



Final Program Report

Serbia Media Assistance Program  
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Please direct any questions about this report to:

Erin Murrock  
IREX  
1275 K Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20037  
(202) 628-8188  
emurrock@irex.org

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## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The USAID-funded Serbia Media Assistance Program began on September 24, 2008 and after a no-cost extension, ran through December 31, 2012.

Independent media suffered severe economic pressures due to the global financial crisis and experienced political pressures as a result of a monopolization of advertising agencies with political ties. Although the legal framework has improved in the years after the Milosevic regime, several laws, including the Law on Electronic Communications and the Public Information Act, were passed that threaten the freedom of speech. Elections, the reorganization of government agencies and slow formation of the parliament delayed efforts to press forward on legal issues for the media during 2011-2012.

IREX activities supported the overall goal of **a legally sound, economically viable media sector provides professional and independent news and information for citizens throughout Serbia**. To achieve this goal, the Serbia Media Assistance Program pursued the following objectives: a legal and regulatory environment for media is stronger and more transparent, effective and stable, an increased managerial and financial capacity of independent media and enhanced quality and availability of information for citizens.

The Serbia Media Assistance Program accomplished major steps toward facilitating a fair and independent media in Serbia. The program combined management and sales support and new media consultation for media outlets to ensure Serbian media outlets continue to reach their audiences where they are – increasingly online. IREX’s biggest accomplishment may be its efforts to strengthen the media environment by uniting media associations to rally behind issues of joint interest and affect positive media reform to the Serbian media sector. Key accomplishments of the Serbia Media Assistance program included:

- IREX supported the creation of the Media Coalition which brought together traditionally antagonistic associations and unanimously recommended a strategy and presented it for public discussion to the Ministry of Culture, Media and Information Society. The Media Coalition continues to work together on areas of shared interest including research on financing of local media. IREX also supported work to reduce broadcasting fees for local broadcasters, close illegal broadcasters and produce legal handbooks for journalists.
- IREX actively promoted new media throughout all program activities, holding roundtables explaining new media, sponsoring seminars on web sales and helping local media outlets develop websites to enhance their brand and develop social network strategies. Web portals offering local news content have expanded across Serbia because of IREX assistance in years 3 and 4. 12 radio stations, online news portals and media associations now have websites to provide quality information to online audiences.
- IREX incorporated a holistic approach to move independent media outlets toward sustainability. Program activities included radio research, research on new media and trends among youth, participation in regional trade fairs to pitch programming to international producers and targeted training on management and marketing to partner stations. With IREX assistance Radio Advertising Bureau Serbia was founded to improve the financial situation of radio stations across Serbia.
- IREX offered specialized trainings on topics including the economic crisis, coverage at the International Criminal Tribunal of the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), environmental issues, EU accession as well as traditional journalism trainings on TV package production and photojournalism. Investigative reporting initiatives were particularly successful. The B92 series *Insider*, funded by IREX, had a huge impact. “Kolubara --The Plunder of the Century,” dealt with

abuses and embezzlement in the Kolubara coal mines. As a result of these broadcasts police arrested several of those identified in the series. Over a million people watched the Insider series. *Insider* completed its third season completely funded by advertising. With the help of IREX, Southern News, a local investigative new portal, developed a mobile version of the website, created a business plan towards sustainability, launched a whistleblower website and established a marketing department. Due to their high quality work, Southern News has greatly increased their audience and reached over 1,350,000 page views in September 2012.

- 11 projects focused on youth, gender, new online content, citizen engagement, and media monitoring were supported for the 2012 Presidential and Parliamentary elections.

## II. INTRODUCTION

The Serbian media scene experienced a period of transition during the Serbia Media Assistance Program due to the economy, the rapid growth of new media, and the digitalization process. Old business models began to give way to new models. Local TV began to disappear with digital conversion, while national TV remained strong - the national television stations have shown less loss of revenue than other media during the economic crisis, and it is still Serbia's main source of news. While local radio will remain, it may continue to lose share against national radio and against new media. Newspaper circulation continues to decline. More Serbs are using Internet and the use of smart phones is growing. As new business models evolve, especially models to provide local news to citizens, the Internet and mobile phones will become increasingly important.

The global financial crisis had a huge impact on the Serbia' already oversaturated media market. According to AGB Nielsen, the advertising market fell by 22% in 2009 compared with 2008. National TV has faced about a 16% decline in revenue while print media was the hardest hit with a decline of more than 33%. Radio fell between the two at 27%. Advertising budgets decreased dramatically, leading to a drop in revenue for nearly all media—generating a number of effects that endangered professionalism and freedom of speech. Almost all stations have reported layoffs, reduced salaries or missed payrolls. Years three and four saw the closure of several media outlets and newspapers along with a reduction in employees in major broadcasters including RTV Vojvodina and RTS. The low subscription fee collection created a burden on national broadcasters RTS and TV Avala.

To compound the impact of advertising on the media, the Serbian advertising sector in particular remains under the control of a few economic and political actors, entailing a significant risk of influence on the media and of self-censorship. The economic situation has made it easier for financial interests to exert control, specifically political, over the media. The two largest advertising agencies in Serbia are owned by people with political interests and are in a position to grant advertising or, almost as importantly, control media outlets' cash flow by the speed with which they pay outstanding debts.

The advent of new media will permanently change the advertising market for traditional media. Media outlets will have to adjust to sharp, permanent reductions in revenues. The use of new media in Serbia grew much more than expected. In 2008, AGB Nielsen reported Internet advertising took 1.5% of the national advertising market (€2.5 million) – this grew to almost 5% in 2012. Having a presence on social network and offering mobile applications became increasingly vital to media outlets' sustainability.

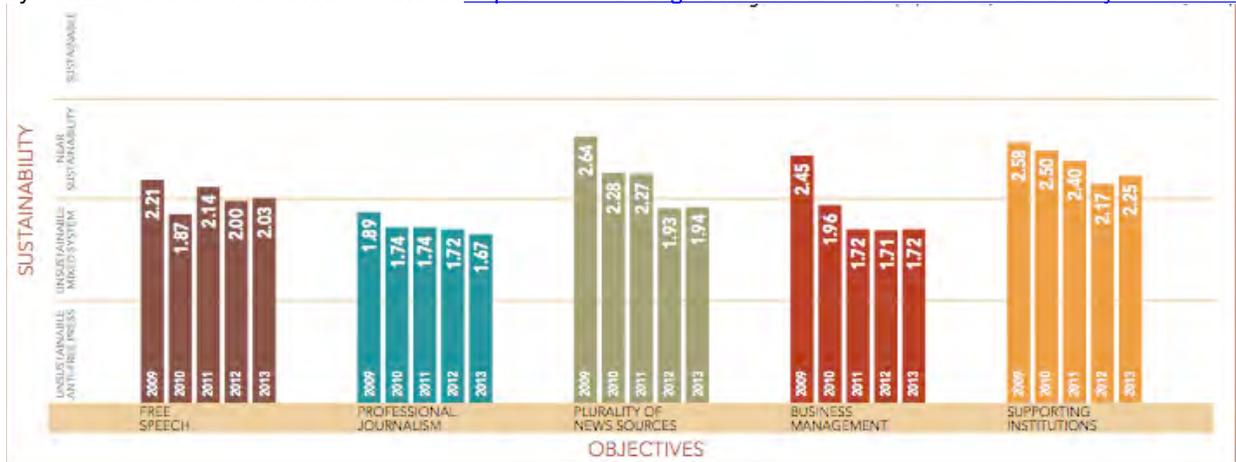
Although Serbia's media environment is pluralistic, transparency of media ownership has yet to be ensured. The Anti-Corruption Council released a report in September 2012 that determined that out of the 30 most important media in Serbia (12 dailies, 7 weeklies, 6 TV and 5 radio stations) the real owners of only 18 media outlets are unknown.

The most highlighted legal issues over the years included the Media Strategy, Public Information Law, threats against journalists, privatization and digital conversion. UNS successfully led the fight to overturn the damaging amendments to the Public Information Law which would have allowed interference with the independence of Serbia's courts. While violence and threats against journalists remain of concern, their frequency has decreased slightly and some crimes against journalists have been prosecuted. However,

journalists still face harassing libel suits along with the threat--and reality--of violence. The Ministry of Culture-funded media study to establish a media strategy presented an important opportunity for IREX partner media associations to unite on around key positions and taken an active role in the discourse of the media strategy. The Media Coalition continues to participate in a working group on new media laws and actively releases joint statements on laws violating the Media Strategy. Privatization of media outlets remains a murky issue. The Privatization Agency restarted the process in 2009 but due to confusion on contradictory laws not much progress was achieved. The Serbian government introduced its digitalization strategy for television and initially announced that they will fully convert to digital in April 2012. Despite having a technical strategy, the implementation of digitalization proved to be complex, leading Serbia to push back the deadline to April 2015.

### MEDIA SUSTAINABILITY INDEX

IREX's Media Sustainability Index (MSI) provides in-depth analyses of the conditions for independent media in more than 80 countries across Europe, Eurasia, the Middle East, and Africa. Since the Eurasian MSI was first conceived in 2000, in cooperation with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the MSI has evolved into an important benchmark study to assess how media systems change over time and across borders. Policymakers, development specialists, and civil society leaders and professionals in transitioning countries increasingly recognize the state of media as a key element of the development agenda, not only in the democracy and governance sectors but also in such fields as economic growth, poverty reduction, health, youth, and gender. The MSI is designed to assist in advancing development in all these areas by analyzing the elements of each country's media system and highlighting where intervention can be most effective in promoting a sustainable and professional media system. Serbia scores can be found at <http://www.irex.org/resource/serbia-media-sustainability-index-msi>.



Overall 2008 MSI Score: 2.39

Overall 2012 MSI Score: 1.90

2008 MSI Score for Free Speech: 2.21

2012 MSI Score for Free Speech: 2.03

2008 MSI Score for Professional Journalism: 1.89

2012 MSI Score for Professional Journalism: 1.67

2008 MSI Score for Plurality of News Sources: 2.64

2012 MSI Score for Plurality of News Sources: 1.94

2008 MSI Score for Business Management: 2.45

2012 MSI Score for Business Management: 1.72

2008 MSI Score for Supporting Institutions: 2.58  
2012 MSI Score for Supporting Institutions: 2.25

### **III. SERBIA MEDIA ASSISTANCE PROGRAM RESULTS FRAMEWORK**

**GOAL: A legally sound, economically viable media sector that provides professional and independent news and information for citizens throughout Serbia.**

**PURPOSE:** The goal of the Serbian Media Assistance Program is driven by USAID Strategic Objective 2.11 “Risk of political instability reduced.” A well informed population, which has comprehensive, fact-based information will make better decisions and be less likely to be swayed by demagoguery.

**OBJECTIVES:** IREX worked toward three key objectives (intermediate results) in support of the Program Goal:

IR 1: Legal and regulatory environment for media is stronger and more transparent, effective and stable.

IR 2: Increased managerial and financial capacity of independent media.

IR 3: Enhanced quality and availability of information for citizens.

**IR 1: Legal and regulatory environment for media is stronger and more transparent, effective and stable.**

**IR 1.1 Capacity of media support organizations is strengthened**

**Activity 1.1.1:** Creating Partnerships with Media Organizations

**Activity 1.1.2:** Advocacy Skills Building

**Activity 1.1.3:** Supporting Coalition Initiatives

**Activity 1.1.4:** Fostering Joint Industry Committee(s)

**Activity 1.1.5:** Feasibility study for multi-stakeholder media development fund

**IR 1.2 Legal and regulatory framework is improved**

**Activity 1.2.1:** Prioritizing collective action on behalf of stakeholders

**Activity 1.2.2:** Aiding the Republic Broadcasting Agency and RATEL

**IR 1.3 Media sector monitoring information is widely available and updated regularly**

**Activity 1.3.1:** Creating a Media Environment Monitoring Service

**IR 2: Increased managerial and financial capacity of independent media**

**2.1 Improved management and financial capacity of 8-10 local and regional media outlets covering markets throughout Serbia**

**Activity 2.1.1:** Selecting local media partners and executing MOUs

**2.2 Increased sustainability of media serving local and regional audiences**

**Activity 2.2.1:** Conduct research and ratings

**Activity 2.2.2:** Foster Regional Media Cooperation

**Activity 2.2.3:** Create new technology initiatives

**Activity 2.2.4:** Leadership training for woman managers and aspiring managers

**Activity 2.2.5:** IREX consulting service

**Activity 2.2.6:** Assessment of Radio Vojvodina

**IR 3: Enhanced quality and availability of information for citizens**

### **3.1 Increased coverage by local and regional media issues of interest and concern to citizens in their communities, including minorities**

**Activity 3.1.1:** Support existing media centers in Serbia, especially those that help minority media and journalists

**Activity 3.1.2:** Covering Community Concerns

### **3.2 Enhanced quality and quantity of media coverage of reform and other pertinent issues**

**Activity 3.2.1:** The Special Coverage Initiatives Fund

## **IV. SERBIA MEDIA ASSISTANCE PROGRAM ACTIVITIES**

### ***IR1: Legal and regulatory environment for media is stronger and more transparent, effective and stable***

IREX sought to improve the quality of print, broadcast, and online journalism so that the media would provide objective, balanced and useful news and information to as many citizens as possible. IREX combined training and consulting with the financial support necessary to bolster media during the difficult economic period in addition to improving the journalistic and technical competence of journalists.

#### **IR 1.1 Capacity of media support organizations is strengthened**

##### **Activity 1.1.1: Creating Partnerships with Media Organizations**

In Year 1, IREX, in cooperation with USAID, identified key media associations as assistance recipients and coalition partners, including Association of Independent Electronic Media (ANEM); Independent Journalists Association of Serbia (NUNS); Association of Journalists of Serbia (UNS); Media Association; Independent Journalists Association of Vojvodina (NDNV); Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC); Local Press; Media Center Belgrade (MCB); Media Center Nis (MCN). IREX asked its partners for proposals to forward work on coalition issues raised by the various media associations. Representatives from the media associations prioritized new media initiatives, journalism funds for the financial crisis, and media reform efforts.

In June 2010, the Ministry of Culture introduced a study paper designed to serve as the basis for a media strategy. IREX addressed the study paper at its Summer School and sponsored three roundtables on the paper and strategy to better prepare its partners for the roundtables and public debate. Because of IREX's intervention, the major media associations--including NUNS, UNS, ANEM, Local Press and The Association of Independent Journalists of Vojvodina--came up with joint positions on the paper, advocating transparency of media ownership, prohibition of ownership concentration, the complete withdrawal of state ownership in the media, and the establishment of equal treatment of all media on the market. The Media Coalition presented them during a series of roundtables in fall 2011. IREX's intervention helped foster the environment where traditionally antagonistic associations could cooperate and issue joint statements.

The Ministry adopted a strategy September 28, 2011 which envisages broad legal reform, introduces the concept of public interest, calls for withdrawal of the state from media ownership, outlines processes for transparency of media ownership, and calls for the ownership transformation of the TANJUG state news agency. While media support organizations were critical of some parts of the strategy, the development of the strategy gave several different, and historically antagonistic, media support organizations an issue around which to unite and come to a set of common conclusions.

IREX invited Social Impact consultant Maureen Taylor to conduct a social network analysis to find further areas of shared interest in which the members of the Media Coalition could continue to work. The analysis identified structural weaknesses in internal relationships between coalition members, found shared interests with civil society organizations and revealed public opinions of each Media Coalition member. Results of the study were presented at a workshop for MSOs and CSOs where the organizations discussed opportunities for joint efforts like the research on local financing of media.

Following the presentation on the social network analysis results the Media Coalition and BIRN conducted research on the financing mechanisms of local media outlets by local self-governments in 33 towns and municipalities. For the first time models and mechanisms through which local self-governments distributed funds to media were mapped. The Coalition made recommendations to the Government for State withdrawal from media ownership, legislation ensuring local media are funded through the local budget, transparent contracting processes, that media selected using public funds should represent the public interest, that independent committees select projects and transparent procedures for the purchasing of advertising space, and that regulations governing public procurement using state funds are consistently used.

### **Activity 1.1.2: Advocacy Skills Building**

All media associations launched activities to enhance their sustainability and provide better services to their members. Local Press developed a joint editorial system and subsequently added it to their web portal, UNS established advanced video journalism courses and AS Media organized an extensive course for 12 economic journalists.

As part of a growing trend in Serbia and globally of seeking information and news on the Internet, IREX provided assistance and financial support to partner associations to develop and improve their websites as well as enhance their online communication presence and social media strategies. In fall 2010 IREX organized a roundtable for media associations to discuss new media policy in the European Union and trends in new media development globally and in Serbia. IREX presented results of a survey that demonstrated media association members recognized the importance of new media but that they need additional training on new media theory and use. The roundtable helped identify new activities for media associations to offer their members, including new media training and education.

IREX worked with INBOX, a software development company, to develop websites for UNS and NUNS to improve communication among its members and international partners, expand public awareness of media issues and promote activities and results. UNS' website hosts a Press Center sub-site for voting and online petitions as well as news articles, extensive archives, members' benefits and legal support, education and courses for journalists (i.e. web and video journalism courses) and social media applications and newsletters. NUNS launched its website which hosts different databases of members and abuse of journalists' rights and features a sub-site for the NUNS magazine *Dosije*. ANEM and Media Center Belgrade also launched new, resigned websites.

IREX worked with the following media associations to determine ways to better enhance services to their members.

#### **Association of Independent Electronic Media (ANEM)**

IREX and the **Association of Independent Electronic Media (ANEM)** cooperated on projects to expand ANEM membership and support a variety of workshops on relevant topics in the media. ANEM received subgrants to improve its website to better serve members, facilitate organization of the ANEM assembly meeting, provide media monitoring to the Serbia media environment and increase advocacy efforts.

ANEM carried out several advocacy initiatives on topics including copyright fees, licensing fees, media strategy cooperation, advertising law, cable broadcasting law, and the distribution of local funds to local media. ANEM successfully worked with the Republic Broadcast Agency (RBA) and the Organization of

Serbian Music Authors (SOKOJ) to decrease the copyright fees and licensing fees broadcasters must pay, launched work to reduce the number of illegal broadcasters from 200 to 50 and led the initial roundtable to discuss the media strategy proposed by the Ministry of Culture early in 2010.

ANEM clarified potential problems with representatives from the Ministry of Trade and the RBA regarding the Advertising Law and participated in working groups for cable broadcasting, television licensing and digitalization. An ANEM representative was appointed as a member of the Ministry of Telecommunications and Information Society's working group for the monitoring of the digitalization process.

In addition to subgrants aimed to increase ANEM's capacity and provide better services to its members, IREX also provided management consultation to ANEM. While it has a successful assembly and amended its by-laws creating a stronger board, runs relevant workshops and provides invaluable media law monitoring, it still lacks strategic direction. ANEM is not sure if it is a media association, an advocacy NGO or a think tank. Its membership is small and selective and does not represent many of the strongest broadcasters in Serbia. IREX worked with San Ng to help ANEM develop a strategic plan outlining critical decision making issues and the managing board's authority for addressing and financial strategy. Communications expert Dr. Kos also provided consultation on ANEM's mission and organizational structure. He recommended that ANEM develop a think-tank organization that works on technology and management skills by offering members educational workshops and by creating media content. He also offered the association ways to identify and solve institutional problems; finalize a membership fee policy; and create incentives to entice organizations to become fee-paying members.

IREX provided extensive support to **Independent Journalists Association of Serbia (NUNS)** to improve member services through legal protection for media professionals and social media consultation. NUNS conducted several activities to better represent journalists in labor disputes and published a handbook for journalists outlining their rights vis-a-vis employers.

NUNS set up a hotline to provide assistance to media practitioners in understanding their industry labor rights. NUNS also conducted two labor rights seminars in fall 2010 to strengthen journalists' bargaining position by offering them knowledge and tools on how to prevent violations of their rights before they sign an employment contract, fight for their rights during an employment period and ensure their rights are respected should their position be terminated. They also held a series of seminars for local journalists to discuss the impact of the Labor Law and Public Information Act on everyday journalism. Following up on these activities NUNS published a guide on the Labor Law and the Public Information Law, contributing to media professionals' awareness of their labor rights, the Public Information Act and their own self-protection.

IREX provided a consultant to work with NUNS on developing a social media strategy, action plan and guidelines for offline and online events. NUNS organized two roundtables in summer 2012 in which panelists discussed how traditional media is using social networks and how to develop the professionalism of bloggers. As a result of these efforts NUNS is better positioned to serve as a relevant player in the profession, increase membership, reach out to younger members and new generations and commercialize its online presence with banners and sponsorship options.

**The Association of Journalists of Serbia (UNS)** has been extraordinarily effective in fighting for journalists' rights. UNS successfully led the fight to overturn the damaging amendments to the Public Information Law and has hosted a number of roundtables on issues including Criminal Code amendments and the future of the web and role of journalists. UNS also organized a roundtable on "State Secrets and the Public's Right to Know," in fall 2011 after journalist Jelena Spasić and editor Milorad Bojović were criminally charged for disclosing confidential data and for assisting the perpetrator of a criminal act by not revealing who was the source of the classified documents. After the event the Prosecutor's Office informed UNS they would close the case.

With IREX support UNS organized the third generation of its Webnovinar School in spring 2010 and in spring 2012 UNS developed an “on the spot classroom” that allowed UNS to organize video journalism courses, trainings and seminars in different towns in Serbia.

**Local Press** developed a joint editorial system for its members to produce higher quality issues with an improved layout and automatically created websites. A consultant helped incorporate the joint editorial system into the association’s business plan, analyzed strengths and weaknesses of its projects and ways to address them, introduced four new membership services and five commercial services, and developed a price list for usage of the joint editorial system. Local Press now has two people trained to manage and maintain the system and conduct its future upgrades. Local Press also has a fully trained newspaper editor who helps all members produce their dailies.

IREX also supported Local Press in providing legal assistance to its members and preventive action with consultations in writing articles through a subgrant from 2010-2012. Local Press represented members in court, responded to lawsuits, conducted interactive in-house training on media laws, analyzed examples of articles which may trigger lawsuits for slander or similar proceedings and conducted content analysis of the 10 local newspapers run by Local Press members.

**Media Center Nis** organized the March 4, 2010 Local and Regional Media in Serbia – Obstacles and Opportunities conference in Nis with IREX support. More than 70 representatives of local and regional media in Serbia attended. The four panels gave an overview of the position of the local media and the size of the local media market, insight into the problems faced by minority media and their sustainability and information on the extent and form of the assistance from state institutions. Participants also discussed how innovative approaches can help local media create a successful brand like Radio 021’s and how Internet portals can provide good quality local news and information for local communities.

**Activity 1.1.3: Supporting Coalition Initiatives.** This activity is addressed in Activity 1.1.1 Creating Partnerships with Media Organizations.

**Activity 1.1.4: Fostering Joint Industry Committee(s):**

IREX organized roundtables, conferences and trainings to further strengthen the media coalition, foster a partnership between media industry and civil society organizations, prepare media support organizations for the EU accession, promote legal media monitoring and identify issues for the media with the new government. IREX coordinated two workshops focusing on the EU accession process and the opportunities for media. Professionals from Slovakia, Croatia and Bulgaria were brought in to share experiences on the transition in their countries changes in the regulatory environment, quality of media content and free and professional and sustainable media.

IREX also worked with partners to organize several conferences and campaigns to advocate media. IREX supported the BIRN “5 pennies for media” campaign which promoted the dialogue between media and citizens on local media, the Bizz Buzz Conference on mobile content, marketing and business with Southern News, the Second Annual Southeast Europe Media Conference with OSCE and the 4M Balkans Conference on New Media with the French Embassy, OSCE and NUNS.

**Activity 1.1.5: Feasibility study for multi-stakeholder media development fund**

IREX commissioned a study, requested by USAID/Serbia, that explores the potential of a permanent multi-donor media support fund that would channel resources to independent media in the face of scaled-back donor funding for this sector in Serbia. IPSOS Strategic Marketing collected and processed data while IREX compiled a report. Interviews were conducted with potential international and Serbian donors. Existing and past donor media development initiatives provided background and examples of best practices.

The potential donors who took part in the research positively assessed the feasibility of the fund. Most respondents agreed that the fund should finance media that have a track record of professionalism and independence. The fund's projects should be devoted to public interest themes and investigative journalism. The study found the fund should encourage high quality and professional media to resist tabloidization and develop their online presence in order to enhance their positive influence. Several respondents think that the fund should be open to all media and that they should compete on a project basis for the fund's resources.

## **IR 1.2 Legal and regulatory framework is improved**

### **Activity 1.2.1: Prioritizing collective action on behalf of stakeholders.**

IREX identified three main topics: privatization, digitalization and media law reform.

**Privatization:** Privatization remained a much-debated topic with many agreeing about its necessity but with persistent opposition. The dismal economic situation and reorganization of government agencies in 2010-2012 delayed the process going forward. Several laws contradicted the privatization process, including the Law on the Capital and the Law on Local Self-Government that allow the City of Belgrade and other municipalities the right to found and own public media outlets. In year 2 the lack of a media strategy and uncertainty over the planned 2012 digitalization turned what had been a stalled process into a complete standstill. During year two, 16 media outlets were put up for public auction by the Privatization Agency. Not all auctioned were sold due to lack of interest by potential investors, and in the end only eight were privatized.

In year two Pravni Forum provided a legal analysis of the status of illegal broadcasters and an analysis of the available tools for commercial media to deal with the unfair competition of illegal broadcasters and stations owned by local municipalities. Pravni Forum delivered a report on the state of affairs in local electronic media in Serbia; analyzed the current legislative framework (national and international) and its implementation; cited institutional problems with implementation of the legislation; and identified problems created by pirate broadcasters and their possible impact. In addition to the necessary litigation, they advocated broader action to raise awareness on the issue of illegal broadcasters.

**Digitalization:** In late January 2009, the Serbian Government adopted the "Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy for Development of Telecommunications in the Republic of Serbia from 2006 to 2010". The working group, led by the Ministry of Telecommunications and including the Republic Telecommunications Agency (RATEL) and the Ministry of Culture, was tasked to produce the Strategy and Action Plan for the transfer from analog to digital broadcasting. The Ministry of Telecommunications completed a draft Strategy on Digitalization scheduling analog shut-off in April 2012 and was adopted by the government in early July.

As part of its assistance to support the digitalization process, IREX agreed to support two projects on behalf of the Ministry; a study tour to the British Office of Communications (OFCOM) and an independent economic study on the cost of digitalization for Serbia. In year two, from September 21 – 25, seven members of the Ministry of Telecommunications, Ministry of Culture and RATEL visited London with IREX and OSCE support to study various aspects of digitalization with UK organizations, including OFCOM, Digital UK, BBC and Department of Media Culture and Sports. By the end of 2011, the group amended definitions in the Broadcasting Law, aligning them with definitions contained in the AVMSD; introduced more precise criteria for issuing broadcasting licenses by the RBA; introduced delineation between linear and non-linear media services; developed detailed regulations on purchasing programming from independent productions; increased independence of broadcast media as to editorial policy and programming, inter alia; specified programming of special public importance and obligations of PSBs related to them; and added new provisions on collection of license fees.

In fall 2009 Deloitte began work on a study outlining how much the analog to digital conversion will cost for commercial stations and three scenarios for viewers' converter boxes. The study showed that the

costs for converters would be more than double compared to initial expectations from the Ministry of Telecommunications and Information Society. Conversion costs for the TV stations will vary between 50-100,000 EUR for local stations to as much as three million Euros for national stations. The second half of the research could not be completed as RATEL did not finalize a frequency plan within the period of implementation of the Serbia Media Assistance Program.

IREX and the OSCE organized a second digitalization study tour to the United Kingdom in summer 2010. Seven representatives from media associations (UNS, NUNS, ANEM) and policy makers (RBA and the OSCE/IREX working group on the Broadcasting Law) participated. All study tour participants discussed the progress of digital conversion with stakeholders and realized the importance of coordination among organizations that hold various responsibilities and competencies in the digitalization process.

In March 2011 the Ministry of Telecommunications and Information Society accepted the Digitalization Media Strategy Proposal created by IREX consultants Miroslava Nadadin and Jasna Milosevic. This document was prepared to identify the best way of informing citizens about the digitalization process in Serbia, the concept, benefits and features of digital television, reasons for switching to digital broadcasting and the ways it will affect their lives. The Digitalization Media Strategy Proposal was based upon the document produced by Public Relations Agency (PRA) in November 2010.

The digitalization process stalled in April 2011 when the Ministries of Telecommunications and Information, Society and Culture merged. In April 2012 the government adopted amendments to the digital switchover strategy, shifting from a single switchover date, originally scheduled for April 4, 2012, to a phased approach so that the final analogue TV switch-off date is set for June 17, 2015. The first digital network was launched in April 2012 with a digital test signal accessible to 50% of the territory of Serbia. The Ministry received a 12 million Euro EU grant (IPA funds) for consulting services, procurement and installation of transmission equipment. The Ministry for Foreign and Internal Trade and Telecommunications is late in adopting the design of the distribution network which is a precondition for obtaining the construction and operating permit for the digital network and licenses for the use of radio frequencies.

In October 2012, the government adopted an important document in the process of digitalization: the Radio Frequency Allocation Plan. This document envisages that the digital dividend created by the switch off of analogue transmission will be used for mobile broadband. In the proposed budget for 2013, the Government also proposed granting a state warranty for the loan to the Broadcasting Equipment and Communications company, aimed at purchasing necessary equipment, which can be interpreted as the willingness of the government to expedite the process of digitalization.

ANEM organized a round table in November 2012 to gather all the relevant stakeholders to discuss the implementation of the digitalization process and build cooperation with competent authorities. The event resulted in a constructive discussion where the participants voiced their views and provided useful information for other participants. This meeting also provided an opportunity for broadcasters to obtain information from competent authorities on what was done so far, what was yet to come and what the roles, tasks and responsibilities of all participants in the process are.

**Media law reform:** IREX worked on developing hubs of young media law experts. Through IREX assistance to **NUNS** law students had internships with Snezana Djokic and worked with NUNS on developing database of attacks on journalists. NUNS trained the students and with IREX/NUNS assistance these students won the Oxford Price Moot Court International Media Law Competition in April 2011. In cooperation with OSCE, IREX engaged Judge Dragoljub Popovic, of the European Court for Human Rights in Strasbourg to deliver workshop for legal interns and students of law on media law and European standards in freedom of expression.

NUNS, supported by IREX and OSCE, also prepared a short glossary of media terms for judiciary representatives aimed to become a standard textbook used by future judges and trainees of the Judicial Academy. The Glossary contains short explanations of the journalism profession and the specific processes of newsgathering and production. Through distribution to judges at trainings on media law, judges will better understand the responsibilities within editorial rooms and specifics of the media profession.

IREX also worked with **OSCE** to arrange a series of legal seminars for judges, prosecutors and journalists to address the disconnect between the judiciary and the media as a result of amendments to the Public Information Law that tightened control over what journalists could and could not report on court cases. The second workshop focused on local media and their understanding of media laws and local courts and judiciary practices in media cases.

**ANEM** legal advisors created an e-guide for reporting on court proceedings for journalists of ANEM stations, produced under ANEM's advocacy subgrant. This guide informs journalists of their rights in this field and identifies potential problems in their profession. It includes instructions based on existing valid legislation that directly regulates this area, but also on legislation and regulations that indirectly affect reporting on court proceedings.

In February 2012 **U Pravu Si (UPS)** was awarded a grant for the development of a comprehensive online guide through the legal system for media professionals. The guide provides media professionals with legal information in an easy-to-understand format, so that the media can conduct their activities without confronting lawsuits and fines. This project was implemented in cooperation between UPS and the NUNS.

From October 2011 to September 2012 IREX organized the following trainings to promote legal media monitoring, discuss what laws should be passed by the new government to encourage a better media environment for the media and journalists and shed light on court proceedings involving journalists.

- IREX cooperated with OSCE to bring best practices and standards established by European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg to Serbian journalists and judges. As ANEM monitoring demonstrated, practice and interpretation of law in Serbia courts was in many cases different from the European standards. OSCE and IREX organized consultations for judges and journalists on Article 10 of the European Convention of Human Rights.
- ANEM organized a roundtable to promote the results of Legal Monitoring and present the fifth Legal Monitoring Publication at Media Center Belgrade on November 28, 2011. Participants discussed the current state of affairs in the media and intentions of Serbian state institutions in a debate that followed the presentation. Their focus was on possible implementation of the Media Strategy and progress of the digital switchover process, which was postponed due to the delays and phased implementation announced by the Ministry of Culture.
- The working group responsible for preparing a draft of the new Law on Electronic Media presented the final draft at a press conference on June 7, 2012. The drafting of this law was supported by IREX and OSCE.
- ANEM hosted a roundtable on "Reporting on court proceedings" to bring together journalists, representatives of the media along with prosecutors and judges, and other stakeholders. They discussed the existing regulations, practice of the courts and problems that the judiciary and the media experienced in reporting on court proceedings. Presentations were followed by a live discussion with prosecutors, judges, journalists, media representatives, experts and other stakeholders.

- IREX and ANEM, together with the Media Coalition, facilitated a press conference on June 26, 2012 entitled “What the new government can do to improve the position of media and journalists in Serbia.” Organized through an IREX advocacy subgrant, panelists discussed the current media situation, failure to implement the adopted Media Strategy and priorities for the new government. Speakers at the event advised the future government to make dedicated efforts to improve the position of media and journalists in Serbia.

### **IR 1.3 Media sector monitoring information is widely available and updated regularly**

#### **Activity 1.3.1: Creating a Media Environment Monitoring Service:**

IREX initially planned to contract the Media Center Belgrade for this project. Due to concerns about the center’s capacity to do this work, IREX awarded ANEM’s legal department with a subgrant to implement the legal monitoring project. ANEM provided professional monitoring of Serbian media legislation, continuous advocacy for regulatory framework reform, dissemination of monitoring results through various promotion materials.

Media Center Belgrade produced biweekly Media News Bulletins from January 2011 to November 2012. Each issue provided a short account of news on the media environment, professionalism of the media, economy, innovations and institutions and activities. Each report informed the media, donors, stakeholders and other relevant institutions on changes and important current events in the media.

IREX supported UNS with a subgrant for publishing 4 editions of the Link magazine. UNS, with editorial support from Media Coalition members, published a special double edition of the Link magazine dedicated to the media strategy on June 28, 2012 and a feature on promises kept and broken 90 days after the formation of the new government.

Following the success of the media strategy edition of Link, UNS approached IREX for assistance with a proposal to re-design the magazine and transform it into a media industry publication that would inform and educate the professional community in Serbia about regional and global trends and present and recommend professional literature and training. With IREX support UNS has begun the process to make Link sustainable by expanding its audience and purchasing 10% of the ownership share from Media Art to become the majority owner in the next three years.

### **IR 2: Increased managerial and financial capacity of independent media**

#### **2.1 Improved management and financial capacity of 8-10 local and regional media outlets covering markets throughout Serbia**

##### **Activity 2.1.1: Selecting local media partners and executing MOUs**

Over the first year of the Serbia Media Assistance Program, IREX chose local media outlets as partners by examining ratings research results, discussing different outlets with associations such as ANEM and service organizations like A-Media and investigating aid other donors and implementers gave media outlets. In year one IREX chose Radio Luna, TV 017, TV Jedinstvo, RTV Zajecar, Radio 021, and City Radio.

In year two IREX continued partnerships with the following stations: Radio 021; City Radio; Radio Luna; Timocka RTV; TV 5; and Radio Boom 93. IREX also began secondary media partnerships with OK Radio, Radio TV Cacak, Radio Cto Plus and Radio 9. While IREX TV partners ranked well among their local competitors in year three, they still had overall low audiences because most viewers prefer national TV. Local radio fares better, sitting at around a 40% share of the radio audience. After year two IREX and USAID decided to drop local TV.

IREX launched efforts to improve the media outlets’ management capacity by holding a session on strategic planning and digitalization at its 2010 Summer School. Partners were introduced to European

Consulting Group's (ECG) financial evaluation results based on the 2007-2009 official financial statements from each station. Consultants helped provide business plans and SWOT analyses and briefed them on the upcoming digital conversion and use of new media. IREX discussed activities from their development plans, priorities at each station, strategic subgrants and future cooperation with each partner. From 2010-2012 ECG conducted financial evaluations reports of partner stations including Radio Luna Uzice, Radio 021 Novi Sad, Radio OK, City Radio, Radio Boom 93, RTV Cacak, RTV5 Nis and RTV Timocka. IREX used this information to update station development plans and shape activities to strengthen partner stations.

ECG concluded the final financial analysis of eight IREX primary partners in June 2012. Partners included Radio 021, Radio City, Radio Luna, Radio Boom 93, RTV Cacak, OK Radio, Juzne Vesti/Southern News, Sumadija Press. The major findings on 2011 financial performances are:

- All outlets jointly generated revenue of around US \$ 1.5 million, which is a 10% increase from their joint 2010 revenue.
- Five out of eight firms increased their revenue since 2010 (City Radio, Radio Luna, Radio Boom 93, RTV Cacak, and Juzne Vesti/Southern News).
- Three firms had slightly smaller revenues in 2011 (Radio 021, OK Radio, and Sumadija Press).
- All partners except RTV Cacak succeeded throughout the period in keeping positive results and recorded profits despite the general decrease of business operations.
- RTV Cacak has struggled since their 2009 privatization. However, the 2011 loss was significantly decreased compared to their 2010 loss.
- Juzne Vesti also recorded losses from 2008 – 2011, but these losses can be attributed to their start-up activities.

### Activity 2.1.2: Strategy Subgrants

IREX originally intended to give each partner a strategic development subgrant in year three. Because of the economic crisis some stations received subgrants in year 1 and 2 to help them survive the loss of revenue and to develop better marketing strategies.

**City Radio** strengthened its marketing department with the support from this subgrant, bringing in \$50,000 in revenue and added 44 new clients. Under another subgrant City Radio purchased a new studio transmitter link to bring it into compliance with RATEL regulations.

The subgrant to **Radio 021** allowed the station to continue programming while the station overcame business difficulties resulting from the global economic crisis. Program production and broadcast requires significant financial investment in human resources and technical capacities, and the subgrant IREX provided assisted the station in supporting these costs and ensured that Radio 021 continued this important service while recovering financially. Radio 021 continued to produce news broadcasts, the afternoon daily "Novi Sad at 3," the informational morning show "Zornjak," and "Centrifuge." Radio 021 journalists also continued regularly updating and moderating the 021 website which provided information to the 5,000 daily visitors.

In December 2009, **Radio Luna** received a subgrant to launch a five-month outreach campaign for its marketing department aimed at both advertisers and listeners. Activities for advertisers included phone and face-to-face meetings with existing and potential advertisers and marketing agencies. Promotional materials were printed and distributed to citizens in major towns and communities in the region that Radio Luna has a license to cover. The campaign attracted six new advertisers to Radio Luna and brought sales of \$23,500 to the station.

**Beta News Agency** developed new software to reduce production costs and enable the agency to offer new services. After completion of the software development, Beta continued to publish BetaWeek and BetaNews bulletins and began publishing a new economic bulletin, the BetaBusinessNews.

**Radio TV Zajecar** boosted the operations of its marketing department and intensified collaboration with advertising agencies, resulting in new business with five new advertising agencies and nine big national enterprises. Altogether RTZ signed contracts with 18 new clients in the total amount of around \$74,000.

**RTV 5** boosted its marketing department's activities by launching a two-month extensive marketing campaign to help the station develop its marketing activities and reduce the effects of the financial crisis. While the station renewed old contracts and negotiated new ones with advertisers at a conference organized in February, the largest effect occurred from running a billboard campaign. As a result of all these activities, RTV5 acquired 10 new TV clients, 13 new radio clients, established stronger campaigns with some existing clients and began working with six additional advertisers.

IREX also provided business consultation to two web portals, Southern News and Sumadija Press.

**Southern News** and a consultant completed the business plan for the news portal in December 2011. Key elements of the business plan to raise Southern News' advertising revenue involve the establishment of an organizational structure for the marketing department as well as an expansion of staff with a marketing director, sales employees and additional journalists.

IREX engaged a consultant to assist **Sumadija Press** in setting up their marketing department. She recommended extending marketing services, increasing participation in social networks, conducting direct marketing and sales activities, expanding the sales agents' network and improving their pricing policy.

Recognizing changes in media consumption and trends in the media industry, IREX provided 9 digital strategy subgrants in years 3-4 to Southern News, City Radio, OK Radio, Sumadija Press, TV Cacak, Radio Boom 93, Radio Luna, Radio 021 and Radio Plus. The subgrants were aimed at developing social network strategies, launching mobile phone applications for Android and iPhone and creating mobile versions of web sites and other digital activities. As a result, the stations enhanced their brand awareness, increased the number of visitors to their website and social networks and strengthened their sales departments. Partner stations learned how to implement long-term strategies for survival in the digital age, especially how to leverage the most use of the web portals IREX provided to each station.

**Sumadija Press** developed a new backend for their web site to better integrate it with social media, developed a mobile version of the site, mapped the potential new market for advertising on the portal, and upgraded their advertising strategies to meet the needs of new clients. A business directory was created to improve marketing and is now constantly updated. It should provide an additional income stream for the station in the future.

**OK Radio** launched a new website that features live streaming, podcasts, blogs, citizen journalism, and other interactive content. There is also a version for mobile phones. Following an intensive promotional campaign during the subgrant period the number of visitors of OK Radio website increased ten times. OK Radio improved their news production through this activity and South Serbian citizens now have a relevant news portal that provides them with fast and reliable information.

**Radio Boom93** strengthened their programming and market position through the development and improvement of digital platforms and radio and web integration. Boom 93 developed a citizen journalism section, where listeners and visitors could share videos and photos of the latest local events. Radio Boom 93 also built up their sales and web teams by hiring two sales agents, a web journalist and a web administrator. New team members were trained to write for the web, promote the station through social media platforms and sell and market over radio and web. As a result, the number of Boom 93 web visitors, social network followers and online radio listeners significantly increased.

**Radio Luna** strengthened their market position through the renovation of their digital platforms and the integration of radio to online platforms. Luna produced more multimedia content to upload to the portal and added mobile applications for Android and iOS. They also created separate Facebook pages to increase the number of visitors to their site and strengthen ties with their audience for the two most popular programs - "Pulse of the City" and "Luna Park." By the end of the subgrant term they attracted 20,000 visits to their website.

**City Radio** produced high quality website content and strengthened their overall new media presence under the subgrant term. The station invested in promoting their Facebook page which resulted in an increase of over 7,500 fans. In order to achieve all their planned goals City Radio employed 5 additional people: 2 web journalists, a web administrator and 2 salespeople who brought in new contracts for the station and successfully conducted different promotional campaigns. City Radio also developed an Android application that features a live audio stream, program schedules, breaking news, and Facebook and Twitter pages. IREX also engaged an information technology consultant to repair the computer network and secure their broadcast.

City Radio proved to be the most successful IREX radio partner in preparing and delivering outdoor promotional events. Over the years it has grown into their trademark. As a result of the project, City Radio strengthened their sales team, enhanced cooperation with existing clients, increased advertising and increased the number of web site visitors as well as Facebook fans.

**RTV Cacak** integrated their television and radio news desks and the network of correspondents through an IREX digital strategy subgrant after launching their website earlier in 2012, also supported by IREX. RTV Cacak produced news and shows and facilitated live streaming of the TV and radio programs onto their website. The creation and promotion of new content delivery platforms increased their capacity to provide news to their audience through web platforms and improved the quality of content and speed of production.

Unfortunately, due to growing debt, RTV Cacak closed due to bankruptcy. The Commercial Court stated in its decision that it was brought due to the inability of the station to cover its outstanding debt in the near future. The station has not broadcast any programs since July 25, 2012.

**Radio Plus** redesigned its web site to better integrate it with social networks, creating a new visual identity for the station and better positioning the station to provide information to the local audience through the new website. Radio Plus now enjoys an interactive relationship with listeners and visitors via its website by allowing communication between listeners and the station.

IREX supported **Southern News/Juzne Vesti** through several subgrants:

Video News Service: IREX provided a subgrant for the production and hosting of a video news service and training in multimedia reporting. Southern News in cooperation with Media Center Nis organized 12 one-day workshops for 10 selected participants that covered the topics of agency reporting, photojournalism, use of video camera and camera editing. During the course of the project over 180 video packages were produced. A system was developed for sharing and selling Southern News' video materials that are automatically uploaded to their YouTube channel.

Sales and Advertising Department: IREX supported the creation of Southern News' sales and advertising department to help them develop their market position and become fully independent and sustainable. In spring 2012 Southern News selected a Sales Manager who was trained in sales management and strategic planning. The new employee drew in 15 new clients and established long-term cooperation with several of them. Southern News was able to attract a relatively high amount of advertising revenue during this period.

Classifieds Section: Southern News created a classifieds section to their website to increase their overall sustainability and web portal potential. They developed a database with over 2,000 classifieds. Visitors

can submit and search ads for free, but with limited promotion and visual capabilities. The classifieds section will help ensure the long-term financial sustainability of Southern News and attract more visitors to the website.

In year four IREX approved **technical digital upgrade subgrants** to RAB Serbia, Sumadija Press and FoNET to upgrade their technical capacities and remain competitive in their markets.

**FoNet** completed improvements to the FoNet Web TV database and obtained additional equipment for production of a Web TV program, improving the quality of media content offered through Web TV and user experience for website visitors.

**RAB** developed a database of radio stations and conducted radio ratings research on more than 300 stations. The research will allow potential clients and marketing agencies to find radio stations with listeners in their target groups.

**Sumadija Press** purchased new hardware and software for news, video, photography and audio production to improve their technical capacities and offer higher quality new programming.

## 2.2 Increased sustainability of media serving local and regional audiences

### Activity 2.2.1: Conduct research and ratings:

An integral part of IREX's work in Serbia is commissioning research. This research has assisted IREX identify strengths and weaknesses, what kind of training and consulting to provide and how to do the training. IREX contracted Ipsos Strategic Marketing to conduct audience research focusing on partners' viewership shares and overall trends in media use. Radio research was conducted twice a year. IREX added a youth and new media survey to get a better understanding of the rapid changes in new media.

**TV and Radio research:** The TV and radio research evaluated the audience of selected media and their audiences' habits and attitudes, provided national, regional and local market television audience ratings (via LPMs and diaries), and compiled information about the content of the broadcast media and its impact, the advertising market and competition.

The overall message from the baseline research was the growing trend towards an increase in share for local radio stations and a *decrease* in share for local television stations. Research showed viewers turning to national television channels or turning off the television entirely to tune into local radio. The added expenses to convert to digital, a process which many conjecture may also be government-funded for non-privatized stations, combined with digitalization costs and competition with stations supported by government were all factors in the potential collapse of local TV stations.

In year two, results showed that local radio held its own against national radio, increasing to a 65% share of the Serbian radio audience but falling slightly in the spring to 61%, back to the same percentage it held in the 2009 spring survey.

Year four results found that most of the primary partners improved reach of their program. This can be attributed to changes in their format, music policy and the quality of content they provided to their listeners around the elections. IREX partners showed an increase in cumulative reach and ATS (Average Time Spent Listening) and Share (percentage of all listening to radio who are listening to your radio station).

**Youth and New Media Survey:** Because of rapid changes in the media situation in Serbia and increased Internet use IREX initiated three youth and new media surveys from 2010-2012 to explore the latest developments in new media and help media understand how Serbian youth absorb global trends. Research results provided information on consuming media, habits of users, ways they combine new and traditional media, differences in lifestyles, images of different new media, and how young people use the Internet, mobile phone and MP3 players with Wi-Fi capacities.

The first results indicated that Internet is the second most important source of daily information for Serbian citizens and that, overall, Internet use is expanding much more rapidly than expected. From 2010-2012 Internet use on a daily basis among the total population in Serbia grew from 36% to 59%, with 50% using it at least once a week. In 2012 the survey found that 84% of all Digital Natives (ages 12-29) use the Internet every day, increased from 68% in 2010 and 80% in 2011. Online radio listening grew from 15% of all radio listening to 20% in 2011 alone. Each survey reinforced that TV is losing its influence, especially among youth, though it remains the most important media for gathering information.

**Print and online media data:** In spring 2012 **ABC Serbia** successfully implemented an audit to 17 local print media from Vojvodina and Central Serbia to collect data on local print media circulation, promote local media market development and attract advertisers to place advertisements in local newspapers. ABC Serbia promoted this data by organizing two trainings for local print media marketing managers and one promotional event for advertising agencies. After the promotional event local media participants and representatives of ad agencies and ABC Serbia signed a consolidation agreement aimed to increase market share in campaigns directed at local media.

After several successful workshops and interest in web measurement ABC Serbia received a subgrant in November 2009 for software system improvements to provide reliable and affordable data about website visitors to advertisers and marketing agencies. The software supported online media development by giving advertising decision-makers accurate web traffic figures based on which their trust in on-line media would be built, encouraging greater investment online and direct their campaigns towards websites which trustworthy traffic patterns.

#### **Activity 2.2.2: Foster Regional Media Cooperation:**

IREX arranged several activities linking possible networks of interest between local and regional media houses and worked to help those media houses cooperate in developing different forms of cooperation, including sales networks, co-productions, new media initiatives and program exchanges.

IREX contracted **Media Art Service International** to develop a variety of show formats to improve partner stations' programming and achieve higher ratings through content distribution, education and training of TV staff in format production and content distribution. Media Art prepared proposals for stand-alone programs and serials, such as feature news, children's, game, and reality shows and distributed the formats to 51 stations for comment. Through year two, Media Art created programming packages with graphics, music, and style definition for stations to implement the formats and lead a series of workshops on how to use the formats. After the workshops, Media Art and the format authors were available to partners for format and content start-up and development. Five television stations—RTV Cacak, Zajecar/Timocka, 5, Jedinstvo, and 17--began implementing the formats. Thanks to negotiations by IREX trainer Sanjin Perisic, who provided news production training, the chief picture editor at FOX TV commissioned and broadcast two packages produced by NTV 017 and TV Jedinstvo in spring 2010.

In spring 2012 Media Art published a TV exports guide on DVD. It contains information on licensing agreements, selling models, promotion techniques, pitching instructions, negotiation process, and other valuable content exporting tips. The guide content is based on twenty interviews with world leading production/content distributors, commission editors, and sellers. More than 300 DVD copies were sent to independent producers and production companies, TV stations with significant percent of "in-house" production, media faculties and training centers, and other Serbian institutions involved in TV content export. The guide will help content producers approach foreign markets in an easier and more professional way, increase their exports and sustainability. It is a legacy of the 15 years of IREX and USAID efforts to build a generation of producers and production houses.

One of the biggest successes of the Serbia Media Assistance Program was the formation of the **Radio Advertising Bureau (RAB) Serbia**. IREX initially provided a consultant from RAB Slovenia to participate at a launch event for interested media and advertising professionals, published an informational brochure and helped RAB Serbia register a website. On December 15, 2010 seventeen radio station owners signed a letter of intent and the RAB Serbia was formed. In January 2011, RAB Serbia invited more than

300 licensed Serbian radio stations to become organization members; within three days, RAB Serbia received more than 50 telephone calls and email expressions of interest.

In spring 2011 RAB Serbia organized a board meeting for 32 member stations and presented a plan for forthcoming activities, launched a promotional campaign, participated in the Radio Days Europe Conference to expand its international contacts and organized a Radio Days for its members, incorporating formatting radio and profiling listeners, breakfast shows, selling radio ads, writing ads and teasers, and producing competitive radio promotions.

RAB Serbia regularly organizes Radio Days trainings for its members on a biannual basis and plans Assembly meetings to discuss changes related to the payment of membership fees, RAB's branding strategy and quality standards, radio research results, radio formatting, radio awards, seminars for the radio hosts, and a joint program network/radio shows.

IREX also worked with the **Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB)** of Serbia, an association that supports the increase and development of digital and interactive marketing in Serbia by organizing appropriate training, setting standards and measuring web sales, enabling a more transparent market, promoting advantages of interactive advertising and increasing its sales. IREX supported the launch of the IAB Serbia establishment at the Forum IAB Serbia in spring 2011. 300 participants discussed social media marketing, search-engine marketing, online publishing, mobile advertising, research of the digital marketing, and global online trends.

The Serbian Media Assistance Program helped Serbian programmers attend regional trade shows and program fairs and festivals to help them sharpen their products and seek co-production funding to develop successful regional program vehicles.

- IREX partnered with Slovak media organization 3 Media to send seven ethnic Slovak Serbian journalists to the LOToS Local TV Festival in Dolny Kubin, Slovakia. The journalists presented their Slovak language television productions at the fair to gauge the potential market in Slovakia for Serbian productions and create a source of funding to support minority language productions. The participants made contacts with people from seven different media organizations for production cooperation and sales. In addition, the organizers of the LOToS festival invited them to attend regular LOToS practical workshops in TV production and present additional screenings at next year's festival.
- IREX worked with Media Art Service International to send five local broadcasters to the Weekend Media Festival in Rovinj, Croatia. Media Art distributed promotional leaflets and DVDs designed to stimulate co-operation, co-production, correspondent services, location management, program exchanges, etc. with other participants at the festival.
- IREX, jointly with Canal France International and the Embassy of France in Serbia, supported an initiative to gather 30 independent productions and TV entities to match their activities with the interests of French producers at a seminar on European Co-production and International Distribution for Serbian Producers and Broadcasters. Participants discussed pitching techniques and practiced reaching out to sponsors, possible co-producers and EU markets. On the second day, they were given an opportunity to pitch their projects to the French organizations. Four independent producers from Serbia were approached by a French counterpart to continue their projects.
- IREX supported the setup of a Serbian Pavilion at the **2010 DISCOP program fair**. Ten production groups exhibited and met with interested buyers. Five TV stations worked together to prepare a trailer for a documentary about mythological creatures still alive in Serbia and famous across Europe. The trailer grabbed the attention of three DISCOP attendees, Viasat History (Scandinavian), F-Production (France) and ARD (Germany). Viasat History inquired about six episodes that would incorporate the entire Balkans region. Overall, the project brought new light to Serbian producers who realized the opportunities and challenges of international sales.

Partners stations continued to sell their productions based on the interest developed at Discop fair well into year three.

- IREX led a delegation of Serbian radio broadcasters to the **European Radio Days** conference which offered a frank and creative forum for discussion on the future of radio in the digital age, touching on research, use of social media, music downloads, promotional tie-ins, new advertising models, and media trends around the world. Attending from Serbia were representatives of: OK Radio, Radio 9, Radio 100+, Radio Sport Plus, Radio Luna, Radio 021, City Radio, A-Media, RTV Cacak, Radio Boom93, RTV, ANEM, and Radio B92. IREX developed a relationship with the Radio Advertising Bureau in Slovenia at this conference that led to the plan of developing radio as stronger advertising medium in Serbia through RAB Serbia.

### **Activity 2.2.3: Create new technology initiatives:**

Over the program years the Serbia Media Assistance Program responded to the changing needs in the Serbia media scene, one of which is to encourage traditional media to incorporate new media and technologies in their organizations to meet the growing demand for online access to information. In addition to the digital strategy subgrants and Special Initiatives projects IREX supported the development of new media initiatives through summer school sessions, consultation, trainings and subgrants.

**Summer school:** Two weeks of IREX's summer school in 2009 were devoted to sessions on new media, the objective of which was to improve participants' knowledge of new media concepts and enable them to develop ideas for new programs, content, and generation of revenue. In week one presenters covered new media and advocacy, policy making, web TV, citizen reporting, social media, social networking, and mobile media. IREX engaged several experts from Telenor, OMD, and Belgrade University, as well as from partners FONET News Agency, Ipsos, Radio 021, and Media Center Nis to present the latest developments in the new media sphere and analyze current projects. IREX and BIRN teamed up in week two to cover new media, online journalism basics, advantages of the web, multiplatform authoring, web journalism styles, Internet ethics, Web and marketing, linking and sharing of materials, social networks, and ethical pitfalls. Fifteen participants from 11 private stations, NUNS, and Media Center Belgrade successfully completed this training.

**Consultation:** With the support of the BBC and A-Media, IREX set up a series of in-house consultancies and a three-day workshop on online media with Stephen Desmond, an experienced leader with vast experience of convergence and product development. Desmond conducted seven days of consulting from June 1 to 7 in Belgrade. The first four days were dedicated to separate in-house consultancies for B92, Blic, Mondo and Politika, resulting in specific recommendations:

- B92: Focus on integrating commercial and project management skills into their operation and bridge the gap between B92's web and commercial/marketing functions.
- Blic: Educate the company on how different platforms enhance overall consumer usage and experience and invest in multi-platform training sessions to enable collaborative discussion between print and web teams.
- Mondo: Provide further education around monetization and commercialization of content propositions, develop more robust content and more clearly define hierarchy in the content team.
- Politika: Provide training and understanding for top-level management in the print division to understand the opportunities that lie online.

**Trainings:** With IREX support, ABC Serbia organized a number of lectures and workshops on new media and online advertising from 2008-2012. Topics included web measurement methodology, online advertising and Internet and news evolution, profitable websites and new media as a way of overcoming the economic crisis.

A multiplatform authoring workshop for local and regional private stations was organized in summer 2009. The workshop agenda included an overview of web and mobile industry trends and social media networks and covered topics such as repurposing, home page makeovers, writing for the web, search

engine optimization (SEO) and monetization. Participants sketched out ideas for a new homepage design for their respective stations using case studies and devised specific project plans. Desmond recommended follow-up training and consulting sessions for individual stations tailored to their needs, including assessment of existing web sites, content analysis, output, workflow and revenue potentials, and new media initiatives.

In June 2012 IREX organized a training on website promotion and monetization for its partners. Topics of the sessions included latest online trends, social media positioning, community management, online media market in Serbia, use of analytics, and content monetization. Nine participants from Radio Luna, Boom 93, OK Radio, Sumadija Press, UNS, NUNS and Media Center Belgrade attended the training.

**Special projects:** In cooperation with Master AV Studio, IREX launched a three-hour syndicated radio show in year 4 based on planning and meetings with stations done in year 3. The show was carried by all IREX partner radio stations and helped fill the air while staff could begin work on other creative ventures. The show encourages interaction from listeners through social media.

Through spring and summer 2012 ABC Serbia organized an online advertising tour to promote online advertising at the regional and local level and help foster the growth of the local digital advertising media market in Subotica, Kragujevac, Nis and Belgrade. The final conference in Belgrade in June 2012 gathered 150 participants who exchanged experiences on successful digital market models and Internet entrepreneurship. Beneficiaries of the tour learned that interesting, useful and creative content is the most important aspect of every successful website and that owning a website is only one component of web presence. Entrepreneurs need to be active on social networks, personalize their advertising offer to fit their clients' needs and adapt to new trends.

**Activity 2.2.4: Leadership training for woman managers and aspiring managers.** IREX worked with partner associations to develop training and advocacy for women managers incorporating a gender focus across a range of topics. IREX dedicated intensive sessions to women media managers at each year of summer school.

In 2009 IREX held a session for women managers in order to improve participants' knowledge of management, roles and competencies, assist them to improve staff and their own performance, strategic planning, and how to develop team spirit. To train the participants, IREX selected Bharati Acharya, American Leadership consultant; Ljiljana Neskovic, HR manager at B92; Ljiljana Smajlovic, president of UNS; and Sanja Popovic-Pantic, Association of Business Women. They covered prioritization, time management, effectiveness and qualities associated with leadership, inspiring and motivating employees with job performance issues, and cultivating professional resiliency. Fifteen participants brought up issues related to media and management in a new way.

In 2010, IREX organized a workshop entitled "How to promote your success" which gathered 17 participants from IREX partner stations, other media and associations. The panel discussion was led by a moderator, Tatjana Petrovic, editor at *Politika* Online. The workshops initiated an interesting debate among participants who shared personal experiences and requested follow-ups with more examples, crisis decision-making, building self-confidence and motivation and encouragement for taking on more leadership-type roles at work. They also requested the involvement of a psychologist/therapist who could provide analysis and recommendations to the group.

In 2011 IREX gathered eleven women managers and aspiring managers from media outlets for the "Leadership and Managing New Projects" workshop. Five lecturers delivered presentations with exercises on planning and managing projects; leading effective teams; performance and results-oriented management, media management, and new media as a business, promotional and empowerment tool.

The Summer School session in 2012 gathered 12 female participants from IREX partner stations and organizations. IREX hosted well-known editors, journalists, activists and renowned women from women organizations, government and educational institutions as motivators and leaders of this group. The key

lecturer was Dr. Jasna Milosevic, Professor of Faculty of Media and Communications, Singidunum University, and Research Director at Ipsos Strategic Marketing. Participants discussed good and bad practices for different leadership styles, ideas for improvement of women representation in media, quality of programs and freedom of media. Conclusions drawn were that the main task of media is to condemn unequal publicity given to one gender, to popularize gender rights and to fight against stereotyping and negative perception of women leaders.

With IREX support the Faculty of Media and Communications at Singidunum University diversified its spring curriculum for the 2012-2013 school year by adding an undergraduate course module specifically aimed at developing management skills for women. This course was tested in the fall of 2012 among senior year students as a part of the Social Psychology course already being taught. These lectures addressed the experiences of men and women leaders in getting access to and remaining in powerful leadership positions in the media. IREX translated and published 500 copies of the book.

IREX organized an internship program for aspiring women managers in cooperation with TV Akademija/PG Mreza in October 2012. Three female students from the Faculty of Political Sciences and the Faculty of Media and Communications at Singidunum University each spent one week at Studio B, PG Mreza Production Group and B92 online. The internship program allowed students to gain basic skills by working in a TV station, an online newsroom and a TV production company. It managed to offset one of the main shortcomings of the higher educational system regarding journalism in Serbia: the lack of practical experience with basic media techniques at the beginning of a journalist's career.

#### **Activity 2.2.5: IREX consulting service**

**Radio Sales and Marketing:** Radio sales consultant **Bud Stiker** visited partners in Serbia several times over the four years to deliver presentations to partners on advertising in a difficult economy, why radio is a good use of clients' money, and thoughts on the state of radio in Serbia today. In year one he trained B92, Radio Patak, Radio Naxi, Radio Boom 93, Radio Luna and Radio Zajecar on selling advertisements in a difficult economy. Stiker also consulted Radio 021, advising the team to explore non-traditional revenue, Internet sales, and person visits to clients. At City Radio Stiker advised the management to hire more salespeople, restructure a commission plan more accountable to their mission and provide more training to the sales department. He also worked with Lenja Papp, CEO of RAB Slovenia on RAB Serbia startup in year 2. In year 3 he trained participants at the Serbian Radio Days and helped RAB Serbia in formatting radio and selling ads. He virtually consulted partner stations on organizational strategies and sales.

**Dusan Masic**, a professional in broadcast management at the BBC WS London, visited partner stations in year three. He provided management, programming and business recommendations Radio 9, Naxi Radio Radio Boom 93 and B92. With Masic's assistance and training Radio 9 won four new accounts from known retailers and signed year-long advertising contracts with them. The station implemented these changes prior to IPSOS's fall research and the results of Masic's visit were clear - their audience share grew from 3.4% in November 2009 to 8.5% in November 2010.

**EU Grants Funding:** The European Integration Media Fund for Serbia published a call for proposals supporting projects addressing issues of European integration in year two of the program. Many IREX partners were unfamiliar with EU granting procedures and paperwork. In order to ensure that IREX partners maximized their options, IREX engaged a combination of independent consultants and its partner **ECG** to work with them on the development of their grant applications. The consultants offered stations assistance in developing proposals and budgets, filling out EU grant paperwork, and providing consultation on the administration of EU grants. Six partners received EU-funded grants (Timocka RTV, Radio 021, RTV5, Radio OK, Radio Boom 93 and Media Center Belgrade).

IREX and ECG organized five two-day workshops for partner stations and organizations aimed at enabling partners to draft successful applications for the forthcoming EU and other project openings. The first workshop focused on EU Funding Programs, recent research on Serbian citizens' perceptions on EU

integration, writing and evaluating applications, concept note, log frame formulation and several winning case studies. The second workshop was developed to help the same group prepare successful applications. Participants analyzed log frames and budgets of several applications and completed exercises and homework assignments. IREX partner stations (Radio OK, Radio City, Radio Naxi) and organizations (BIRN, FONET, ANEM, A-Media, Sumadija Press, UNS, Media Center, RTV Vojvodina) participated in the workshops.

**Radio Music and Formatting: Christopher Price** is a renowned professional in the field of music strategy, programming, and talent management with years of experience as music editor for BBC Radio 1 and MTV. From year 2-4 Price visited radio stations Radio 021, City Radio, Radio Boom 93, Radio Luna and Naxi Radio to provide station management external insight on the development of a music strategy, music programming best practices and recommendations for broader station improvements such as schedule, imaging, talent management and development. For all stations Price broke down recommendations by music, talent and imaging and station sound. In year four Price trained radio professionals in insight-gathering and creativity techniques to help them devise programming, commercials, events and other output which is more innovative and compelling than that of their competitors.

In year three IREX procured the music scheduling software Powergold for the partner radio stations. The software helped elevate the effectiveness and sophistication of radio stations' music strategy to increase the audience for news output and provide the stations with a competitive advantage at their local markets. Furthermore, it reinforced stations' music strategy; increased brand recognition; and ensured retention of listeners around commercial and news blocks within the hour. After the installation of the Powergold software Price visited the stations to reinforce the use of the software and provide practical knowledge on how to build station's reach and share through music. He provided ongoing strategic support with recommendations for possible updates to the music library, clocks, and rules. Since the introduction of PowerGold 4 of the 5 stations have increased their share and their Average Time Spent Listening.

**Activity 2.2.6 Assessment of Radio Vojvodina.** OSCE asked for IREX's help in providing an assessment of Radio Vojvodina. IREX worked with T-Media to provide recommendations for further action in support of Radio Vojvodina, especially its minority language services.

T-Media found in its initial assessment that the majority of RTV Vojvodina's problems are not financial but program and management issues. Radio Novi Sad transmits three separate services, Radios Novi Sad 1, 2 and 3, all for 24 hours a day. Radio Novi Sad 2 broadcasts in Hungarian, Radio Novi Sad 3 caters primarily for Slovakian, Ruthenian, and Romanian languages while Radio Novi Sad 1 is the Serbian service. The editor-in-chief is responsible for all the output on the three stations but there is no specific head of news for all the radio channels. The five heads of the Serbian, Hungarian, Romanian, Slovakian and Ruthenian languages are *de facto* heads of their output and meet daily to discuss briefly what they will be doing on their own programs, with the editor-in-chief making some decisions on what they should cover. This appears to be the only forum for editorial exchange, and T-Media discovered a lack of discussion among the different languages programming resulting in fragmented organization and lack of a distinctive sound of RTV. T-Media found that management and staff have no vision of the future, no mission statement, and no objectives. Other issues included an unclear management structure, no staff briefings, no guidelines and a lack of forward planning. They lacked objectives, policy, responsibility, and there is no feedback from management or editors. The station also had a shaky understanding of what public service broadcasting entails, who the target audience is, or how to attract an audience.

T Media identified priority action points to be achieved within three months including greater staff effort to strengthen morning programs, more relevant and topical news and information in the mornings, more regular presenters, a forward news planning operation and a consistent music policy.

In year 2 IREX, in cooperation with OSCE and the British Embassy, continued to provide consultation at RTV Vojvodina. Roy Saatchi implemented a training program designed to improve its journalism, refresh

its sound, and win new audiences for its three channels developed following T-Media's assessment of the stations. The work in 2009 and 2010 included nine station visits over a 12-month period. Saatchi ran ten formal workshops and provided on-site coaching and feedback during every visit. At every stage, all the minority services were involved.

The results of this training included the introduction of hourly news bulletins and a new central news program at 15:00 each day concentrating on Vojvodina. This new half-hour program is simulcast by a number of local stations. The news is now regularly illustrated with reports and audio clips. Journalists use more conversational speech rather than the language of newspapers and were trained to develop a livelier and more enthusiastic presentation style. Timekeeping also improved, revealing a keener appreciation of program discipline. During this 12-month period, the audience share improved from 1.9% in May 2009 up to 2.7% in May 2010, and the Average Time Spent Listening (ATS) doubled, indicating that the content is more interesting. An experienced producer/presenter was seconded to run the new promotions unit. It was equipped with a computer and software provided by the British Embassy and began making an immediate impact. Program promotions were made in an engaging fashion and were scheduled to be broadcast at set times. Specially written RTV Vojvodina Production Guidelines were translated and printed. Fully endorsed by the editor-in-chief and distributed to everyone, these guidelines are a comprehensive code of practice stating public-service values, describing the key roles, and explaining the professional practice expected of staff.

IREX completed its work with OSCE at RTV Vojvodina in year three. Activities in the final year included audio skills training, multi media newsgathering, radio production, newsroom organization and election coverage. Activities also included meetings and one-on-one consultation with the new RTV Vojvodina management team. In the third quarter of the program year most of the management of RTV was replaced with journalists, many with experience at B92, and some with experience as IREX trainers. IREX and OSCE were assured that innovations introduced during the three years of the project will continue, including news room organization, restructuring of the morning program, and use of the newsroom manual.

### **IR 3: Enhanced quality and availability of information for citizens**

#### **3.1 Increased coverage by local and regional media issues of interest and concern to citizens in their communities, including minorities**

IREX worked with its media centers and partner stations to enhance the quality of local news and information available to citizens while helping media outlets learn how to deliver the content that they provide over different platforms

##### **Activity 3.1.1: Support existing media centers in Serbia, especially those that help minority media and journalists.**

IREX funded an audit for the **Media Center Belgrade (MCB)** in 2009. IREX originally intended that the Media Center Belgrade would take the lead for implementing a media monitoring service to assist IREX in determining where assistance was needed and to provide media and the public with an open source of information on the performance of media in Serbia. Prior to the start of the Serbia Media Assistance Program, the Media Center Belgrade moved from its premises in the Sava Center in New Belgrade to a smaller, more centrally located space in Stari Grad Belgrade. IREX offered the Media Center financial support to complete these conference rooms in exchange for discounted space rental for program activities. With IREX support, the Media Center finished its conference rooms and quickly became fully operational.

With IREX support **Media Center Nis** set up a News Lab which used mobile telephone technology to transmit live pictures for broadcast on a breakfast show and the evening news without needing an outside broadcast (OB) van. They found that they can get signal from everywhere in Nis using the 3G connection on mobile phones combined with Skype. When the project began, Media Center Nis already had a news

desk with six students training as reporters. With support from the IREX subgrant, it expanded its facilities to add five more students. Media Center Nis produced a total of 96 local news bulletins. At the IREX summer school in 2009, Media Center Nis and Telenor discussed further options to use the 3G system to improve quality and cut costs for the project.

### **Activity 3.1.2: Covering Community Concerns**

IREX arranged the following targeted trainings and other activities to help media cover news items of local concern. While the Serbia Media Assistance Program encouraged and emphasized online and new media applications and training, traditional journalism trainings were also provided to partner stations and media outlets.

- IREX provided funds to the Balkan Investigative Reporters Network (BIRN) to conduct a three-day training course on economic crisis reporting for ten journalists and a two-week follow-on mentoring process during which BIRN provided assistance to participants in story writing. This endeavor was initiated in order to strengthen trainees' understanding of the economic crisis, its causes, and its possible outcomes in Serbia, as well as to enhance their ability to report about it in a comprehensive, objective, and analytical manner on digital and print platforms. Seven news stories resulted from the training and follow-on mentoring.
- IREX organized a training on covering capital markets in summer 2009. E-marketing Plus, a collective of economists who provide substantive information, data and analysis to the website on capital funds, pension funds, and stock market events, conducted the training. The focus of the training was on the financial markets in participants' respective local communities. The journalists received training on developing reports for TV, radio, and online outlets. Many of the attendees had never before reported on financial markets in their communities or regions; only a few had basic knowledge on the subject. Several of them followed through with reporting on capital markets upon return to their stations by introducing five-minute reports in their television program schedules.
- IREX awarded B92 with a subgrant for special one-day coverage of the verdict of defendants at the International Criminal Tribunal of the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) at The Hague. RTV B92 broadcast live coverage of the one day event at the Hague Tribunal on the sentence reading of former high ranking Yugoslav officials "The Kosovo Six" (former Serbian President Milan Milutinović, Yugoslav Deputy Prime Minister Nikola Šainović, Yugoslav Army Chief of Staff Dragoljub Ojdanić, Yugoslav Army Generals Nebojša Pavković and Vladimir Lazarević, and Serbian Police General Sreten Lukić) on its INFO cable news channels. Viewership readings from Ipsos showed that the live coverage on the terrestrial channel reached more than 600,000 viewers and the cable channels added another 40,000.
- The third summer school session in summer 2009 included training local TV stations in environmental coverage organized with the help of PG Mreza. The agenda incorporated essentials of TV journalism and editing, participants' selection of themes and research, on-site shooting, and editing and production of packages. 11 participants represented eight private stations from Zajecar, Vranje, Novi Sad, Bosilegrad, Prijepolje, Nis, and Novi Pazar. Packages developed during the training were broadcast on national RTS channels.
- IREX and OSCE co-sponsored three training events for editors and senior journalists in different areas of Serbia. The first workshop targeted senior editors from southwest Serbia and focused on the principles of newsroom management, the latest trends in the production of modern TV news programs, analysis of current TV management structures, and forward planning. TV Akademija and PG Mreza professionals delivered the trainings.

The second three-day workshop from June 26 to June 28 was for editors and senior journalists from South Serbia to enhance editorial capacity and improve the professionalism and overall quality of local TV in South Serbia.

The final workshop offered training on making news packages. Thirteen participants were taken through the entire process of making packages. They analyzed new items, investigated content to include in the story and how it would fit into the news program's order and what the technical aspects of producing the package would involve. They learned how to prioritize and select items and how pictures and language can either increase or decrease the effectiveness and professionalism of a story. Trainers also covered shooting, on-site shooting, editing, and presentation and analysis.

- In fall 2009 IREX held the first in a series of workshops on online content development for IREX partner stations throughout Serbia. This training gathered 13 participants from both partner and other stations. Topics included web publishing, web positioning, use of new media by legacy media, and writing for the web. The second online journalism workshop concentrated on applying a traditional media experience to online media. The workshop allowed the participants to revisit their basic journalism skills and gave them the skills to write for an online audience. The training gave special attention to defining the differences between functioning in traditional and online media, explaining how web is the medium of the future but at the same time mitigating concerns that the Internet will completely replace other types of media.
- In October 2009, IREX and OSCE co-sponsored training for cameramen, picture editors and journalists to improve the quality of television packages at TV Bujanovac, TV Vranje, and TV 017 through real life experience. IREX also held a training for TV presenters. Each training was tailored to the needs resulting from content analyses and emphasized improving the quality of daily news packages. As a result of the trainings, the stations began introducing morning editorial meetings, simplifying their visual identity, and improving package production quality.
- IREX engaged Donald Weber, a world-renowned photographer, to deliver a master-class for photographers and photojournalists in fall 2009. The two-day class consisted of an introduction to the specifics of a photojournalist's profession and the importance for every photographer to establish a distinctive profile and portfolio.
- IREX held one summer school session in 2010 on radio imaging, jingles and commercial production. The trainers covered radio formats: the general position is that formatting has largely contributed to the sustainability of radio, scheduling and playlist structure. Later participants practiced sound branding exercises and produced two radio commercials applying knowledge gained during the session.

A second session during the 2010 summer school continued with a five-day session for videographers, picture editors and newsroom staff. The goal of the training was to improve their technical expertise and creative and artistic approach to everyday shooting and editing applications. Trainers covered picture elements of a TV package, camera positioning, linear and non-linear editing, sound recording and interviewing basics. After the training the participants produced an interview and an ad.

- During the Nis Film Festival in 2010 IREX brought together 15 journalists from both traditional and new media for four-day training in online reporting about culture. IREX specifically addressed the role and importance of photography in today's online journalism – in capturing readers' attention and retaining them on the web page. The training provided the participants with the basics of photography, its elements, visual messages, and use of photography on web.

- IREX held a three-day Basics of Radio Journalism training at Radio Luna in October 2010 and at City Radio in December 2010. Trainers worked with the journalists on how to write for the radio, prepare the radio news and radio package, make a difference between journalism and PR, report from press conferences, etc.
- IREX delivered a three-day TV production training for journalists, cameramen, editing technicians, and news editors at Timocka TV in March 2011. The training was based on the central newscast continuous content analysis. Trainers shadowed journalists, cameramen, and video editors, during their daily duties in the newsroom and in the field. One day was dedicated to a training of the editors and organization of the newsroom.

IREX organized a training session on specialized reporting on agribusiness and how Serbia's EU integration process affects it during the Summer School in June 2011. Journalists received theoretical and hands-on practical knowledge from experts in agribusiness and experienced TV, radio and web journalists. Participants applied their skills on the TV and radio packages that were produced during the training, with an overall idea of promoting a concept of multiplatform content production. As a result, a TV and radio magazine *Agrokultivator* was produced, following the highest production standards. Several TV packages, produced during this training, were broadcast on B92's specialized show for agribusiness.

- In year three United Nations Development Program in Serbia (UNDP) invited journalists to submit investigative pieces focusing on the issues of monitoring public spending in Serbia. As a result of the IREX "Keep an eye on public finances" training on investigative journalism in public finances with BIRN, Vladimir Radojevic and Aleksandar Djordjevic from the Sumadija Press wrote a story about lack of transparency in operations and reporting of the Kragujevac Transport and Tourism Agency. UNDP awarded Vladimir and Aleksandar with a group study visit to the US to become acquainted with the work of reputable media-support organizations and institutions which nurture cutting-edge investigative journalism practice and advocate the highest professional standards.
- After developing and releasing web portals for partner stations IREX organized trainings at TV Cacak and Radio Luna in January and March 2012 to provide journalists with the skills for working in a converged media environment. Trainers from Blic and B92 familiarized journalists with the principles of the practical work in online journalism. Special segments of the trainings were dedicated to social media, with a focus on Facebook, and its role in modern journalism and greater interaction between the station and its audience.
- IREX, Canal France International (CFI) and NUNS organized two training modules for TV journalists in hosting TV debates from March-April 2012. The first training enabled TV journalists from local and national TV stations to learn how to conduct cutting edge TV debates with one or more guests, offer balanced and relevant information to the viewers by challenging guests and pursue answers to the journalist's and audience questions, by using well-prepared and professionally presented facts. During the second training journalists prepared debate topics, casted guests, assessed their field packages and played the role of an anchor, pundit and debater.
- IREX supported Photography Development Center (CRF) in developing webinars for professional documentary photographers to learn about the international trends and standards in photography, improve the quality of the photographs published in the Serbian media industry through continuous education and enable exchange of ideas and practice among peers and recognize possibilities for creating additional revenues. Access to webinars was offered through the UNS website as well as special segment on CRF's website. The participants were able to exchange views with the lecturers and ask them questions in real time.

- IREX commissioned the translation and publishing of the book *Editorial Guidelines* by Mary Raine for news editors of major Serbian media to improve their editorial skills, such as information on citizen journalism and the proper usage of social networking sites as journalistic tools. IREX distributed 750 copies to media outlets. An important part of the handbook is dedicated to election reporting, which made the book a very valuable resource to IREX partners during pre-election campaigns.
- In July 2012 IREX organized a training for web editors for IREX partner stations and organizations. Web editors from B92 and Blic discussed home page planning, news selection, diversity of content, available sources, multimedia integration. Specific results of this training included developed skills of the trainees to edit their home pages and content so it attracts users, developed skills to manage their community building processes, promotion and visibility of news and finally, skills for advanced use of analytics in optimizing news delivery. Participants received a handbook for editing websites adapted to particular needs of beneficiaries' websites that will help them in their daily work of web site management.
- IREX, AS Media and OSCE organized an advanced training course for 12 journalists reporting on economic issues in the main print media (Blic, Politika, Press, Kurir etc.). The three organizations jointly prepared an ambitious, four-session agenda for 12 training days of training from May through July 2012. The goal of this training was to improve the quality of economic reporting in dailies, increase knowledge and expand network of contacts of journalists, and inform citizens on relevant issues of Serbian economy in the context of European and global environment. Training topics included fiscal and monetary policy of the Republic of Serbia, privatization, public expenditures, corruption, German response to the world economic crisis, roles of the Central European Bank, IMF/World Bank and global macroeconomics. Experienced Serbian economists, renowned international lecturers and owners and managers of the biggest private and public Serbian companies were invited as presenters. To conclude this training IREX, OSCE and AS Media organized a study tour to the US in the fall to provide the journalists with contacts and news sources and help them cover international financial issues in a more objective manner. Participants visited the World Bank, New York Stock Exchange, Washington Post and other relevant institutions in the US.

### **Activity 3.1.2: Small Production Subgrants**

In year two IREX awarded small subgrants to support the production of news and public affairs content to its partners to encourage a greater variety of and access to information.

IREX awarded a subgrant to **RTV 5** in 2010 for the further development and improvement of its informative programs as the core of the station's programming. RTV 5 increased field information and established an open and wide discussion about citizens' problems and ways to solve them. The subgrant supported the morning show, short news programs, central newscasts, and business and sports news.

**Radio Luna** also received support in 2010 to produce a series of radio shows on social issues important for the region and listenership. Radio Luna is produced 17 programs which address education, health care and social welfare, environmental protection and challenges for people with disabilities. The station also ran a promotional campaign to increase its brand recognition and attract more listeners to its programming. The promotional campaign included distributing flyers and posters on the streets of all larger cities in Radio Luna's region as well as TV advertisements on two regional/local TV stations and a presentation of its program concept on TV programming.

### **Activity 3.1.3: Training of Trainers**

IREX and NUNS recognized the need to create a pool of local trainers available to NUNS and the wider media community after donor funding ends. Through its Center for Investigative Journalism (CINS),

NUNS conducted two rounds of trainings of trainers (ToT) programs for professional journalists to create a pool of trainers specialized in online journalism, video journalism, computer assisted reporting and similar activities. NUNS trained 24 participants from Belgrade and 24 participants from Cacak, Leskovac, Novi Sad, Pirot, Nis, Novi Pazar and other cities.

In the first part of the session trainers presented tactics such as forming trainee groups, managing trainees with different knowledge levels and designing trainings, training techniques and methodologies such as getting to know the participants, handling difficult participants or groups, ice-breakers, brainstorming and simulations. In the following session participants presented their modules on reporting from the courtroom, EU reporting, reporting on people with disabilities, social media for journalists and media organizations, photo-journalism, journalism ethics, and behaving in front of a camera. During the final session participants presented their completed modules to the NUNS trainers and a group of journalism school students.

Both IREX and NUNS believe this initiative holds sustainability in it, empowering media professionals with the skills necessary to educate their own colleagues and improve own media outlets from within.

### 3.2 Enhanced quality and quantity of media coverage of reform and other pertinent issues

#### Activity 3.2.1: The Special Coverage Initiatives Fund

The Special Coverage Initiatives Fund provided the Serbia Media Assistance Program the opportunity to, in cooperation with USAID, choose extraordinary projects to fund that address reform topics such as elections, war crimes, corruption and reconciliation that may require extra resources or not have commercial appeal; inventive proposals from current and new partners for sustained content production, including new media and programming shared between national and local outlets may also be accepted. IREX approved the following projects:

The *Insider* subgrant supported **B92** in providing professional training for five young journalists in the production of high quality investigative journalism content. The highly experienced team of the documentary series worked on training and educating their younger colleagues throughout the research and program production process. Fourteen *Insider* programs were broadcast in prime time on B92 Television, out of which 6 documentary hour-long programs and 8 two-hour long debates with special reports complementing debates.

“Kolubara – The Plunder of the Century,” which dealt with abuse and embezzlement in the Kolubara coal mines, was the most-watched *Insider* investigative episode. Every fifth viewer watching television at the time of the broadcast watched the first part while the second part attracted every third viewer in the 10-11 p.m. prime time slot.

The show on Kolubara led to the arrest of more than 15 people in October 2011, present and former executives of Kolubara, which are suspected of embezzlement of 12 million EUR. *Insider*'s third season was completely supported by advertising revenue.

The **Beta News Agency Media Center** completed negotiations with RTS on a broadcasting time for their documentary “Is there life in Serbia,” and began broadcasting every Thursday on September 23 on RTS2. The show represented a small number of people who work in very difficult conditions in agriculture, tourism and other industries that still manage to achieve results, earn a profit and create new jobs. Beta produced seven 48-minute episodes. The overall goal was to present Serbia's potential, the attitude toward European integration and its obstacles, and to familiarize Serbian citizens with the problems and potential of their country. In September, Beta launched a website dedicated to the show and held a promotional event at the Havana Club in Belgrade.

From July until September 2010 the **Beta News Agency** reported on trials from the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) on war crimes proceedings in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo. This indigenous reporting was very important for the establishment of an atmosphere of

tolerance and reconciliation, both in Serbia and all countries of the former Yugoslavia. Only objective and impartial information on delicate topics such as this enables cooperation and mutual understanding. During the reporting period, Beta released an average of 45 news items and 20 audio reports monthly. ICTY reports were used by all major media in the country as part of their news programs. Beta had around 600 users who used the news service that includes news from the Hague tribunal.

**FoNet** received a subgrant to start a web TV project to incorporate news packaged in different formats as well as interviews with politicians, and webpages devoted to economy and business, culture, music and sport, technology, entertainment, and other content.

IREX awarded **Radio 021** a subgrant to support a comprehensive local web portal program that includes radio, web TV and mobile applications. Radio 021 improved its website by adding local news, weather, travel, and health sections. A new visual identity was created for the site which added connections to social networks as well as founding of new content and new sections.

**EXIT** developed data visualization software and promoted open data and open government concepts. EXIT researched information and statistics available online from the past 15 years, processed, and displayed them through infographics and visual presentations that enable better understanding and higher public awareness of different social phenomena and processes.

The first presentation of the project was scheduled for the Share conference in Belgrade, April 7-9 2011. Three combinations of various economic data were presented in the form of 3D models made out of cardboard, polystyrene, plaster, industrial silicone and paint: the relationship between the exchange rate of RSD/USD and average net income in RSD; the ratio between the consumer basket and yearly inflation, and; the relationship between the industrial production index and the population growth. EXIT also showed the visualizations at the EXIT music festival July 7-10 2011.

In fall 2011, IREX awarded a grant to **Southern News/Juzne Vesti** to redesign the juznevesti.com web portal, develop content applications for mobile platforms and social media sites and hold investigative journalism trainings. Southern News organized 11 investigative journalism trainings for journalism students from Nis on topics including ethics, investigative journalism techniques and online databases.

On June 9, 2012 Southern News launched a new, improved web site design. Since then, the number of visitors steadily grew, reaching over a million by August 2012. Southern News also used the subgrant funds to complete Facebook and Twitter applications for their web site to better engage visitors and build loyalty.

In October 2011 USAID supported the setup of whistleblower protection software for Southern News. They decided to build a new, fully branded web site named Perun that would use the whistleblower protection software, minimize risks for whistleblowers and protect their identity. In spring 2012, IREX supported Southern News in developing and launching the Perun website and help create its visual identity and brand. After conducting an extensive online and offline promotional campaign, whistleblower tips started coming in through the Perun system. Southern News investigated the tips and published over 10 stories.

IREX worked with B92, Sumadija Press and Pitaljka on setting up the Perun software with their media outlets with the help of Southern News.

IREX provided support to **Sumadija Press** to produce investigative journalism stories. By December 2011 Sumadija Press published two series of investigative journalism articles following excessive employment in public enterprises in Kragujevac and the construction of an indoor pool in Kragujevac. Sumadija Press confirmed that investigative articles have the largest amount of visitors and tend to increase the popularity of the web site. Increased number of visitors should create additional opportunities for marketing, and thus better chances for sustainability in the market.

In August, **MTV** began implementation of the *MTV Reporters* TV show aimed at affirmation of investigative journalism among youth. MTV launched a new website through which they engaged youth across Serbia to develop investigative stories from their communities. The project was promoted via social networks and through interviews in different magazines. MTV launched their call for ideas to collect investigative journalism stories from young viewers. Potential reporters recognized problems in their local communities and submitted stories in order to put the spotlight on some crucial issues and hopefully bring them to a favorable resolution. The MTV Reporters team selected 12 stories.

The future MTV Reporter was introduced to the MTV Team, along with his/her mentor. Mentors were experienced journalists from well-known media outlets and/or IREX partners such as Radio 021, B92 and Southern News. The mentors trained the future reporters and took them through the full reporting process. The goal of this phase was not just to enable citizen reporters to become investigative journalists, but to share that knowledge, over TV and the web, to a wider audience.

In November and December 2011, six 30-minute “MTV Reporter” shows were broadcast, each containing two 15-minute stories. Website visitors were allowed to vote for the best story. The stories had over 45,000 votes in total. The winner received a camera from MTV to continue their work.

The project helped increase visibility of relevant issues in local communities, educated young people in journalism and helped bring positive social change. Through trainings provided for young journalists, they have embraced knowledge in formulating, investigating and reporting on key social issues in their community.

In August 2011, the **Eutopija (Pistoljka)** was awarded a grant to establish a secure channel for whistleblowers to anonymously report on the cases of corruption and power abuse, and to raise public awareness of the need to protect whistleblowers. Tips and documents sent by whistleblowers were analyzed and investigated by the project team in order to verify claims and ask for further information from relevant parties. During the project Eutopija published 89 investigative articles on corruption in state institutions. These stories were published in major dailies Politika, Danas, Kurir, Alo, Pravda, and broadcasted on TV B92, Radio 021 and other media.

**NUNS** began work in fall 2011 examining the efficiency of the Serbian court system with a special emphasis on the asset forfeiture law. NUN’s investigative journalism team (CINS) produced and published seven investigative reports on judiciary reform and judges’ election process issues in order to increase Serbian citizens’ awareness of the importance of an independent and reliable judiciary. Through this project, CINS expanded knowledge on the Serbian judiciary process, system organization and legal framework. CINS also developed a network of competent and independent sources which will be used to keep an eye on the Serbian court system and its services to citizens and justice. This activity improved capacity of NUNS investigative journalists’ team, promoted investigative journalism online and increased NUNS’s visibility.

IREX supported **Radio 021** in strengthening their marketing position and creating a strong online community through new media channels and content. This activity focused on improving the quality and quantity of 021 WebTV production. Radio 021 conducted extensive production activities which resulted in over 200 videos in less than 4 months. Programming included animated two-character shows, short student investigative reports, non-fiction event recordings, and the satirical and growingly popular Teleplov show. R021 also developed their web archives, offered three training workshops for employees and established cooperation with local producers and students.

The project significantly increased the number of average Web TV weekly visits. 021 also developed an official Android mobile app as a way to reach younger audiences and raise accessibility of 021 media content on mobile devices.

**Elections 2012:** Serbian Parliamentary and Presidential Elections were held on May 6, 2012. Serbian citizens elected its president in the second round on May 20, 2012. The elections had a huge impact on

the media and citizens. In the economically unstable environment the media produced news and current affairs programs, covered the campaign, reported on activities of politicians, parties and candidates, and issues relevant to the elections and citizens.

IREX joined efforts with other USAID implementers, such as ISC and NDI, to bring important issues to the attention of citizens, media and political players. IREX supported activities with long-term effects and stressed the importance of voting rights, fighting corruption, administration efficiency, job creation/employment, education and other issues. IREX chose 11 projects for MSOs and media outlets to better represent their constituencies, serve as effective watchdogs, raise the professional and managerial standards of organizations, and opened channels for public input. These projects were focused on youth, gender, new online content, engagement, priority topics, and media monitoring. All IREX activities had strong online and social networking components.

Over the elections campaign **PG Mreza** aired 40 episodes of “My First Vote”. These 5-minute shows, produced through an IREX subgrant, exposed disinterest in political issues of young people who recently received their voting rights. Young people responded to a set of questions on everyday and future challenges of Serbia in a mature and refreshing way. They demonstrated concern for burning society issues, presented their beliefs and values, revealed news sources, and positions about the burning questions of Serbian society.

IREX supported the **Initiatives Fund** project “Youth Writes New Government’s Agenda.” Four TV debates on socially significant, youth-targeted topics of migration, employment, education and health were produced by Key Connection Media, and broadcasted between April 27 and May 16, 2012 on 15 regional and local stations including TV Vojvodina, TV Studio B and B92.

Host Jugoslav Cosic (TV B92) facilitated the debate between youth from different regions (Vojvodina, Sandzak, Eastern Serbia and South Serbia), and high state and political parties’ officials. Youth representatives posted questions to:

- Migration: Mitar Djuraskovic, National Coordinator for Trafficking, and Vladimir Cucic, Director, The Commissariat for Refugees;
- Education: Bozidar Djelic, Democratic Party, and Miljenko Dereta, LDP;
- Employment: Jorgovanka Tabakovic, Serbian Progressive Party;
- Health: Slavica Djukic Dejanovic, President of the Serbian Parliament, and Zoran Stankovic, the Minister of Health.

IREX approved a subgrant to **Local Press** to support the “I choose, so I can be selected” project during the pre-election period. Local Press members in conducted research in 16 local areas on women’s involvement in local communities and wrote a series of investigative journalism texts about the role, position and influence of women in local communities. A total of 48 articles were prepared and published.

IREX supported the development of komentari.rs (“comments”) website by **Inbox** to foster the dialogue among different groups of citizens. Komentari.rs is a powerful statistics and research tool with data, graphics, and charts that collects news and comments from 20 of the most important Serbian online news portals. Besides measuring public opinion on current affairs, komentari.rs represents a great online archive of all comments generated in the pre- and post-elections period. Visitors can make new comments and share all content with friends on Facebook, Twitter, Google + and other social media and digging sites The database of comments and news articles increased on a daily basis.

IREX supported the **Center for Development of Photography (CRF)** in producing photography and multimedia content around the 2012 Serbian Parliamentary Elections. CRF photographers captured the atmosphere of elections rallies across Serbia and produced photo-stories on those events. CRF covered over 100 events and produced over 1000 photographs in 12 cities. All these materials were available to IREX partner media organizations for their free use on the CRF web site.

After the elections CRF organized a photographers' conference in Nis to discuss the local and global challenges and use of photography and improve communication and cooperation among the neighboring countries. Panelists discussed documentary photography, the state of photography in post-communist countries, photography manipulation and misuse, the market and the position of Serbian authors and tendencies in modern American and European photography.

IREX supported **FoNet** to cover pre-election activities of civil society organizations throughout Serbia. FoNet produced and published extensive multimedia coverage of events organized by the European Movement in Serbia (EMinS), Dokukino, Center E8 and other CSOs. FoNet also covered the SHARE conference, parliamentary and presidential TV debates, and election night debates.

IREX supported the development of the **B92 Elections Web Special** dedicated to the 2012 Parliamentary and Presidential elections in Serbia. Over the campaign, B92 Elections Special published a "Women and Politics" section and posted articles on female political candidates. B92 also developed a mobile version of the Elections 2012 content and an online polling and live blog system during the election day.

**MTV** produced a second season of "MTV Reporters," an investigative journalism show for young people with the focus on the elections. The election season was extensively promoted through press releases which attracted over 100 applications from young viewers. MTV Reporters team chose 11 reporters eager to grab the attention of city authorities to solve their problems.

IREX supported **Media Center Belgrade (MCB)** to conduct "Digital Voice of Serbia", an online monitoring activity of the 2012 second round of presidential elections. This was a part of a wider elections night program organized together with NUNS, Civil Rights Defenders, Open Society Fund, and the Olof Palme International Center.

Over both rounds of elections the MCB team analyzed and reported on the election results, using available tools to follow social networks, blogs and other online channels. MCB shared this research with guests over two elections nights at MCB and with Serbian media. The conclusions were that online communication channels are a valid indicator of public opinion and that trusted sources have a tendency to share information publicly on social networks prior to or simultaneously as with reporters and official institutions.

### **Activity 3.2.2: Marking 15 years of USAID assistance to Serbia: Close-out conference**

On November 1-2, IREX organized a closeout conference entitled "Building Independent Media in Serbia – Fifteen Years Later." Over 200 media representatives, media associations, state institutions, international institutions and donors took part in the conference. The keynote speaker opening the conference was Mr. Michael D. Kirby, U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Serbia, who highlighted that the USA will continue supporting further development of Serbian media. The Minister of Culture and Information of the Republic of Serbia Bratislav Petkovic talked about media freedom as one of the crucial assignments of the new government. He also added that the question of redefining media strategy is an ongoing one and that the issue of media ownership will be solved within the new drafts of the media laws. IREX Vice President Mark Whitehouse noted that Serbia had made big steps forward in the media sphere during the past 15 years, but many things remained to be achieved and the Serbian media sector itself was ready to lead.

The second day of the conference was opened with the panel "Looking Ahead – Preconditions and Critical Issues for Media Development in Serbia." The panelists were Susan K. Fritz, Mission Director of USAID Serbia and Montenegro, Paula Thiede, Acting Head of the OSCE Mission to Serbia, Adriano Martins, Deputy Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Serbia and Jadranka Jelinčić, director of the Open Society Foundation. The panel was moderated by Dragana Solomon, head of the Media Department, OSCE Mission to Serbia. Conclusions drawn from the discussion were that the main problems for the media strategy implementation were state ownership in media and the issue of

media financing. Adriano Martins announced that the EU would invest 1.95 million USD next year for implementing the media strategy in Serbia.

The audience in the main room as well as those who followed the conference over a live stream were mostly interested in the panel “Media Market and Trends” moderated by Dusan Masic and the “Social Journalism” panel, moderated by David Brewer, with Steve Herrmann, editor of BBC News website, Malachy Browne, news editor of Storyful, Solana Larsen, managing editor of Global Voices and Danica Ilić from the Media Diversity Institute London.

Apart from the main program, the conference had two side programs featuring workshops, panels, discussions and presentations. The topics included ranged from investigative journalism, data protection on the internet, advertising and sales on the web, via selection and usage of photography on the web, to data journalism presented by James Ball, data journalist at The Guardian and Kevin Charman-Anderson, editor and digital strategist of Knowledge Bridge, Media Development Loan Fund.

## V. CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

The economic crisis had a huge effect on the Serbian media through most of the Serbia Media Assistance Program, shrinking advertising budgets that private media depend on and resulting in the reduction in staff and closure of many media outlets. The rise of online news media and social networks media resulted in a digital disruption of news that has significantly impacted the media industry worldwide. As audiences are increasingly consuming news on websites and mobile phones media outlets everywhere are struggling to find sustainable business models to adjust to the changed environment. Serbian media face greater challenges of limited online advertising market and a potential lack of advertisers due to political pressures.

Against these events, USAID and IREX continued their efforts to develop the independent media sector in Serbia and to institute internationally recognized professional standards for journalists and the media industry. Despite the continued and ongoing economic and political struggles, the Serbia Media Assistance Program had considerable impact on the independent media sector.

The impact of the Serbia Media Assistance Program is a strengthened legislative framework, increased professionalism of journalists and greater business management capacity of media outlets throughout Serbia. IREX’s institutional history supporting independent media in Serbia allowed IREX to build on its relationships with media organizations and media regulators and brought these partnerships to the next level. Early in the program, acknowledging the shift to new media, IREX secured new partners working on online platforms and supported their development. A flexible approach within program objectives was essential to tailoring activities to the real needs of partners and successfully addressing the dramatic changes that new media and the financial crisis brought to the Serbian media.

- One of IREX’s greatest achievements was the creation of the Media Coalition. At a critical time in the Serbian media environment IREX laid the foundation by helping the Coalition identify a common set of interests. By concentrating on mutual interests, the members of the Media Coalition were able to come up with a set of priorities to present to the government. Its successful advocacy on the finalization and adoption of the government’s Media Strategy gave several different, and historically antagonistic, media support organizations an issue around which to unite and come to a set of common conclusions. Together the Media Coalition will continue to push for media reform and work together to overturn laws and regulations that contradict laws supporting media freedoms.

Though the Media Coalition has shown significant progress in safeguarding media freedoms, the alliance is only one part of the equation to achieve a legal environment that protects attacks to free speech. Media reform is only possible through concerted and unified efforts by parliament and policy-makers, the judiciary, civil society and journalists. The dismal economic environment in

Serbia during program implementation seemed to reinforce government's efforts to control media and stall legislative efforts.

- New media is a constantly changing field. Media outlets should stay up-to-date with the latest developments in the field and actively apply them to their own business plans and programming. The rapid expansion of new media fostered a demand to introduce partners to new technologies through trainings and consultation. With subgrant support to build websites, IREX partners began to develop their own social media strategies, learn about successful online advertising models and use new media technologies to enhance their content and reach new audiences. Implementing new media technologies, such as mobile application, online radio players and live streaming will also provide more revenue and contribute to the financial sustainability of media in the long-term.
- Building the capacity for local and regional media outlets to produce specialized programming, though sometimes requiring extra resources and lacking commercial appeal from advertisers, is an important investment. Sponsoring specialized reporting helped train staff, share knowledge throughout the outlet, and increase the chances that media outlets will continue to provide high quality and specialized reporting to their audiences. IREX funded a number of inventive initiatives from radio stations and online news portals to create programming that contributed to the variety of information Serbian citizens received from their local stations and increased the capacity of local and regional partners to produce specialized programming. These grants enhanced coverage of specific reform topics such as elections, war crimes, and corruption; investigative journalism projects proved to be particularly fruitful.
- Establishing an effective business strategy requires a more hands-on approach based on day-to-day decisions rather than annual financial evaluations and trainings. IREX continued to provide management training and consultation to outlets and helped them build sales strategies complementary to the changing media landscape that would draw in advertising revenue both online and offline. Partners incorporated audience research data into their overall strategy and used it provide evidence of their audience share to advertisers, adjust programming and plan for future projects. Acknowledging the need for continued international donor support to function as the political and legal environment for media remain uncertain, IREX provided workshops on grant writing and reporting to help media outlets be better positioned to find necessary funding and commissioned a study on future support to media in Serbia to inform the international community on priorities.