



Centrul Independent de Jurnalism

IJC ACTIVITY - 1998

The Independent Journalism Center, founded in 1994, began as a project of the Open World House. Registered as an independent NGO in November 1998, the IJC has received generous support from the Soros Foundation-Moldova as well as the Eurasia Foundation (USAID), US Information Service (USIS), World Bank Small Grants Program, AgroInform, National Program "Pamint", TACIS Democracy Programme, Council of Europe, Knight Foundation, Dynamic Network Technologies (DNT) and the US Peace Corps.

The mission of the Independent Journalism Center (IJC), a non-governmental organization (NGO), is to facilitate the development of media through the support and promotion of professionalism among journalists as well as the development and sustainability of quality independent and objective media organizations.

SUMMARY

IJC activities in 1998 included several short-term training courses and seminars for journalists, media managers, and students; the Chisinau Press Club; the publications "Curier Media," the bi-monthly bulletin and "Media in Moldova," the analytical magazine; administration of the Media on Business/Economy Program; assistance for the formation of the Independent Audio-Visual Association; and organization for consultations for independent newspapers.

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A. SHORT-TERM TRAINING COURSES AND SEMINARS

Computer Courses

In 1998 the computer courses were the again very populat. Lack of knowledge regarding computer usage is still a major problem of the Moldovan journalists. On this account, in 1998, the IJC organized several courses for journalists the aim of which was to acknowledge them with WINDOWS' 95 and WORD 7 (February 16 – 28); Page Maker (computerized page making) – September 14-18.

Supported by the Soros Foundation Moldova.

Training for TV Presenters

1-4 June 1998

Eighteen reporters, editors and presenters from TV stations from Chişinău, Cimişlia, Rezina [i Străeni participated in this theoretical and practical course for TV presenters, organized by the Independent Journalism Center during 1-4 June, 1998. As the presentation style of the television station PRO-TV is much appreciated by Moldovan journalists, we invited Peter Barabaş, Executive News Producer, PRO TV Romania, to give this course.

The training had both theoretical and practical components.

The practical component took place at the TV studio of the Open World House. In order to practice what they learned during the training, participants had the opportunity to use the equipment at the studio of the Open World House.

In the studio they practiced several techniques for TV presenters, including the “stand-up” where the presenter in front of the camera gives a brief introduction to the event/news that has occurred, literally “standing up” in front of say the Parliament or at the scene of the event. They also practiced creating a montage-- how to present and organize their news story. In addition they practiced the creating a plan for interviews.

The two components integral to the success of this training were the expert's high level of professional experience as well as energy and the participant's openness to new ways of presenting news. As most of the participants were young, they had not been heavily influenced by the “old ways” of presenting television programs and could easily understand, accept and adapt these new methods imparted by Mr. Barabaş.

This interactive training, which also stimulated and supported the exchange of opinion and experience among Moldovan TV journalists and presenters, was financed by the United States Information Service (USIS) as well as the Soros Foundation-Moldova.

Radio Reportage Workshops

Advanced

10-15 June 1998

Beginners

20-25 July

Between June 10th and 15th and July 20-25 Patrick Cox, Knight Fellow at the IJC and radio journalist with “The World” Boston, conducted two separatw radio journalism workshops at the Central Independent de Jurnalism and at the studios of Radio D'Or. During each workshop, the six participants, together with an engineer, produced 30-minute news programs, which were subsequently broadcast on National Radio (Program One) and Radio D'Or.

The aim of the workshops were to introduce participants to the concepts of news reportage and programming, as practiced by National Public Radio in the United States. Thirty years ago, NPR debuted on American airwaves, led by a group of young, eager but largely untrained journalists. Today, it regularly attracts over 10 million listeners across a network of more than 550 stations, making it one of the biggest news media success stories in recent years. Not only is NPR popular, it is also highly trusted by both the public and newsmakers.

Radio journalists in Moldova are accustomed to spending no more than a few hours slamming a story together. Most stories use just one, occasionally two sources. So it came as something of a shock to some workshop participants that they would have the luxury of an entire week to produce their stories.

For example, the advanced workshop took 29 hours of studio time to produce a 30-minute program- that is 29 hours of studio time after all the stories and interviews were script-edited. In time, if these journalists build on what they have learned-- and train others-- they can expect to reduce that 29 hours to about 6 hours. But it will take plenty of practice and graft.

Moldovan journalists tried their hand at this in-depth approach to radio journalism. They were exposed to the value of thorough reporting, writing for the ear, and production rich in field-recorded sound. All participants are eager to try again, to learn more. Now, they have to convince their bosses to let them use what they have learned on the job.

The workshops were supported by the Knight Foundation and the Soros Foundation Moldova.

Basic Journalism for Young Journalists

1-4 July 1998 Independent Journalism Center, Chişinău

6-9 July 1998, Dumbrava Alba, Bălţi

The main course objective was to familiarize young contributors to school and student newspapers, from 15 to 20 years old, with the Western (American) standards of writing news and other stories, which are based on an unbiased presentation of facts.

Two courses of the same format were organized in Chişinău (1-4 July) and Bălţi (6-9 July). In Chişinău the course was taught by Burton Bollag, Senior Reporter for Europe, "Chronicle of Higher Education", Washington DC. To teach the course in Bălţi we invited Dasa Obereigner, Senior Editor of "Transitions" magazine, Prague, Czech Republic.

Extremely effective were the practice classes, during which the students prepared news and stories, carried out interviews in the street, participated in a mock press conference and critiqued and edited their classmates' materials. An important component was the meeting between the young participants and experienced journalists from Moldova. "What is the journalist's status today? What is the price of this profession? How can one keep one's writing unbiased? What are the responsibilities and rights of journalists?" – these are only several of the questions answered by "Moldovan press sharks" Anatol Golea (INFOTAG), Andrei Porubin (Radio Free Europe), Arcadie Gherasim (Radio Moldova), Vasile Botnaru (BASA-press), Valeriu Saharneanu (Journalists' Union).

Violeta Cojocar, national consultant for UNICEF, talked during the seminar about children's rights and the importance of their awareness and implementation.

The course was successful because the instructors used the most efficient methods of teaching (games, group work, practical advice, improvised press conferences, etc.), that facilitated comprehension of the material, which seemed complicated at first sight. Also, the instructors used examples from their own experience to show differences between Western and Moldovan journalism; the latter includes in the material the journalist's opinion at the expense of the "bare facts" principle.

The course, in Chişinău and Bălţi was financed by the United States Information Service (USIS) as well as the Soros Foundation-Moldova and UNICEF.

Radio Management Seminar

19-20 November

The seminar in radio management given by James J. Wychor, and American expert in media management for a total of 11 radio station managers from Moldova.

Mr. Wychor, from Minneapolis Minnesota, was very qualified to give this seminar,. He has close to 50 years of broadcast experience, including more than 35 years in radio station management. He has managed both small radio stations with only 5 employees and large stations with close to 50. He chose to focus the topic of his seminar on the "Psychology of Management."

In Moldova concepts of management are new, especially for managers of new and independent stations. Mr. Wychor conducted the 2-day seminar in four sessions, each session having four topics. They included: Reinforcement; The Motivating Power of Praising Publicly, The "Hot Stove Rule"; Analysing Performance Problems; Goal Setting; Dealing with Problems; Handling Employee Complaints (I & II); How to Say No; Delegating Authority; Value Added for your Advertisers; Commercial Copy writing (I & II); Accountability; How to be a Great Manager (I & II).

All in all the sessions were highly interactive and informal. As many of the participants had management experience they were encouraged to share their experience and ask questions of the presenter.

The 11 participants hold posts such as Executive Director, Director, Vice Director, Editor-in-Chief, Manager, Legal Counsel, Program Director, and Music Director at radio stations from Chisinau, Cahul and Balti.

The seminar was supported by the Eurasia Foundation and the Soros Foundation Moldova.

On Access To Information Legislation

December 2, 1998

The workshop was organized by the ARTICLE 19 (London) and the Independent Journalism Center together with the American Bar Association (ABA) Moldova Office. The participants were primarily lawyers and others involved in the drafting of an access to information law which will be presented to the Moldovan parliament in early 1999.

The aim of the workshop was to discuss the draft access to information legislation and to provide the participants with information about international standards which would aid in refining the initial draft (attached).

The international experts were Tim O'Connor who talked about US legislation and from the perspective of a working journalist. Helen Darbishire of ARTICLE 19 provided European experience, including the jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights.

The seminar concluded with the experts noting that the legislation should be formulated in such a way that it provided Moldovan citizens with their rights, avoided definitions which could be exclusive and therefore used as pretexts for refusals to provide information by the authorities, and that the legislation should be flexible enough that it would not become outdated by the changes experienced in Moldova's transitional process.

Finally the experts noted that although they had scrutinized the draft very closely and strongly criticized some provisions, overall the draft was good, and clearly in line with democratic principles. The experts offered to critique revised drafts and to provide further information if required. At the same time, it was stressed that the ultimate shape of the law was for the Moldovans to decide according to local needs and realities.

The seminar was supported by the TACIS Deomcaracy program in collaboration with Article XIX.

Training for Journalists Writing On Economic Issues December 1998

The program was dedicated to professional journalists and students at the Journalism and Communication Studies Faculty at the State University of Moldova (SUM) and those from the Academy of Economic Studies from Moldova (AESM) wishing to specialize in economic journalism. The jury selected the winners (professional journalists) according to the inquiries filled in by participants (42) and their submitted articles (2-3) on economic issues.

In addition to their selection as participants in the seminar, the selected journalists and students participated in internships in Romania at highly regarded media organizations.

The program started on July 13 with a theoretical economic seminar. The seminar was moderated by Gabriel Giurgiu, Executive Diorector, Economic and Business Department of TVR and Eugen Chirovici, Director of the Economic Department, "Curierul National", Bucharest, Romania during the week of July 13-17. The main topics were Investigative Economic Reporting, Ways to Access Economic Information, Transparency in Discussing Economic Problems, Press and Entrepreneurship, Ways to Collaborate, and Possibilities of Supporting Economic Processes with Information.

At the end of the seminar the participants completed an evaluation questionnaire. Sixty percent (60%) of the participants said the seminar met their expectations; 76% said the information they received will be useful for their work in future; 72% said the material presented was accessible and; 88% said the seminar was organized at a high level. In the general comment section, some examples of participants' comments are:

"The seminar was a large success and welcome, having the correct scope of sharing the (journalistic) practices of our neighbors in Romania." "The information presented was interesting and the experts had much knowledge of economics, which generated new interest in the participants."

The second stage of the program was the internships for journalists and university students at the most highly regarded mass media organizations in Romania. The internships took place during September 29-October 2 and were arranged with assistance from the Independent Journalism Center, Bucharest. Journalists had internships at the most highly regarded media organizations in Romania, including at the newspapers: "Capital" (3 people); "Ziua Financiara" (2 people); "Curierul National" (2 people); "Evenimentul Zilei" (2 people); "Rompress" (5 people) and at the electronic media organizations "ProTV" (3 people) and "Radio Romania" (3 people). The participants were assigned to organizations based on the journalists' preferences.

The final component of the internship included articles written and published by the journalists in collaboration with their Romanian colleagues. This collaboration will allow the journalists from Moldova and Romania to know and further understand the economic situation in their own countries and to inform the public about economic issues. The seminar was supported by the Soros Foundation Moldova.

B. PRESS CLUB PROJECT IN CHIȘINĂU

The Press Club, in collaboration with The Committee for Freedom of the Press, began in autumn 1995, is one of the most popular activities of the Independent Journalism Center, having popularity with journalists and politicians of Moldova. The Press Club offers journalists the possibility, in an unofficial atmosphere, to meet and discuss important issues with decision-makers, politicians and other interesting people. Through the broadcast of one meeting per month, the population of Moldova, both in and outside of Chișinău are able to learn more about the important issues in our country.

The Press Club meets once every two weeks: approximately 45-50 journalists attend each meeting. Once per month, there is a televised version of a Press Club meeting.

From this point of view the most important meetings in 1998 were:

- September, 24 – with Serafim Urecheanu, the Mayor of Chișinău.
- November, 21 – with Gheorghe Duca, Iurie Roșca, Ștefan Secăreanu and Vasile Spinei, the members of Parliamentary Committee for culture, science, education and mass media.
- December, 25 – with Ion Sturza, the minister of economy; the budget for 1999 was discussed.

C. PUBLICATIONS

Bulletin "Curier Media"

September 1998, saw the reintroduction of a bulletin for journalists produced by the IJC. "Curier Media" now produced bi-monthly and distributed free of charge to journalists. The bulletin contains information and news of interest, specifically the bulletin:

- Hosts information such as job listings, information about conferences, and international and national programs;
- Reports news concerning media legislation and free speech issues;
- Provides a forum for journalists to communicate with one another as well as for the IJC to communicate with journalists and;
- Highlights media freedom issues so journalists can compare their work conditions with other journalists from around the world.

Analytical Magazine "Media in Moldova"

In 1998 financed in collaboration with the Eurasia Foundation, the analytical magazine *Media in Moldova*, published by the IJC since August 1995 is the only publication, since its beginning and until this time, about the media situation in Moldova. It began as a bi-annual magazine, in 1998 we published quarterly; in 1999 we plan to publish bi-annually.

The authors of the magazine represent a large spectrum of specialists and experts in the domains of independent media and the government. The magazine is published in two languages, Romanian and English, and has a circulation of 500, distributed to local and international media organizations, journalists and experts in the field of media.

As of the end of 1998, we published 3 issues of the quarterly analytical magazine on the media situation in Moldova, *Media in Moldova* ("MM"). Each issue appeared in both Romanian and English and were sent to local media, educational and local institutions, and foreign media organisations.

The first issue (March '98) was dedicated mainly to journalistic ethics, the right of access to information as it can be used in journalistic practice and as it should be according to the Moldovan Press Law and the Law on Audio-Visual. Some other articles topics included the newspaper market in Moldova, in particular the top 10 daily and weekly newspapers, the independent press, an opinion poll about the mass media in the Republic of Moldova as seen by journalists and opinion leaders. This issue also contains an interview with Julianne Paunescu, US Embassy First Secretary of Culture and the Press.

In the second issue (July '98) were published some research on Moldovan media during parliamentary elections, on the party publications, and TV channels which can be received from region to region in Moldova. Some news gathered from news agencies reflected some regulations on media in the last poll. An opinion poll conducted at the beginning of 1998 shows how often people use different mass media in Moldova: frequency of radio listening, reading periodicals, time spent on media consumption, the public's interest in various TV programs, radio programs, etc. Our guest was Dorin Tudoran, IFES program director for Moldova who gave an interview with the editor-in-chief.

The third issue (September '98) had its focus as the news agencies in Moldova: competition in the news agencies market; what is the information business like in Moldova; an attempt to promote information from the provinces; the news and protection of the information area; and the Audio-Visual Council requirements for official language broadcast quota. In the appendices were presented the properties of the news agencies in Moldova and information on newspaper and magazine circulations. One can also read about legal guarantees for media independence in R.M., why is there no free press? and why a stringer will not survive in our conditions? Patrick Cox, a senior producer/reporter with the World, Boston - a syndicated daily international news magazine co-produced by Public Radio International and BBC Radio, was in Moldova as a Knight Fellow for six months, and gave his opinion on radio journalism in Moldova.

Opinions we have received regarding *Media in Moldova* are, in general, positive. Suggestions made by our readers are taken into account. For example, the rubric "Our guest", appears in each issue, in which we highlight opinions on media in Moldova shared by some visiting Western journalists and officials related to media. Several Moldovan newspapers have made references to and use the information published by "MM". For instance, "Saptamina" (June) and "Flux" (September 2, 1998), reproduced information about newspaper circulation in Moldova and frequency of watching different TV programs. (The "Saptamina" weekly and the "Flux" daily are among the top ten newspapers in Moldova). "Libertatea" weekly wrote, on November 18, 1998, about the third issue of "Media in Moldova".

Foreign media organisations have also cited *Media in Moldova*. The IFEX Communiqué #7-40, from October 20, included information from "Media in Moldova" concerning the coverage of elections by the Moldovan press (a copy of the communiqué is attached).

D. MEDIA ON BUSINESS/ECONOMY PROGRAM

On April 8, 1998 the Eurasia and Soros Foundations launched the "Media on Economy/ Business Program" with a press conference at the IJC. The program's goal is to stimulate greater support for economic reforms among the general population and government officials in Moldova by bringing economic and business issues to the attention of the public. At the same time, the program aims to increase both the quantity and quality of economic-related materials in rural, as well as urban, communities, encourage greater interaction and communication between media representatives and the business sector, and provide specialized training for Moldovan journalists.

The program consists of several integrated components that combine training in business reporting with hands-on internships at successful economic newspapers in Central and Eastern Europe, study trips, and small grants for journalists and media organizations to then put these newly acquired skills into practice.

Introductory Seminar

May 27th

On May 27th the Independent Journalism Center organized a one-day seminar for more than 80 Moldovan journalists, editors, TV/radio producers and information agency managers, all participants of the Media on Business/Economy Program.

Eighty four journalists from different regions of Moldova (Orhei, Rezina, Cahul, Glodeni, Criuleni, Falesti, Cimislia, Balti, Chisinau, Basarabasca, Calarasi, Cantemir, Comrat, Hincesti, Ialoveni, Singerei, Tiraspol, Ungheni) participated actively in the seminar. Seventy one percent of them (60 participants) participated in the contest as individual journalists, while twenty-nine percent (24) - as managers of media organizations. Out of 84 journalists, 39% (33) are women and 61% (51) are men. Sixty eight percent of journalists (57) are Romanian speakers and 32% (27) are Russian speakers. The majority of the participants in the program work as editors and special reporters. The seminar provided an impetus to covering topics that are usually poorly dealt with by the mass media.

Training and Internships Sessions for Economic Journalists

22 – 27; 19 – 25 June 1998

Seventeen Russian-speaking and forty two Romanian-speaking journalists responded to the invitation to take part in training followed by internships in Ukraine and Romania by filling out questionnaires distributed during the introductory seminar. Training and internships in Romania were organized through a joint World Bank and Soros Foundation Moldova program, "Training and Internships Sessions for Economic Journalists".

The week-long training on economic journalism, organized for the 17 participants representing Moldovan print media, as well as broadcast media, was held in June 22 – 27, 1998 at the IJC. It was conducted by Victor Tarnavsky, Editor of the analytical department, daily "Finansovaya Konsulitatie" and Vladimir Colomiet, Editor-in-chief, radio and TV company "Studia-Plus", (Kyiv, Ukraine). Training topics included lessons in country economic development, budget and state financing system, external trade, privatization and market infrastructure development, monetary system and currency exchange regime, preparation of TV and radio stories, specifics of economic stories in press, news and promotion campaigns, information sources, legal protection and safety of journalists and some others.

In June 22 – 27; 19 – 25, 1998 sixteen of the seminar participants went on internships at successful economic mass media organizations in Ukraine, selected by the participants. The journalists visited the following economic newspapers and journals: "Finansovaya Konsulitatie", "Kievskie Vedomosti", "Business", "Sobstvenik", "Investitionaya gazeta", "Kompanion", as well as the TV studio "Studia-Plus".

First Round Competition winners

Twenty journalists were selected as winners of the first round competition. Of them 70% (14) are individual journalists and 30% (6) are managers representing media organizations. Thirty-five percent (7) of participants are women and 65% (13) are men. Forty-five percent (9) are Russian speakers and 55% (11) are Romanian speakers. From the total number of winners 65% (13) work in press, 20% (4) in TV, and 15% (3) – in radio.

Internships in USA

28 November –12 December

The two-week program ran from November 28 to December 12, 1998, and included visits to in Washington, D.C., Philadelphia, PA and New York City. Through professional appointments and briefings at a variety of journalistic venues, participants gained an understanding of how economic and business issues at the local, national and international levels are covered by the U.S. media.

Participants learned how American news organizations, such as *USA TODAY*, *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Kiplingers Personal Finance* magazine, *Journal of Commerce*, *CNN*, *CBS-News Affiliate* in Washington, D.C. and *National Public Radio*, cover national economic policy, investigate and obtain reliable information, convey complex business and financial information to the public and deal with ethical considerations.

A second competition was announced among the participants, again for a four-month period, for the best coverage of economic and business development issues. Three journalists and two media organizations will be selected as winners by a review panel. Journalists will receive professional equipment, and media organizations, additional institutional development grants.

E. STRENGTHENING INDEPENDENT BROADCASTERS IN MOLDOVA

autumn

In October, with support from the International Center for Journalists (ICFJ) and the United States Information Service (USIS), Michael Beardsley came to Moldova to assess the climate of Moldovan broadcasting in order to help organize an Association of Broadcasters.

Following Mr. Beardsley's visit and assessment, Jim Wychor, of Wychor Communications, began to meet with broadcasters from independent, commercial stations in Chișinău and from the Republic. They discussed what an Association for Independent Broadcasters would mean, how it might help them and how to form one. More than a dozen meetings were held at the IJC. By-laws were drafted and the Independent Audio-Visual Association (APEL) of Moldova is beginning to take shape, with plans for official registration in 1999.

The project will be completed with a follow up visit from a consultant supported by ICFJ and USIS in the summer 1999.