

# **EVALUATION OF THE KOSOVO INDEPENDENT MEDIA PROGRAM EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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*Submitted to:*

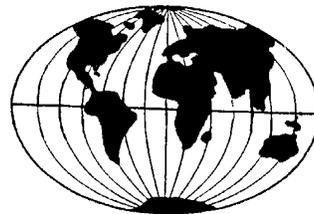
**United States Agency for International Development/Kosovo**

*Under:*

**Evaluation IQC No. AEP-I-00-00-00023-00  
Task Order No. 850**

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**August 11, 2004**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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### A. BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

This evaluation covers the Kosovo Independent Media Program (KIMP) (CA 167-A-00-01-00107-00) implemented from July 16, 2001 to July 15, 2004 by the International Research and Exchange Board (IREX) under a Cooperative Agreement with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) at a cost of \$7.7 million.

The principle objectives of the evaluation are: 1) An assessment of the effectiveness of IREX's approach to achieving the objectives of the Cooperative Agreement, 2) Identification and quantification of the degree of success in developing the elements of Kosovo's media which have received assistance under the KIMP, 3) Assessment of which elements of the KIMP produced the greatest value for funding provided and which the least, 4) Assessment of the management structure and business practices employed by IREX.

To evaluate the successes and failures of the KIMP implemented from 2001 to 2004 by IREX requires largely subjective judgments and comparisons because of lack of baseline data. The Evaluators necessarily relied on reports and recollections for a description of the state of Kosovo media three years ago, in 2001, when IREX signed the Cooperative Agreement to implement the KIMP. The Evaluators matched quantifiable assessments of the performance and professional level of present-day Kosovo media with those of 2001 in order to gauge the effect of IREX programs on the Kosovo media. Or, lacking quantifiable assessments, the Evaluators relied on judicious review of more than 50 interviews with working journalists, editors and media managers, including those who have undergone IREX training seminars and workshops.

### B. IMPACT

1. In general, the Evaluators have found that the indicators articulated under the four objectives of the KIMP have not been met in full, especially in quality.
2. They have not been met because the KIMP training has focused on quantity rather than quality, and chiefly on reporters alone, rather than including senior editorial management.
3. Constraints include: 1) Reluctance if not unwillingness of the two private television stations--RTK21 and KTV--financially supported by IREX under the KIMP to participate fully in professional training of reporting and editorial staffs; and 2) the depressed Kosovo economy that presents an obstacle to increased television advertising, and, hence, revenue.
4. As stated above, Kosovo's weak economy negatively impacts Kosovo media by contributing to sluggish advertising revenues. Other donors, most notably the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Kosovo Open Society Foundation, complement the KIMP rather than competing with or duplicating programs.

5. KosovoLive would have benefited from far more assistance by IREX under the KIMP, both financially and through training to develop and enlarge a professional news service. That, in turn, would have benefited Kosovo media at large.

## **C. IMPLEMENTATION**

1. The fairness and effectiveness of sub-grant allocation by IREX appear balanced and objective.
2. From 2001 to 2004, IREX has provided training to more than 1,200 Kosovar journalists and marketing, business and technical personnel. The training, plus on site-consultants, has covered a broad spectrum of reporting specialties and technical and financial matters. Workshops and seminars have been the predominant vehicles for the training. These forms of training have tended to have little impact on the Kosovo media. Hands-on instruction and in-house training are more effective, and at the same time more expensive than workshops and seminars. However, in-house training by IREX provided marketing and financial advisers has produced positive and quantifiable results at KTV and RTV21
3. IREX management structure both in Kosovo and Washington D.C. is appropriate to implementing the KIMP and is cost effective in terms of organizational functioning. The in-country expertise has largely not been appropriate to the purpose of establishing a more professional Kosovo media. The foreign experts have been qualified on the whole, the Evaluators were told, but training has been too short, and the quantity of trainees too large.

## **D. SUSTAINABILITY**

1. If grants and foreign assistance were to cease now, the electronic media, as well as KosovaLive and possibly KTTN would not be sustainable. They will be self-sustainable when the Kosovo economy improves and therefore advertising revenue. Revenues of the IREX-assisted RTV21 and KTV are increasing. In KTTN's case, the organization could be self-sustainable if users of the KTTN transmission network paid for the services, as they are obligated to do. The most promising local television and radio stations will be self-sustainable only when the number of stations is substantially reduced, thus freeing up advertising revenue for those stations that remain.
2. Available evidence suggests that training has not been institutionalized in terms of strengthening professional journalism, but some has been in terms of improving management and television programming. The training is, of course, affordable to the end users because IREX has paid for it.

## **E. LESSONS LEARNED**

- ▶ Television news broadcasts in Kosovo have yet to even begin to reach minimum European or American standards for quality.

- ▶ It is no longer acceptable that the IREX-funded RTV21 and KTV be subsidized by USAID unless station managements firmly and convincingly agree to in-house training by qualified foreign or Kosovar journalists and editors at all levels of the stations' staffing, including senior editors and producers.
- ▶ Training supported by USAID—the KIMP--to date has not measurably produced the desired results. Too many journalists and editors in Kosovo fail to meet the test of professionalism.
- ▶ USAID should continue strong support of AMPEK AND APJK, the two existing journalists' associations in Kosovo. The associations need to develop short- and long-term plans for achieving self-sustainability for the foreseeable future they will rely on international support, including that of USAID.
- ▶ IREX has largely failed to realize concepts outlined in its own original training plans that could have led to a better and more coherent approach with more lasting benefits for Kosovo journalis.
- ▶ Election reporting is a specific area that badly needs improvement and has particular importance in Kosovo's present situation, looking to the October elections.
- ▶ IREX should continue to support KTTN, given its essential role in distributing television and radio signals, but to press subscribers to pay for full KTTN operations so that it will be financially self-sustaining at the earliest possible time.
- ▶ RTV21's and KTV's have recorded business successes, but even with significant gains in advertising revenue, both will continue to need substantial subsidies for some time to come.
- ▶ It is clear to the Evaluators that there are real questions about the long-term viability of two independent television stations.
- ▶ There are clearly too many local broadcasters, especially radio, for a region of some two million people. The result is a continuing battle over limited numbers of advertisers, thus holding back development of self-sustaining and quality radio and television stations. USAID should continue to support chosen local TV and radio stations, as it does by subsidizing 15 subscriptions to KosovaLive services
- ▶ The Kosovo Assembly's adoption of the Law on Access to Government Documents and opening discussion about the status of libel law are positive signs for the advancement of a democratic society.
- ▶ KosovaLive, intended to become a "professional and sustainable news agency," has managed to reach a reasonably high standard of journalistic practice, but nowhere near the speed or breadth of coverage expected. However, the Evaluators strongly recommend further USAID support for KosovaLive, looking to the day that its subscribers will provide adequate budget funds.