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**STRENGTHENING INDEPENDENT MINORITY MEDIA  
(Cooperative Agreement No. 167-A-00-08-00102-00)**

**Final Performance Report  
July 15, 2008 – June 10, 2013**

**Submitted September 12, 2013**

IREX submits this final report in accordance with the requirements of the Strengthening Independent Minority Media program (No. 167-A-00-08-0010-00), Section A.5 Reporting and Evaluation. IREX welcomes USAID comments and questions directed to Terry Thielen, Senior Technical Advisor ([tthielen@irex.org](mailto:tthielen@irex.org)).

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## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The USAID-funded Strengthening Independent Minority Media program (SIMM) began July 15, 2008, received a two-year cost extension on September 17, 2010, and received a no-cost extension on March 10, 2013. The program officially ended on June 10, 2013. During the five year program period, IREX provided a range of technical assistance including consulting advice; training and subgrants to assure the business viability of targeted media outlets, especially in northern Kosovo; enhanced the professionalism of media practitioners and improved the content of broadcast media products; improved the legal, regulatory and policy framework for media in Kosovo; and improved the organizational capacity of media associations.

Under the initial 3-year program, IREX completed the technical task of networking the Serb-language TV stations to form *TV Mreza*, the first Serbian language TV network in Kosovo and facilitated the re-launch of the Serb language *KOSMA* radio network. TV and radio station newsrooms were upgraded with modern, digitalization-ready studio and production equipment and malfunctioning transmission equipment was replaced to improve broadcast quality. Extensive journalism, production and technical training was provided to all partner stations, increasing their capacity to produce high-quality, balanced radio and television programming. An incentive grants program was initiated to encourage and motivate the production of more localized programs to meet listener and viewer needs and interests. SIMM also addressed station management and operational issues in order to improve business practices and introduced marketing and advertising strategies to increase revenues and thus sustainability of the stations in tight advertising environments. IREX also commissioned four rounds of audience research to measure market share and listener and viewer preferences and habits. In addition, IREX provided assistance to the Independent Media Commission on its re-licensing process and to the Minority Media Fund in its efforts to set up a grantmaking system and award its first grants.

With the two-year cost extension IREX expanded activities to continue strengthening the *TV Mreza* and *KOSMA* networks, with a special emphasis on partners in north Kosovo. SIMM expanded the incentive grants program to support production of more sophisticated shared news and educational programming, and provided additional equipment grants and technical training to improve the stations' broadcast quality and ability to professionally maintain and operate the equipment. IREX hired a marketing and sales manager on behalf of *TV Mreza* to help the network establish a presence in the Serb-language advertising market, and begin generating shared revenues. This was in tandem with providing marketing and advertising training. The manager was also an experienced producer and assisted the network stations on other aspects of their programming. In the fifth and final year of SIMM, IREX focused on improving the quality and supply of local information to Serb communities in north Kosovo, continued to upgrade equipment at select stations, and expanded the *KOSMA* network's reach by adding two new stations in remote parts of northern Kosovo in towns previously without locally produced news. SIMM also funded shared programming on issues of mutual interest between *TV Mreza* stations in the north and south to create links between communities. During the extension SIMM also commissioned four additional waves of audience research to measure the *TV Mreza* and *KOSMA* audience shares and popularity among Serb speakers in Kosovo. *TV Mreza* also launched its new website, allowing access to the network's programming to viewers world-wide.

Finally, during the three-month no cost extension, in addition to close-out activities, IREX provided the leadership of *TV Mreza* and *KOSMA* with intense training and tools for developing effective private sector marketing strategies and increased their capacity to successfully interface with the donor community to apply for funding. This effort culminated in a successful donor conference which brought together potential funders interested in supporting programming for both networks.

Highlights from the five-year SIMM program include:

- Re-launched the five-member Kosovo Media Association (*KOSMA*) network in February 2009, with IREX support.

- Launched in February 2010 *TV Mreza*, the first Serbian language television network in Kosovo, with IREX support.
- Conducted eight rounds of audience research showing *TV Mreza*'s market share increased from 5% to 15% over the life of the program, indicating the network can hold its own with Serbian media in a highly competitive market.
- The *KOSMA* network led the Serbian radio market with a share of 28% by the close of the program, up from 12% in 2008. Radio Kontakt Plus remained the most popular station among listeners.
- SIMM added 30,000 new listeners to the *KOSMA* network by connecting three new stations in northern Kosovo in previously unserved areas.
- *TV Mreza* partners and *KOSMA* radio stations each exchanged more than 3,000 news and educational programs on a variety of topics of local concern.
- SIMM awarded a total of \$130,000 to partner TV and radio stations for equipment grants, substantially improving the technical quality of their output.
- The *TV Mreza* board increased the network's financial viability by establishing itself as a limited liability company (LLC) to pursue profit-making ventures in parallel with its NGO status.
- With IREX support, *TV Mreza* launched its new website, [www.tvmreza.tv](http://www.tvmreza.tv), in early 2013, providing continuously updated news and information to *TV Mreza* viewers in Kosovo and world-wide.
- IREX and its sub-implementer Social Impact devised a system for the Independent Media Commission (IMC) to monitor the output of the Kosovo-wide TV stations.
- SIMM provided assistance to the Minority Media Fund (MMF) to set up its grantmaking system, enabling the MMF to award three rounds of 48 grants to minority media outlets in the amount of €372,592. MMF grants included awards to five SIMM partner stations and the *KOSMA* network.

## II. INTRODUCTION

The USAID-funded Strengthening Independent Minority Media program (SIMM) began July 15, 2008, as a three year mandate to develop sustainable Serbian language broadcast media capable of providing professional local news to citizens. In September 2010, USAID awarded IREX a two-year cost extension to continue building on SIMM's progress over the first three years. Finally, in March 2013 IREX received a no-cost extension to finalize activities focused on north Kosovo. The program officially ended on June 10, 2013. This final report provides a review of the five year SIMM program, starting with an analysis of the program's Performance Management Plan (PMP, see Section III), followed by an in-depth look at SIMM activities during the three year original program period and the two-year cost extension and NCE (Section IV). The report concludes with a set of conclusions and observations on the impact of the program as a whole (Section V).

SIMM activities were launched in a political and economic environment that was uncertain and fragile. While Kosovo declared its independence in February 2008, it was not universally recognized and tensions between Kosovo and Serbia, which was hostile to Kosovo's declaration, were evident throughout the life of the program. The de facto separation of the Serb majority north of the river Ibar created difficulties in engaging with Kosovo Serbs as a unified group, particularly while many in the north aspired to a re-alignment of the border between Kosovo and Serbia. The Kosovo election in December 2010 emphasized that comparatively few Serbs were willing to vote. Helping stations deal with high levels of tension in Serb communities in Kosovo, particularly in the north, in ways which did not inflame already strong views became particularly important in the final years of the program as Belgrade and Pristina continued negotiations on the futures of both countries.

A diplomatic breakthrough was finally reached in April 2013, and though Serbia still refused to recognize Kosovo independence, it conceded its legal authority over the whole territory. In exchange, Kosovo conceded limited autonomy to the four Serb-controlled areas in the north where several SIMM partners were located. Though this development occurred too late in the program to have any impact on SIMM activities, it is notable as a reminder of the level of political uncertainty under which the program successfully operated throughout the life of the project.

SIMM also operated during a time of financial unrest. The global economic crisis further set back the growth of Kosovo and adversely affected media advertising revenue. Because of the political environment, potential advertisers and sponsors from Serbia were reluctant to do business with Serbian TV and radio stations in Kosovo until they received some indication from the Serbian government that it was acceptable to do so. Some Kosovo Albanian advertisers were reluctant to support a community unwilling to accept Kosovo's independence. Business activity in the Serb areas remained weak, making it hard for minority language TV and radio stations to generate sufficient revenues to sustain themselves from their local communities alone. Despite the difficult environment SIMM managed some success in generating revenue from public bodies and international organizations. Commercial companies such as banks and food distribution companies, however, were often harder to convince because the potential Serbian speaking audiences for advertisers are comparatively small and fragmented.

Despite these challenges, in five years' time SIMM successfully developed a financially viable and journalistically professional Serb-speaking media sector, and created important ties between north and south Kosovo. Key successes during the original three year program included the re-launch of the radio KOSMA network and the creation of *TV Mreza*, the first Serb-language television network in Kosovo. Partner stations were networked and re-equipped with quality equipment, improving the look and production values of partner programs, a process that continued over the five year period. IREX commissioned eight rounds of audience marketing research to measure stations audience share and gauge viewer and listener preferences which was ultimately used by partner stations for programming and business decisions. SIMM also hired a dedicated marketing expert to develop an advertising and marketing strategy for *TV Mreza* and sell advertising on behalf of both networks, and ensured the technical integrity of the networks with equipment grants and by coordinating with the networks' Internet service provider to ready the stations for the country's coming digitalization. In addition, a targeted content grants program increased station output with hundreds of original, locally produced news and entertainment programs, which in turn provided more shared programming in the networks and more information for audiences. IREX also continued to provide on-site journalism and production training and mentoring for all member stations.

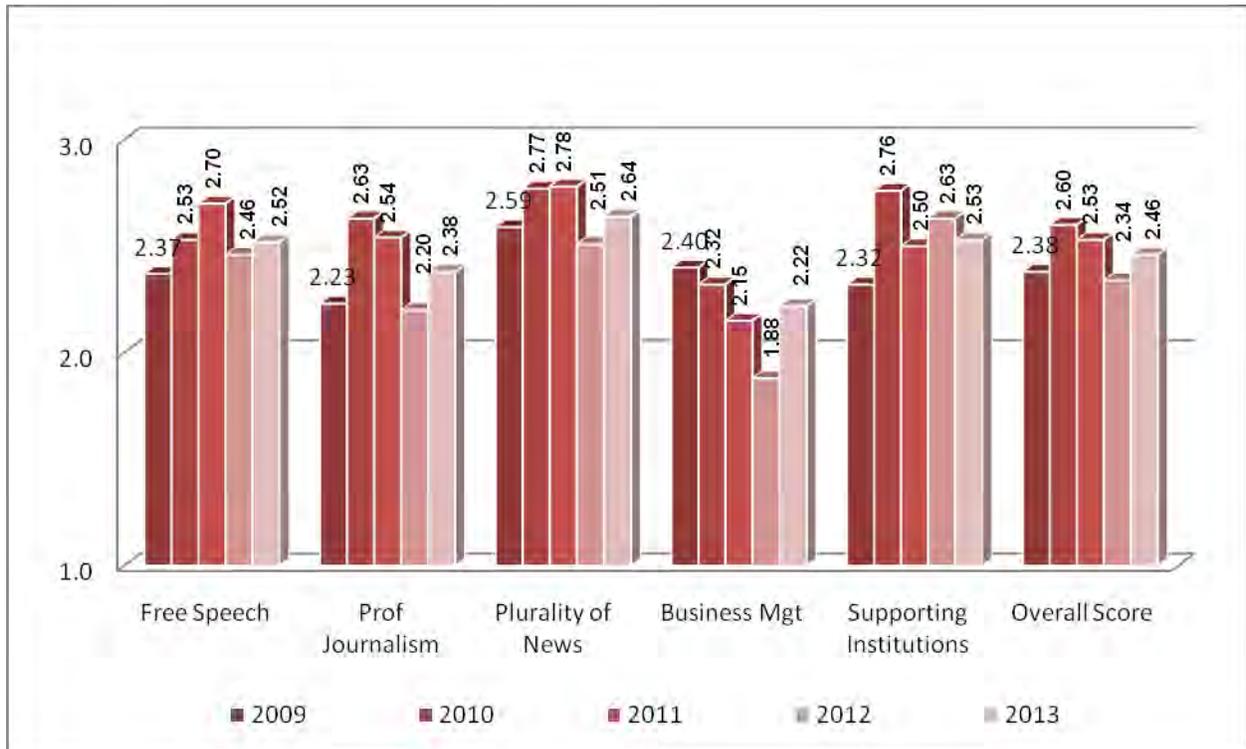
Early in the program, SIMM also helped to strengthen the Kosovo media enabling environment and sensitized it to minority media concerns. SIMM provided technical assistance to the electronic media regulator the Independent Media Commission (IMC) on various initiatives including the issuance of permanent licenses to broadcasters in Kosovo (including minority media), re-drafting and modernizing its regulation of the cable industry, and assisting in the preparation for the digitization of Kosovo's television transmission system before 2014. SIMM also assisted the Minority Media Fund (MMF), administered by the Prime Minister's Office, develop its grantmaking processes and award its first round in 2009. The MMF ultimately awarded 48 grants during the program period for a total of €372,592. Its future, however, was uncertain at the close of the program as funds allocated to the MMF were in dispute.

SIMM staff also worked with all the stations throughout the program to improve their level of compliance with the terms of their IMC licenses and with other Kosovo laws, particularly the newly enacted Copyright Law. Most of them are now members of the independent electronic media owners association, AMPEK, making it one of Kosovo's truly multi-ethnic representative bodies. Three of the partner TV stations joined the Kosovo Albanian station TV21's IPTV platform, providing programs to the Balkan Diaspora all over the world.

Over the course of the program period, SIMM monitored the debate about the establishment of a Kosovo-wide Serbian language television channel as required by the Kosovo constitution. It was ultimately decided it would be a public channel, part of the RTK public broadcasting structure. In March 2012 the new RTK law was passed, providing an operational framework for the station including how to appoint the director of the new RTK2 channel. Though a minority RTK2 channel was strongly objected to by the Association of Serb Journalists in Kosovo, RTK2 was launched in May 2013, at the end of the SIMM program. SIMM's main concern was that already scarce advertising sources would be diluted further by a new entry into the minority language broadcasting space. It was unclear as the program closed what affect, if any, RTK2 will have on the *TV Mreza* audience or advertising sales.

During each year of the SIMM program, IREX independently conducted its annual Media Sustainability Index (MSI) panel assessment. Though the MSI does not specifically focus on minority media, SIMM monitored the results of the report throughout the life of the program to identify trends in the media sector as a whole. MSI scores fluctuated during SIMM, peaking in most categories in 2011 and leveling off during the last two years of the program. Scores in all categories rose between 2009 and 2013 except Business Management which overall garnered the lowest scores and sunk to 1.8 in the 2012 before climbing back slightly in 2013. Kosovo’s overall score for 2013 of 2.46 puts it in the middle of MSI’s ranking for a “near sustainable” media sector.

**Kosovo’s Progress in the Media Sector 2009-2013  
 Measured through the Media Sustainability Index**



**Overall 2009-2013 MSI Score: 2.38, 2.60, 2.54, 2.34, 2.46**

MSI Score for Free Speech: 2.37, 2.53, 2.70, 2.46, 2.52  
 MSI Score for Professional Journalism: 2.23, 2.63, 2.54, 2.20, 2.38  
 MSI Score for Plurality of News Sources: 2.59, 2.77, 2.78, 2.51, 2.64  
 MSI Score for Business Management: 2.40, 2.32, 2.15, 1.88, 2.22  
 MSI Score for Supporting Institutions: 2.32, 2.76, 2.50, 2.63, 2.53

**III. PROGRAM INDICATORS**

SIMM’s performance indicators were embodied in the performance management plan (PMP), which was modified as required during the program, particularly in 2011 to reflect new activities associated with the two-year cost extension. The PMP targets established the intended level of performance for the SIMM project in the cooperative agreement between IREX and USAID. Indicators accompanied each target and measured SIMM results.

All indicators set out to support the original SIMM program objective: *Sustainable Serbian language broadcast media provide professional local news to citizens*, and accompanying activities.

The SIMM program began in 2008 with two SIMM overall intermediate results (IRs), each of which encompassed a major program component. Achievement of these IRs was contingent upon the successful implementation of sub-IRs and activities. Together the IRs and the sub-IRs were necessary and sufficient to achieve the overall SIMM program objective and to support USAID IR 2.1.1 “Better Informed Citizens” and the USAID Strategic Objective 2.1 “Civil society and government are more effective partners in achieving good governance”.

<b>Intermediate Result 1:</b>	<b>Link and Strengthen Minority Broadcast Media</b>
Intermediate Result 1.1:	Link select minority language television and radio stations
Intermediate Result 1.2:	Linked stations’ news and information programming meets professional standards
Intermediate Result 1.3:	Linked stations and networks are well-managed businesses
<b>Intermediate Result 2:</b>	<b>Strengthen Independent Media Enabling Institutions</b>
Intermediate Result 2.1:	Minority Media Fund operates with transparency and fairness
Intermediate Result 2.2:	Independent Media Commission (IMC) provides fair and transparent regulation of broadcast media

In March 2011 IREX was awarded a two year extension of SIMM to support USAID’s Kosovo Strategic Plan 2010-2014 under Assistance Objective 3: “**Empowering Kosovo’s Citizens to Consolidate a Functioning Democracy**, civil society and government are more effective partners in achieving good governance”. The extension also supported Program Element 4.2, “Media Freedom and Freedom of Information” under USG’s Framework for Assistance.

As part of the extension, SIMM added four new sub Intermediate Results under the original **IR 1: Link and Strengthen Minority Broadcast Media**. These IRs and accompanying activities were designed to underpin the SIMM extension program goal: *Continue Support to Improve Access of the Minority Language Communities to Reliable, Objective News and Information accompanying SIMM intermediate results*. Achievement of these IRs was contingent upon the successful implementation of all the program activities.

The original PMP was merged into a revised and expanded PMP that continued to measure results of the original program as appropriate, but reflect and measure indicators connected to the new IRs and activities. The Performance Indicator Analysis chart was somewhat revised from the original to incorporate the extension and the new IRs. Three new indicators were added: IR1.3C TV stations abiding by the copyright law, IR 1.3Aa Grant equipment tendering Milestone Index, and IR 1.3Ab # of average daily visitors to the TV network’s website. In addition, most indicator numbers changed and/or were renamed. These changes are denoted in the following Performance Indicator Analysis chart. Where an indicator number changed, the original number appears in parenthesis and italics under the current number. Where an indicator name was changed, the original appears in parenthesis and italics under the current performance indicator. The new IRs added as part of the two year cost extension are shown below.

**Intermediate Results for SIMM 2-Year Cost Extension, 2011-2013**

<b>Intermediate Result 1.1</b>	<b>Strengthen the Networks of Minority Broadcast Media</b>
	Activity 1: Strengthen the technical viability of the <i>TV Mreza</i> network.
<b>Intermediate Result 1.2</b>	<b>Provide Operational and Technical Support to <i>TV Mreza</i> and <i>KOSMA</i> Network Stations.</b>
	Activity 1: Provide technical and maintenance support.
	Activity 2: Monitor station usage.
	Activity 3: Support <i>KOSMA</i> radio news programming.

	Activity 4: Integrate and link other community media into Serb networks.
<b>Intermediate Result 1.3</b>	<b>Linked Stations' News and Information Meet Professional Standards</b>
	Activity 1: Improve journalism skills and editorial capacity.
	Activity 2: Establish common ethical, editorial and technical operating norms.
	Activity 3: Create small competitive incentive grants program.
	Activity 4: Develop co-production projects with independent production companies.
	Activity 5: Provide additional support to electronic media in north Kosovo.
<b>Intermediate result 1.3A</b>	<b>Provide additional support to electronic media in north Kosovo</b>
	Activity 1: Modernize Radio Kontakt Plus's newsroom, secure its transmission facilities and support additional program making.
	Activity 2: Extend KOSMA network programming and Radio Kontakt Plus's news bulletins to Radio Kolasin in Zubin Potok and Radio Mir in Leposavic. Provide incentive grants to fund contributions to the network.
	Activity 3: Support news room equipment development at TV Most, with additional professional and program making development.
	Activity 4: Develop a multi-media website for TV Mreza and promote new media development for all partners in north Kosovo.
	Activity 5: Support studio re-equipment at TV Mir and continue to provide training for journalists and technical staff.
	Activity 6: Develop understanding between Serb media in south and north Kosovo.
	Activity 7: Provide training and consultancy support for new media development, technical capacity and journalistic quality
<b>Intermediate Result 1.4</b>	<b>Linked Stations are Well-managed Businesses</b>
	Activity 1: Train individual outlets on business development.
	Activity 2: Conduct audience research.
	Activity 3: Develop joint advertising and revenue sharing.
	Activity 4: Support networks and stations in dealing with Kosovo regulators

**PERFORMANCE INDICATOR ANALYSIS TABLE**

SIMM supported USAID IR 2.1.1 “Better Informed Citizens.” The performance indicators outlined below show progress of the SIMM program from inception in 2008 (including baseline data gathered in September 2008) through the end of the two-year cost extension awarded to IREX in March 2013. While not all indicators fully reached their targets, all show measurable improvement over the life of the program and most targets were met.

Indicator Number	Performance Indicator	Unit of Measure	Disaggregated by	Baseline Value Sept. 2008	Target EOP Yr 1 June 2009	Actual Project Year 1 (6/30/2009)	Target EOP Yr 2 June 2010	Actual Project Year 2 - 2010	Target EOP Yr 3 June 2011	Actual Project Year 3 March 2011	Target EOP Yr 4 March 2012	Actual Project Year 4	Target EOP Yr 5 March 2013	Actual Project Year 5	Remarks	
IR 1.1A (IR 1.1B)	Digital equipment tendering process Milestone index (Equipment Tendering Process Milestone Index)	#	N/A	TBD	-	-	-	-	-	0/100	100/100	95/100	-	-	This activity ended in 2012.	
IR 1.2A (IR 1.2A)	TV stations' score on MCAT (same as original PMP)	Numerical score	N/A	Story Criteria (scale 1-5)	Story Criteria (scale 1-5)	<b>Remarks</b>  TV stations improved the quality of reporting between 2008 and 2013. SIMM's priority during the final year was to sharpen stations' capacities to										
				TV Most: 2.42	TV Most: 2.75	TV Most: 2.52	TV Most: 3.20	TV Most: 2.57	TV Most: 3.20	TV Most: 2.57	TV Most: 3.20	TV Most: 2.59	TV Most: 3.20	TV Most: 2.79		
				TV Mir: 1.87	TV Mir: 2.10	TV Mir: 1.96	TV Mir: 2.30	TV Mir: 2.09	TV Mir: 3.60	TV Mir: 2.48	TV Mir: 3.60	TV Mir: 2.50	TV Mir: 3.60	TV Mir: 3.19		
				TV Puls: 2.43	TV Puls: 3.95	TV Puls: 3.03	TV Puls: 3.95	TV Puls: 2.74	TV Puls: 3.95	TV Puls: 2.91	TV Puls: 3.95	TV Puls: 2.90	TV Puls: 3.95	TV Puls: 3.18		
				TV Herc: 2.60	TV Herc: 2.80	TV Herc: 2.58	TV Herc: 3.20	TV Herc: 2.47	TV Herc: 3.20	TV Herc: 2.92	TV Herc: 3.20	TV Herc: 2.99	TV Herc: 3.20	TV Herc: 3.22		
	Overall program quality (scale 1-5)	Overall program quality (scale 1-5)	Overall program quality (scale 1-5)	Overall program quality (scale 1-5)	Overall program quality (scale 1-5)	Overall program quality (scale 1-5)	Overall program quality (scale 1-5)	Overall program quality (scale 1-5)	Overall program quality (scale 1-5)	Overall program quality (scale 1-5)	Overall program quality (scale 1-5)	Overall program quality (scale 1-5)	Overall program quality (scale 1-5)	Overall program quality (scale 1-5)		

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Indicator Number	Performance Indicator	Unit of Measure	Disaggregated by	Baseline Value Sept. 2008	Target EOP Yr 1 June 2009	Actual Project Year 1 (6/30/2009)	Target EOP Yr 2 June 2010	Actual Project Year 2 - 2010	Target EOP Yr 3 June 2011	Actual Project Year 3 March 2011	Target EOP Yr 4 March 2012	Actual Project Year 4	Target EOP Yr 5 March 2013	Actual Project Year 5	Remarks
				TV Most: 2.43	TV Most: 3.20	TV Most: 2.58	TV Most: 3.20	TV Most: 2.67	TV Most: 3.20	TV Most: 2.63	TV Most: 3.20	TV Most: 2.58	TV Most: 3.20	TV Most: 3.00	deal with the difficult political environment.
				TV Mir: 1.67	TV Mir: 1.95	TV Mir: 1.85	TV Mir: 3.00	TV Mir: 2.30	TV Mir: 3.00	TV Mir: 2.53	TV Mir: 3.00	TV Mir: 2.60	TV Mir: 3.00	TV Mir: 3.21	
				TV Puls: 2.28	TV Puls: 3.50	TV Puls: 2.81	TV Puls: 4.00	TV Puls: 2.69	TV Puls: 4.00	TV Puls: 2.98	TV Puls: 4.00	TV Puls: 3.24	TV Puls: 4.00	TV Puls: 3.36	
				TV Herc: 2.90	TV Herc: 3.15	TV Herc: 3.16	TV Herc: 3.40	TV Herc: 2.67	TV Herc: 3.40	TV Herc: 3.18	TV Herc: 3.40	TV Herc: 3.26	TV Herc: 3.40	TV Herc: 3.50	
IR 1.2B (IR 1.1C)	Monitoring system scorecard to track station weekly usage and contributions of participating radio stations to shared platform in operation (same as original PMP)	#	N/A	Radio Kontakt Plus: 2.23	Radio Kontakt Plus: 2.40	Radio Kontakt Plus: 2.57	Radio Kontakt Plus: 2.9	Radio Kontakt Plus: .31	Radio Kontakt Plus: 4.00	Radio Kontakt Plus: 2.09	Radio Kontakt Plus: 4.00	Radio Kontakt Plus: 2.24	Radio Kontakt Plus: 4.00	Radio Kontakt Plus: 1.62	KOSMA stations varied their usage and contribution to the radio network during the project. Staff fluctuations, other business priorities, and tense political situation likely caused the slight decrease in scores in the final year.
				Radio Kim: 1.32	Radio Kim: 1.50	Radio Kim: 1.40	Radio Kim: 1.80	Radio Kim: 1.66	Radio Kim: 2.50	Radio Kim: 1.50	Radio Kim: 2.50	Radio Kim: 1.67	Radio Kim: 2.50	Radio KIM: 1.57	
				Radio Klokot: 0.47	Radio Klokot: 0.70	Radio Klokot: 0.49	Radio Klokot: 0.80	Radio Klokot: 0.48	Radio Klokot: 0.80	Radio Klokot: 0.47	Radio Klokot: 0.80	Radio Klokot: 0.39	Radio Klokot: 0.80	Radio Klokot: 0.49	
				Radio Gorazdevac: 0.40	Radio Gorazdevac: 0.60	Radio Gorazdevac: 0.33	Radio Gorazdevac: 0.70	Radio Gorazdevac: 0.52	Radio Gorazdevac: 0.70	Radio Gorazdevac: 0.48	Radio Gorazdevac: 0.70	Radio Gorazdevac: 0.47	Radio Gorazdevac: 0.70	Radio Gorazdevac: 0.61	
				Radio Herc: 2.1 (March 2010)	Radio Herc: 0.0	Radio Herc: 0.0	Radio Herc: 0.0	Radio Herc: 0.40	Radio Herc: 0.70	Radio Herc: 0.39	Radio Herc: 0.70	Radio Herc: 0.42	Radio Herc: 0.70	Radio Herc: 0.42	
IR 1.2C (IR1.1D)	Monitoring system scorecard to track station weekly usage and contributions of participating	#	N/A	0	TBD	TBD	TBD	# of stories produced for news	# of stories produced for news	# of stories produced for news	# of stories produced for news	# of stories produced for news	# of stories produced for news		
								TV Most: 9.4	TV Most: 8.0	TV Most: 6.6	TV Most: 10.0	TV Most: 9.6	TV Most: 10.0	TV Most: 10.3	The scorecard for TV Mreza shows an

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Indicator Number	Performance Indicator	Unit of Measure	Disaggregated by	Baseline Value Sept. 2008	Target EOP Yr 1 June 2009	Actual Project Year 1 (6/30/2009)	Target EOP Yr 2 June 2010	Actual Project Year 2 - 2010	Target EOP Yr 3 June 2011	Actual Project Year 3 March 2011	Target EOP Yr 4 March 2012	Actual Project Year 4	Target EOP Yr 5 March 2013	Actual Project Year 5	Remarks
	stations to the Serb TV network in 3 categories: stories produced for news; other shared and stories received ( <i>Monitoring system scorecard to track weekly station usage and contributions of participating stations to the Serb TV network</i> )							TV Mir: 3.9	TV Mir: 8.0	TV Mir: 3.0	TV Mir:8.0	TV Mir:4.1	TV Mir:8.0	TV Mir: 4.8	increase in the number of stories stations produced for the network, the stories they shared and stories they received from member stations over the life of the program
		TV Puls: 5.7	TV Puls: 8.0	TV Puls: 4.9	TV Puls:8.0	TV Puls:5.4	TV Puls:8.0	TV Puls: 5.7							
		TV Herc: 4.5	TV Herc: 8.0	TV Herc: 5.3	TV Herc:8.0	TV Herc:5.2	TV Herc:8.0	TV Herc: 5.0							
		# of other shared	# of other shared	# of other shared	# of other shared	# of other shared	# of other shared								
		TV Most: 1.9	TV Most: 4.0	TV Most: 1.8	TV Most:4.0	TV Most:3.2	TV Most:4.0	TV Most: 3.6							
		TV Mir: 0.4	TV Mir: 4.0	TV Mir: 0.9	TV Mir:4.0	TV Mir:2.2	TV Mir:4.0	TV Mir: 3.0							
		TV Puls: 0.9	TV Puls: 4.0	TV Puls: 1.5	TV Puls:4.0	TV Puls:2.5	TV Puls:4.0	TV Puls: 3.							
		TV Herc: 0.6	TV Herc: 4.0	TV Herc: 0.8	TV Herc:4.0	TV Herc:2.5	TV Herc:4.0	TV Herc: 2.7							
		# of stories received	# of stories received	# of stories received	# of stories received	# of stories received	# of stories received								
		TV Most: 6.2	TV Most: 10.0	TV Most: 2.7	TV Most:10.0	TV Most:3.8	TV Most:10.0	TV Most: 7.0							
		TV Mir: 6.6	TV Mir: 10.0	TV Mir: 3.6	TV Mir:10.0	TV Mir:5.8	TV Mir:10.0	TV Mir: 7.0							
		TV Puls: 7.6	TV Puls: 10.0	TV Puls: 4.5	TV Puls:10.0	TV Puls:5.3	TV Puls:10.0	TV Puls: 7.9							
		TV Herc: 5.9	TV Herc: 10.0	TV Herc: 3.8	TV Herc:10.0	TV Herc:5.3	TV Herc:10.0	TV Herc: 7.7							

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Indicator Number	Performance Indicator	Unit of Measure	Disaggregated by	Baseline Value Sept. 2008	Target EOP Yr 1 June 2009	Actual Project Year 1 (6/30/2009)	Target EOP Yr 2 June 2010	Actual Project Year 2 - 2010	Target EOP Yr 3 June 2011	Actual Project Year 3 March 2011	Target EOP Yr 4 March 2012	Actual Project Year 4	Target EOP Yr 5 March 2013	Actual Project Year 5	Remarks
IR 1.2D (IR 1.2C)	KOSMA network members scores on program quality assessment tool (same as original PMP)	Numerical score	N/A	Story criteria (scale 1-5)	Story criteria (scale 1-5)	Story criteria (scale 1-5)	Story criteria (scale 1-5)	Story criteria (scale 1-5)	Story criteria (scale 1-5)	Story criteria (scale 1-5)	Story criteria (scale 1-5)	Story criteria (scale 1-5)	Story criteria (scale 1-5)		
				3.06	3.70	3.18	4.50	3.47	4.50	3.47	4.50	3.44	4.50	3.47	Radio Kontakt Plus, Radio KIM main contributors to KOSMA network; program quality depended on their output. Despite disruptions at stations, the network's quality improved significantly between the baseline and Y2, keeping that standard to Y5.
			Program Quality (scale 1-5)	Program Quality (scale 1-5)	Program Quality (scale 1-5)	Program Quality (scale 1-5)	Program Quality (scale 1-5)	Program Quality (scale 1-5)	Program Quality (scale 1-5)	Program Quality (scale 1-5)					
				3.15	3.70	3.31	4.50	3.69	4.50	3.58	4.50	3.57	4.50	3.63	

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IR 1.2E (IR1.1 F)	# of new, Serb and non-Serbian language minorities, joining the internet-based exchange system <i>(same as original PMP)</i>	#	N/A	0	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	1	-	1	-	3	The Bosnian station Radio Omega 3, Radio Mir and Radio Kolasin exchanged programs with the KOSMA network.
IR 1.3A (IR1.2 D)	# of journalists & technicians trained (disaggregated by gender) <i>(same as original PMP)</i>	#	N/A	22 (6 female/16 male) Baseline December 2010)						32 (7 female/25 male)	30 (8 female/22 male)	73 (28 female/14 male; 31 technicians)	40	49 (22 female/17 men; 10 technicians)	All TV and radio stations increased the number of staff. Targets exceeded for women trained.
IR 1.3B (IR2.2 A)	Milestone index on partners complying with IMC licenses <i>(IMC Milestone Index score)</i>									TBD	100/100	86/100	-	-	This activity ended in 2012.
IR 1.3C	TV stations abide by the copyright law <i>(indicator added as part of cost extension)</i>	%								4	4	4	4		Data show a high % TV station compliance rate to IMC rules and regulations.
										TV Herc:82 %	N/A	TV Herc: 85%	-	TV Herc: 80%	

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										TV Most: 96%	N/A	TV Most: 100%	-	TV Most: 100%	
										TV Mir:55%	N/A	TV Mir:75%	-	TV Mir: 80%	
										TV Puls:86%	N/A	TV Puls: 85%	-	TV Puls: 85%	
IR 1.3D (IR1.2 B)	# of small grants issued to stations to produce socially and culturally relevant programs; number of grants completed and rejected/amended stories (same as original PMP)	#	N/A												
			# issued grants	0/30	11/30	11/30	22/34 (15 grants added to the remaining 19)	20/34	36/76 (62 grants added to remaining 14)	14/76	14/62	29/62	32/33	125/125	Total number of grants awarded by SIMM increased from 30 in Y1 to an additional 15 in Y2. 62 grants were added with extension. Total grants awarded during regular SIMM = 107. 18 grants awarded with additional funds for north Kosovo. Total grants = 125.
			# of grants completed								13/76	29/62	32/33	125/125	

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			# of rejected / amended stories								0	0	-	-	
IR 1.3Aa	Grant equipment tendering Milestone Index <i>(additional indicator for north Kosovo)</i>	#	N/A										-	87/100	Equipment for stations in north bought and installed by the end of the program.
IR 1.3Ab	# of average daily visitors of the TV networks web site <i>(additional indicator for north Kosovo)</i>	#	N/A										-	31	TV Mreza website was launched in January 2013. Hits expected to increase as site becomes known.
IR 1.4A <i>(IR1.3 C)</i>	# of Media outlets that receive training to promote financial sustainability <i>(same as original PMP)</i>	#	Station	8/10 Baseline December 2010				8/10	10/10	8/10	10/10	10/10	10/10	10/10	All SIMM partners received the training.

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IR 1.4B (IR 1)	% share of available Serb audience <i>(same as original PMP)</i>			Radio Audience share: 11.92%	15%	50%	55%	25.70%	55%	22.00%	55%	25%	55%	28%	Early fluctuations in audience share due to inaccurate sampling by firm. Share consistent from Y3 with slight increase in Y5, up from baseline		
				TV Audience share: 5.53%	10%	7.9%	10%	3.40%	10%	4.81%	10%	18%	25%	14%	TV share inc significantly from baseline.		
1.4C (1.3B)	# of participating stations using audience research findings in their program scheduling & advertising sales and marketing consultant's score on station's use of this <i>(same as original PMP)</i>	#	N/A	5	7	7	9	5	9	9	9	9	9	9	Evaluation criteria is a 5 pt scale from 1 to 5. 1= no use of the audience research; 5= station effectively uses audience research in all program scheduling & advertising sales		
				RTV Herc: 3				RTV Herc: 4			RTV Herc: 3			RTV Herc: 4			RTV Herc:4
				TV Puls:4				TV Puls: 4			TV Puls: 5			TV Puls:4			TV Puls: 4
				Radio Kontakt Plus: 4				Radio Kontakt Plus: 4			Radio Kontakt Plus: 3			Radio Kontakt Plus:3			Radio Kontakt Plus:3
				Radio Kim: 3				Radio Kim: 2			Radio Kim: 4			Radio Kim:4			Radio KIM:4
				TV Most: 3				TV Most: 2			TV Most: 3			TV Most:3			TV Most: 3
				TV Mir: 1				TV Mir: 1			TV Mir: 3			TV Mir:3			TV Mir: 3
				R.Goraz devac: 1				R.Goraz devac: 1			R.Goraz devac: 1			R.Goraz devac:2			Radio Gorazdev ac:2

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				R.Klokot: 1 Baseline March 2010				R.Klokot: 1		R.Klokot: 1		R.Klokot: 2		Radio Klokot:2	
IR 1.4D (IR1.3 A)	Amount of advertising revenue generated by individual radio and TV stations and TV Mreza network in quarterly basis (Amount of advertising revenue generated by participating stations in quarterly basis)		Individual Stations	€11,600	€ 24,735	€31,465	€28,320	€ 72,735	-	€ 50,690	-	€65,821		€53,877	Data show steady increase in revenue during program
			TV Mreza							€ 500 Baseline March 2011	-	€17,299	-	€ 11,232	Decrease in TV Mreza revenue at end of Y5 due to its failure to hire Executive Director until early March 2013.
1.4E (IR2.1 A)	MMF Milestone index score (same as original PMP)			0/35	100/100	68/100	100/100	42/100	100/100	35/100	100/100	99/100	-	-	The MMF fund became a fully established body in 2012.
1.4F (IR2.1 B)	# of MMF grants awarded (same as original PMP)			0	10	15	15	0	-	0	-	15	15	18	MMF awarded a <b>total of 48</b> grants during the project

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## PERFORMANCE INDICATOR ANALYSIS

SIMM supported USAID IR 2.1.1 “Better Informed Citizens” and the USAID Strategic Objective 2.1 “Civil society and government are more effective partners in achieving good governance” then, as part of the two year cost extension Assistance Objective 3: “Empowering Kosovo’s Citizens to Consolidate a Functioning Democracy, civil society and government are more effective partners in achieving good governance” and Program Element 4.2, “Media Freedom and Freedom of Information” under USG’s Framework for Assistance. The performance indicators outlined in the table show the progress of the SIMM program from the program’s inception in July 2008 through year five of the program which ended in March 2013. Monitoring and evaluation data was not available for the no-cost extension period from March 11 to June 10 2013 as the program was in close-out mode and a full three months of comparable data collection was not possible.

The indicator analysis from the SIMM Annual Performance Report April 1, 2012-March 31, 2013 outlined final results of the program and provided analysis on performance issues during the two-year cost extension. That analysis is repeated here and expanded where appropriate.

IR 1.1A shows that the re-equipment process met its target and that TV Most, TV Mir, TV Herc and TV Puls are equipped for the digital transition, required by 2015 at the latest. The strengthening technical capabilities of *TV Mreza* activity ended with the SIMM end date on March 10, 2013.

IR 1.2A monitors the content of news and other programming of the *TV Mreza* network both qualitatively and quantitatively. Though the stations did not meet their 2013 targets, all increased their performance considerably from the start of the program in 2008 until its close, despite on-going political unrest and provocation. 2012 was a year full of considerable unrest with frequent demonstrations and barricades in north Kosovo which required more work by the media to ensure its safety. The situation also increased the importance of the media to assure the news was fact-based and balanced to avoid further violence. SIMM’s efforts during the last half of the extension period were to assist young journalists with reporting on the demonstrations and barricades and to increase the stations’ capacities to deal with the difficult political environment.

IR 1.2B and 1.2C monitors contributions to the *KOSMA* radio network and the TV network on a weekly basis. The data collected show a decrease of contributions from Radio Kontakt Plus and Radio KIM in later years due to the staff fluctuation at Radio Kontakt Plus and the launch of Radio KIM’s new TV Center channel.

With regard to the *TV Mreza* network, good progress was made in all three scorecard categories. *TV Mreza* members increased the number of news stories produced, the number of other stories shared as well as the number of stories they have received from other member stations. This is important because it shows that the network is serving its purpose of delivering a wider variety of news and information from different parts of the country to Serbian community throughout Kosovo so the Serbian public is properly informed. *TV Mreza* member stations additionally produce and shared four other longer weekly programs, three of which were supported by SIMM until February 2013.

IR 1.2D indicates a slight increase in the *KOSMA* story criteria score and its program quality. As outlined above, Radio Kontakt Plus and Radio KIM are the main contributors to the *KOSMA* network, so program quality depends on these radio stations. Despite some set-backs at Radio Kontakt Plus and Radio KIM in the last quarter of Year 5, the network itself managed to maintain the standards set a year ago and even showed slight progress.

IR 1.3A shows a significant number of journalists were trained by the program and a solid cadre of competent reporters left at the close of the program. In the last two years of the program the number of women journalists outpaced the men, exceeding the target.

IR 1.3B indicates that partner stations largely complied with their IMC licensing requirements.

IR 1.3C was designed as part of the extension to ensure that SIMM TV partners abide by the copyright law. The data collected indicates that the stations showed a sharp improvement in their compliance with the Copyright Law, an important achievement in a region where copyright is widely abused.

1.3D is designed to keep track of the number of small grants issued to partner stations to encourage them to produce local stories of direct relevance to their audiences. Since the beginning of the program SIMM awarded 125 grants to its partners.

In September 2012, SIMM developed two new indicators to measure the new IR 1.3A, "Provide additional support to electronic media in north Kosovo." 1.3A shows that the equipment process of SIMM partners in north Kosovo was completed. 1.3Ab is a new indicator which shows the number of daily visitors to the *TV Mreza* website. The numbers were first measured in March 2013. The website was launched in January and network staff were trained on how to upload stories and video materials to the site in February and March. The data collected for March is not a good indicator of the website's potential. On April 19 the network staff took over administration of the website, allowing them to upload daily reports and other video programming in addition to the shared SIMM-funded programs. This will likely increase the number of daily visitors to the site as *TV Mreza* viewers continue to learn of the site's existence.

1.4 B measures the audience shares of the TV and radio networks, giving an idea of their ability to compete with the well-funded Belgrade-based stations that are watched in Kosovo. The methodology and the contractor changed during the SIMM extension, which means that comparing this data with data before 2011 is difficult to assess. The 28% radio share for 2013 however is credible and shows that the *KOSMA* network maintains a strong presence. Similarly, *TV Mreza's* 14% audience share makes it competitive with the more popular Belgrade-based stations showing it can be competitive in a highly saturated media market.

IR 1.4D shows a decrease in revenues from advertising sales compared to one year ago. This is likely a result of *TV Mreza's* failure to hire an Executive Director until early March 2013. In addition, individual TV and radio stations aired fewer commercials compared to last year. However, over the life of the program *TV Mreza* showed that advertising revenue is available, if limited, and if properly managed the network can generate income for its members.

IR 1.4F shows that the MMF awarded a total of 48 grants in three rounds during the life of the program. However, in 2010 the Kosovo Constitutional Court suspended the public broadcast fee from being included in the KEK electricity bill which directly affected the MMF fund. Unless an agreement is reached between MMF and Kosovo Ministry of Finance the Fund has no money for another round after 2013. IREX has no control over MMF grantmaking and only reported on grant awards.

**US Foreign Assistance Indicators:**

Number of media outlets that received USG-supported training to promote financial sustainability: 10  
Number of journalists trained with USG assistance (disaggregated by gender): 135 total (63 female; 72 male) plus 41 technicians trained (gender not tracked)  
Number of media civil society organizations and/or support institutions assisted by USG: 4

## **IV. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES**

The program activities section of this report provides an overview of activities undertaken by IREX and the five-year SIMM program from July 2008 through early June 2013. As noted in the program indicators section, USAID awarded IREX a two-year cost extension and three month no-cost extension starting in April 2011 which brought with it a new set of related activities. These activities fell within the parameters of IR 1 - Link and Strengthen Minority Broadcast Media (see program activity 1 below). For clarity and for chronological purposes, activities implemented during the two year extension and NCE are included at the end of Program Activity 1.

### **PROGRAM ACTIVITY 1: LINK AND STRENGTHEN MINORITY BROADCAST MEDIA**

#### **IR 1.1: Link select minority language television and radio stations**

Activity 1: Create and maintain a system that utilizes Internet technology to link the news and information production of minority broadcasters, particularly Serbian language TV outlets.

This activity sought to establish and secure the physical network of *TV Mreza* and ensure its technical functionality. At the beginning of the program, SIMM's four partner television stations--TV Herc, TV Mir, TV Most, and TV Puls--planned to form their network without using a central hub and instead use equal strength servers at each station to allow partners to exchange material bilaterally without the necessity of central storage. After investigating the equipment necessary to make this system operational, IREX presented the four stations with a revised technical proposal including a hub that would serve as a central storage facility for materials. Despite initial misgivings, the stations agreed to the new plan and continued to see the network as a competitive advantage against the Kosovo-wide Serbian language station planned by RTK. In June 2009 New Press Productions, close to Media Center and Pristina, was established as the hub for the network. SIMM also provided support to the TV stations to establish the *TV Mreza* network as an NGO on October 9, 2009 to manage the hub system and receive equipment to enhance their newsrooms and exchange news stories more efficiently.

On February 19, 2010, the *TV Mreza* network was formally launched with a short ceremony at TV Puls in Silovo. SIMM's chief of party opened the ceremony and USAID Mission Director Patricia Rader made a presentation about the importance of *TV Mreza*. Together the four stations involved in the *TV Mreza* network – TV Mir (Leposavic) and TV Most (Zvecan) in north Kosovo with TV Herc (Strpce) and TV Puls (Silovo) in the south – covered 80% of the Serbian population in Kosovo.

The physical task of constructing the network infrastructure proved difficult, with the political environment and ethnic divisions factoring in. SIMM staff worked with service provider Kujtesa to improve the reliability of the *TV Mreza* technical infrastructure and by March 2011 it was functioning at a much higher level and with greater reliability. IREX also worked with Kujtesa to connect TV Puls in Silovo, TV Most in Zvecan and New Press Productions to the main optical fiber network in Kosovo which would improve reliability and technical quality even further. Throughout most of the program, stations (not including New Press Productions) were connected by a mixture of satellite links and analogue cable. IREX also provided access to a back-up file transfer protocol (FTP) system and provided training to journalists so they could operate it without technical assistance. Journalists used "Sendspace", an Internet site which can be used to share large video files, for alternative routes for program exchange. The equipment donated by SIMM enabled member stations to exchange programs and materials much faster and at a lower cost.

TV Puls established a link to the IPKO cable system, which allowed it to broadcast in most of Kosovo's major towns and cities. This was an important development for the station as it expanded local Serbian language television and *TV Mreza's* network programming to viewers outside the Serbian enclaves for the first time.

Outside of networking the stations, IREX worked with the stations to liaise with relevant Kosovo institutions. During the second year of SIMM, all the TV and radio partner stations became members of

the Kosovo Electronic Media Owners' Association, AMPEK. In the past, AMPEK's membership was almost entirely Kosovo Albanian. The association's director also campaigned vigorously on the stations' behalf in particular to get compensation for collateral damage done by the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) when it disabled illegal equipment owned by Telekom Serbia.

Participation in the network increased the TV stations' access to news in all Serbian communities in Kosovo. Each station developed coverage of issues of concern to their communities such as education, decentralization, infrastructure problems, politics, youth, and unemployment. In addition, with the network's hub based in Caglavica, just outside of Kosovo's capital Pristina, these stations' viewers could now receive news about events in Pristina sourced from the capital itself. By the end of the program the stations exchanged more than 120 news items a month in addition to a smaller number of longer programs.

Activity 2: Purchase hardware, install and maintain computer-based news exchange equipment at individual outlets and a common server site.

The networking system was completed in Year 2, as noted above, with the news exchange equipment moved to the Media Center to establish it as the network hub. IREX worked throughout the program to ensure that the stations used the network equipment effectively and regularly and that the system was maintained properly by network participants. The stations continued to develop the quality of the programming and worked with IREX technical consultants to ensure that material regularly provides local news coverage.

Activity 3: Provide technical training and maintenance support to keep the system operational.

In Year 2 IREX cooperated with Streambox to provide technical training and maintenance support to the networks. The SIMM media technical advisor provided day-to-day advice on how to use the equipment most effectively to the *TV Mreza* and *KOSMA* networks. He conducted technical training sessions at each station throughout Year 2 and configured the Streambox equipment to work in a standardized and easy-to-understand way. He continued to provide maintenance support when and where it was needed throughout the program.

Activity 4: Document and monitor station usage and contributions to the shared platform.

The SIMM monitoring and evaluation subcontractor, Social Impact, designed a monitoring system to track stations' network usage. Monitoring was conducted by the SIMM deputy chief of party and the production and training coordinator. In July 2010 Social Impact consultant Maureen Taylor visited Pristina to assist SIMM staff with the M&E for the third year annual report and assess SIMM's progress in the implementation of the recommendations made by the consultants who carried out the program's 2009 mid-term review. Her overall conclusion was that SIMM satisfactorily addressed the issues raised in the review. Station usage and contributions continued to be monitored by the SIMM DCOP and production and training coordinator throughout the two-year cost extension period.

Activity 5: Support the existing *KOSMA* radio network and facilitate new and active content producers.

During the first year of SIMM, IREX conducted a technical assessment of the *KOSMA* radio network stations including Radio KIM, Radio Kontakt Plus, Radio Gorazdevac, as well as Radios Klokot and Borzani, both of which had been more active *KOSMA* contributors through IREX support. All faced various technical difficulties but the most immediate need was to repair or replace the existing networking equipment, which SIMM did with the installation of an internet-based networking system manufactured by Comrex. The installation of these Comrex units early in the program opened the door for shared programming and remote broadcasting opportunities by all the partner stations throughout the SIMM program. Additional grants were issued in Year 3 to *KOSMA* stations plus the Bosnian station Radio Omega 3 for new transmission equipment as well as technical and other assistance. *KOSMA* itself applied for Comrex networking units to link with additional radio stations.

The Comrex units were used with great effect throughout the program. Radio Kontakt Plus used its unit to begin a new weekly Monday evening show broadcast from bars and cafés around north Mitrovica during the life of SIMM. The program, *City 028*, is a "drop by" program, with a mixture of guests, music and contributions from people visiting the cafes and bars. This generated a great deal of public interest, with

café customers and passers-by keen to take part. While Radios Kontakt Plus, Klokot, and Gorazdevac made good use of their mobile units, Radios' KIM and Borzani's units went largely unused. After discussions with the *KOSMA* board in Year 2, IREX transferred their mobile units to two stations on the fringe of the *KOSMA* network, Radio Lesak in Leposavic and Radio Hit Laser in Pasjane in order to broadcast the *KOSMA* nightly news and to contribute regular coverage.

Radio Borzani continued to underperform and finally in Year 2 the board lost patience and replaced Borzani with Radio Herc, the radio arm of the SIMM partner TV station, RTV Herc. IREX relocated the Comrex equipment from Radio Borzani to RTV Herc, together with the enhanced internet connection.

Lobbying efforts on behalf of *KOSMA* and its stations produced results that further strengthened the network. Lobbying at the IMC in Year 2 resulted in permission for Radio Klokot to move its transmitter and extend its signal as part of its re-licensing process, covering the Gjilan region and eastward as far as the Serbian border, an area previously without network coverage. This was an important development for SIMM and the *KOSMA* network. SIMM staff also helped Radio Klokot negotiate with the Kosovo government to gain access to municipal land to build a new transmission tower to fulfill its new IMC license. As a result Radio Klokot's signal became much stronger and of better quality in its local area and able to reach a wider range of communities in south and east Kosovo.

Despite IREX lobbying in Year 3, the IMC refused Radio Kontakt Plus's request for additional frequencies to cover the towns of Zubin Potok and Leposavic on the grounds that in March 2010 it made a decision to turn down all such requests by existing licensees. The station's request would have required the IMC to reverse this decision, opening up 20 or so other requests for review. IREX circumvented this problem by expanding the *KOSMA* network to Radio Kolasin in Zubin Potok and Radio Mir in Leposavic in Year 5 of the two-year extension, adding an additional 30,000 listeners.

#### Activity 6: Investigate the linking of other minority and majority media into the Internet-based information exchange system.

IREX discussed the possibility of *KOSMA* membership with the Prizren-based Bosniak station Radio Omega 3. This station received two incentive grants during SIMM's second year, and the news items funded by the grants were of good quality. The station, however, was reluctant to get involved because it believed its audience would not wish to listen to Kosovo Serb programming. The station was more interested in building relationships with radio stations in the Sanjak, with which it said it has more in common. Despite this interest IREX installed a Comrex networking unit at Radio Omega 3 to link it to the *KOSMA* radio network to allow Omega 3 to rebroadcast the nightly *KOSMA* news and to contribute to the program. This marked an important achievement for the SIMM program, developing links between media of different ethnicities in Kosovo.

### **IR 1.2: Linked stations' news and information programming meets professional standards**

#### Activity 1: Improve journalism skills and newsroom management through on-site training and through multi-station training programs

From Year 1, IREX conducted on-site trainings to the stations to enhance the professionalism of their news and information programming. International video journalism consultants Martha Dixon and Dejan Vuksanovic provided training on local newsgathering, journalistic balance and language, fact based reporting, news editing, and camera and video editing skills. In addition, they trained the crews working on programs and news items funded by SIMM program production incentive grants and ensured the stations were correctly using the equipment donated to them. The consultants also worked with staff at New Press to guarantee the quality of their work matched that of their colleagues at the *TV Mreza* stations.

During on-site visits, Dixon and Vuksanovic helped the outlets and journalists better understand how to operate legally in all areas of Kosovo, access other communities, focus on local news story production and improve standards of news bulletins. The trainers reinforced messages to support local news coverage, improve production values and levels of professionalism in the stations, encouraged them to source news about Kosovo from Pristina, and to include interviews with Kosovo Albanians in their reports.

Results during the first three years include:

- At **TV Most**, with assistance from IREX trainers, young journalist Silvia Emini aired an investigative series about a Roma community having to pay electricity bills, despite an apparent Kosovo government promise that they would be exempt. It included an interview with the deputy minister at the Kosovo Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare, who promised to investigate the matter, an important breakthrough for the journalist. She continued to produce Roma bulletins and the longer weekly “Anglunipe” program which was ultimately rebroadcast by SIMM TV partners, giving Roma communities all over Kosovo the chance to see it.
- **TV Herc** made good progress in developing the quantity and quality of local news in its bulletins and especially showed its willingness to contact and work with Kosovo Albanian institutions to ensure that news stories were told from all angles.
- **TV Puls** was SIMM’s most cooperative partner, making the biggest effort to improve its output and produce balanced news. With IREX support the station improved its news making operations, applied sophisticated formats and tools, and refreshed the traditional look of its evening news program with a modern design and new set.
- At **TV Mir** in north Kosovo the owner and staff finally recognized the need for and value of producing local stories, as well as those sourced from Pristina, ultimately producing programs on a school’s fund raising exercise for poor families in the area; a municipal competition for the best garden in the area; and the regional celebration of “Earth Day.” Production values also improved at TV Mir over the first three years of SIMM.
- At **New Press Productions** the training team concentrated on developing production standards for the weekly talk show “Slobodno Srpski”, aired by all *TV Mreza* members apart from TV Most. They assisted the presenter in building his on-screen skills and presence, helped New Press’s technicians with the studio lighting for the program and advised them on how to make the set look more professional, worked with them on techniques for editing talk shows and provided them with a full graphics package, and encouraged the addition of short *vox-pop* sequences including with Kosovo Albanians on the streets of Pristina.

Activity 2: Assess equipment needs at individual outlets, and provide supplementary newsgathering equipment or other support where needed.

In addition to the networking equipment which allowed the four partner stations to share programming, IREX also recognized the stations’ needs for updated production equipment to ensure high-quality, professional program production. IREX staff identified the equipment requirements for TV Mir, TV Most, TV Puls, TV Herc and New Press Productions. The equipment was delivered and installed at all the stations in Year 1. This equipment allowed the SIMM video journalism and technical trainers to work more effectively with the stations and improve the quality of the video they transmit. The electronic news gathering equipment helped the station extend its coverage of local and Kosovo news and develop more sophisticated studio productions. Contingency funds were also available in Year 3 to purchase new or replacement equipment. IREX ensured that the equipment met the qualifications for digital broadcasting when Kosovo converts its terrestrial transmission system before the ITU deadline of 2015 for Europe.

Activity 3: Establish common ethical editorial and technical operating norms for linked stations, and develop a system for internal regulation and enforcement of agreed-upon norms.

The Deputy COP and production and training coordinator drafted a code of common ethical and editorial norms based on international practice and the stations’ license terms from the IMC. These operating norms focused on the following points:

- Broadcasters should not broadcast material that encourages crime or criminal activities or which carries imminent risk of causing harm, such harm being defined as death, injury, damage to property, or other violence;

- Broadcasters should not broadcast material that denigrates an ethnic or religious group;
- Broadcasters should not broadcast material that attributes criminal responsibility to individuals prior to a court verdict;
- Broadcasters should not reveal the names, description, photograph or specific information about any individual alleged to have committed a crime, unless authorities responsible for the administration of justice have expressly authorized that such information can be made public;
- Broadcasters should strive to ensure accuracy, fairness, and impartiality in all reporting;
- Broadcasters should strive to present differing points of view accurately and fairly; and
- Broadcasters should not promote the interests of political parties or the political views of groups or individuals.

IREX also cooperated with the IMC to enforce the terms of the stations' broadcast licenses and assisted the institution on developing the editorial and technical standards it set as part of its 2009 re-licensing process.

In years two and three the IMC closely monitored the editorial and technical standards at all local TV and radio stations in Kosovo. The SIMM legal advisor, the production and training coordinator and the media technical advisor worked with the IMC to identify the undertakings made by SIMM partner stations in their new license agreements and ensure compliance with the IMC. IREX worked with each station individually on technical and editorial standards, completing a detailed checklist with 19 items representing all their legal and other obligations, paying particular attention to:

- Clauses in the licenses which relate to the protection of children and minors from unsuitable program content and the placing of advertisements in news programs
- Payment of taxes and other fees
- Adherence to copyright regulations

TV Puls and RTV Herc proved generally compliant with their license terms and conditions and paid fees and taxes promptly and in full. TV Puls, TV Mir and RTV Herc failed to adopt an internal code of practice on categorizing harmful program content in relation to children and minors. As with many local TV stations in Kosovo, copyright is still an issue. The SIMM partner stations became aware of this and as a result began to broadcast movies produced before the copyright threshold.

Activity 4: Create and manage a small competitive grants program to assist individual stations or multi-ethnic teams to produce programs on specific topics.

In years one through three of SIMM, IREX offered four rounds of incentive subgrants to radio and television stations as well as independent producers starting June in 2009 through February 2011. Stations submitted applications to produce programs of interest to their local communities. Two independent producers also received approval for subgrants: Link Production, which received incentive grants under KMAP, and Production 028 based in north Mitrovica. Of note:

- **TV Puls** produced five 30-minute programs dealing with health issues and the treatment available in the Gjilan area. Because of their unwillingness to use Albanian administered facilities, Serbs in Gjilan travel to Serbian enclaves in the north and south for treatment, often to a patient's detriment.
- **TV Mir** created five programs on the economic development of business in the area, such as agriculture, trade, industry, tourism and other local enterprises in Leposavic and its surrounding villages.
- **Radio Gorazdevac** produced five biweekly programs on youth issues and problems in areas inhabited by Serbs such as freedom of movement, personal safety, the need for interethnic dialog, human rights, etc.
- **Radio Kontakt Plus** aired 300 short items for news bulletins about the provision of services by the local municipality, including stories about garbage collection in north Mitrovica and the state of the local roads.

- **Radio Klokot** produced 24 “Open Studio” programs about decentralization and the powers of local municipal authorities.
- **TV Herc** used its subgrant to create 150 local news items to keep its viewers in Strpce better informed about events in their town and to increase the station’s news-gathering skills.
- **Radio KIM** produced and aired 80 original stories of local interest such as gender, youth, health, economic and social issues.
- **TV Most** aired five programs about addictions to which people are susceptible: Internet, alcohol, smoking, and overeating, with a final studio debate to discuss issues raised in the earlier programs.
- **Link Production** produced two documentaries: one about the corruption in governmental institutions, in particular the Serb “parallel” institutions and the other on corruption in health care institutions, particularly those serving the Serbian community.
- **Produkcija 028** also created two documentaries. These analyzed the strategy of the local authorities concerning the water supply in Mitrovica from the beginning of the UN Mission in Kosovo until today.

The deputy chief of party and the production and training coordinator monitored all the stations’ projects to check whether they conformed to the project outline for program quality and balance. Programs submitted by Omega 3, TV Most, TV Mir and Radio Klokot submitted programs of good quality, with some outstanding and well researched reports from journalists at TV Mir. TV Puls, Radio Kontakt Plus and Radio Gorazdevac submitted excellent material that was both ambitious and professional.

For the last three rounds of grants, IREX and USAID agreed to continue supporting the successful projects at TV Mir, Radio Kontakt Plus, TV Most, Radio Klokot and Radio Omega 3 rather than issue additional RFAs for new projects.

Production standards improved for all stations and stories became increasingly well-balanced through SIMM support. The quality of the journalism at the partner stations improved appreciably, particularly at TV Puls and Radio Kontakt Plus. TV Most ceased to refer to the “so-called” government of Kosovo.

### **IR 1.3: Linked stations are well managed businesses**

#### Activity 1: Train individual outlets on organizational structuring, operations, management and local advertising business development.

During the first three years of the program, IREX provided extended sales and marketing training for SIMM partner stations from Serbian consultants Nikola Pejovic and Nevena Radovanovic. The consultants concentrated on TV Most, TV Puls, TV Herc, Radio Kontakt Plus, Radio Gorazdevac and Radio KIM to assist them with how to use their networks to attract advertising revenue. Specifically, during the first part of SIMM the consultants:

- Provided training for sales managers where they had been appointed and encouraged their appointment elsewhere.
- Assisted in the development of rate cards and discounting policies.
- Facilitated contacts with advertisers and agencies in Kosovo and elsewhere in the region.
- Assisted in the preparation of materials for stations’ meetings with advertisers.
- Helped stations with the analysis and use of audience research in presentations to advertisers.
- Provided any assistance required by the KMI in its sales efforts for the *KOSMA* stations
- Worked with the four TV stations on joint sales efforts and the development of *TV Mreza*.
- Trained the newly appointed *TV Mreza* sales manager Stanko Pevac

As *TV Mreza* was established and the *KOSMA* network gained strength, consulting increasingly focused on network advertising and marketing, in addition to individual stations. In particular, they worked closely with *TV Mreza* and marketing consultant Stanko Pevac on the development of a sales strategy to be implemented in the first part of SIMM’s third year. The consultants recommended focusing on four sources of income:

- Classical advertising (Kosovo and Serbian agencies)
- Production package sales, using their own facilities
- Public information projects with international and local organizations
- Promotional events and sponsorship

IREX held a series of marketing events during this time including business seminars for network leaders, and a well-attended marketing launch for *TV Mreza* to introduce the network to potential advertisers, marketing agencies and other entities to assist the stations in generating non-donor income. Activities were designed to support the network in establishing itself as a business and begin generating revenue.

IREX also provided management support as well as sales and marketing consultation to the members of the two networks, with special attention paid to board development. With its establishment in Year 2, *TV Mreza* partner stations began holding regular board meetings to address issues facing the overall network. Early on they agreed to employ a marketing and administrative executive to develop central advertising sales (initially held by Pevac with SIMM funding). The *TV Mreza* board also agreed that, in addition to the daily exchange of news material, each station would produce a 30-minute weekly program that was distributed on the network.

Of the SIMM partner stations, Radio Kontakt Plus, Radio Gorazdevac, TV Herc, TV Most, and TV Puls employed dedicated full- or part-time sales executives working on commission, as advised by the SIMM marketing consultants.

Activity 2: Conduct audience research for beneficiary stations.

IREX commissioned four rounds of audience research for the local Serb TV and radio stations in the first three years of SIMM in December 2008, July 2009, January 2010, and June 2010.

Audience share for the *KOSMA* radio network increased from 11.92% at the start of the program to 22% by the end of year 3. Data showed a clear audience peak at the time of the daily shared program produced jointly by the stations. The research showed that the three most active stations--Radio KIM, Radio Kontakt Plus, and Radio Gorazdevac--had a weekly reach of nearly 25% of the Serb population in their areas, which was a great achievement. Radio Klokot and Radio Herc helped to expand the available audience.

Audience share for the *TV Mreza* partner stations grew from 3.4% in 2010 to 4.8% in Year 3, with a weekly reach of 30%, comparable to Belgrade-based B92. The network reached almost a third of the potential audience across a week. This was a good performance for small local stations with few resources. TV Puls as an individual station performed extremely well and continued to build its audience throughout the program. This was primarily a reflection of its news and the new morning program. TV Herc also demonstrated an improved performance. TV Mir remained stable but weaker than the other channels.

In addition to providing TV and radio audience data, the survey conducted in Year 3 provided information to assist the development by SIMM of media websites and the distribution of video over the Internet. The research found that 43.7% of the survey sample uses the Internet frequently, the majority using it to access news, to search for information, to read and make comments on blogs, and for entertainment. 84% of the sample accessed the Internet at home, followed by Internet cafes (7%) or work (5.8%). Of those accessing the Internet at home, only 20.4% had broadband or other fast connections, with the remainder using dial-up via their phone lines. These numbers are low by international standards but indicate that there was a readiness among Kosovo Serbs to use the Internet as a main source of information and entertainment. This survey helped to underpin work by *TV Mreza* during the 2012 and 2013 extension period to establish its own website, providing news, video and on-line advertising.

Activity 3: Develop parameters and explore joint advertising for common programming, along with financial management and revenue sharing options.

In spite of the difficult economic environment in Kosovo and Serbian businesses' reluctance to advertise in Kosovo, *TV Mreza* reported revenues of €41,900 for the six months of activities in 2010 which were shared between network member stations according to the formula agreed by the board. Revenues were generated by numerous successful marketing efforts with varied advertisers including broadcast of an OSCE public information campaign, an advertising campaign funded by USAID to encourage Serb businesses to apply to BEEP, a joint venture with the Serbian Ministry of Culture, a successful application to the EU for inter-ethnic programming, an agribusiness program sponsored by Raiffeisen Bank, sponsorship by the Aqua Sana water company, among others. Though some of this funding proved unsustainable over the long run, nonetheless, the network began to establish something of a track record for generating non-SIMM funding as the program entered the two year extension period.

The *TV Mreza* sales manager also cooperated closely with the network on other activities to capitalize on the contacts made and the publicity generated from *TV Mreza* marketing events. The production and training coordinator, the *TV Mreza* chairman, and the sales manager prepared a strategy and a rate card (price list and discount policy) agreed on by the network's board along with a series of presentations to potential advertisers and agencies in Pristina and Belgrade. The *TV Mreza* sales team also worked to develop a central airtime selling service for the stations by building business relationships with Kosovo, regional and international advertisers. IREX monitored *TV Mreza* stations to ensure they complied with the terms of their contracts with advertisers and worked with the stations to develop new program formats.

***TWO-YEAR COST EXTENSION & NCE ACTIVITIES, APRIL 1, 2011 to JUNE 10, 2013***

Most of the activities under the two-year extension were similar in nature to the original programming, but expanded and more in-depth to continue building the journalism skills, technical capacity, financial and marketing acumen of *TV Mreza* and *KOSMA* networks, and professional quality broadcasts of the partner stations. The exception is IR 1.3A which was added to the program in September 2011 to direct additional funds and focus to the partner stations in north Kosovo. Activities under this IR were largely specific to certain partner needs and new media development.

**IR 1.1 Strengthen the Networks of Minority Broadcast Media**

Activity 1: Strengthen the technical viability of the *TV Mreza* network.

Throughout the first year of the SIMM program extension IREX monitored the performance of the network and took steps with Kujtesa, the network provider instrumental in setting up the network in 2009, to correct any defects that may have occurred. In general the system worked well though Kujtesa sometimes had difficulty getting to north Kosovo to carry out repairs. SIMM monitored the development and availability of fiber optic cable as an improvement to the network as it became more available outside Pristina during the extension period.

SIMM equipment grants issued to TV Mir, TV Herc, TV Most and TV Puls additionally strengthened the network in years four and five. TV Mir and TV Herc purchased new transmitters which allowed them to broadcast stable and reliable signals. TV Mir's transmitter gives it a strong signal in the Mitrovica and Zvecan segment of its license area and improved the quality of its signal to the local cable provider. Likewise TV Herc's signal was strengthened in the central Kosovo part of its license area and similarly improved its signal to cable providers. TV Most and TV Puls received studio and control room equipment which substantially improved the technical quality of their output. With TV Puls's terrestrial transmission and cable distribution in south and central Kosovo its morning program could be seen by more than 50% of the Serb population.

By the end of the program all the radio stations were using their Comrex portable broadcast units for producing live reports from the community. *TV Mreza* members TV Puls and TV Most pioneered the use of their Streambox units for outside broadcasts. TV Puls used its unit for live coverage of the Kosovo Assembly while TV Most used it, among other things, for live coverage of news events in north Kosovo.

**IR 1.2: Provide Operational and Technical Support to TV Mreza and KOSMA Network Stations**

Activity 1: Provide technical and maintenance support to keep the system operational.

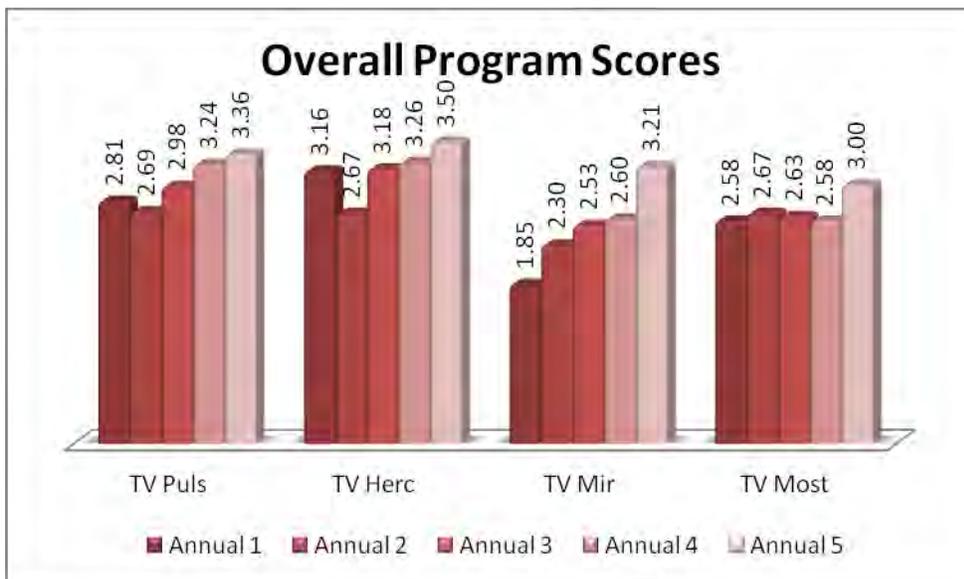
The SIMM media technical advisor provided on-site maintenance and technical support at all the partner TV and radio stations that used SIMM funded networking equipment. In Year 4 TV Most and TV Mir were plagued by power surges that caused substantial damage to key equipment. IREX took steps to ensure these incidents did not happen again by making sure the equipment was properly protected from power surges and lightning strikes. A more difficult problem was the lack of properly qualified technical staff at most of the stations. To address this issue the SIMM production and training coordinator and the media technical advisor visited each of the stations to provide additional training. While the existing engineering staff members were experienced, they were not familiar with IP technology and digital systems. IREX trained at least one engineer in IP technology per station.

IREX also employed consultants to build TV Mreza’s on-air identity. IREX employed a graphic design consultant Dejan Dimitrijevic to build a brand identity for the network for its on-air programming and for its marketing materials. In May 2012 Dimitrijevic designed a new "virtual" electronic studio set for the "Kosnet Info" program. The studio demonstrated the benefits of the "Chromakey" units at the partner TV stations, donated by SIMM, and the design quality achieved for a very small outlay. Up to the end of the program IREX continued to work at all the partner stations to develop their Chromakey capacity and to improve the overall quality of set and graphic design at the stations.

In July-August 2012, the SIMM media technical advisor and the production and training coordinator conducted a training program for all the partner radio stations to encourage them to use the Comrex mobile portable broadcast units and demonstrate how effectively live outside broadcasts can improve their news and entertainment programming. Radio Kontakt Plus was already broadcasting a weekly program from bars and cafés around north Mitrovica, Radio Gorazdevac began producing an occasional series "In your Village" and Radio Klokot provided live broadcasts of the proceedings of the local municipality.

Activity 2: Document and monitor station usage and contributions to the shared platform.

The TV and radio stations’ usage of the networks was monitored by the SIMM deputy chief of party and the production and training coordinator, both for quantity and for quality. Staff also monitored other shared output, such as the talk show “Slobodno Srpski”, produced for the network by the independent production company New Press and distributed through the Streambox system. After initially declining to take the



program, TV Most agreed to broadcast Slobodno Srpski every week starting in summer 2012 following the director’s appearance on the program, marking an important step forward for the program and the Serbian community in the north. Without SIMM’s persuasion the program would not have been seen by TV Most’s viewers in north Mitrovica and

Zvečan, an important example of how media development can play a role in bringing Kosovo’s

communities closer together. The Overall Program Scores chart above shows the steady improvement in program quality made by each *TV Mreza* station over the life of the program (data based on indicator 1.2A, Overall Program Quality, in Section III of this report).

In addition to “Slobodno Srpski”, with IREX support, the network launched two additional weekly programs which strengthened *TV Mreza*’s identity and the quality of its shared output. The agri-business program “Agrar” is aimed at the substantial farming community in Kosovo’s Serbian speaking population. At the beginning of 2012 *TV Mreza* launched “Kosnet Info,” a weekly magazine program dealing with some of the more difficult political stories as well as lighter cultural themes. All programs benefitted from editorial and production support from SIMM staff and consultants, with technical support on lighting, camerawork and graphic design.

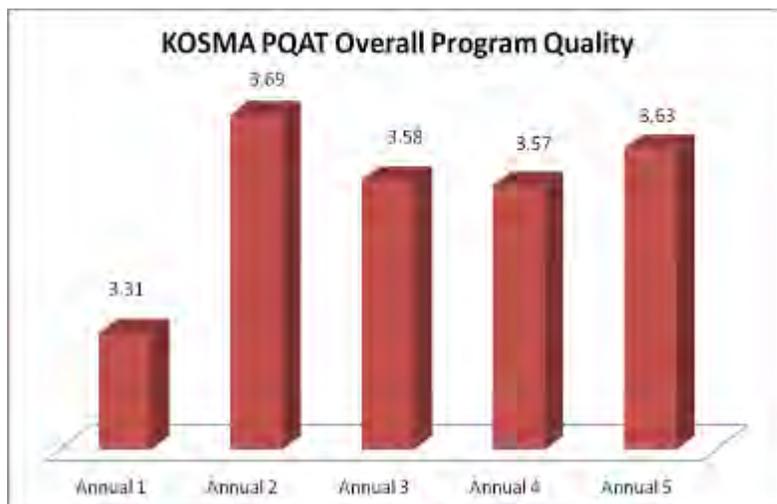
In Year 5 *TV Mir* launched the cultural documentary series “Koreni.” This program looked at life in village communities in the Laposavic area through the eyes of prominent local personalities. *TV Most* produced a new series for young people “Zuta Minuta” supported by USAID’s additional funds for north Kosovo and shared by all other members of the network. *TV Most* also provided additional longer format programs to the network in the final year of the program, funded from its own resources. These shows included: “Info-kult” (Info cult), “Zrno po zrno” (Grain by grain), “Osvrt” (Review), “Otvoreno o” (Openly about) and various other music and documentary programs. *TV Mir*’s and *TV Most*’s programs were offered to other *TV Mreza* network stations for rebroadcasting.

The stations also worked together on other projects. *TV Mir* and *TV Puls* shared and jointly produced a morning “Jutarnji” program and *Radio KIM* contributed to *TV Herc*’s morning show, which is broadcast simultaneously on radio and TV. *Radio KIM* also produced the “Dogovor” TV discussion program. These programs were either funded by the stations themselves or by other donors, but IREX provided technical and editorial training together with graphics and program formats.

*TV Mreza*’s shared output and wide range of joint programs shows the depth of the network’s activities. These are programs and news items which would not have been produced without USAID assistance and contribute a great deal to the quality of information available in Kosovo’s Serbian communities, particularly in the north. Many of them continue to be produced and broadcast after the SIMM program ended in June 2013.

Activity 3: Support existing *KOSMA* radio news programming and facilitate additional Serbian language station content contributions and broadcasting commitments to the program.

The two leading *KOSMA* stations, *Radio Kontakt Plus* and *Radio KIM* provided most of the network’s shared content. *Radio Gorazdevac*, *Radio Klokot* and *Radio Herc* also contributed but offered fewer news items for the shared nightly “Journal” program. Additional funds for north Kosovo allowed *KOSMA* to extend its programming to communities not previously served by building links with *Radio Kolasin* in Zubin Potok and *Radio Mir* in Laposavic. *Radio Mir* began regularly contributing local reports from Laposavic to “Journal.” Both *Radio Mir* and *Radio Kolasin* broadcasted the *KOSMA* nightly “Journal” program and the *Kontakt Plus* evening news, adding an estimated additional 30,000



potential listeners for *KOSMA*. The chart above shows a significant increase in the quality of the *KOSMA* network programming from Year 1 to Year 5 (data based on indicator 1.2D, Program Quality, using the Program Quality Assessment Tool [PQAT] developed by IREX in Section III of this report).

New transmission equipment was also provided to Radio Kontakt Plus and Radio Gorazdevac. This equipment strengthened and broadened the Radio Gorazdevac's signal, which now covers much of west Kosovo. In particular it can now be heard in villages near Istok and Klina where Serbs are returning to their pre-conflict homes.

Activity 4: Investigate opportunities to integrate and link other minority and majority community media into the internet-based information exchange systems

In Year 4 TV Puls, TV Herc and TV Most joined the Kosovo-wide Albanian language station TV21 on its new Internet Protocol TV (IPTV) platform. This provides a multi-channel TV service for the Balkan Diaspora via the Internet, wherever they may be, from Melbourne to Chicago. This was an important breakthrough for Kosovo, the first Kosovo Albanian/Kosovo Serb media business partnership.

TV Mitrovica, an Albanian language station based in the south of the city, and SIMM partner station TV Mir, based in north Kosovo in Leposavic, also began to exchange program material. Both stations now regularly broadcast items about each other's communities. The Prizren based Bosniak station Omega 3 was also connected to the *KOSMA* network in 2011 and provided some contributions to the network though their journalistic and technical standards were a lower level compared to the established *KOSMA* members.

**IR 1.3: Linked Stations' news and information meet professional standards**

Activity 1: Improve journalism skills capacity and newsroom management through on-site training at individual outlets and through multi-station training projects.

IREX staff and consultants continued to build upon the on-site training to the *TV Mreza* network stations during years 1-3, focusing on camerawork, lighting, editing and graphics skills. At TV Puls they also worked on improving the presentation skills of the main news anchors, in particular for the station's main news bulletin. They have also worked with TV Puls's editorial management to ensure that the station, with its much-expanded potential audience, met standards in the language it used and in the way it balanced its news items. The station reported positive feedback from its new audience on the IPKO network.



*Sanja Sovrlic and Branislav Krstic at the north Kosovo border with Serbia*

At TV Mir IREX worked to improve journalistic standards after the most experienced member of staff left the station. The production and training coordinator trained two new journalists on balancing their stories and encouraged them to submit material for sharing with the *TV Mreza* partners. In particular he worked with a journalist on a news item about the border crossing near Leposavic. The TV Mir executive director Nenad Radosavljevic had previously been reluctant to report directly from the border and the barricades because of concerns about the vulnerability of his staff and his equipment during the unrest in fall 2011.

SIMM technical trainers assisted editors and technicians at all the stations to develop professional lighting, camerawork, editing and graphics formats for the three shared programs, "Slobodno Srpski", "Agrar" and "Kosnet Info". They also worked at Radio KIM to provide formats for the TV program "Dogovor", which was produced by the station's TV production unit. These two consultants made the partner TV stations technically more professional and capable of sophisticated television production.

The journalism and editorial training in the two-year extension of the program concentrated on building a group of talented and ambitious young professionals to contribute to the improvement of overall standards at the partner stations. The SIMM team worked particularly with Sonja Milojevic and Marijana Milutinovic at TV Most, Sanja Sovrljic and Vesna Vukasinovic at TV Mir, Maja Petkovic and Uros Staletovic at TV Herc and Brankica Milenkovic and Marko Zakic at TV Puls. These journalists anchored and contributed to “Kosnet Info” and “Agrar”. The career development of these professionals was an important achievement for SIMM. Without USAID assistance they would all have looked for work in Belgrade or elsewhere in Serbia.

The SIMM program also published its TV news production guide in the Serbian language in Year 4. This guide provides a written handbook for journalists and editors to remind them of the lessons they learned about news production and packaging during the first three years of the SIMM program and the last year of its predecessor, the Kosovo Media Assistance Program. The guide is local and specific to Kosovo.

Activity 2: Establish common ethical, editorial and technical operating norms for linked stations. Develop a system for internal regulation and enforcement of agreed-upon norms.

During the SIMM extension, IREX concentrated on ensuring that all the partner stations abide by the terms of their IMC licenses and observe Kosovo laws and regulations, in particular the revised copyright law. The SIMM legal advisor developed a checklist of 19 items to monitor the level of compliance with their license terms and their observance of other business regulations in Kosovo. In Year 4 he visited all of the SIMM partner TV and radio stations and determined the majority of partner stations abided by their license terms and other regulations.

By the end of the program all the partner stations were in compliance with the terms of their IMC licenses and observe Kosovo laws and regulations, in particular the copyright law. Journalistic and editorial standards are also well established, in spite of the occasional lapse. IREX distributed to all senior editors in the SIMM partner stations a Serbian translation of a UNESCO and Commonwealth Broadcasting Association handbook of editorial guidelines. The *TV Mreza* stations signed an MoU agreeing to abide by the ethical and editorial standards outlined in this document and the norms will be regulated and enforced internally by the executive director of *TV Mreza*.

Activity 3: Create and manage a small competitive grants program to assist individual stations or multi-ethnic teams of journalists to produce topic specific programming.

For the two-year extension period of the SIMM program IREX, expanded the small grants program to six rounds with awards up to \$3000 for radio projects and \$6,000 for TV. The TV stations used the grants to fund work on the “Agrar” and “Kosnet Info” programs as well as daily news reports. Funds for the radio stations were used to encourage local news reporting for *KOSMA* and for a series of longer programs by Radio KIM and Radio Kontakt Plus. Radio KIM continued its excellent series of Roma programs and Radio Kontakt Plus extended its weekly “028” show which uses the SIMM donated Comrex outside broadcast units in bars and cafes around town.

Activity 4: Develop co-production projects with larger production facilities as both training for station personnel and a means to increase the amount of shared content.

*TV Mreza*’s special coverage of the folk dance festival in Leposavic, Lesak and Socanica in August 2010 was one of the first network collaboration projects. The programs they produced were genuine joint productions with all the stations contributing staff or equipment. All the programs were branded with *TV Mreza* as the media sponsor of the event, sharing equipment and offering staff to cover the event and edit the program. Stanko Pevac, who organized coverage for *TV Mreza*, said it was important to have *TV Mreza* directors at the event so they could experience high quality outside broadcast production and get a sense of what *TV Mreza* can achieve if all the stations work together. It was also an important learning experience for the stations’ staff, coming from all parts of Kosovo.

IREX continued to work with New Press in Caglavica to develop joint projects for the network including the “Slobodno Srpski” weekly talk show and daily news items from central Kosovo through the life of the program. IREX assisted Radio KIM with the production of the weekly “Dogovor” program broadcast by all

the SIMM partner TV stations apart from TV Most. SIMM continued to work closely with New Press and with the TV production arm of Radio KIM, providing assistance with the production of the “Slobodno Srpski” program and with the morning program produced jointly by Radio KIM and TV Herc.

Activity 5: Provide additional support to electronic media in north Kosovo.

IREX worked closely with the three SIMM partner stations in north Kosovo – TV Mir, TV Most and Radio Kontakt Plus. Because of the difficult political and security situation in the north in fall 2011 extra attention was paid to the stations’ output to monitor for unbalanced or inflammatory material. Radio Kontakt Plus justified SIMM’s confidence in the station: in spite of threats and technical problems the station continued to provide good quality, well balanced coverage of the disturbances. TV Mir, because of concerns about damage to equipment, took its coverage of events from the Beta news agency and from TV Most but eventually produced its own reports with support from SIMM. The production and training coordinator worked particularly closely with TV Most, where editorial controls are often weak, resulting in mostly responsible and non-inflammatory coverage.

After submitting a proposal for additional support to north Kosovo partners, USAID approved and granted the additional funds in September 2012. IREX added a new sub-IR, IR 1.3A Provide additional support to electronic media in north Kosovo, with seven activities. Progress on the north Kosovo activities is described in greater detail below.

**IR 1.3A Provide additional support to electronic media in north Kosovo**

Activity 1: Modernize Radio Kontakt Plus’s newsroom, secure its transmission facilities and support additional program making.

Radio Kontakt Plus received two sets of new equipment as part of the two-year cost extension. The first was for newsroom computer equipment to modernize the station’s systems and make its news production quicker and more efficient. The second was for transmission and studio equipment to further increase the quality of its signal and fill gaps within its transmission area. The studio equipment enhanced the capacity of the station to produce sophisticated programming and provide services to its advertisers. The equipment was delivered and installed in March 2013.

In addition to the equipment subgrants, IREX supported the station on an expansion of its programming for women and young people. These are important audiences in Mitrovica, which is a university town, and reflect USAID’s worldwide priorities. IREX administered program incentive subgrants to fund these new initiatives.

Radio Kontakt Plus is one of the most successful and cooperative of the SIMM partner stations. The work SIMM conducted with the station is reflected in its growing audience. It was the leading contributor to the *KOSMA* network and its audience share increased sharply, to 20% of all Serb listeners in the last survey conducted in February 2013.

Activity 2: Extend *KOSMA* network programming and Radio Kontakt Plus’s news bulletins to Radio Kolasin in Zubin Potok and Radio Mir in Leposavic. Provide incentive grants to fund contributions to the network.

Both Radio Mir and Radio Kolasin began to broadcast the *KOSMA* “Journal” program and Kontakt Plus’s news in fall 2012. This was particularly important in Zubin Potok. For the first time listeners in the town had access to balanced sources of information as Radio Kolasin had previously only broadcast music and advertisements but no news. The owner of Radio Kolasin and the SIMM production and training coordinator also made sure that those who might object in the town would accept the station’s partnership in a USAID program.

IREX made its requirement for editorial balance very clear to the owner of Radio Kolasin and that he would be broadcasting news items which included Kosovo Albanian views and interviews with representatives of the Kosovo government. He accepted this. Through targeted incentive grants SIMM also supported the employment of young journalists who were trained to *KOSMA* standards. IREX estimated the total potential additional audience for *KOSMA* to be about 14,000 Serbs. Radio Mir was also linked to the *KOSMA* system, adding an additional potential audience of 16,000 to the network.

IREX and Radio Kolasin developed a re-equipment program for the station's studio and transmission facilities. The equipment was delivered and installed in March 2013. The equipment grant package contained transmitters including the antenna system which strengthened the signal of Radio Kolasin significantly and the studio equipment consisting of a professional mixer broadcast console, microphones, sound processor, etc. which improved the sound quality and operation of the station. Radio Mir received a transmitter, antenna system and one computer supported with the additional funds for the north.

Funded by program incentive grants, the stations produced their own news and started production of a morning show aimed at an important audience for radio stations. Both stations took on two new staff members, supported by the SIMM grants. Radio Mir regularly contributed items to the *KOSMA* "Journal" and its new staff member began contributing quality work. Contributing to *KOSMA* was an important source of revenue to these small stations.

Activity 3: Support news room equipment development at TV Most, with additional professional and program making development.

SIMM's relationship with TV Most was adversely affected by changes to its management in years four and five which made dealing with the station problematic and unpredictable. The TV Most board, which was politicized and reflected the balance of power in Belgrade, dismissed the station's executive director Zvonko Miladinovic and demoted his deputy Veroljub Miletic in fall 2012. Initially Mr Miladinovic seemed to accept this but later made efforts to reassert his control. As a result of these developments SIMM suspended the equipment subgrant to TV Most envisaged in the concept paper for the additional activities in north Kosovo. SIMM proceeded with funding for TV Most's "Zuta Minuta" youth program and continued the existing incentive subgrants which funded "Agrar", "Kosnet Info" and news items. SIMM staff monitored and influenced the content of the programs funded by USAID. Content proved to be balanced and of high quality, particularly as they were largely produced and presented by people trained by IREX. The rest of the station's output was less easy to control.

Activity 4: Develop a multi-media website for TV Mreza and promote new media development for all partners in north Kosovo.

A website for *TV Mreza* was developed and launched on January 19, 2013. All *TV Mreza* news and feature content was available on the site. It provided background information on each of the stations and profiled all *TV Mreza*'s on-screen personalities. It was and remains a valuable resource for Serbian speakers everywhere in the world who want to find out more about life in the Serbian communities in Kosovo.

In February and March 2013, development work continued with the next phase providing for live streaming of all the member stations' output. News content was updated regularly and supervised by the SIMM production and training coordinator and by SIMM marketing manager. Training was conducted for journalists and technicians at TV Herc, TV Puls, TV Mir and TV Most on how to maintain the site, create news stories and upload video. The web developer also created an intranet to enable the partners to share and archive materials and other information.

Activity 5: Support studio re-equipment at TV Mir and continue to provide training for journalists and technical staff.

SIMM provided training for journalists and technicians as part of the development of the "Koreni" program. This followed the policy of training groups of younger staff members at each station to help them spread good standards more widely.

The equipment grant for TV Mir was installed in April 2013 and included the purchase of RTV Mir's new studio, camera, computer equipment and uninterruptable power supply (UPS). This equipment enabled TV Mir to update its studio and computer equipment to make the station technically capable of producing better quality programs more efficiently while the UPS would compensate for any power failures or surges. SIMM consultants Dejan Dimitrijevic and Dejan Vuksanovic provided training to TV Mir staff for using the equipment.

Activity 6: Develop understanding between Serb media in south and north Kosovo.

This important part of the additional SIMM activities in north Kosovo encouraged the television partners in the south (TV Herc, TV Puls and New Press) to develop programming about north Kosovo and the links between Serbian communities in the north and south. TV Herc and TV Puls produced a series of short programs which explored the lives of students in the south who go to university in the north, looking at the problems they face and the poor facilities and living accommodation they are offered. New Press produced a series of interviews for the network about the Pristina-Belgrade talks, reflecting the sometimes different priorities of Serbs in north and south Kosovo.

Activity 7: Provide training and consultancy support for new media development, technical capacity and journalistic quality

As outlined above during September and December 2012, IREX provided consultancy support to TV Mir for the development of the “Koreni” program. It also launched the new youth program “Zuta Minuta” on TV Most. SIMM consultants together with the SIMM production and training coordinator worked with the two northern partner stations on the development of program formats and design and on the techniques of documentary production up until the end of the program. “Koreni” is a much more sophisticated program than other *TV Mreza* productions and the techniques required were more advanced than journalists and technicians at the stations were familiar with.

**IR 1.4: Linked stations are well-managed businesses**

Activity 1: Train individual outlets on organizational structuring, operations, management and local advertising business development.

The *TV Mreza* marketing manager continued work on management issues during the extension period, as IREX focused more efforts to develop *TV Mreza* as a functioning business rather than a loose collection of partners. Through a series of *TV Mreza* Board meetings, the Board agreed to add a second legal status to the network as a limited liability company to give it more freedom to generate profits. They retained the NGO license to allow for funding from donors.

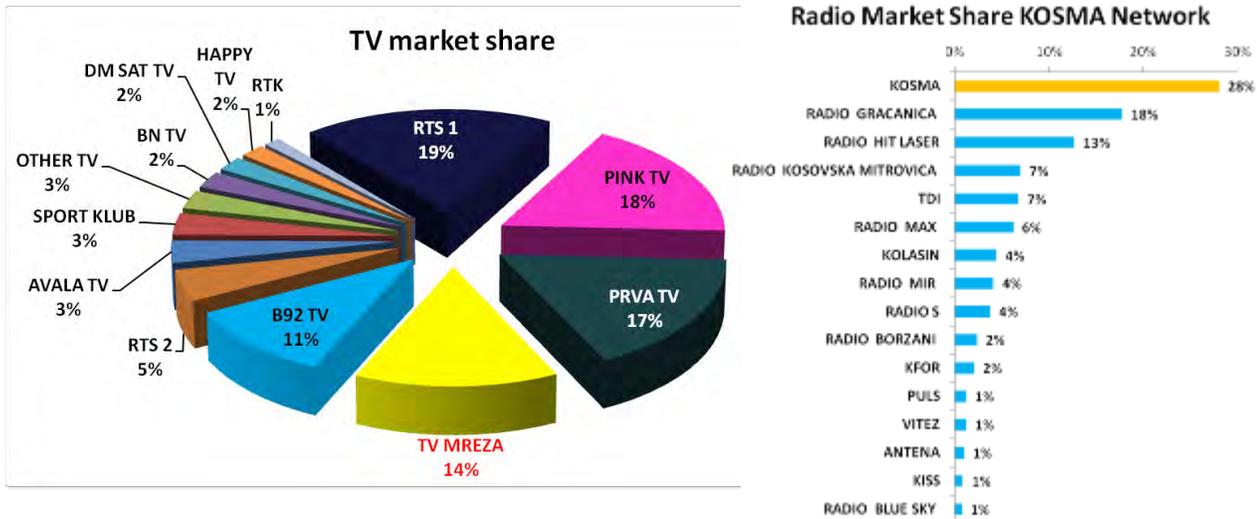
Consensus among *TV Mreza* board members proved challenging. In the beginning of March 2013, *TV Mreza* hired Dusan Djuric as Executive Director of *TV Mreza*. However, due to a lack of coordination with the *TV Mreza* board, it requested that Mr. Djuric leave the position. Soon after, the *TV Mreza* Board hired Milena Kostic as the Executive Manager. The SIMM production and training coordinator briefed her on the *TV Mreza* Network and programming while SIMM consultant briefed her on the Kosovo media market and advertising opportunities for *TV Mreza*. Ms. Kostic stepped down from the position in May 2013. As of the end of the program in June her replacement had not yet been named.

SIMM organized a financial management training seminar aimed to prepare the partner stations after IREX and USAID assistance ended in June 2013. SIMM staff trained partners how to comply with USAID rules and regulations when applying to and managing donor funds. The training included a presentation on what marketing is and how to attract funds for organizational development.

During the NCE period, IREX met with the directors from New Press Production and *TV Mreza* to discuss the development of a business strategy for *TV Mreza* and *KOSMA* networks. Based on their interest, IREX developed business strategies for both networks. Professional media kits were produced for both networks so that they will be well-equipped to present to donors and marketing agencies. These media kits were presented to the donor community in Kosovo and Kosovo institutions on Thursday May 30, 2013 during the “Media Donor’s Roundtable for *TV Mreza* and *KOSMA* radio network.” The IREX Chief of Party and representatives from both networks presented information about the networks and their financial needs. The event was a huge success, attracting more than 45 attendees, including the USAID mission director, and culminated with commitments and pledges from potential non-USAID donors.

Activity 2: Conduct/contract audience research pertinent to beneficiary stations.

Four rounds of audience research were conducted during the two-year SIMM extension. The results showed continued growth in the market share of the TV partners. The biannual survey was conducted by UBO Consulting using face-to-face interviews, with a sample of approximately 1,200 Kosovo Serbs.



Overall the results showed that the *TV Mreza* daily audience share had remained steady at around 15%. The network is competitive with the Belgrade based stations which provide its main competition, RTS1, Pink and Prva. An important highlight was the rise in audience share of TV Mir in years four and five. It showed an 18% share of the *TV Mreza* audience, up from just 2% in summer 2011. This reflects the investment by SIMM in the quality of its transmission system, links to the cable networks in north Mitrovica and Zvečan and in the increased quality in its programming. This was led by the “Koreni” documentary program, funded by SIMM and the improvement in the quality of its news. Taking the measures “very trustworthy” and “somewhat trustworthy” together the stations combined score was a remarkably high 94%, up from 91% in July 2011. TV Most and TV Puls were particularly well trusted by their audiences.

The radio data show the continued dominance of the *KOSMA* network stations. For radio, the *KOSMA* network as a whole remained dominant among Serbian listeners. Its market share varied from 28% in the last winter survey and 40% from the last summer survey. This denotes a seasonal trend in radio listenership where the audience always decreases in winter. Radio Kontakt Plus remained the leader among network members with a 13% share. IREX believes that this sharp improvement was caused by the improvement in its broadcast signal, with new transmission equipment funded by SIMM grants.

Activity 3: Develop parameters and explore joint advertising for common programming along with financial management and revenue sharing options.

The *TV Mreza* marketing manager worked throughout the extension to develop links with potential advertisers and sponsors for *TV Mreza*. Their efforts yielded a total of €88,500 for the network as a whole, for the individual stations and for the *KOSMA* network of radio stations during the first year of the extension.

Much of this money, however, was from donors and Kosovo government departments. The genuine commercial advertisers and sponsors were limited to a sponsorship deal with Raiffeisen Bank to support the “Agrar” program and a campaign for Top Shop to promote its new outlet at the ETC mall on the boundaries of north and south Mitrovica. Contacts were built with most major Kosovo and international companies, but they remained reluctant to advertise on Serbian language media to such a small potential market and in such an unpredictable political environment. However, international donors and the Kosovo government are clearer about the need to reach the Serb community in Kosovo as evidenced by the overwhelmingly positive response at the donor conference conducted at the end of the program. The value of the marketing manager to the network was considerable because of his skill in creating program formats and building relationships with potential Kosovo advertisers.

Activity 4: Support networks and stations to represent their editorial and commercial interests before Kosovo regulators and relevant institutions.

IREX closely monitored the work of the Minority Media Fund (MMF) to ensure that its grant allocation was fair and transparent. Between April 2011 and March 2012 only one round of grants was distributed because of disagreements between the public broadcaster RTK and the former license fee collector, the electricity distributor KEK, over how much money was available. A total of 48 grants were awarded during the SIMM program for a total of €372,592.

IREX also monitored the media enabling legislation in the Kosovo Assembly with two important re-drafted laws passing through parliament. The IMC law and the RTK law were both passed early in 2012 after lengthy delays largely caused by objections from the European Commission Liaison Office that both laws did not comply with the relevant European Union media directives.

At the end of March 2012 the new RTK law was passed, after disagreements over how to appoint the director of the new RTK2 channel, provided for in the law. The dispute was resolved by a clause which provides for a working group to be set up by the RTK board with seven members, four Kosovo Serbs, two Kosovo Albanians and one other minority. This group will recommend the successful candidate for the channel director. He or she will be appointed for a three-year period, extendable for a further three years. The Association of Serb Journalists in Kosovo objected strongly to the provision in the law for a minority RTK2 channel and was considering an appeal to Kosovo's Constitutional Court. However, as the program closed, RTK2 was launched in May 2013. So far it is unclear if the new public minority-language broadcaster poses a threat to the *TV Mreza* network.

The MMF was excluded from the new RTK law because the government sees no point in allocating money to fund the public broadcaster and then taking 5% of it back to fund the MMF. However the office of the Prime Minister, which administers the fund, seemed to be committed to its future and discussions had begun with the Ministry of Finance to arrange the direct transfer of up to €200,000 a year.

The revised IMC law was also passed by the full Assembly at the beginning of 2012. The only important change was that the shortlist of civil society applicants for membership of the IMC Council will be selected directly by an Assembly ad-hoc committee, rather than by the IMC itself. Other clauses in the law which might have made it easier for the government to control the IMC have been eliminated, after lobbying by ECLO, the independent electronic media owners association AMPEK and by IREX.

**PROGRAM ACTIVITY 2:  
STRENGTHEN INDEPENDENT MEDIA ENABLING INSTITUTIONS**

**IR 2.1 Minority Media Fund operates with transparency and fairness**

Activity 1: Provide technical assistance to the Prime Minister's Office (OPM), Liaison for Media, to make the MMF operational and ensure transparent and fair grant-making procedures.

IREX/SIMM staff provided assistance to the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) during the early phase of the program to ensure smooth administration of the Minority Media Fund (MMF). Because IREX already had in place a proven system for managing its incentive grants program, the OPM was keen to use this experience to create an effective and transparent management system for the MMF and sought IREX assistance in the creation of requests for applications, the grant application forms, the procedure for the selection of grantees, the monitoring of projects, and the financial management of the process.

During the first round of grants in spring 2009 the MMF received 53 applications including a number from SIMM partners. Of 53, 15 applicants were chosen, including:

**Multi-ethnic:** Radio Kamenica, Radio Premier, Radio K.

**Serb:** Radio Kontakt Plus, Radio KIM, TV Puls, TV Mir, TV Herc, the *KOSMA* network, New Press (Media Center, Caglavica).

**Bosniak/Gora:** Radio Gora, Radio Astra, *Alem* newspaper.  
**Disadvantaged:** *Syri Yne* newspaper.

The SIMM legal advisor monitored the commission's activities and progress in awarding grants and obtained funds from RTK. He believed it behaved with fairness and transparency. In June, the MMF finalized the grant amounts for the successful applicants of its first funding round: TV Herc (€14,850), RTV Mir (€12,996), Radio Kontakt Plus (€10,000), the KOSMA network (€10,000), TV Puls (€7,140), Radio KIM (€10,000), New Press (€8,800), *Alem* newspaper (€15,000), Radio Gora (€10,000), Radio Premiera (€10,000), Radio K (€9,840), Radio Kamenica (€6,948), Radio.Romano Avazi (€10,000), *Syri ynë* newspaper (€14,975), and Radio Astra (€10,000).

Despite progress in the first year of the program, ministers in the Kosovo Government raised concerns that the grants were not in proportion to the size and number of Kosovo's minorities and also suggested that they should be given on the condition that they reflected government achievements and successes. These issues were resolved when the chairman of the MMF grant commission explained to the cabinet that the grants were distributed according to the quality of competitive proposals and it would be impractical to do so according to the size of the communities.

A dispute between RTK and KEK, the electricity company, over license fees caused delays to the fund, making RTK's funding sources uncertain over an extended period. Despite regular lobbying by the SIMM legal advisor the MMF has been unable to collect the money owed it by RTK. The RTK Law includes a clause stating that 5% of its license fee payments should be transferred to the MMF to support minority media in Kosovo. Due to RTK's continued refusal to transfer the €1 million or so it owes, the MMF was not able to process proposals for a second round of grants until 2011.

Activity 2: Support selection and seating of the MMF commission, the decision-making body.

During the first year of the program the SIMM legal advisor met with the liaison for media official in the OPM who was responsible for the operation of the MMF. After helping draft a letter to the Deputy Prime Minister, which urged him to use his influence to unblock the bottleneck in the drafting of the regulations in the OPM's legal department, the SIMM legal advisor attended three working group meetings on the drafting of the regulations for the administration of the MMF. This document provided a comprehensive legal basis for the functioning of the fund's managing commission and the distribution and monitoring of grants to minority media in Kosovo. The draft regulation provided for a managing commission of seven members from government, media associations, and NGOs. The draft was approved by the cabinet and signed by the Prime Minister in December 2008.

Activity 3: Support inclusion of minority community members in the grant-making decision process.

Minority media representatives were not directly represented on the granting commission because of the possibility of conflicts of interest. Serb, Bosniak and other minority and disadvantaged groups sit as representatives of public bodies. IREX's legal advisor worked as a member of the MMF working group establishing the commission. He lobbied on behalf of minority media to ensure their interests are represented fairly and provided recommendations on the selection on composition of the grant commission. This activity was completed in year one.

Activity 4: Assist minority community broadcasters in advocating for and monitoring regular transfers of funds to and from the MMF.

In the first year of SIMM, IREX concentrated on lobbying to get the MMF functioning properly and distributing grants. Since establishing the MMF the production and training coordinator worked with AMPEK, the organization representing electronic media in Kosovo, to develop its relationships with Serb language media and lobby on behalf of independent media with Kosovo institutions.

**IR 2.2 Independent Media Commission (IMC) provides fair and transparent regulation of broadcast media**

Activity 1: Provide legal expertise to the IMC for the re-licensing process, in particular regarding adherence to the Ahtisaari revised plan for Serbian language media.

The SIMM legal advisor provided day-to-day assistance to appointed staff in the legal department at the IMC throughout year one on its re-licensing plans and provided advice and assistance where needed for station re-licensing.

The IMC Council held a public meeting in May 2009 on a series of documents relating to the long term re-licensing of electronic media and the IMC audio visual commercial communications (advertising) rule. The IMC chairwoman explained that it would not issue new licenses but, as required under the IMC law, re-issue the existing temporary licenses allocated by its predecessor the Temporary Media Commission (TMC). Following the public meeting, the IMC released the official documentation on the 2009 long term re-licensing of electronic media in Kosovo. With assistance from the SIMM legal advisor and the SIMM production and training coordinator the IMC was able to improve its communication about the re-licensing process with electronic media in north Kosovo.

By the end of November 2009, the IMC licensed a group of 20 TV and radio stations on the condition they install transmission filters, including SIMM partners Radio Klokot, Radio KIM, Radio Gorazdevac, and Radio Omega 3. IREX provided funds for all its partner radio stations to install the necessary filters. In addition, the IMC required that licensees fulfill all their tax obligations to the Kosovo government. SIMM staff ensured that all partner stations complied with this requirement. By the end of Year 2 of SIMM, the re-licensing process was complete, apart from a handful of stations including partner station Radio Kontakt Plus.

In addition to assisting the IMC with the re-licensing process, the SIMM legal advisor also assisted the IMC with a revision of the Code of Conduct for the Broadcast Media in Kosovo. Originally issued by the IMC's predecessor, the TMC, the Code required changes to bring it up-to-date, and the amendments were approved by the IMC Council and issued to the stations as part of their re-licensing package in May. In April, the IMC Council also approved its advertising rules for broadcasters. These included: stricter rules on product placement; restrictions on the amount of advertising on the public channel, RTK, limiting advertising to six minutes per hour (it was allowed 12 minutes); and banning advertisements entirely from 07:00 to 09:00 and from 18:00 to 23:00.

SIMM conducted two workshops on content analysis for media monitoring for the IMC in February 2009 and July 2010. Members of the IMC Media Monitoring and Compliance Division attended the SIMM workshop to refine its content analysis of the stations it licenses. Content analysis is a systematic, quantitative methodology used to standardize media monitoring. The IMC used the methodology to track compliance by the three national television broadcasters (RTK, KTV and RTV21). Areas of compliance monitored include the diversity of programming, impartiality, balance, relevance of news, accuracy and the appropriate coverage of political parties and elections.

Activity 2: Solicit stakeholder input for re-licensing criteria.

The SIMM legal advisor and production and training coordinator assisted all partner stations in preparing their re-licensing documentation for the IMC in years one and two. Radio Klokot, Radio KIM, Radio Kontakt Plus and Radio Gorazdevac were all granted wider local or regional licenses during this process. This was an important step forward for the program as it increased the range and audibility of the Serbian language partner radio stations in Kosovo.

IREX and AMPEK visited TV Puls, Radio Klokot, TV Mir, TV Most, and Radio Kontakt Plus to discuss the problems they faced and how AMPEK could help them. Many of the stations had issues to resolve with the IMC but did not have an organization to assist them in their negotiations. IREX worked to position AMPEK to improve its representation of Serbian language radio and TV stations.

IREX also assisted the IMC legal department throughout the first year of the program on responding to complaints from unsuccessful license bidders in the Serbian community.

Activity 3: Develop a strategic plan and timetable for meeting known IMC regulatory deadlines.

The IMC began preparing its strategic plan before the start of the program. The IREX legal advisor provided assistance throughout the process as required in its drafting and implementation. In year one SIMM provided support for a workshop held in Ohër/Ohrid to address the Kosovo Assembly Media Committee's decision to amend the IMC law. Thirty-six people attended the workshop, including Kosovo Assembly media committee members, the heads of the parliamentary political groups, and the head of the Assembly finance committee. IMC Council members also attended with representatives of the OSCE, independent media owners, and minority media. Discussion at the workshop centered on practical and technical revisions to the IMC law to make the IMC more effective. These included lengthening the term of office of IMC Council and Media Appeals Board members and speeding up the implementation of IMC decisions. The SIMM legal advisor along with the IMC legal department prepared the drafts for approval by the Assembly committee compiling a total of 70 proposed amendments.

In August 2010, the SIMM legal advisor attended the first session of the working group to amend the Code of Conduct for Audiovisual Media. After discussions on the structure of the new document and the need to ensure that all provisions conform to international standards on freedom of expression, the IMC Council approved a revised code of conduct for audiovisual media services in December. The council approved new regulation on the payment of the broadcast license fee, providing for an increase of around 40%. The document outlined that a local radio station would pay € 540, a local TV station € 810, a regional TV station €1,890, a national radio station €10,080 and a national TV station €15,120.

Activity 4: Strengthen IMC relationships with the Kosovo government to enable it to operate as an independent body and work to ensure orderly seating of IMC Council members and RTK Board of Directors.

Under this activity, IREX sought to ensure that the IMC's authority with government and in the Assembly improved. Together with AMPEK, the SIMM legal advisor urged civil society organizations to nominate Council members and lobbied on their behalf, monitoring their appointment by the Assembly.

In December 2009, the Kosovo Assembly appointed four new members to the IMC Council, two of them from the list of civil society candidates proposed by IREX. Lobbying was focused on Assembly members from minority parties who were members of an ad hoc commission that appointed four out of eight nominated candidates.

The conversion from analogue to digital broadcasting was a major concern for IREX and the IMC during Year 2. Kosovo planned to complete the conversion by 2012, three years ahead of the EU deadline of 2015. However, the process was complicated by the 2006 decision of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) to allocate Kosovo's frequency spectrum to Serbia and by the Serbian regulator's clear intention to enforce its control over Kosovo's spectrum. To help solve this issue, IREX in cooperation with the IMC hired two consultants to prepare the strategy for digitalization and the technical framework to begin negotiations with the ITU. In September 2009, they completed the first phase of their work in Kosovo and began preparing options for the IMC to present to other regional regulators and to the ITU. Their report showed that about 48% of the territory of Kosovo was left outside its planning zone and so was assigned to Serbia's service area and considered by the ITU as part of Serbian territory. The consultants presented their findings at a regional conference of electronic media regulators. The IMC used the alternative plan drawn up by the consultants to open discussions with neighboring countries to coordinate their approach to digitalization and to approach the ITU to get the frequencies re-allocated. IMC representatives visited Geneva at the end of December 2009 to meet with officials at the ITU. They presented the technical research demonstrating that the frequencies allocated to Serbia for Kosovo in 2006 are not adequate, do not cover the whole of Kosovo, and are technically not practicable. ITU officials confirmed that they cannot deal directly with Kosovo, and the frequency allocation cannot be re-assigned to allow Kosovo to take control of its own digitalization process<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Because the ITU is a UN organization, it does not recognize Kosovo's independence. It will deal with some of the issues if approached through another UN body (UNDP for example) but will not deal with Kosovo institutions directly.

In December 2009, the SIMM legal adviser took part in the Office of the Prime Minister's legal office working group established to amend the Law on Access to Official Documents (LAOD). The purpose of the amendments was to align the LAOD with the Kosovo Constitution and to fill in some gaps that existed in the law. The draft transferred responsibility for the implementation of the LAOD from the Inter-Institutional Committee to the Ombudsperson, despite that body's lack of any powers to issue obligatory decisions. The draft also included a scale of fines for public bodies which do not comply with the law, including personal fines for officials. The draft remains under discussion in the Cabinet and no ruling was made by the end of SIMM program Year 2. Qeriqi also assisted the IMC and its legal staff with a range of drafting and other legal issues. One of the key activities was the help he provided on the final re-draft of amendments to the IMC Law as revised by a legal expert hired by the Assembly media committee. The issues were largely technical, providing clearer definitions of the time limit for IMC decisions on license applications and discussing whether the IMC chief executive should be appointed by the government committee for appointing high-ranking officials, or by the IMC board. These new proposals were presented by the IMC to the Assembly committee.

IREX also assisted the IMC on preparations for redrafting the cable regulations to bring them up-to-date. The regulation that was in operation did not take into account the many pay-per-view offerings by cable operators in Kosovo, nor did it regulate Internet carried IPTV. In addition, the framework discriminated against licensed broadcasters because the "must carry" clause for local stations was not sufficiently well-defined and some provisions for consumer protection are more onerous for broadcasters than they are for cable operators. Two lawyers supported by SIMM funding visited and provided recommendations to the IMC. They advised at the beginning that it was most important that consultation with the industry is adequate as the IMC was criticized in the past for lack of proper consultation in the existing cable regulation. The lawyers also cautioned that changes to the regulation of cable systems will need to be coordinated with the revision of the IMC Law by the Kosovo Assembly, with proposed changes to the regulation of broadcasting on the internet and with the appointment of a new IMC Council. In January the lawyers presented the IMC with a document on cable regulation that raised issues which should be addressed with the Kosovo Assembly

IREX monitored all relevant meetings of the Kosovo Assembly media committee, the IMC Council and the Media Appeals Board. Early in the program there were seven outstanding Media Appeals Board cases because of the failure by the Kosovo Assembly to appoint two new members to the board.

The SIMM legal advisor monitored the first meeting after the election of the new Assembly Committee for Education, Culture, Youth, Sports, Public Administration, Local Government and Media (Assembly media committee). It approved the IMC annual report for 2010 which the legal advisor assisted in drafting. The committee accepted the report as very professional and recommended that it should be given final approval by the full Assembly. The report includes an account of the assistance given to the IMC by the SIMM program. The committee asked the IMC to re-submit the short list of civil society candidates for the IMC Council and would not accept the existing list.

The Kosovo Assembly was slow to appoint new council members when the mandate of four of its members expired December 2010. The process of redrafting the IMC Law also took longer than expected and was made more difficult by the insertion of clauses to which the regulator strongly objects, dragging out the process. Because of the delay IREX agreed to monitor the work of the IMC during the SIMM extension to ensure the interests of minority and other independent media were protected.

## V. CONCLUSIONS

IREX's relationships with Serbian-language stations established and nurtured during the last part of the Kosovo Media Assistance Program (KMAP) were instrumental in creating a firm foundation upon which to build the Strengthening Independent Minority Media (SIMM) program. Starting from a place of trust and credibility with Serb partners, particularly in the north, allowed SIMM staff was able to mobilize quickly and

begin implementation of program activities. This set the stage for a successful launch, allowing the program to build momentum from the beginning.

Also key was appropriate staffing. SIMM retained capable staff from KMAP including the deputy chief of party and finance team who were critical to the operations and grants management elements of the programs. SIMM also devoted much effort in consultancy support for its partner stations in the first year of the program and throughout. The hire of SIMM's production and training coordinator not only helped improve IREX's relationships with its partners, but also provided them with a production expert familiar with both radio and television who is always available. Stations also came to rely on the expertise of SIMM's media technical advisor as he assisted the *KOSMA* network and television stations with the installation and use of the new equipment purchased with IREX subgrants. In addition to the assistance provided by local SIMM staff, international production consultants continued to work with the television stations building on the training plan developed under KMAP.

IREX's facilitation and support of the re-launch of the *KOSMA* network, and creation of *TV Mreza* set the stage for all subsequent training and technical work conducted by SIMM. These two early successes created a platform for targeted interventions and equipment support to partners that endured throughout the five year program. SIMM did not engage in one-off strategies but rather provided sustained support to a limited number of beneficiaries the program was able to develop and work with over a prolonged period of time. This approach, enhanced by the addition of the two years' extension, allowed for incremental, lasting improvement in reporting skills and production values at all the member stations.

SIMM's work early in the program with the Independent Media Commission (IMC) also had far reaching effects. IREX legal staff worked with the IMC to support the re-licensing of partner stations thus expanding the stations' audience and reach. Also significant was the IMC's willingness to prioritize in the redrafting of the IMC and RTK laws fully protecting the interests of independent minority media. This would likely not have happened without SIMM input. These and interventions helped ensure the program's lasting impact.

The eight waves of audience research commissioned by SIMM confirm that Kosovo Serb viewership increased considerably for the *KOSMA* newscast and *TV Mreza* stations over the life of the program from 2008 to 2013. IREX believes this steady increase in viewership is attributable to improved quality of the broadcasts from partners' better-equipped studios, and more professional programming over time. The networks' standings in the ratings should also position them well with potential advertisers and donors seeking to reach Serb minority populations. New revenue sources have already been opened up by the *TV Mreza* marketing manager and other consultants during the program, which resulted in the amount of advertising revenue generated by the stations to grow substantially over the life of the program. This momentum, coupled with the networks' positive market share and new marketing materials should provide the stations with the tools necessary to continue building new sources of revenue over time.

Journalistic balance, an issue throughout the program, was monitored through weekly content checks of all SIMM-funded productions by the training and production coordinator and DCOP and breaches were corrected when required. A commitment to balanced reporting was a cornerstone of the consistent on-site training, coaching and mentoring provided to stations by SIMM staff. The results of this emphasis were evident in the balanced and neutral reporting from Radio Kontakt Plus, TV Most and RTV Mir in north Kosovo during the heightened tension at borders between Serbia and Kosovo in 2012 which led to barricades throughout Mitrovica and other north Kosovo towns. Each station showed improved professionalism in their coverage of the situation with balanced and fair reporting that was non-inflammatory. The SIMM-funded programs that promoted coexistence, tolerance and other democratic values also played a role in these stations' approach to reporting on sensitive issues.

While SIMM leaves with many successes, there are still challenges. The IMC continues to suffer from inadequate funding, low salaries, and excessive staff turnover making it vulnerable to political influence and the institution does not yet command the level of authority an independent regulator should enjoy. Continued funding for the Minority Media Fund is not guaranteed. Despite improvements in programming and production, not all PMP targets were achieved. Some partner managers still do not fully understand

the significance of audience research and sometimes failed to diligently follow marketing advice. While progress was been made, some of the partner stations still remain insufficiently committed to marketing as a dedicated part of their station strategy and unconvinced that it is an effective tool for sustainability. Some partner stations pull their weight; others do not. Rivalries among the stations lie just under the surface and are sometimes explicit. Time will tell if the desire to succeed by working together can override these tendencies.

Most of the stations, though not all, are more secure as businesses than they were before the program, and more confident in dealing with Kosovo institutions. Although the stations vary with regard to management skills, all still have management challenges. While appreciative of new equipment and training, some SIMM partner stations found putting training into practice difficult.

Overall, however, the program leaves the minority media broadcast sector measurably stronger and more professional than where it started. Kosovo now has 10 Serb minority radio and television stations that are substantially re-equipped and the quality of their transmission signals are dramatically improved. The new network technology is performing well. News items and longer-form programs are regularly exchanged through the networks, the standard of news broadcasting continues to improve and new formats have been and continue to be developed. *TV Mreza* and *KOSMA* audiences are growing, encouraging the stations to be more ambitious about the standard of informational programming they produce. Overall, they are providing a considerably better service and product to Kosovo Serb citizens, who before lacked good quality news and entertainment, but importantly, now sourced from within Kosovo rather than from Belgrade. This achievement alone is a mark of SIMM's success.

At the program's end in June 2013, IREX is confident in its legacy for USAID of well-regarded, sustainable radio and TV stations who are at the core of their communities in Kosovo.