristina remained high on the agenda of the international community, which discussed the need for dialogue at a September meeting of the Contact Group in Moscow. The group, which includes the United States, Russia, France, Germany, and Italy, met again in New York later in the month and determined that initial talks would be held in Vienna in October.

Also over the course of the quarter: the Kosovo Trust Agency (KTA) announced the second round of tenders for the privatization of 18 socially-owned enterprises. The round includes two hotels, a company of pharmaceutical products, a fisheries farm, a store, and a number of brick and concrete factories. While the KTA and other stakeholders have expressed satisfaction with the privatization process, some members of parliament have accused the KTA of a lack of

transparency and poor management. Serbia also requested that UNMIK cease privatization initiatives in the Serb enclaves of Kosovo.

A July survey by Index Kosovo indicated that television remains the main source of information for 80.6% of the public. 63.4% of the 1,100 respondents cited public broadcaster RTK as the television station they trust most, with RTV 21 rated second at 16.2% and KTV third with 12.1%. Trust in RTK had dropped in comparison to previous studies, however, while trust had grown in both RTV 21 and KTV. Aggregate figures also suggested that RTK remains the most watched station, with TV 21 second and KTV third. As with trust in the station, viewership had also dropped for RTK, and risen for RTV 21 and KTV.

Though the Kosovo Assembly approved a law on freedom of information in late June, the legislation was challenged in July by the Serbian minority coalition party Povratak. Based on Constitutional Framework Section 9.1.39, Povratak members proposed a number of amendments to the law, which, according to Povratak, violates the basic rights of Serb community living in Kosovo. In response, the government requested the establishment of a special panel, would address proposals and recommendations to the Kosovo Parliament. Holkeri appointed Slovenian Peter Pavlin, a consultant to the Ministry of Justice in Slovenia, to run the special panel, which is composed of Ilir Dugolli, a Kosovo government representative, and Nenad Trifunovic from Povratak.

III. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

For this quarter, IREX reports on its activities according to the previous workplan approved by USAID. In the upcoming quarters, IREX will report according to a new workplan, following its final approval by USAID.

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

1.1 Journalists Follow Accepted and Recognized Professional Standards

IREX Senior Media Advisor Matt Shelley met with national stations KTV and RTV 21 to assess progress in television training. Shelley attended morning news meetings, worked in the field with news crews, and spoke with staff, editors, and managers in order to examine the possibilities for improvements in both station operations and specific programs.

Shelley also worked to complete plans for an overseas professional development project, scheduled for October. The plan calls for four editorial managers from KTV and RTV 21 to spend a week at an American television station of comparable size. The editors will have an opportunity to work alongside news personnel and reporting crews in the field and meet station managers. The training will focus on news as well as offer exposure to all station operations, including sales and promotion, local production, and engineering.

In addition, Shelley developed a scheduling training session with IREX consultant Helen Harrison for both RTV21 and KTV to coincide with the release of the second quarterly survey results in September. The consultancy has been divided into teaching modules that cover schedule strategies, target audiences, and program types; promotion, principles of research data, and program planning; detailed analysis of each station's schedule performance; and future schedule planning and strategy. See IR 4.2 below for additional information.

In August, RTV 21 and KTV began broadcasting to Europe through the new Albanicast satellite system. Five radio stations from Kosovo and Albania are participating in the effort. The venture

reflects the belief of RTV 21 director Aferdita Kelmendi that the station's short-term financial viability depends on serving diaspora Albanian communities through satellite broadcasts to Europe and the U.S. According to this belief, while the current uncertainty in Kosovo prevents the economy from supporting three national TV stations, this same uncertainty creates substantial interest in events "back home" on the part of the diaspora. Kelmendi therefore hopes that revenues from Albanicast will allow the station to hire additional staff and become more competitive with public broadcaster RTK.

1.2 Independent Media Provide Comprehensive News and Public Affairs Coverage

Four Kosovo journalists – Birol Urcan, chief economics reporter for KTV, Ganimete Shakiri, economics reporter for TV21, Naim Gashi, economics reporter with KosovaLive, and Syzana Bytyci, second to the economics editor at *Koha Ditore* – spent July 7-11 undergoing intensive business reporting training with the London bureaus of Dow Jones News Wires and CNBC. Over the week, the journalists had the opportunity to work one-on-one with their Dow Jones colleagues to develop an understanding of the wire service's five main sections – Spot News, Equities, Global News, Market Talk, Energy and Money Desk – as well as learn the techniques of market-based business writing. The rigorous five-day hands-on training also included attendance at Dow Jones morning editorial meetings and observation of and participation in the production process of the CNBC international business TV service (in which Dow Jones holds 50% ownership). The journalists, already recognized as four of Kosovo's leading financial reporters, returned to Kosovo with new ideas and concepts on how Western journalists approach news output and what might apply to Kosovo. The training was organized by IREX/Kosovo in cooperation with Dow Jones, whose participation in this endeavor was offered pro bono.

Later in September, 50 journalists from throughout Kosovo attended the fourth in IREX's series of business reporting seminars devised to help journalists understand the development of a market economy. Building on the success of past seminars, which highlighted the beginnings of the privatization process, this fourth seminar sought to produce sessions that would also yield news stories or future subjects for participants. Lead by IREX business consultant Andrew Clayton in conjunction with Adam Najberg, European Money Editor of Dow Jones Newswires, the seminar's topics included the liberalization of telecommunications in Kosovo, lessons learned from the first round of privatization, and the regulation of Kosovo's utilities. The business reporting series has led to noted improvements in the coverage of economic issues by leading dailies *Koha Ditore* and *Zeri*, as well as television stations KTV and TV21, and has helped foster professional relationships between journalists, business leaders, and the government.

At the end of July, *Koha Ditore* journalist Blerim Xhemalji completed a two-month assignment in The Hague, where he reported from the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY). Xhemalji's articles, which covered the trial of former Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic as well as developments relating to Kosovar suspects Fatmir Limaj, Haradin Balaj, and Isak Musliu, often graced the front pages of *Koha Ditore* and provided Kosovo's only source of daily news on the ICTY. IREX's support to Xhemalji formed part of a regional project that has provided financial, logistic, and technical assistance to journalists from Bosnia, Croatia, Kosovo, Serbia, and Montenegro to enable them to cover the tribunal's events, decisions, and implications firsthand. Through sharing common facilities, accommodations, and experiences, these journalists have also had the opportunity to work together with their colleagues from the former Yugoslavia towards the mutual goals of professional reporting and true reconciliation. The Hague Coverage Project has been primarily funded by USAID and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation; IREX has received additional funding from the Mott Foundation to continue the project in the fall.

While the IREX Women's Business and Media Luncheon Club was quiet for much of the quarter, IREX Manager for Media Law and Associations, Filloreta Bytyçi, has invited Marcie Ries, the new Chief of Mission of the U.S. Office in Pristina, to become the honorary president of the club. The invitation also requested that Ries participate as a featured guest speaker at the club's next

event, which would provide the opportunity for Ries to address an audience of leading Kosovar women from all walks of life. Parliament members, ministers, heads of private companies, journalists and editors, NGO activists, and academics have all attended previous luncheons.

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

IREX Senior Media Advisor Matt Shelley met with the management of RTV21 and KTV to discuss the preparation of upcoming equipment subgrants. The requests will be based on recommendations from IREX technical consultant Peter Williams, who will also review the final lists. IREX staff also worked on upcoming subgrant requests from Radio Vala Rinore and Urban FM, and sought to further previous requests from *Java* magazine and Radio Peja.

Executed subgrants over the course of the quarter included audio delay equipment for KTV, which seeks to address a problem of poor synchronization between sound and pictures during some programs. IREX also aided Klina-based station Radio Alba with the purchase of an inverter (power supply with batteries) that would allow the station to establish better connections with its antenna and link system, located a mile or so from their facilities. As the station has been unable to broadcast with much consistency due to Kosovo's frequent power shortages, an inverter would solve the problem by storing energy when it is available.

Matt Shelley also met with Kelmend Hapciu, manager and editor-in-chief of KosovaLive, to investigate a number of new products for the news agency – such as the addition of photographs and sound clips – and the technical capacity necessary for their delivery. These new products would seek to increase the income of the agency, which continues to suffer from low revenues. Shelley later met with the Press Association of London, which offers 250 different products, for ideas on how to improve KosovaLive's productivity. The association has invited the management of KosovaLive for an on-site visit. Shelley has been monitoring KosovaLive's output to gain a clearer picture of the agency's operations and story production with aim to help KosovaLive provide the best possible product, better satisfy existing clients, and attract new ones.

IREX also worked on a subgrant request that will provide KosovaLive with funds to continue and expand its subscription subsidies program for radio stations. The program seeks to widen the client base of KosovaLive and provide radio stations with regular access to updated news and quality journalism. A request for equipment will follow in the fall.

Intermediate Result 1 – Results

- Four Kosovo journalists undergo intensive business reporting training with the London bureaus of Dow Jones News Wires and CNBC.
- Fifty journalists from throughout Kosovo attend the fourth in IREX's series of business reporting seminars.
- *Koha Ditore* journalist Blerim Xhemajli completes a two-month assignment reporting from the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.
- KTV and Radio Alba receive subgrants for equipment; progress continues on additional subgrants to KTV, RTV 21, Radio Peja, *Java*, Radio Vala Rinore, Urban FM, and KosovaLive.
- Four editorial managers from KTV and TV 21 will spend a week at US station in October.

**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**

With IREX's assistance, the Association of Independent Electronic Media of Kosovo (AMPEK) finalized its strategic plan, which was submitted to and approved by its board. The plan forms one of the preconditions for future support to the association. AMPEK's activities for the period through September 2005 include advocacy initiatives for the rights and interests of independent media, legal assistance to association members, and a media professionalism training program for media owners and editors.

Over this quarter, AMPEK continued to receive funding as part of a previous subgrant covering operational and capital costs for the period February 2003 - September 2003. IREX's Manager of Media Law and Associations, Filloreta Bytyci, advised the association on completing an upcoming request to cover the period October 2003 – July 2004.

Bytyci also joined AMPEK in visiting Radio Ylberi and Radio Globi in Mitrovica in response to requests from the stations for advice in a dispute with municipal authorities. The dispute, primarily financial in nature, was deemed to be a civil, rather than a political, conflict. Following an August 29 decision of the municipal court in Mitrovica, the two stations have returned to their premises and resumed broadcasts after 120 days of closure. AMPEK, along with the Association of Professional Journalists of Kosovo (APJK), had petitioned the president of the municipal court to expedite the trial.

AMPEK also united with APJK in meeting with representatives of local media outlets to discuss their current obligation to pay value added taxes (VAT) of 15% on transactions such as newsprint and advertising. The associations are joining local publishers, as well as the office of the Temporary Media Commissioner (TMC), in formulating a campaign to persuade the UNMIK to lower VAT, arguing that neighboring countries have instituted concessions on the tax as it applies to media. APJK and AMPEK continue to gather related information and are working together to organize a follow-up meeting in order to draft a request for the decrease of taxes for Kosovar media starting from January 1, 2004. In the past, representatives of the associations have met with the UNMIK legal office, the TMC, the general secretary of the International Federation of Journalists, and members of the London-based free expression organization Article 19 on this issue.

2.2 Transmission System Effectively Managed by Non-Partisan Kosovar NGO

IREX continued to work with the Kosovo Terrestrial Telecommunications Network (KTTN) on issues such as the development of sustainability plans, the preparation of future subgrant requests, the reorganization of management, and the implementation of user fees. A KTTN board meeting agreed to the payment of fees beginning January 1, 2004.

2.3 Publishers Association Represents the Interests of Independent Media Outlets

Publishers have demonstrated resistance to the formation of a publishers' association. However, IREX continues to meet with publishers individually to listen to their concerns. Both the broadcasters' association AMPEK and the journalists' association APJK arose from a similar beginning and it is hoped that publishers may follow suit in the future. IREX thus reports no activities in the development of a publishers association this quarter.

2.4 Journalists Association Provides Journalism Training

With IREX's assistance, the Association of Professional Journalists of Kosovo (APJK) drafted and finalized its strategic plan, which was submitted to and approved by its board. The plan, whose activities include an assessment of media capacity in Kosovo, the establishment of a media resource center, a training of trainers program in journalism, and the establishment of a set of professional standards for journalists, forms one of the preconditions for future support to the association. The Kosovo Foundation for Open Society has approved a grant to APJK for the media resource center, which will cover the costs of buying a collection of all newspapers published in Kosovo from 1956. IREX also advised and assisted APJK's executive director in preparing documents needed to apply for donations from the OSCE that will cover costs for a media lawyer and administration officer.

APJK approached the International Federation of Journalists for membership, leading to a September visit to Kosovo by the federations secretary general Oliver Money-Kyrle.

Also during the quarter, IREX Manager for Media Law and Associations Filloreta Bytyci met with Bernhard Knoll, the then acting representative of the Temporary Media Commissioner (TMC), to outline the work of APJK. Among other issues, Knoll raised the idea of forming a press council in the near future. The TMC currently implements a temporary Print Code of Conduct, which needs to be extended every three months by UNMIK's chief administrator. Awareness is now growing that it is time to move from a press regulation of a statutory authority to a self-regulatory system with a press council that would handle complaints and act as a kind of ombudsperson. This body would represent the spectrum of Kosovo's press, serve to safeguard its freedoms, and hold its own profession accountable through an adjudicating procedure. Such a system should be ultimately self-sustainable, financed by contributions of the press industry as well as journalist associations. Its authority rests on the willingness of publishers and editors to respect the council's views, to adhere voluntarily to the standards, and to admit mistakes publicly.

As noted above, APJK united with the broadcasters' association AMPEK in meeting with representatives of local media outlets to discuss their current obligation to pay value added taxes (VAT) of 15% on transactions such as newsprint and advertising. The associations are joining local publishers, as well as the TMC, in formulating a campaign to persuade UNMIK to lower VAT, arguing that neighboring countries have instituted concessions on the tax as it applies to media. APJK and AMPEK continue to gather related information and are working together to organize a follow-up meeting in order to draft a request for the decrease of taxes for Kosovar media starting from January 1, 2004. In the past, representatives of the associations have met with the UNMIK legal office, the TMC, the general secretary of the International Federation of Journalists, and members of the London-based free expression organization Article 19 on this issue.

Intermediate Result 2 – Results

- AMPEK and APJK finalize strategic plans.
- AMPEK and APJK unite in campaign to lower VAT for media.
- AMPEK aids Radio Ylberi and Radio Globi in Mitrovica in a dispute with municipal authorities.

- Initiatives for a press council move forward.
- Work continues with KTTN on development of sustainability plans, preparation of future subgrant requests, reorganization of management, and implementation of user fees.
- KTTN completes construction of Kaqanik tower.

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

As noted above, the law on freedom of information has been passed by the Kosovo Assembly, but is now under review following objections from the Serbian party Povratak. Pending its implementation and enforcement, IREX plans to address a number of issues related to freedom of information, such as its principles, protection, and counter-effects. IREX will also offer media law training for lawyers in Kosovo. IREX Manager for Media Law Filloreta Bytscy has been in touch with David Goldberg, co-convenor of the campaign for freedom of information in Scotland, to examine ways of cooperation in developing projects for the future.

3.2 Media Licensing is Fair and Apolitical

Representatives of the Association of Independent Electronic Media of Kosovo (AMPEK) met with Kosovo's ombudsperson, Marek Antoni Nowicky, in early August to discuss issues relating to draft legislation on the establishment of an Independent Media Commission (IMC). The IMC will replace the Temporary Media Commissioner (TMC), which was established by the UN administration in Kosovo in 2000 to serve as the regulatory agency for broadcast media. AMPEK and Nowicky also discussed an apparent conflict between Kosovo's constitutional framework and the founding legislation of the public broadcaster RTK, legislation that excludes RTK from the domain of the constitutional framework. This exclusion leaves the appointment of members of RTK's board of directors in the hands of the UN's chief administrator, essentially rendering the public broadcaster more of a state broadcaster. Kosovo's constitutional framework, in contrast, calls for ensuring the editorial independence of the public broadcaster through the appointment of board members by local institutions, following nominations by nonpartisan, nongovernmental organizations. Nowicky expressed his support for reconciling the two provisions; a move he believes can be addressed through enactment of the law on the IMC.

AMPEK's meeting with Nowicky was one of a number of lobbying activities geared towards representing the rights and interests of its members with regard to the IMC. Its representatives also approached the Belgium-based Association of Commercial Broadcasters for their opinion on the draft regulation. The association responded with comments on the compatibility of the proposed legislation with EU norms, focusing in particular on the draft's Article 16, which regulates access of publicly-funded broadcasters to advertising revenue.

Bytscy assisted the new TMC in proposing participants for a Council of Europe seminar on freedom of expression and broadcasting, originally scheduled for September. Bytscy also contacted IREX Washington for their assistance in engaging the law firm of Covington and Burling to help AMPEK prepare submissions for the seminar. The seminar could provide AMPEK with the opportunity to represent the interests of their members and rights in general, specifically regarding the last version of the IMC draft regulation.

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

There was no activity in this area in this quarter.

Intermediate Result 3 – Results

- AMPEK continues lobbying activities on the IMC and other issues, including meeting with Kosovo's ombudsman and contact with the Association of Commercial Broadcasters.

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

4.1 Independent Media Utilize Strategic Business Plans

KTV and RTV 21 agreed to accountancy training for their employees, a key recommendation of recent KPMG audits. An intensive four-week training program, conducted under the auspices of the USAID-supported Kosovo Business Services (KBS), began in September for five bookkeeping staff from RTV 21 and three from KTV. The training seeks to bring accounting at both stations into compliance with Kosovo standards and to address issues raised by the KPMG financial reviews. Both KBS and the stations reported a high level of satisfaction with the training, its attendance, performance, and quality of instruction. The training will continue into October.

IRES business adviser Andrew Clayton returned to Kosovo for another quarterly visit to KTV. His review revealed that the station's marketing revenue for the second quarter of 2003 is nearly double that for the same period in 2002. There are also indications that advertising rates are increasing. While some costs are running ahead of projections, KTV has taken measures to track and control them. The issue of additional space for the station remains unresolved.

Clayton also made his first visit to RTV 21 this quarter, after station director Aferdita Kelmendi agreed to his appointment as business adviser. This first review of RTV 21's business performance found that RTV 21's advertising sales are roughly comparable to KTV's. Because RTV projected much higher advertising sales for the year, it seems they will not reach that target. Clayton paid particular attention to RTV 21 satellite ventures after the KPMG audit raised substantial concerns about the programs' ability to break even. He discovered a substantial error in the cost estimates and determined that the satellite transmission project could be closer to breaking even than previously believed. RTV 21, along with KTV, is participating in a European satellite distribution program that began in September. Clayton will continue to monitor this development, as well as examine rising production costs, in the next review.

4.2 Independent Media Utilize Market Research

In September, IRES released the results of the second of four television audience surveys, conducted in July by the London-based Helen Harrison and Company in conjunction with the Kosovar research agency Prism, in an effort to provide key data on the viewing habits of Kosovo's three national channels: public broadcaster RTK and private stations KTV and RTV 21. The results indicate that average weekly viewing for KTV and RTV 21 has risen 3.7% and 3.1%, respectively, while RTK viewership has dropped 8.1%. KTV viewership has particularly increased during the station's morning program and continues to show strength in the early evening, despite a dip in audience during its 7:00 pm newscast. In the later evening, RTV 21 has moved to the number one position for most of the 9:00-11:00 pm period, due to the popularity of two soap operas in its nighttime line-up. For the overall adult audience average, however, RTK continues to draw the strongest share at 32.7%, with KTV and RTV 21 drawing 25.9% and 22.7%, respectively. RTK's primary strength remains its dominant position in news, with viewership during its 7:30 pm slot sufficiently high to be the single most important factor in giving the public broadcaster the lead in average weekly viewing. Both KTV and RTV 21 scored nearly identical high marks to RTK on the question of the credibility of their news programs, an especially important indicator given a July Kosova Index report that suggested that the credibility of the two

independent stations lagged behind RTK.

Following the release of the survey, IREX Senior Media Advisor Matt Shelley, and consultants Helen Harrison and Graeme Moreland, met with station, program, and marketing directors, as well as news and information editors, of both KTV and RTV 21 to explain the survey processes and results and to outline the role audience research should play in establishing program schedules, acquisition, and production. The consultations included advice on how to analyze the research data and how it can be used to make strategic decisions about advertising sales, promotion, and marketing. Discussions about the survey also addressed what the viewing public of Kosovo chooses to watch, compared with what the stations elect to broadcast, with an eye on the need to improve local program production, and in particular, news programming, which serves as both a major audience draw and a significant factor in determining station branding. As a result, the stations are now re-evaluating their schedules and on-air promotions and reviewing their commitment to programs that bring little or no material return. Moreland's consultancy will continue through early October, during which he will work closely with Shelley to establish recommendations and goals for each of the stations. He will return in November to follow-up on these activities.

IR 4.3 Female Media Managers Achieve Parity in Professional Opportunities

There was no activity in this area in this quarter.

IR 4.4 Entertainment Programming Attracts Audience and Increases Revenue

IREX held preliminary meetings with TV21 to discuss a plan to produce a local court-drama series in an effort to increase its audience. A request for subgrant support for this series will follow in the fall.

Former IREX training consultant Delina Fico continued to assist in coordinating work on a long-term documentary "academy," similar to the Sundance school in Colorado, which would be partly sponsored by the British Office, IREX, the OSCE, and other smaller donors. The project seeks to provide Kosovar documentary makers with mentoring in all phases of documentary development, with the goal of producing broadcast-quality programs to be aired locally and on the Discovery channel.

IR 4.5 Local and Regional Radio Develop Marketing and Programming Networks

IREX consultants and KTTN development personnel continued to work on plans for assistance to a radio network, which seeks to increase the sustainability of participating stations and encourage news and program exchange. The exchange would both increase news coverage outside of Pristina and give wider access to news for rural Kosovo. Six stations currently participate in the network, though the exchange remains limited by technical limits. KTTN has investigated related needs, such as the line of site to a KTTN transmitter.

Intermediate Result 4 – Results

- KTV and RTV bookkeeping staff receive accounting training.
- Quarterly review of KTV indicates advances in marketing revenue and sale of advertising time.
- RTV 21 undergoes first business review.
- Second for four audience surveys completed. Results indicate increased viewership for both KTV and RTV 21.
- Scheduling and marketing consulting, designed to maximize the benefits of the survey results, lead KTV and RTV 21 to re-evaluate their schedules and on-air promotions and reviewing their commitment to programs that bring little or no material return.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE AND OTHER ISSUES

In July, IREX senior staff met with OSI, USAID, KTV, and RTV 21 to assess progress on assistance to the national television stations, as agreed to at meetings held earlier this year in Budapest between IREX, USAID, and OSI. The implementation plan continues as noted above, including accounting training and audience surveys.

In August, IREX Chief of Party Keith Hayes met with Myrna Flood, the new media coordinator for the OSCE, and Bob Gillette, the new TMC, to introduce IREX and its activities and further the possibilities for closer cooperation on media affairs.

Two new staff members joined the IREX Kosovo office: Florent Ismaili, a bookkeeper, and Blerim Krasniqi, as a media advisor. Krasniqi, formerly of UNMIK TV, replaces Behar Zogjani, who left Kosovo in the spring for a post in Iraq.

Throughout the quarter, efforts continued to resolve IREX's beneficial status with UNMIK.

IREX also continued to work with USAID on the submission and approval of a new workplan.