

AN EVALUATION OF USAID/OTI MEDIA TRANSITION GRANTS IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA



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by

MAUREEN TAYLOR, Ph.D.
Rutgers University

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
BHR	Bureau for Humanitarian Response, USAID/Washington
ENI	Europe and the New Independent States
FRY	Federal Republic of Yugoslavia--Serbia and Montenegro
IEBL	Inter-entity Border Line
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
OBN	Open Broadcast Network
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
OTI	Office of Transition Initiatives
RFE	Radio Free Europe
RS	Republika Srpska
SRT	State-run Television and Radio in Republika Srpska
UN	United Nations
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government
VOA	Voice of America
ZOS	Zone of Separation

MAP OF THE REGION



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview

The United States government seeks to foster the development of a free and independent media in Bosnia. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), Bureau of Humanitarian Relief (BHR), Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) has assumed a leadership role in this area. In 1996, after the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement, OTI opened offices in Bosnia--Banja Luka, Sarajevo, Tuzla, and Zenica--to assist in the peace process. One of the most important goals of the Bosnian Transition Initiative is the development of a free and independent media.

The state-controlled media in Bosnia are partly blamed for the genocide of the 1990s. Government media ownership and manipulation of news content heightened ethnic tensions (Glenny, 1995; Silber & Little, 1996). Today, with support from international humanitarian organizations, Bosnian alternative media outlets offer different perspectives than the state media. Commercial media, known as "alternative," include radio, television, and print outlets that now serve many regions of the nation. These alternative media outlets moderate the strangle-hold that the government media has traditionally maintained over news content.

USAID/OTI supported the research of Maureen Taylor, Assistant Professor at The School of Communication, Information and Library Studies at Rutgers University to evaluate the impact of the media transition grants. Research, conducted from May to July 1998, evaluated the different media grantees in the region and examined public perception and acceptance of the alternative media. A multi-method approach--surveys, focus groups, and interviews--provided the data for this evaluation.

Evaluation Findings

Impact of Alternative Media

The alternative media are having a positive impact on the social and political situation in Bosnia. Editors and journalists in both the Bosnian Federation and the Republika Srpska report objective information and inform the public of the actions and abuses of government officials. Alternative media outlets offer candidates with moderate or pro-democracy platforms an opportunity to communicate their positions. In Bosnia, independent political candidates and community leaders with pro-democracy views cannot get fair media coverage from the government-controlled outlets. Alternative media offer the only opportunity for moderate voices to reach a large number of people. Thus, the impact of alternative media is not only in its ability to disseminate objective information but also in its ability to offer a venue for public dialogue on important social and political issues.

Public Acceptance of Alternative Media Content

For the alternative media to be truly successful in contributing to peace and democracy, it must be accepted by the public as a credible source of news and information. The data suggest that alternative media have received mixed reactions from the people of the region. Citizens

appreciate and value the news coverage by alternative media. However, alternative media are not as readily accepted as state-controlled media and many outlets lack credibility. Public mistrust of media content can be attributed to a societal attitude toward media that goes back to the days of propaganda from the Tito regime. During the war communist propaganda turned nationalist in tone and content. Because of this, Bosnians harbor deep suspicions of all media messages. Media effects research (Halpern, 1994) suggests that even though people may distrust media messages, these messages can still influence their ideologies and perceptions of events. The alternative media need to improve their reputations by adhering to higher standards of objectivity and fairness than the state media. This action will disprove the widespread belief that alternative media are tools of the opposition groups and the mouthpiece of the international community. Regardless of the causes, the alternative media in Bosnia need to address their lack of credibility before they can have the intended impact on peace and democracy.

Contribution to Political Dialogue

Alternative media contribute to peace and democracy because they provide an outlet for citizens to discuss public issues and policies. In the former political system, citizens were discouraged from voicing their opinions and questioning their leaders. To foster an open communication process in Bosnia, OTI supported radio and television stations now have “contact programming.” Contact programs allow political candidates and elected officials to communicate their positions to a wide audience. These programs let the public call in to ask important questions. This format was unknown before the war but it is crucial for civil society because it gives the public an opportunity to ask the difficult but necessary questions of their leaders and potential leaders. Moreover, broadcast contact shows offer opposition candidates media exposure that the state-controlled media refuse to provide.

Extending the Reach of NGOs

In addition to funding alternative media, OTI supports many NGOs with civil society initiatives. These NGOs create grass-roots projects to build peace and democracy. NGO activities include round-tables, forums, and public meetings. Media coverage of NGO activities amplifies the impact of pro-democracy and peace activities. Improved cooperative relationships between OTI funded NGOs and OTI funded alternative media will be mutually beneficial to both organizations. OTI staff need to work to ensure that alternative media and civil society organizations support each other’s activities and objectives.

Obstacles to Media Development

Media Literacy

Many Bosnians are not ready for the critical messages communicated by alternative media. Focus group participants and survey responses showed that Bosnians are weary of negative stories, investigative reporting, overtly political content, and the scandal mentality of the alternative media. One focus group participant succinctly described Bosnian weariness about critical reporting by the alternative media when she said, “I just don’t want to see or hear

anymore about the bad things that people do. I saw too much during the war.” Because Bosnian citizens are not yet sophisticated consumers of media, messages that may appear to Westerners to be part of normal journalism are actually creating a backlash on the perceived credibility of the alternative media. This backlash is an unintended consequence of transplanting a free media system into a region that has only known state control of messages and tone. Media literacy would teach Bosnians to become more adept at understanding critical media messages.

Journalist Professionalism

Many Bosnians also believe that the alternative media are unprofessional. One of the reasons that many Bosnians have doubts about the credibility of alternative outlets can be attributed to the actions of young, enthusiastic reporters. A large number of journalists are young, inexperienced, and lack professional standards. Many media outlets are staffed by young reporters who are not trained as news professionals. The great influx of inexperienced journalists is an outcome of the civil war and genocide. Many of Yugoslavia's best journalists either left during the war or were killed (Glenny, 1995). In addition, the credibility of some of the more established journalists is questioned because many of them worked in the former authoritarian media system and then also worked for nationalist-oriented media outlets during the war. The public is suspicious of journalists who were once communists, then nationalists, and now democrats.

Economic Support for Programming

Many media grantees (approximately 80% of those interviewed) are still dependent on OTI funding for daily operations, salaries, and/or equipment support. Most media in Bosnia operate in areas with severe economic problems. Alternative media need to develop marketing strategies and forge relationships with other organizations to ensure the survivability of their news organizations and their informational messages.

Lessons Learned

- Through collaboration with other international organizations, OTI media grantees have contributed to easing community tensions by communicating objective information during times of crisis and offering venues for political discussions. Without OTI grants to alternative media, Bosnians would have less choices and would have to rely only on the government for information and news.
- The concept of “alternative media” is still unclear to many Bosnians. Citizens need to understand the concept and function of alternative media. A coordinated strategic communication effort should be used to introduce and shape understanding of the alternative media so that citizens will not remain suspicious of its messages
- The exportation of an Americanized commercial, free press into another nation is not an easy endeavor. Media systems exist in the context of national economic, social and cultural factors. Thus, Bosnian media development will follow its own path. OTI can help guide it along this path with financial and educational support but societal forces

much stronger than OTI may have the most impact on the final status of Bosnian alternative media.

- Overt and visible support for alternative media outlets is important and even crucial during the initial stages of media development. However, as media begin to develop and find their voice, overt support needs to shift so that the alternative media gain acceptance for their own messages.
- Alternative television stations and their programming are cost-effective ways to reach the public. In a survey almost half of the respondents claimed that they would often think about the subjects that they had learned about while watching television. Television is a strategic approach to educate and to cultivate democratic processes.
- Small radio stations in remote or sensitive regions are effective ways to reach large numbers of people. The re-broadcast of RFE and VOA are important sources of information. However, Bosnians also want local stories and news events. Indigenous news services such as ONASA, AIM and FLASH are important for disseminating local news stories to alternative media outlets.
- The print media that are distributed throughout the two entities are considered very provocative. Unfortunately, they are also expensive for the average Bosnian and many citizens believe that they are targeted only to elites. The print media allow for in-depth coverage and analysis on key issues. Support should be continued.
- News exchanges between the Federation and RS newspapers and magazines are an important way to foster unity and correct misinformation. This has built and will continue to build inter-entity understanding. Moreover, this practice extends the research of alternative media into key regions that may be under-served by alternative media.
- Few alternative media operate in the Bosnian Croat areas. The Herzegovina region needs continued attention. Although it is difficult for OTI staff to gain access to media in the region, data show that the existing alternative media are appreciated and used by Bosnian Croats.
- Training is an important part of continued media success. Training for journalists and technicians will improve the quality of news content. Training in marketing will ensure the survivability and credibility of alternative media outlets.
- Journalistic practices such as investigative reporting that are popular in the West may have a backlash effect on the credibility of the alternative media when the public is not skilled in judging media messages. Increased training is needed to ensure that specific media practices that are necessary foundations for civil society are accepted and respected by the public.
- The best way for OTI to continue to build on the success of its transition initiatives for media development is to identify the media with the greatest impact or potential impact and to begin to prepare them for the day when OTI support ceases. Plans for OTI

transition out of Bosnia should continue to focus on helping media organizations become truly sustainable.

- Continued relationship building between pro-democracy NGOs and the alternative media is needed to extend the reach of NGO efforts and to ensure that the alternative media contribute to the peace process. OTI staff should make increased efforts to build relationships between media organizations and other political transition grantees.

Conclusion

At a macro level of analysis, the Bosnian Transition Initiative is accomplishing many of its short-term and long-term goals. While it may appear that the alternative media struggle at times to find their place in the new Bosnia, it is clear that they offer the people of the region accurate, objective, and thoughtful information.

Alternative media in Bosnia may never resemble their Western counterparts and this is not a goal of the transition project. However, alternative media can make a difference in the development of peace and democracy if both they, and the public they seek to serve, are prepared for the challenges and the responsibilities of a free media system.

USAID/OTI media grants are an important foundation for building civil society in the region. OTI has been very successful in its efforts to build peace and democracy in the region. Its proactive policies have reached into many areas that no other international humanitarian organization has dared to venture. There is considerable gratitude by many media grantees and NGOs and this gratitude will no doubt benefit USAID and the American public for many years. But, it must be remembered that media strategies and civil society initiatives are long-term efforts and more time is needed for the many newly founded organizations to mature. In only two years OTI has assisted a significant number of media and NGO grantees. Now, it is time to wait to see the rewards of OTI humanitarian efforts as the alternative media create the groundwork for a peaceful and participatory post-war society.

I. BACKGROUND ON THE CRISIS

The former Yugoslavia followed an authoritarian model of the press (Siebert, Peterson, & Schramm, 1963). Under the Tito regime, the media served the state's needs. Journalists were employed by the state, for the state, and to protect the state. There were no objective sources of information in the former Yugoslavia for people to consult. Although Voice of America and Radio Free Europe were broadcast in the region, citizens did not possess the media literacy to critically compare the messages of the state media to the messages of the international media. Indeed, citizens in the former Yugoslavia never learned how to be comparative media consumers.

The Yugoslavian state media carried propagandistic messages that supported the State and the Party. Typical programming included news and information about party leaders and governmental policies. Programming was never critical of the government and it showed the commonalities of the Yugoslavian people rather than focusing on differences. People knew that the media served the interests of the State. Although people usually accepted the messages, they did not always trust the source (Glenny, 1994). This is not uncommon in authoritarian media systems. Halpern has concluded that although state-controlled media often suffer from low credibility, "contrary to what small media effects theories suggest . . . in an authoritarian political system, media dependency might have a significant impact on political perceptions" (1994, p. 51). In other words, even though citizens may mistrust the source of messages, the cultural ideology behind the messages is part of their everyday life.

Tito's authoritarian leadership kept the nation together for over 30 years. However, the Yugoslavian Federation started to collapse after Tito's death in 1980. The economically strong Yugoslavian republics of Slovenia and Croatia declared their independence in 1991 and Bosnia unsuccessfully attempted to follow their lead. By 1992, political leaders, seeking to extend their territory, had mobilized their respective ethnic group members and the Bosnian Civil War began. When Yugoslavia started to collapse, ethnic leaders continued to use the media for propagandistic purposes. Only this time, the propaganda took a more sinister turn—ethnic nationalism.

The media in Bosnia are partly responsible for the genocide of the 1990s. Government media ownership, control and manipulation heightened ethnic tensions during this time (Glenny, 1995; Silber & Little, 1996). In the Bosnian genocide, all sides used the media to motivate their ethnic group members to war. The media regularly carried vivid stories about wartime atrocities and casualties. In many towns under siege, radio emerged as the dominant source of information and entertainment. Nationalistic songs urged people to persevere, while news reports featured information about military operations and ethnic cleansing by the "enemy." The media also played an important unifying function for each ethnic group. Tragically, media messages created ethnic unity by reinforcing cultural stereotypes and demonizing the other ethnic groups.

The fighting between Bosniaks, Serbs, and Croats displaced approximately 2 million people and left over 200,000 dead. Today, many of the regions of the nation that were once ethnically integrated are now "ethnically cleansed." Finally, after 4 years of fighting, and the long awaited intervention of the international community, all sides of the conflict signed the Dayton Accord in 1996. Dayton called for important liberties for citizens including freedom of assembly, freedom

of movement, and the protection of privately owned media in the region. The creation of media systems that support democratic principles is not new. In post-war Japan, "the Allies viewed mass media as potentially playing a vital role in helping realize [democracy]. . . the reformation of broadcasting was one of the occupation's principle goals" (Luther & Boyd, 1997, pp. 39-40).

In 1995, OTI, in cooperation with International Rescue Committee (IRC), started funding small grants out of the USAID Sarajevo office. In 1996, after the Dayton peace agreement was signed by all parties, OTI expanded its activities. Offices were created in the strategic areas of Tuzla, Zenica, and Banja Luka to serve the entities of the Federation and the Republika Srpska. One underlying assumption guiding OTI policy was that the media were a contributing factor to the violence during the break-up of the Former Yugoslavia, thus, media could also be part of the peace solution. OTI's strategic objectives are firmly grounded in addressing the issues that contributed to the violence in the early 1990s.

Today, the government in Bosnia continues to control most state and municipal radio, television and print outlets. However, with the assistance of the international community, there are now many new, commercial media outlets. Commercial media, known as "alternative", include radio, television, and print outlets that now serve many regions of the nation. These private media are in the beginning stages of development and face many challenges. The most significant issue in the development of an alternative media is the economy. The average citizen has no income to purchase consumer goods and, more importantly for the alternative print media, no money to purchase newspapers or magazines. Likewise, small business owners lack resources to advertise with local media. The media also face harassment from the government that they criticize. Journalists and editors face physical and property threats and often have materials or services needed for operations--electricity, roads, printing--withheld.

With support from international humanitarian organizations such as OTI, Bosnian alternative media offer different perspectives than the state media. However, Jakubowicz has predicted there is a "less than optimistic outlook for the future" for Bosnian media because the country has not yet made the difficult transition to either a fully democratic political system or a fully free media (1995, p. 130). It was discovered that Jakubowicz's claim is still valid today.

The media do have a critical role to play in mobilizing public support and influencing public policy. "They are both observers and participants" in the civil society process (Shiras, 1996, p. 109). The media have an important role in that they have become a part of the democratization process and yet must still report on it for their audiences. Two descriptions best illustrate the nature of media in Bosnia. First, Bosnian alternative media acknowledge the important role that they can play in changing the political situation. Second, efforts of these alternative media organizations are constrained by enormous economic problems.

The media have an important role in the development of a civil society in Bosnia. Alternative media are not only a tool for public communication but they are also a tool for bringing like-minded groups together to articulate needs, pressure government, and represent the voices of isolated interests and groups. Thus, the function of the media places the Bosnian alternative media squarely at the center of building civil society. It is for these reasons that OTI has incorporated media strategies into its Bosnia Transition Initiative.

II. OTI STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

USAID/OTI was one of the first international organizations on the ground in Bosnia when the Federation was formed. OTI efforts support the Dayton peace accord through all of its political and media transition grants. OTI's stated objectives for the Bosnia Herzegovina Transition Initiative include reducing community tensions, cultivating democracy, promoting basic political freedoms, promoting alternative media to negate nationalist voices and encouraging political participation. To achieve these objectives, OTI has identified inter-related project areas of civil society building, alternative media, and facilitating relationships between NGOs and the media to increase the reach of political activism.

OTI has identified both short-term and long-term objectives for the Bosnia Transition Project. In the short-term, OTI seeks to blanket the region with alternative media to counter the nationalist messages of state-controlled media. OTI's long-term objective is to foster sustained free media development in the region that will support and complement democratic practices.

This evaluation focused on OTI Political Transition Grants for media. It examined how these grants contribute to the objectives for the Bosnia Transition Initiative. This evaluation offers an analysis and several recommendations about the project in the areas of alternative media. Specific recommendations will be made in the last section of the report.

III. METHODOLOGY OF THE EVALUATION

To achieve the objectives stated above, OTI has supported political transition grants to alternative media organizations and grassroots NGOs. These media transition grants were designed to promote a media system independent of government control and manipulation and to support moderate voices in the political arena.

The evaluator traveled to the region during the summer of 1998 and visited grantees in the Federation and RS entities. To investigate the impact of media transition grants a three-part methodology was developed:

- In-depth interviews were conducted with grantees to understand the intended and actual goals of media grantees and NGOs.
- Survey questionnaires were distributed throughout the two entities to measure the impact of the media grants on the general public.
- Focus groups with citizens were conducted to gain an in-depth picture of the impact that media and political transition grants have had on targeted groups and communities.

Interviews With Grantees

The evaluator conducted site visits with a total of 50 grantees. Interviews included 36 media outlets and 14 NGOs that have been supported by OTI. In-depth interviews with media and NGO grantees were conducted with the assistance of Bosnian translators. See Appendix A for a complete list of interviewees. Interviewees were asked a series of questions ranging from organizational mission, contributions to peace and democracy in their localities, and needs and obstacles that impair their activities. This interview schedule can be found in Appendix B. Interviews were tape-recorded and the translated versions were transcribed for analysis.

Focus Groups

The evaluator conducted ten focus groups with specifically targeted groups (see Appendix C). Focus groups are an effective, qualitative methodology to learn about the personal experiences, attitudes, and perceptions of specific groups. This method allows the researcher to identify interests and needs of a specific group. In a focus group research design, subjects from homogenous groups are selected and asked a variety of open-ended questions. Participant responses were tape-recorded, transcribed, and reviewed for trends and themes.

Surveys

The final part of the evaluation collected quantitative data that can be used to generalize findings. Surveys were conducted in 10 locations throughout the RS and BiH. See Appendix D for locations and total survey distributions. Respondents were randomly selected from the general public.

Data collection in another country, especially a post-crisis country, is a difficult endeavor. Surveys are an effective way to capture a snapshot of public awareness, attitudes, and behaviors. American social science research posits that random samples can be generalized. Surveys in less developed parts of the world, however, present many challenges for the researcher.

Eleven hundred surveys were randomly distributed throughout the two entities in the towns where OTI grantees operated. A total of 994 were returned and 973 (88 % usable) are the basis for the analysis of public perceptions about media credibility and usage.¹ Although a sample of over 1000 would be more statistically desirable, evidence suggests that smaller samples, especially when combined with other data collection methods such as interviews and focus groups, can be effective. In a recent study, Palmer (1998) argues that smaller samples offer researchers important insights into social phenomenon in crisis-prone areas. Palmer notes that “audience surveys are important management tools for groups that create radio and television programs to advance peace, reconciliation, and resettlement in war zones. Yet these groups often see no way to mount field surveys of useful quality. Deterrents can include a lack of local survey capacity, the technical and logistical difficulties of conducting field work in war-ravaged circumstances, and the high cost of conducting adequate surveys in light of typically limited budgets.”

The CGP Rapid Survey Method (1998) reports that a smaller sample method “also has an important role to play in the more demanding context of summative evaluation, where the aim is to assess the effectiveness of programs in such outcome domains as knowledge, attitudes, and actions.”

Survey questions are based on reliable media credibility scales. Questions about news credibility are based on Gaziano & McGrath (1986) measurement scales. These scales are considered reliable in the mass media research literature (Meyer, 1988). As part of the instrument refinement, questions were tested on Bosnian students at Rutgers University, translated, back-translated and, finally, pilot-tested in Bosnia. Versions were printed in Cyrillic and Latin script, depending on the region of the survey location.

English versions of the survey questions that inform this study can be found in Appendix E.

The goal of this evaluation is to use the three research methodologies to create a complete picture of the impact of transition grants in Bosnia. The term "impact" in this evaluation will describe the ways in which transition grants contribute to OTI short-term and long-term objectives and how the alternative media in the region contribute to civil society.

The next section of this report describes the impact of media transition grants in the Federation.

¹ Surveys were checked and verified. To ensure methodological rigor, surveys that were less than half complete or that were suspected of irregularities were not used for this project.

IV. EVALUATION OF MEDIA TRANSITION GRANTS IN THE BOSNIAN AND CROAT FEDERATION¹

The Federation, made up of Bosnia and Herzegovina, is served by three OTI offices-- Sarajevo, Tuzla and Zenica. Each office exists in a unique political and social environment and will be discussed separately.

Sarajevo

The OTI/Sarajevo office oversees grants to alternative media, non-government organizations, news service organizations, and media analysis organizations. Sarajevo is a saturated media market with many small radio, television, and print media competing for very minimal advertising revenues. To evaluate the impact of OTI grants on the general public, interviews were conducted with grantees and 300 surveys were randomly distributed in the city of Sarajevo.

Fostering Alternative Media

The people of Sarajevo enjoy many programs sponsored by the international community to foster media development. OTI efforts to reduce community tensions in Sarajevo include funding projects that offer opportunities to bring the community together in various ways. One such grantee, **FAMA International**, has created films, museums, books, guides, and posters to help Sarajevans celebrate the multiethnic cooperation during and after the war. OTI has funded the creation of a FAMA documentary show, "Dossier" that features political discussions about the effect of Dayton on the citizens of BiH. Documentaries such as "Dossier" empower citizens and encourage political participation.

Radio programs by media grantees also attempt to minimize community tensions. The "City in Action" programming of **Radio Grad** provides coverage of cultural and educational activities to improve the quality of life in the city. Likewise, **Radio Zid** offers "Hardship," a program dedicated to addressing the psychological state of post-war citizens. Zid's goal is to "break down the mental, spiritual and cultural barriers that hinder our understanding each other." These programs promote community-building, and offer people a public forum to negotiate difficult issues.

Sarajevo enjoys many alternative media outlets. OTI has helped many of these fledgling media to purchase equipment, support staff, or pay for publishing and distribution costs. Moreover, OTI has underwritten numerous programs that foster peace and democracy. The alternative media supported by OTI offer Sarajevans:

- Objective information about current events,
- In-depth political discussions about government leaders and their decisions,
- Outlets to communicate their views in a public forum.

¹ Given the complex situations in the country, this evaluation will address BiH and RS entities separately.

Alternative media and media organizations promote freedom of expression and contribute to the political process. These types of communication programs are not available from the state-controlled media. Due to OTI assistance, new types of media organizations have emerged. OTI support has fostered the creation of **Media Plan**-- a University of Sarajevo media watch group that monitors the content of television, radio and print media. Another organization, **ONASA**, has emerged as an independent news service for alternative media outlets throughout BiH. ONASA offers objective coverage of political and social issues that challenges the domination of the state-controlled news service. Many smaller media outlets throughout BiH subscribe to ONASA news coverage and analysis. ONASA is an excellent example how one transition grant can serve many different publics.

OTI reaches out to many media outlets and is a driving force in Sarajevo media. One of the best ways to illustrate this impact is to examine how these media outlets influence people's lives. During the last two weeks of June 1998, 300 Sarajevans were randomly selected and asked to complete a survey. Of these 300 surveys, 297 are used for this evaluation.

Findings from the surveys show that alternative television stations are viewed as more important for news and information than the state-controlled television station. The survey found:

- 65% of respondents view the alternative media outlet, OBN, as an important source of news and information.
- 55% of respondents consider state-run TV BiH as an important news and information source.

This is a significant finding because 42% of respondents claimed that they would often think about the subjects that they had learned about while watching television. Television programming is a strategic approach to educate the public about political subjects. Moreover, the use of public service announcements to educate citizens about the elections cultivates democratic processes.

The print media are also having a positive impact on citizens' lives. Weekly political magazines are also very popular in Sarajevo. Sixty percent of the respondents consider the weekly, alternative magazines **Svijet** and **Dani** as important sources of news and information. **Vercernje Novine**, a daily newspaper that has some of its distribution costs supported by OTI.

1. Vercernje Novine is considered by 52 % of respondents to be an important news source.
 - Vercernje Novine is also considered by over 41% of the respondents to serve the public interest through its news coverage and feature stories.

Unfortunately, the major drawback of the print media is that newspapers and magazines are often too expensive for the average person to purchase. Table 1 reports the findings from the survey about how the Sarajevo public perceives the importance of media sources. Respondents were asked to rate the importance of specific media as a source of news and information. The percentage reported is the total percentage of agreement to each outlet as an important source of

news and information. See Appendix E for a sample of this question.

Both state-controlled and alternative media in BiH were included in this survey for comparison purposes.

Table 1 Percentage of Agreement of Importance of Media Sources for News and Information²

<u>Sarajevo Media Outlet</u>	<u>Importance as a Source</u>
Open Broadcast Network (I) (television)	65 %
TV BiH (S) (television)	55 %
Radio BiH (S) (radio)	53 %
Svijet and Dani (I) (weekly magazines)	60 %
Vercernje Novine (I) (daily newspaper)	52 %

It is evident that alternative media are considered important sources of information. Table 2 reports how Sarajevans perceive these outlets on credibility scales. Respondents were asked to rate each of the following media outlets. The scores reported below represent means of the agreement to descriptive statements about credibility about each media outlet. Credibility scores are derived from questions about bias, objectivity, telling the whole story, propaganda rating, accuracy, public interest and trustworthiness. Sample questions can be found in Appendix E. A score of 100 would be the highest that any one outlet could achieve.

². State-controlled media are identified with the letter (S) and independent media are identified with the letter (I).

Table 2

Mean Score of Perceived Media Credibility³

TV OBN (I)	48.14
TV BiH (S)	43.17
Dnevi Avaz (I) (newspaper)	39.40
Svijet and Dani (I) (magazine)	35.71
Vercernje Novine (I) (newspaper)	37.00

TV OBN is rated higher than the state-controlled BiH TV. The impact of media grantees clearly shows that alternative media in Sarajevo are on equal footing with the traditional state-controlled media. People who use alternative media for news and information receive factual, objective information on which to base their decisions. Moreover, the critical edge of many of these outlets (Svijet and Dani) should encourage citizens to seek accountability of their leaders.

There is significant competition in the Sarajevo media market and there are many more outlets than were examined here. Alternative media in Sarajevo have many challenges before them. Every outlet will have to distinguish its target public, seek out advertising revenue, and prepare for the day when the international community withdraws support. Some outlets will no doubt fail to become commercial enterprises. Self-sustainability is a major concern for OTI media grantees. Some media organizations such as **Radio M**, **Svijet** and **Dani** have strategic plans for marketing and advertising sales. Interviews with editors and managers showed that these outlets have realistic plans for revenue building and even expansion. Other grantees such as **Radio Grad**, **Radio Zid**, and **Media Plan** may need more guidance as to how to make the transition from grantee to commercial media.

³ . State-controlled media are identified with the letter (S) and independent media are identified with the letter (I).

Tuzla

OTI offices also serve the Tuzla region. The Tuzla office covers many areas that have suffered during the war and it reaches into some of the most remote regions of Bosnia. Moreover, media grantees in the Tuzla region operate in contested areas around the Inter-entity BorderLine (IEBL). OTI/Tuzla also supports many active NGOs that are making significant contributions to peace, democracy and community-building.

Alternative Media

OTI supports many media grantees in the Tuzla region including television, radio, and print outlets. Media grantees range from small radio stations based in private homes to politically sophisticated weekly magazines and television stations. One small radio station illustrates the obstacles facing the alternative media in many parts of Bosnia.⁴ **Radio Glas Drine** is a radio station formed by Bosniak refugees who were expelled from the areas of Zvornik and Bijeljina (now RS territories). Radio Glas Drine serves a community that has been devastated by the war. Refugees in this town still have no running water and there is no economic base for advertising revenue. Most people survive on donations from international relief organizations. Radio Glas Drine is the only radio station in the area that broadcasts objective news and information. Without OTI support this station would not exist and refugees in this area would have no information about their rights under the Dayton Accord or information about returning to their homes.

Several of Tuzla's grantees also reach audiences in the RS and it is this type of cross-entity communication that is necessary for reconciliation in towns such as Doboj and Brcko. Accomplishments of these alternative media include opening up regions where municipal governments have always dominated the media. For instance, OTI staff from the Tuzla and Banja Luka offices have facilitated a relationship between **Radio Slon** (from BiH) and **Radio Jungle** (from RS). These two stations have cooperated on joint programming and air each other's advertisements. Businesses in BiH and RS buy advertisements from one station and then also can have these ads played on the other sister station. This marketing strategy has benefited both stations and also benefits the local businesses that wish to reach publics on the other side of the IEBL.

Inter-entity relationships such as Slon's and Jungle's may help dissolve some of the divisions that separate the Bosnian people. Although Municipal officials have been hostile toward Radio Jungle⁵, survey results show that people in Doboj believe that Radio Jungle is less biased than state-controlled SRT Radio.

⁴ While many media grantees also rely on regional SFOR units for assistance, Radio Glas Drine has been unable to work with its local SFOR because of this unit's loyalty to its sponsoring nation. This is something that OTI staff needs to consider when working with media grantees.

⁵ The owner of Radio Jungle has been the target of numerous threats and actions intended to intimidate the station. During the summer of 1998, municipal officials attempted to build a wall on the entrance road to the radio station. OTI staff immediately responded and the construction of the wall was suspended. In a show of alternative media solidarity, other media outlets (including Radio Slon (Tuzla) and Alternativa Novine (Doboj) reported the incident.

Radio ZOS (Zone of Separation) broadcasts in the Tesanj region and serves both Federation and RS audiences. The director of the station is a professional journalist who brings high standards of journalism to her young staff. Program topics have included freedom of movement on the IEBL, the Dayton Accord, and ethnic tolerance. Likewise, **Radio BET** in Brcko plays an important role in this politically sensitive town. Radio BET has helped to reduce community tensions in Brcko by providing news and feature programming that called for calm during the controversial Arbitration Commission announcement in 1998. While other media were inciting tensions, Radio BET reported objective information and attempted to minimize community tensions.

The OTI/Tuzla Office supports more than 40 different media grantees. The most overtly political magazines and newspapers include **Tribina**⁶ and **Front Slobode**. The weekly newspaper, Front Slobode, publishes a political insert in other alternative papers that are distributed around BiH and the RS. This type of cross-entity publishing is one important step to national reconciliation. To learn more about the impact of OTI media grantees, 100 surveys were randomly distributed to citizens in the city of Tuzla. Ninety-one were returned and 82 were used for the study.

Table 3 shows the results of respondents who were asked to rate the importance of popular media.

Table 3 Percentage of Agreement of Importance of Media Sources for News and Information⁷

<u>Tuzla Media Outlet</u>	<u>Importance as a Source</u>
Front Slobode (I) (weekly newspaper)	42 %
Radio Slon (I)	12 %
Tribina (I) (weekly newspaper)	15 %
TV BiH (S)	33 %
TV Tuzla (I)	66 %
Vercernje Novine (I) (daily newspaper)	32 %

⁶ Tribina is a relatively new magazine. More than half of the respondents in this survey (57 %) reported that they were not familiar with Tribina and did not rate its credibility.

⁷ . State-controlled media are identified with the letter (S) and independent media are identified with the letter (I).

There is a wide variation in public perceptions of alternative news sources. Respondents were also asked to rate the credibility of these media. Table 4 reports the means of the credibility scores. A perfect score would be 100.

Table 4 Mean of Perceived Media Credibility⁸

Front Slobode (I)	34.71
TV BiH (S)	30.42
TV Tuzla (I)	44.71
Vercernje Novine (I)	31.71

OTI/Tuzla grants have reached out to many important geographic areas. OTI/Tuzla's greatest impact is that it supports media that cross the Federation-RS lines. Radio ZOS, Radio Slon and Front Slobode are breaking down barriers and creating a common ground for the people who live in divided regions. TV Tuzla and Vercernje Novine appear to have a very high credibility ratings. These findings suggest that these outlets may be good places to (1) push stories with overtly political content; (2) offer venues for reconciliation; and (3) create even greater opportunities for inter-entity cooperation.

⁸ . State-controlled media are identified with the letter (S) and independent media are identified with the letter (I).

Zenica

The OTI/Zenica office covers an enormous amount of territory including the Herzegovina region. It serves Central Bosnia where fighting between Bosnian Croats and Bosniaks has created many ethnically cleansed areas. The Zenica office supports numerous alternative media outlets, media production and media watch-dog organizations, and NGO grantees for both pre-election activities and everyday democracy-building endeavors.

Alternative Media

The city of Zenica enjoys many different independent media outlets and has access to several Sarajevo media sources. But the OTI/Zenica office also serves people in isolated areas such as Bihac, Kiseljak, Zavidovici, Olovo, Gornji Vakuf, Breza, Livno, and Travnik. A significant population of Bosniaks and Bosnian Croats benefit from OTI media grants to small radio stations such as **Radio TNT**, **Radio Olovo**, and **Radio Zavidovici**. Newspapers such as the **Interesting Paper** operate in rural or ethnically divided areas and serve to negate nationalist voices.

Focus group participants in Zenica, "like having lots of different choices" of media and recognized the names of all of the local media grantees of OTI. However, all focus group participants noted that many of the alternative media sources are not always very believable. For example, one Bosnian Croat woman from Zenica said, "all media, including alternative media, pick up on the negative when it is about Croats. The Croatian enclaves are only covered when there is bad news. All Croatian people are not genocidal but the media makes them look like it. I feel hurt about the way that the media shows my people." In another focus group, a demobilized Bosniak soldier complained that, "I have been at rallies and political events and when I watch the coverage of these events on the news [TV Zetel] I see a different story. I was there. I know what happened and they don't show it."

The credibility of alternative sources is one important indicator of a source's potential impact. Table 5 reports the survey results of 100 surveys that inquired about the importance of media sources in the OTI/Zenica area of operation.

Table 5 Percentage of Agreement of Importance of Media
Sources for News and Information⁹

<u>Zenica Media Outlets</u>	<u>Importance as a Source</u>
TV Zetel (I)	51 %
TV BiH (S)	56 %
Radio BiH (S)	51 %
Svijet and Dani (I) (magazines)	52 %
Vercernje Novine (I) (newspaper)	38 %

It is evident that alternative media are considered important sources of information and many alternative outlets are perceived to be equal to state-controlled media in terms of their importance for news and information.

To gain a better understanding of the credibility of both state and alternative media, Zenica respondents were asked to rate media on the credibility scale. Table 6 reports how citizens in Zenica perceive the credibility of state-controlled and alternative outlets.

Table 6 Mean of Perceived Media Credibility in Zenica

TV Zetel (I)	40.85
TV BiH (S)	42.85
Svijet and Dani (I)	42.85
Vercernje Novine (I)	33.85

⁹ . State-controlled media are identified with the letter (S) and independent media are identified with the letter (I).

The results suggest that TV Zetel is very close in credibility to TV BiH. Dani and Svijet also appear to have favorable ratings. In addition to media grants for Bosniak areas, OTI seeks to fund alternative media in the Herzegovina region. The towns of Mostar and Posusje were studied to understand how Bosnian Croats view alternative media. In Posusje, OTI/Zenica supports a small, independent radio station. Table 7 reports the results of the credibility of the state-controlled media and **Radio Posusje** in this region.

Table 7 Perceived Credibility of Media in Posusje

TV HRT(S)	37.71
Radio Posusje (I)	39.14
Radio Herceg Bosna (S)	44.57
Globus (I) (newspaper) ¹⁰	18.28

Radio Posusje is but a small station with limited reach. However, it scored higher than HRT as a credible source for news and information. The Herzegovina region has yet to receive significant OTI support. Increased attention to this region is necessary in order to achieve OTI objectives.

Mostar is the second city in Herzegovina to be evaluated in this report. The city of Mostar is considered a cultural center of Herzegovina. Today, Mostar is split between Bosniaks and Bosnian Croats. In Mostar, OTI supports the local OBN affiliate on the East side of the city.¹¹ Table 8 reports the results of the media credibility scale of the state-controlled media and **TV Mostar**.

TV Mostar is watched on both sides of the city and is directed by a respected senior journalist. The **Feral Tribune** also receives OTI support for distribution in areas of BiH and its credibility is also examined.

¹⁰ Globus is not an OTI grantee and was added to the survey to show how other independent media are perceived in the region

¹¹ Due to suspected inconsistencies in the sampling method, results will not be generalized beyond the respondents.

Table 8

Mean of Perceived Credibility of Media in Mostar¹²

TV HRT (I)	47.00
TV Mostar (OBN) (I)	59.42
TV BiH (S)	48.42
Slobodan Dalmatia (I) (newspaper)	44.40
Feral Tribune (I) (newspaper)	42.85

OTI has not been able to penetrate all of the regions of the Herzegovina region. However, given the success of the OBN Mostar affiliate and the independent papers, the region appears to be interested in alternative voices.

Alternative media in the Federation are gaining respect and reaching audiences in small and large towns. These alternative media, especially those in isolated areas, contribute much to the free flow of information that is necessary for reconstruction, reconciliation, and democratic processes. The OTI offices in Sarajevo, Tuzla, and Zenica are staffed by professionals who have helped to create an important foundation for peace and democracy in the region. Although BiH is a large territory with many remote regions that still need OTI outreach, many of the existing media organizations are impressive and have positively affected the political and social situation in the Federation.

The OTI/Zenica office should be commended for its efforts to create measures of program effectiveness. The staff had conducted evaluations about its grantees and used these evaluations to make decisions about future grants. More on-site evaluations are necessary to improve the reach and effectiveness of OTI resources.

The next section of this report examines the impact of media transition grants in the Republika Srpska.

¹². State-controlled media are identified with the letter (S) and independent media are identified with the letter (I).

V. EVALUATION OF MEDIA TRANSITION GRANTS IN THE RS

The OTI/Banja Luka office oversees political transition grants throughout the Eastern and Western RS. The political situation in these regions creates many obstacles for pro-peace and pro-democracy NGOs and alternative media.

Banja Luka

Alternative Media

Even before the war, government leaders controlled the media in Serb territories through Serb Radio and Television (SRT). To lessen the hold that propagandistic media have over the people, the OTI/BL Office has supported many alternative media grants. These grants include:

- Covering the costs of print media distribution to remote regions,
- Setting up alternative radio stations in areas with no other alternative media,
- Supporting television stations that will compete with the state-controlled SRT and force it to have more objective news coverage,
- Funding programming that will lead to national reconciliation and political accountability.

There are very impressive media outlets in the RS. One of the most prominent is **Nezavisne Novine** translated as “Independent Paper”. This paper is considered one of the pioneering independent presses in the RS. Managed by a respected professional journalist, Nezavisne Novine offers bold and critical opinions about political, social, and economic topics. According to **BLIC**, a media analysis NGO, approximately 65 % of Nezavisne Novine's content is about political issues. The daily newspaper has a circulation of approximately 6,000 and its weekly edition is also popular. OTI supports the printing and distribution of this paper and funds the distribution of 3,000 copies a day in BiH. Not only are the circulation numbers impressive for this alternative paper, but its prominence as an information source is also noteworthy. Provocative editions of this paper sell out regularly. Moreover, research conducted by the paper suggests that every paper that is sold has 9 readers. This is an excellent source of news and information and its importance in both entities is well-founded.

Nezavisne Novine has recently started a radio station, **NES Radio** that combines the news and information format of the newspaper with popular music programming. The creation of NES Radio is an effective way to magnify the influence of Nezavisne Novine's political content. Its provocative news content and analysis reaches new audiences through the radio station. This type of vertical media development stretches the reach and impact of OTI/BL media grants.

Other important media grantees include **NTV** in Banja Luka and **Reporter Magazine**. NTV is an independent television station and it is an important competitor to the local SRT affiliate.

NTV broadcasts weekly political roundtable discussions and covers political events in an objective manner. More importantly, this station covers news about many different political parties. NTV is one of the only venues for opposition parties to communicate their positions on television. The impact of alternative media in the RS is clear. According to NTV Director Zoran Kalinic, "we, with other colleagues, are the engine of democratic changes in RS. We work for tolerance, implementation of peace, and improved economics."

Another highly visible outlet is Reporter Magazine. This is a critical weekly political magazine that features articles from Federation, Yugoslavian, and Croatian writers. It is directed by a senior Serbian journalist and is considered a provocative source of information. In many ways it is the Serbian equivalent to the Sarajevo-based Svijet and Dani weekly magazines.

OTI's reach extends far beyond Banja Luka. Alternative media outlets in politically sensitive locations such as Prijedor, Bijeljina, Doboj, and Trebinje (**Radio Pegasus**) bring objective information to towns that need it. For instance, in Prijedor, the second largest city in the RS, **Radio Phoenix** broadcasts news and political programming to an area that has no other alternative media. Likewise, in Bijeljina, **PAN Radio** and the bi-monthly paper, **Panorama**, bring the North Eastern RS an alternative perspective to SRT and Srbski Glas.

Surveys conducted in Banja Luka, Doboj, Prijedor, and Bijeljina asked about these grantees and state-controlled media outlets as important sources of news and information. These regions are very difficult for OTI staff to operate in. Although the Dayton Peace Accord has been signed, many towns in the RS continue to let local leaders dominated the political and media scene.

The results of surveys in Banja Luka, Doboj, Prijedor, and Bijeljina are reported in Table 9.

Table 9 Percentage of Agreement of Importance of Media Sources for News and Information¹³

<u>Media Outlets</u>	<u>Importance as a Source in Banja Luka</u>
NTV (I)	48 %
ATV (OBN) (I)	32 %
SRT Radio (S)	36 %
Radio NES (I)	37 %
Srbski Glas (S) (newspaper)	36 %
Nezavisne Novine (I) (newspaper)	42 %

¹³ State-controlled media are identified with the letter (S) and independent media are identified with the letter (I).

These findings suggest that more people in Banja Luka consider NTV as a more important source of information than the OBN affiliate, **ATV**. Nezavisne Novine has a slightly higher rating than the state-controlled newspaper, *Srbski Glas*, and the recently formed NES radio is perceived as equal to SRT Radio by Banja Luka residents.

To follow-up on these statistics, respondents were asked to rate the credibility of each of these media. Results are reported in Table 10. A perfect credibility score would total 100.

Table 10 Mean of Perceived Media Credibility in Banja Luka¹⁴

NTV (I)	42.85
ATV (I)	27.71
SRT (S)	35.42
NES Radio (I)	36.00
Nezavisne Novine (I) (newspaper)	36.85
Reporter (I) (magazine)	31.28

Alternative media supported by OTI/BL enjoy favorable credibility ratings. In a related question, Banja Luka respondents were asked to identify the reasons why they watch television. Forty-three percent of the respondents claim to watch television to learn information about current events. The high credibility rating for Banja Luka-based NTV shows that objective information is not only recognized in the town but people view NTV as more credible than the SRT TV.

Other survey questions inquired about how much consideration and discussions were prompted by information from different sources.

- 44 % of respondents in this survey who read Nezavisne Novine spend time thinking about the issues raised in the paper. A similar finding,
- 35 % of respondents who listen to SRT, actually think about the material.

- In a question about discussing issues raised by different media sources, both Nezavisne Novine and SRT were both rated equally as stimuli for public and private discussions (39 %).

In an effort to measure the impact of media grantees in other regions of the RS, surveys were distributed in Dobož, Prijedor, and Bijeljina. In Dobož, 75 surveys were randomly distributed. A total of 73 were usable and results of the Dobož survey are reported in Table 11 and Table 12.

Table 11 Percentage of Agreement of Importance of Media Sources for News and Information¹⁵

<u>Media Outlets</u>	<u>Importance as a Source in Dobož</u>
SRT (S)	76 %
Radio Jungle (I)	41 %
Srbski Glas (S) (newspaper)	47 %
Nezavisne Novine (I)	38 %
Reporter Magazine	28 %

It appears that state-controlled media have a distinct advantage in their acceptance as an important news source in Dobož. The next table examines media credibility.

¹⁵ State-controlled media are identified with the letter (S) and independent media are identified with the letter (I).

Table 12 Mean of Perceived Media Credibility in Doboj¹⁶

Alternativa (I) (weekly paper)	24.57
Reporter Magazine (I)	23.84
Nezavisne Novine (I)	35.42
SRT (S)	47.85
Radio Jungle (I)	30.00

In Doboj, SRT continues to be considered the most credible source of news and information. Although Nezavisne Novine is objective, trustworthy, and over 37 % of respondents claim that it stimulates discussions about current issues, many people continue to believe that it is used for propagandistic purposes by the opposition parties.

Focus groups participants in Banja Luka commented that alternative media such as Nezavisne Novine, "work for the opposition and say what the international community tells them to say." Editorial content at these alternative media outlets is never influenced by OTI staff but unfortunately, the public does not know this.

The city of Prijedor was also a part of the media survey. Seventy-five surveys were distributed and 64 were used as part of this analysis. Prijedor is another hard-line city with a strong municipal government in the post-war RS. It may be best known for the number of war criminals who have lived there. Tables 13 and 14 examine media perceptions in Prijedor.

Table 13 Percentage of Agreement of Importance of Media Sources for News and Information¹⁷

<u>Media Outlets</u>	<u>Importance as a Source in Prijedor</u>
SRT (S)	68 %
Radio Phoenix (I)	41 %
Srbski Glas (S) (newspaper)	54 %
Nezavisne Novine (I) (newspaper)	59 %
Reporter Magazine (I)	58 %

¹⁶ State-controlled media are identified with the letter (S) and independent media are identified with the letter (I).

¹⁷ State-controlled media are identified with the letter (S) and independent media are identified with the letter (I).

Table 14

Mean of Perceived Media Credibility in Prijedor

ATV (OBN) (I)	45.28
Reporter Magazine (I)	35.71
Nezavisne Novine (I)	34.71
SRT (S)	31.70
Radio Phoenix (S)	30.40

Alternative print media in Prijedor appear to have a strong following. Radio Phoenix is still a new station and given time and support, it will no doubt increase its credibility rating.

The final city to included in the survey is Bijeljina. Like Dobož and Prijedor, Bijeljina is controlled by hard-line politicians. However, former SDS Prime Minister Dodik was elected from this region and he has benefited from local alternative media such Panorama and PAN Radio. Indeed, the directors of Panorama and PAN Radio believe that their media helped Dodik gain a high position in government. PAN Director, Milan Cvjetinovic said, "when Dodik was opposition, he always called us with information. We covered his positions and events. Now that he is Prime Minister we have to chase him."

A total of 50 surveys were distributed in Bijeljina and 48 were used as the basis of this analysis. Tables 15 and 16 report the results of the survey.

Table 15 Percentage of Agreement of Importance of Media Sources for News and Information¹⁸

<u>Media Outlets</u>	<u>Importance as a Source in Bijeljina</u>
SRT (S)	73 %
Radio PAN (I)	54 %
Srbski Glas (S)	63 %
Nezavisne Novine (I)	46 %
Reporter Magazine (I)	33 %

Table 16 Mean of Perceived Media Credibility in Bijeljina

Panorama(I) (weekly paper)	26.28
Reporter Magazine (I)	35.71
Nezavisne Novine (I)	33.00
SRT (S)	47.42
Radio PAN (I)	44.42

It appears that alternative media in Bijeljina are catching up to the state- controlled media in terms of credibility. Panorama and Radio PAN are lead by three professional journalists who will no doubt continue to challenge political leaders and motivate citizens to hold their elected officials accountable for their actions.

¹⁸ State-controlled media are identified with the letter (S) and independent media are identified with the letter (I).

VI. CONCLUSIONS

Media and political transition grants in Bosnia are contributing to the project areas of alternative media and civil society. The data collected for this evaluation suggest conclusions about the impact of OTI activities in Bosnia.

Conclusion #1: OTI Is A Primary Force In Fostering Alternative Media

Before the war, the state controlled all media in the former Yugoslavia. Although Voice of America and Radio Free Europe were broadcast to the nation, the majority of people were forced to rely on government-controlled media for information about political, social, and economic issues. During the war, unscrupulous leaders manipulated the state media for their own ends. Government domination and manipulation of the media were major causes of the ethnic violence that occurred during the war.

OTI assistance seeks to foster an alternative media that can operate without government or political direction. To this end, OTI has allocated substantial financial and human Resources to create commercially viable, alternative media. There are hundreds of media grantees in the RS and BiH. Without USAID/OTI assistance many of the smaller radio and print outlets would not exist.

More than 75 % of the journalists interviewed for this report stated that USAID/OTI was their only source of funding for equipment and operating expenses. This shows that OTI often breaks new ground and reaches out to regions and outlets that no other international organization is able or willing to serve. Moreover, this finding shows that OTI support is crucial to keeping objective, alternative information flowing throughout the region. **Without OTI support, freedom of information and increased political discussion could not occur in many regions of BiH and RS.**

Conclusion #2: NGOs Give Citizens More Information Than Ever Before

Numerous OTI-funded NGO grantees in BiH and the RS organize public forums, roundtables, and political discussions. Other NGO grantees create and distribute information about vital topics such as refugee return, ethnic tolerance, and elections. Because of these efforts, citizens in both BiH and RS have more local and regional political information than ever before. As one NGO president stated, "today, if someone wants information about a situation, there is an NGO for them." Many of these NGOs use information as a basis for stimulating participation in political development.

NGOs play an important role in ensuring that citizens have alternative information. Citizens have always had access to the government's perspective through the state-controlled media but today, thanks to alternative media supported by OTI, citizens can also learn about different views. Increased exposure to information can lead to increased media sophistication. Bosnians are not sophisticated media users; therefore OTI's civil society initiatives help to foster the ability

of Bosnian audiences to discriminate between information sources.¹⁹ Media sophistication and the ability to critically analyze information is a gradual process that takes years and training to develop. OTI offers the first step in this process--the creation of alternative perspectives.

Conclusion # 3: Media Outlets Create Opportunities for Political Dialogue

A key aspect of civil society is the ability of people to participate in the local and national political dialogue. In Bosnia, the alternative media contribute to political dialogue in several ways. First, alternative media rely on objective sources for information in their news programs. Most radio stations interviewed in this report stated that they re-broadcast VOA and RFE. In addition, many alternative media rely on homegrown news services such as ONASA, AIM, and FLASH for objective and factual information. Homegrown independent news services never existed before the war and their existence and prominence has been created and sustained by OTI grants.

A second way in which OTI grants have contributed to political dialogue is through the creation of a variety of contact programs on radio and television. Contact programs allow political candidates and elected officials to communicate their positions to a wide audience. These programs let the public call in and ask important questions. **This format was unknown before the war. It is, however, crucial for civil society because it gives the public an opportunity to ask difficult but questions about important issues.** Moreover, broadcast contact shows offer opposition candidates media exposure that the state controlled media refuses to give.

For example: one radio station in the Federation planned to have the current elected leaders appear for contact shows. The radio station will play excerpts by the politicians from their 1997 Election speeches and interviews and then use these excerpts to ask the politicians why they did or did not achieve certain political promises. This is an effective way to hold political leaders accountable for their campaign platforms.

A third way that the media contribute to political dialogue is to help publicize political activities. In the not too recent past, opposition candidates and political leaders were not even mentioned by the state-owned media. Even worse, if these candidates and leaders were mentioned, they were attacked or criticized. Today, opposition figures can find an outlet for their issues through alternative media. Perhaps more importantly, some state owned media (especially in the RS) have slowly begun to acknowledge their existence and legitimacy to be heard.²⁰

A fourth way that OTI grants have benefited the creation of political dialogue is through encouraging NGO and media relationships. Several media work together with local NGOs to jointly hold and broadcast citizen forums, roundtables, and public meetings. Coordination

¹⁹ Suggestions for increasing media literacy in the region include the incorporation of media education into the high school and university curriculum, class visits and lectures by alternative journalists about the role of the free press, and workshops sponsored by NGOs to educate citizens about questioning and challenging media content.

²⁰ OTI/BL media grantee, BLIC, a media monitoring organization, has reported that state-controlled SRT television coverage of news and current events has been influenced by competition from the alternative television stations NTV and ATV. SRT content has traditionally followed the lead of state-controlled media in Pale, however, beginning in August 1997, news content and tone moderated.

between local NGOs and the media will exponentially increase the reach of these forums and build strong relationships between the grantees. Relationship-building between media and grantees should be encouraged and facilitated by OTI staff.

Conclusion # 4: Print Media Offer National and International Perspectives

With OTI support, multiple daily, weekly, and bi-weekly print sources have emerged. Many of these sources feature columns from writers in different parts of the nation and even different parts of the world. Although this is not an explicit goal of OTI, it serves to bring the region, especially the RS, back into the world community. For example, in Nezavisne Novine, columnists from Sarajevo, Mostar, Belgrade, Paris and London are featured. Print sources also cover important stories happening in the other regions--especially the War Crimes Tribunal at the Hague.²¹ These varied national and international perspectives can correct mis-information disseminated by government-controlled media and may eventually create a common knowledge base for readers in both BiH and RS. This common frame of reference is necessary for national reconciliation, community-building, and future inter-entity cooperation.

Conclusion # 5: Alternative Television Has High Credibility

In the past few years, several alternative television stations have emerged. Some of these television stations are linked to the Open Broadcast Network (OBN) and the directors have created this alliance hoping to gain equipment and training from the network. OTI supports alternative stations in large, strategic areas such as Banja Luka, Zenica, Mostar, and Sarajevo. These stations broadcast important documentaries (some created by other OTI grantees) and offer viewers objective and fair perspectives on news events.

Alternative television stations have featured political programs for the 1997 election and have also planned many programs for the 1998 election. Television offers one of the few venues for citizens to actually see the political candidates as they campaign for office. Moreover, the alternative television stations play important public service announcements that educate people about election registration and procedures. OTI civil society grantees such as Gradanski Glas in the RS have created provocative public service spots that complement print, radio and poster election education campaigns. Given the high credibility rating of TV Zetel, NTV and TV Mostar, OTI should continue to place public service announcements and encourage political content in these media.

²¹ Objective and accurate coverage of the International War Crimes Tribunal at the Hague is very important for audience in both entities. Mis-information could easily incite ethnic tensions.

Impact Assessment

This evaluation concludes that OTI efforts in the Bosnia Transition Program have met many of its stated objectives:

- OTI media grantees contribute to easing community tensions by communicating objective information during times of crisis and offering venues for political discussions. NGO civil society grantees have reduced community tensions by creating public forums for discussions, offering negotiation and legal services, and serving marginalized groups such as demobilized soldiers and ethnic minorities. Continued relationships between media and civil society NGOs will further improve the situation in the region.
- OTI grants have helped to cultivate democracy by supporting NGOs that sponsor political events, distribute election materials, and offer opposition candidates a forum to voice their positions. Public service announcements sponsored by OTI also have educated people about the principles of democracy and voting.
- OTI projects continue to promote basic political freedoms. Through publication and distribution of the Dayton peace accords, OTI has informed thousands of people about their rights to property, legal representation, and voting privileges.
- OTI is a leading force in promoting alternative media whose content, editorial concepts, and commitment to objective and accurate reporting negate nationalist voices. Many OTI media grantees enjoy more favorable credibility ratings than state-controlled media. This finding shows that money spent on highly rated outlets is having its intended impact. Moreover, more projects in remote areas are also needed to extend the reach of objective and accurate information.
- Alternative media encourage the political participation of opposition groups and offer concerned citizens ways to reach their elected officials.

OTI's media program has had a positive impact on the situation in Bosnia. Continued efforts are required to ensure that the progress of the last two years can be sustained. Certain lessons have been learned that can help OTI re-direct its continuing projects in the region and help plan for future transition programs in other post-crisis societies.

The next section of this evaluation outlines lessons learned during the Bosnian Transition Initiative Project.

VII. LESSONS LEARNED

- OTI media grantees have contributed to easing community tensions by communicating objective information. Without OTI grants to alternative media, Bosnians would have less choices and would have to rely only on the government for information and news. **Support for media development should be included in future OTI transition programs.**
- The concept of “alternative media” is still unclear to many Bosnians. Citizens need to understand the concept and function of alternative media. A coordinated strategic communication effort should be used to introduce and shape understanding of the alternative media so that citizens will not remain suspicious of media messages. Indigenous journalists and editors should be encouraged to take a leadership role in the education effort.
- The exportation of an Americanized commercial, free press into another nation is not an easy endeavor. Media systems exist in the context of national economic, social and cultural factors. Thus, Bosnian media development will follow its own path. **OTI can help guide it along this path with financial and educational support but societal forces much stronger than OTI may have the most impact on the final status of Bosnian alternative media.**
- Overt and visible support for alternative media outlets is important and even crucial during the initial stages of media development. However, as media begin to develop and find their voice, overt support needs to shift so that the alternative media gain acceptance as creators of their own messages.
- Alternative television stations and their programming are cost-effective ways to reach the public. In the survey almost half of the respondents claimed that they would often think about the subjects that they had learned about while watching television. Television is a strategic approach to educate the public about political subjects. It is also a tool to cultivate democratic processes such as election education.
- Small radio stations in remote or sensitive regions are effective ways to reach large numbers of people. Rebroadcasts of RFE and VOA are important sources of information. However, Bosnians also want local stories and news events. Indigenous news services such as ONASA, AIM and FLASH are important for disseminating local news stories to alternative media outlets. Continued support for indigenous news organizations will support the development of free media in the region.
- The print media that are distributed throughout the two entities are considered very provocative. Unfortunately, they are also expensive for the average Bosnian and many citizens believe that they are targeted only to elites. **The print media allow for in-depth coverage and analysis and support should be continued.**

- News exchanges between the Federation and RS newspapers and magazines are an important way to foster unity and correct misinformation. This has built and will continue to build inter-entity understanding. Moreover, this practice extends the research of alternative media into key regions that may be under-served by alternative media.
- Continued attention needs to be given to the Bosnian Croat areas in the Federation. Even though access to these areas is limited, the success of OTI grantees, Radio Posusje and TV Mostar, show that alternative media can have an impact on people's lives.
- Training is an important part of continued media success. Training for journalists and technicians will improve the quality of news content. Training in marketing will ensure the survivability and credibility of alternative media outlets.
- Journalistic practices such as investigative reporting that are popular in the West may have a backlash effect on the credibility of the alternative media when the public is not skilled in judging media messages. Increased training is needed to ensure that media practices that are necessary foundations for civil society are accepted and respected.
- OTI should continue to build on the success of its transition initiatives for media development and identify the media with the greatest impact or potential impact and to begin to prepare them for the day when OTI support ceases. Exit transition plans should continue to help media organizations survive in the future.
- **Continued relationship-building between pro-democracy NGOs and the alternative media is needed to extend the reach of NGO efforts and to ensure that the alternative media contribute to the peace process.**

Based on the lessons learned in the Bosnian Transition Initiative, the final section of this report offers recommendations for future OTI efforts.

VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations may help OTI achieve even greater impact in its efforts in Bosnia and in other situations.

Recommendation #1: Alternative Media Must Clarify The Term ‘Alternative’

Focus group participants and surveys suggest that although people like having alternative media, they do not view them as entirely independent or alternative. Every focus group member commented that they do not always believe the alternative media. Reasons for this attitude include a belief that the media are arms of the opposition, instructed what to say by USAID and the international community, and are only out to embarrass the government. Citizens need to be educated about the relationship between the international community and the alternative media. OTI does not dictate content or tone to grantees. Thus, an information campaign or brochure that focuses on the difference between the state media and the alternative media would help to clarify the position of the alternative media. Gradanski Glas in the RS has the creative talent to do something with this campaign.

Recommendation #2: Media Education For Citizens

Focus group participants and survey results suggest that many people are not ready for the aggressive nature of alternative media. Many people noted that they were tired of the negative stories, investigative reporting, overtly political content, and the scandal mentality of the alternative media. Bosnian citizens are not yet critical consumers of media messages and what may appear to be normal media activity for Westerners, is actually having a backlash effect on the perceived credibility of the alternative media. Critical thinking skills are developed over the course of a lifetime. However, media groups, NGOs and even reporters should organize a series of programs aimed at fostering media education. For instance, reporters could visit schools and talk about how investigative reporting and alternative media serve a democratic society.

Recommendation # 3: Increased Training for Young Journalists

Many journalists are young, inexperienced, and lack a professional standard. Every media outlet asked for additional training to improve the quality, quantity and professionalism of their programming and staff. One of the reasons that many people may have doubts about the credibility of alternative outlets may be attributed to the lack of experience in reporters. OTI has supported many workshops that promote journalist professionalism. More are needed. Recommended workshops should address issues such as objective writing and how to portray both sides of a story. As the staff at alternative media become more sophisticated in their news coverage, the citizens will also become more sophisticated media users.

Recommendation #4: Improving Survivability

Many media grantees (approximately 80% of those interviewed) are still dependent on OTI funding for daily operations, salaries, and/or equipment support. In many cases, little or no efforts are being made to create commercial sustainability. While many media operate in areas with severe economic problems, their unwillingness to plan for sustainability and their continued reliance on OTI money is troubling. Passive acceptance of the economic situation is not beneficial to the grantee or the Bosnian public.

Several media have already implemented creative solutions to make the transition to commercial viability and these media can be held up as role models for less motivated media grantees. OTI must put as much effort into planning for the transition out of a nation as it plans for going into post-crisis societies.

OTI needs to ensure that the grantees that have been supported for the duration of the Bosnia Transition Project have a fighting chance to succeed upon OTI program termination. Many grantees have thousands of dollars of equipment that could be used in revenue-building ventures. Suggestions for improving the survivability of media organizations include:

2. A "Commercial Transition" project should be added to counsel media grantees about marketing and commercial opportunities in their region;
3. Relationship-building with sister USAID organizations such as ENI or other donors should focus on business development;
4. Hiring a "Exit Transition Officer" who can stay behind after OTI's two year mandate is over and further counsel media organizations;
5. Successful media grantees could act as role models or mentors to other outlets to suggest ways to conduct marketing, programming and ways to remain commercially viable;
6. The media grantees with the most potential and impact could be handed over to other international donor organizations for continued economic support.

Recommendation #5: Decisions About Direct or Indirect Funding

OTI directly funds, monitors, and evaluates media organizations in Bosnia. This practice has been effective and but it also quite costly. The benefits to this policy include direct contact with grantees, relationship-building, and close monitoring of grantee progress. However, another alternative exists: funding international media organizations (IREX, Internews). The major benefit to working through these organizations would be removing the USG from the loop. Grantees would not be perceived as accepting money from the American government. Third-party grants may improve the credibility of alternative media in Bosnia. However, the costs of this policy may include the charging of overhead fees that would reduce funds available for activities and the appearance of tacit support for NGO agendas that may not closely parallel

USAID's or the USG's agenda for media development. OTI needs to weigh the costs and benefits of either approach—perhaps through further analysis and study.

Recommendation #6: More Focus on Vertical Media Projects

Several media organizations have started vertical media ventures. Newspapers such as Nezavisne Novine and PANORAMA have opened radio stations. This type of joint venture extends the reach of objective and provocative editorial and news content. This practice also increases the chances for sustainability for the alternative media. Vertical media projects should be suggested, encouraged, and supported.

Recommendation #7: Continued Relationship-Building

Multiple media outlets have little contact with OTI project staff after initial equipment grants. Closer relationships between OTI staff and these grantees will ensure an efficient use of valuable resources. Moreover, there needs to be closer relationships between alternative media grantees and NGO grantees. In phone interviews with 50 NGOs (some OTI grantees and some not), more than 50% claimed that they had to pay to have stories about their organization's peace and democracy building activities reported in local, alternative papers. NGOs need media coverage to amplify the impact of their activities. Given that OTI has funded these alternative media, it seems only reasonable that the media should help out other organizations with democratic goals. OTI should write a policy addressing NGO/media cooperation.

Recommendation #8: Creating Measures of Program Impact

OTI needs to formulate performance indicators to measure grantee impact. This suggestion recognizes that the nature of OTI's mission--to be a fast-paced response to international crises--limits the amount of baseline information that can be gathered prior to program implementation. However, OTI's two year mandate offers a considerable amount of time to collect information to help adjust the allocation of resources. Quantifiable and qualitative performance indicators need to be a part of every OTI grant. Performance indicators are powerful tools to understand grantee impact and can help improve the performance of grantees as they work toward peace and democracy. Appendix G offers some basic outcome measurements for future media strategies.

Conclusion of Report

The development of a free and independent media is an integral part of the peace and democracy process. Objective media will help to promote accountability and responsibility of political leaders. Without a strong alternative media, many regions of Bosnia and the RS may return to "business as usual." More importantly, the violence that destroyed the former Yugoslavia could also return to the region.

OTI's media strategy is to be commended. OTI has collaborated with other donor organizations

(USAID/ENI, OSCE, SFOR, Soros, USAID/Democracy and Governance Center) and has amplified the effects of its media transition plan because of this inter-organization cooperation. However, USAID and OTI need to articulate a grand media strategy for future media development projects. A grand strategy will decrease the chances for duplication of funding, reach more deserving media organizations, and coordinate USG efforts in post-crisis societies.

USAID/OTI has been very successful in its efforts to build peace and democracy in the region. Its proactive policies have reached into many areas that no other granting organization has dared to venture. There is considerable gratitude by many NGOs and media grantees and this gratitude will no doubt benefit USAID and the American public for many years. Finally, it must be remembered that civil society initiatives and media strategies are long-term efforts and more time is needed for the many newly founded organizations to mature. In only two years OTI has assisted a significant number of grantees and now it is time to reap the rewards of OTI transition efforts.

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APPENDIX A

Site Visits and Interviews with Grantees

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Zenica Office

Olovo Radio

Breza Radio

Radio TNT

Media Plus

Zaviadovici Radio

Zetel TV

Media Analysis

Hiatus

Mostar OBN Affiliate

Radio M Mostar

Good Vibrations Radio

Posusje

Konics

Radio Gorni Vakuf

Radio and TV Kisejiak

Sarajevo

Svijet

Media Plan

Dani

Radio Zid

Radio Grad

Radio M

FAMA

ONASA

Tuzla

Radio Glas Drine

TV Tuzla

Front Slobode

Tribina Magazine

Slon Radio

Radio Doboj East

HIT Radio

Radio BET

Studio D

Republika Srpska

Nezavisne Novine
NES Radio
Novi Prelom and Publishing Activities
NTV
Reporter Magazine
Phoenix Radio
Pan Radio
Panorama
Radio Jungle
Gradanski Glas
CSEO-Zlatna Jesen
AIM
Independent Union of Journalists
Revolt Magazine

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR GRANTEES

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR MEDIA GRANTEES

1. What is your organization's objective?
2. Who are your target publics? Why? Describe the impact that you have had on these publics.
3. What support have you received? (support in a broad sense) From whom?
4. What types of support do you need?
5. What obstacles do you face?
6. What training do you need? Equipment?
7. What are your short-range goals? long range goals?
8. How can OTI help you?
9. What is your organization doing to ensure that it survives in the next few years?
10. What other alt. media outlets do you have relationships with? Please describe the relationships.
11. Would you like opportunities to meet other people who work in the alt. media?
12. How can you improve your organization's performance?
13. What do you consider to be the most important story of 1998? 1997? Why?

APPENDIX C: FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

Banja Luka

- Serb Demobilized Soldiers
- Young Serb Women (18-25)
- Serb Youths (Males 17-21)
- Serb Mothers

Zenica

- Croatian Women (25-40)
- Bosniak Demobilized Soldiers
- Female Bosniak Professionals

Tuzla

- Demobilized Bosniak Soldiers
- Mature Bosniak Women
- Male Pensioners

APPENDIX D: SURVEY DISTRIBUTION²²

BiH FEDERATION N= 592²³

ZENICA	N= 100
SARAJEVO	N=297
TUZLA	N= 82
MOSTAR	N= 63
POSUSJE	N= 50

REPUBLIKA SRPSKA N= 402

BIJELJINA	N= 75
PRIJEDOR	N= 64
DOBOJ	N= 75
BANJA LUKA	N=188

Eleven hundred surveys were randomly distributed throughout the two entities in the towns where OTI grantees operated. A total of 994 were returned and 973 (88 % usable) are the basis for the analysis of public perceptions about media credibility and usage. Useable surveys were those considered to be fully and honestly completed. Flip or inverted questions were included to check if respondents were filling out the surveys properly. The surveys deemed incomplete or insincere were deleted from the final data analysis.

²² Response rate ranged for the inter-entity survey from a low of 50% to a high of 67%. That is, for every 100 surveys completed, over 150 people had to be approached and asked to participate. While this number may seem high, it is very common in traditional survey research and even more expected given the history of the region.

²³ Although no recent census data exists for either the Federation or RS, the numbers of participants for each survey location were decided by the size of the city, number of OTI media grantees, and availability of trained survey researchers to conduct the surveys.

APPENDIX E: SURVEY ABOUT MEDIA USAGE AND ATTITUDES²⁴

Media Usage

In the past seven days, how many days did you read or look at a daily newspaper?

_____ # Days 9. Uncertain

On the average day, about how many minutes or hours do you watch television?

_____ Minutes or _____ Hours Uncertain

On the average day, about how many minutes or hours do you listen to the radio?

_____ Minutes or _____ Hours Uncertain

How many different magazines do you read in a typical week? (have you read this past week?)

_____ Uncertain

Importance of Media

Please evaluate each of the following media in terms of their importance to you as a source of news and information:

Name of Newspaper

Very important 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Not important at all

Name of Broadcast Television

Very important 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Not important at all

Name of Radio

Very important 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Not important at all

Name of Magazine

Very important 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Not important at all

²⁴ The questions identified here are the ones that the OTI report is based upon. Other scales were included on the survey but do not directly address the topic of this report.

Media Credibility

Name of Outlet

Is Fair	5	4	3	2	1	Is unfair
Is biased	5	4	3	2	1	Is unbiased
Tells the whole story	5	4	3	2	1	Does not tell the whole story
Is accurate	5	4	3	2	1	Is inaccurate
Serves the public interest	5	4	3	2	1	Does not serve public interest
Can be trusted	5	4	3	2	1	Cannot be trusted
Is factual	5	4	3	2	1	Is propaganda

Demographics

Traditional demographic measure questions.

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APPENDIX G: MEDIA MEASUREMENTS

Below are sample indicators for radio that may help OTI in its evaluation efforts.

In formulating communication strategies, planners often utilize two types of indicators: process and outcome objectives. A process objective is something that you do to achieve the outcome objective. Process objectives are actual tactics such as a certain number of programming hours, number of call-in or question forums, etc. Outcome objectives are a little more complex because they are usually goals for change—change in awareness, attitude or behaviors.

Obviously, process objectives are much easier to achieve. I usually suggest that when business organizations plan a communication strategy, they conduct baseline research and then create their overall outcome objective(s) (to increase awareness about _____ by 20-50%). After this, they should decide what steps are needed (process) to achieve this objective. In your business, I would do the opposite since data collection is not going to be a first priority for OTI staff.

Indicators, then, are ways to measure program success. The nice thing about using both process and outcome objectives as indicators is that the process ones are controllable and achievable. Then, if for whatever reason, an organization does not achieve its outcome objectives, it can still claim some success for its process objectives. Moreover, you don't have to have solid social science research to set process objectives—simple counting works fine.

Radio Process Indicators

1. Hours of a certain type of programming.
2. Number of contact shows.
3. Number of inquiries/questions/comments from contact shows.
4. Number of forums set up to discuss programming.
5. Number of people who listen to particular show(s).
6. Number of people who think about what is discussed.
7. Number of people who talk about topics discussed.
8. Influence of programming on other media—how often is station/programming referred to in other media outlets.

Radio Outcome Indicators (Based on baseline research)

7. Increase awareness of _____ issue by 20-50% over a certain time period.
2. Increase favorable/supportive attitudes about _____ by 20-50% over a certain time period.
3. Increase/decrease _____ behavior by 20-50% over a certain time period.

4. Increase amount of listeners by ___% over a certain time period.

The particular outcome objectives will be dependent on the goals of the radio programming. However, the process objectives outlined above can work for most OTI situations.

Please let me know if you have any specific questions or would like further clarifications.

APPENDIX H: INFORMATION ABOUT THE RESEARCHER

MAUREEN TAYLOR, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor
Department of Communication
Rutgers University
New Brunswick NJ 08901
voice (732) 932-1721, maurent@scils.rutgers.edu

EDUCATION

Purdue University, W. Lafayette, Indiana
1996 Doctor of Philosophy: Public Affairs and Issues Management
1993 Master of Arts: Rhetorical Studies

American University in Cairo, Egypt
1986-187 Arabic Language Institute: One year intensive Arabic

Westfield State College, Westfield, Massachusetts
1986 Bachelor of Arts

RELEVANT PUBLICATIONS

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