



FREE PRESS UNLIMITED
MEDIA INCUBATOR FOR THE WESTERN BALKANS
PILOT PROJECT

EVALUATION REPORT

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*The views and interpretations expressed
in this report are the author's and do
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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

FPU	FREE PRESS UNLIMITED
GP	GLAS PODRINJA
K2.0	KOSOVO 2.0
LN	LOZNICKE NOVOSTI
LPA	LOCAL PRESS ASSOCIATION
MIWB	MEDIA INCUBATOR FOR WESTERN BALKANS
NSSJ	NOVI SAD SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM

MEDIA INCUBATOR FOR THE WESTERN BALKANS PILOT PROJECT

EVALUATION REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Free Press Unlimited (FPU) Media in Western Balkans (MIWB) pilot project aimed to stimulate media and media organisations to innovate insofar as possible and enable them to develop ideas tailored to their needs and/or of their audiences. The innovation in this context was described as **“the creation of opportunities that enlarge spaces of expression AND citizen engagement that may help increase the reach and impact of independent media.”** These innovations were not necessarily to be propelled through technology only, but also through storytelling, media campaigns and other creative solutions to better connect with target audiences.

The focus countries of the MIWB project were Kosovo and Serbia with three local implementing partners, out of which one local partner (Local Press Association from Serbia) had four members of their association taking part in the project. The project started in February 2019 and lasted until 31 July 2020. It was funded by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

FPU’s implementation approach emphasizes the value of forming true **partnerships with local implementers to co-develop project plans and build capacity.** This approach led to FPU being perceived by its partners as a refreshingly different type of partner that takes a novel approach in its project implementation. By helping its partners to better understand their audiences and to identify common niches that outlets could fill, FPU motivated its local partners to embrace innovation and change even in such a short time frame.

The Media Incubator’s focus on **increasing media outlets interaction with their audiences and encouraging citizen engagement** is unique and fills an important gap not addressed by the interventions of other donors and international and local NGOs in Serbia and Kosovo. As such, FPU should attempt to build on this pilot with a larger-scale project.

The project was highly relevant from the needs’ perspective, even though each of the partners had different capacity levels, profiles and potential target audience sizes. Local partners also used a variety of platforms to communicate to their target groups, thus comprising a good testing sample for the MIWB pilot project through which a variety of lessons learned could be drawn.

Once a framework was agreed and put into place with each partner, FPU encouraged partners to innovate and experiment as much as they deemed necessary throughout project implementation in order to best attain their intended project goals. However, there proved to be both strengths and weaknesses in employing this “flexible” project implementation approach, because not all partners perceived it in the same way. Some partners perceived this flexibility as freedom to significantly change project activities and target audiences which, ultimately, reduced the level of effectiveness and impact.

There were clearly different levels of progress made by the different partners, **with Local Press Association having made the most progress**; Kosovo 2.0 having made more limited progress and Novi Sad School of Journalism making the least visible overall progress.

There was also a significant difference in quality of performance and results delivered by partners which had external consultant throughout the project implementation process and the partners which did not.

There were no negative project results registered, but some risks and unforeseen challenges (COVID-19 pandemic) negatively affected the overall anticipated achievements of MIWB project results.

The partnerships formed with a media association and individual media outlets had larger target audiences and attained more visible and tangible results than the partnership that was made with an educational institution.

The transformative impact on individual and organisational capacity became apparent through anecdotal evidence and information gathered through interviews for this evaluation.

When it comes to target audiences that were contacted in the compilation of this evaluation, they reported that they feel empowered by having been provided with new spaces where they can voice their opinions and share their stories as well as their problems and they see media as their partners (Local Press Association); Local activists feel more visible as they are recognized by their peers and their local communities as agents of positive change (Kosovo 2.0 storytellers) and the Novi Sad School of Journalism students who provided feedback stated that they use the knowledge acquired at the workshop on regular basis, particularly Mobile Journalism.

The evaluation puts forward five main recommendations to FPU:

- Given the short period and the timing of the evaluation (just one-month after the project ended), systemic, long-term outcomes cannot yet be determined. As such, it is recommended that FPU revisits the partners six months after the project's end to better understand the long-term impact their participation in the pilot had on the way they're conducting their work. This can best be done by conducting interviews with implementing partners and conducting surveys with their target audiences. If COVID-19 conditions permit, actually visiting these partners would facilitate further insight. Even if FPU's project support does not continue in Serbia and/or Kosovo, such data would be useful resource for FPU's strategy and involvement elsewhere, as well as serving as an informative tool for other donors which might be interested in building on FPU's pilot.
- Based on the results achieved through this pilot project, **if FPU can continue with the Media Incubator in the Western Balkans project it should focus on partnerships with media associations and/or media outlets** – as they proved more successful in directly engaging with audiences and in attaining the main project goal: “strengthening public interest journalism AND civic engagement in innovative ways,” while the educational institution partner had only indirect impact and limited results in attaining this goal.
- An expert with knowledge of the local context proved to be a unique value-added factor for the partners which had such a consultant, namely Local Press Association and its four members, and

FPU should consider having a pool of external consultants with knowledge of the local operating context to work with its future implementing partners on any continued MIWB project.

- Given the feedback from participants about how this project increased their relevance and allowed them to focus on their needs and the needs of their target audiences, FPU should promote relevant results of this pilot project with other international organisations/donors and discuss potential partnerships with them.
- FPU should, if at all possible, attempt to build on this pilot with a larger-scale project.

1 PREFACE

On July 1st, 2020 Free Press Unlimited (FPU) contracted Ivana Kahrmann, to conduct an evaluation of its pilot Media Incubator for Western Balkans (MIWB) project. The project was implemented in two countries: Kosovo and Serbia with three local implementing partners, out of which one local partner (Local Press Association) had four members of the association taking part in this project. The evaluation took place from July 13th to July 23rd and included the collection of qualitative and quantitative data from 83 sources and a review of relevant key documentation provided by FPU and implementing partners.

2 METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents key methodological elements of the evaluation, namely the main methodological considerations, data collection methods, challenges and constraints.

The purpose of the evaluation, as outlined in the Terms of Reference (ToR), was ‘to determine if the Media Incubator project managed to achieve its objective, and learning being the primary purpose of the evaluation.’

FPU’s Terms of Reference (ToR) provided important guidance for the evaluation methodology. It was clear on the purpose and focus of the evaluation and provided advice regarding lines of inquiry, data collection strategies, deliverables and the time plan that should be adhered to.

The ToR notes three evaluation criteria: Relevance, Effectiveness and Indications of Impact as it was clear that there were limitations to evaluating impact and sustainability because the project has just ended.

As the ToR stipulated, this project was to be an **experiment** itself and sought to be as flexible and adaptive as possible, the evaluator used the following methodology: “Outcome Harvesting”, a participatory methodology in which key stakeholders identify, validate, and make sense of outcomes that they have influenced. This methodology was particularly useful because activities and outputs were flexible at the time of an intervention and because the Media Incubator for the Western Balkans project involved more than one implementing partner.

The evaluation methodology, which is articulated in more detail in the inception report in *Annex I*, was based on project document reviews and was validated with evidence collected from 83 respondents in two phases:

- In the first phase, interviews were conducted with 20 main stakeholders: representatives of implementing partners' teams, three journalists involved as mentors, the FPU Programme Coordinator and an External Consultant.
- In the second phase, to further enhance the solidity of the data collected and to verify it, the data was triangulated through interviews with 35 end-users and, in the case of GRAD - twenty-eight more readers responded to the evaluator's online survey designed to address qualitative aspects of the project.

The whole evaluation process was characterized by a strong participatory, utility and learning focus. It was of crucial importance during the process of evaluation that the evaluator was able to interview all partner organisations' teams and as many end-users as possible that were targeted by the MIWB project (see *Annex II* for the full list of informants)

	FORMS OF INTERVIEWS			
	ZOOM	Telephone	Email	In person
FPU Project Leader	•		•	
External consultant		•	•	•
Novi Sad School of Journalism Team	•		•	
Novi Sad School of Journalism Target Audience			•	
Novi Sad School of Journalism Mentors			•	
Kosovo 2.0 Team	•		•	
Kosovo 2.0 Target Audience			•	
Local Press Association Team	•	•	•	
JUGpress Team	•		•	
JUGpress Target Audience		•		
GRAD Team	•		•	
GRAD Target Audience		•	•	
Glas Podrinja Team	•		•	
Glas Podrinja Target Audience	•	•		
Loznicke Novosti Team	•		•	
Loznicke Novosti Target Audience		•		

3 PROJECT BACKGROUND

Free Press Unlimited's previous experience in the Western Balkan region goes back to 1993 and lasted until 2013, when it ended its activities in Kosovo after exiting from the rest of the region three years earlier. The decision to withdraw from the region was largely in line with that of other international NGOs, which generally agreed that the region had reached the level of having sufficient democratic space and media freedom for the transition process to continue independently.

Following increased reports of significant backsliding in media freedom in the region, FPU commissioned a scoping study of the Western Balkan media situation early in 2018.

3.1 Scoping study findings

The study outlined the overall regional picture as well as the distinct situations in five countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, and Serbia). The scoping scan confirmed the difficult environment for media outlets and media professionals throughout the region. Most of these difficulties are shared among the five countries, including strong control by political and business interests, weak and oversaturated markets, limited access to information, a lack of independence of media regulators and public service broadcasters, poor working conditions, low levels of professionalism and a strong sense of 'fatigue' and resistance to badly needed reforms. Most of these difficulties are protracted problems. A new and highly troubling problem which has reemerged is hostility towards journalists and journalism.

Stakeholders that FPU consulted noted a crisis in the overall understanding of the role of the media, and a fear that it has lost its democratizing position within the political system. Conventional independent outlets have either closed or been co-opted throughout the region, while a proliferation of unprofessional portals have eroded faith in the digital world as a safer, freer, and alternative space. Numerous investigative journalism organisations have become active and respected throughout the region, but they remain donor funded, with limited audiences, and with sporadic impact. Together with the **political and economic problems and pressures** media are exposed to, one of the main problems of independent media is their **limited impact and general low levels of citizen engagement**. Many of the people FPU spoke to agreed that media seemed to have lost their sense of purpose, as well as an understanding as to whom they serve and why. They also identified a wide gap between the media and the audiences they claim to serve and a reluctance on the part of many media outlets to engage meaningfully with their audiences, and to keep pace with the changes that have been brought about by the digital revolution.

3.2 FPU Added Value

FPU is widely known for its personalized approach, whereby it tends to **closely work with local partner organisations to co-develop approaches with a high degree of local ownership**.

FPU therefore works with pre-identified organisations, rather than applying a competitive call for proposals. The latter approach is one that most other funding schemes prefer and is an approach that enables a higher number of applicants, and thus cherry picking. It would also require a certain level of administration and a linear form of project management that was not considered favorable for the

experimental nature of this pilot project, where initiatives to be supported would result from less formal and more creative ideation processes, personal exchanges and adaptive management.

The idea for this pilot was rooted in the experience of FPU in countries with even higher levels of repression and media capture, but where innovative thinking and approaches have been able to make a considerable difference.

Next to in-house experience, examples closer to home - such as the Dutch Fund for Journalism Innovation that aims to support quality, diversity and independence of journalism in The Netherlands, show that promoting innovation through targeted support can have rewarding results and give a push to interesting media initiatives and projects.

FPU believed that a similar approach tailored to the specific context of the Western Balkans could have an equally beneficial effect for the media sector and journalism in the Western Balkans. From the conducted scoping study and visits, it concluded that media in the Western Balkans have not been exposed to similar support initiatives nor have they had many opportunities to experiment.

The MIWB pilot project aimed to stimulate media and media organisations to innovate in every form possible and enable them to develop ideas tailored to their needs or that of their audiences. The innovation in this context is described as **creation of opportunities that enlarge spaces of expression AND citizen engagement** that may help **increase the reach and impact of independent media** that are not necessarily solely propelled by technology but through storytelling and other creative solutions.

Thanks to a grant from the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the project started in February 2019 and lasted until 31 July 2020.

3.3 Selection of countries and partners

The focus countries of the project were Serbia and Kosovo. The choice was made on the basis of the mentioned scoping study which indicated that while all the countries in the Western Balkans region had similar problems, Serbia was increasingly worsening in terms of media development, and with Kosovo FPU had the most recent relations with (exiting there last) and it wasn't yet as crowded with donors working in this area as the other countries.

FPU decided to test out this pilot project with local partners it had experience cooperating with in the past which are active in the identified niches for intervention and which had also expressed an interest to participate in such a pilot.

All partners came from diverse backgrounds and are at different stages of their institutional development. As such, these partners provided a good representative sample for exploring the feasibility and potential efficacy of any similar larger-scale interventions in the Western Balkans going forward.

By opting to work more closely with local organisations and co-develop interventions, the pilot project was used to test activities that could lead to development of a more long-term approach to innovation in future.

4 EVALUATION FINDINGS

Four main findings are highlighted in this evaluation:

- Project outputs were more visible where the project was implemented by teams which worked effectively together and had an external consultant throughout the whole project implementation.
- There are clearly inconsistencies in the progress made across the projects, **with Local Press Association having made the most progress**; Kosovo 2.0 having made more limited progress, and Novi Sad School of Journalism making the least visible overall progress. Some possible reasons for these differences are explained in the evaluation, but there is the need to provide more time to undertake a more detailed exploration and analysis of the factors affecting the success or otherwise of the approach.
- The transformative individual and organisational capacity impacts are clear from anecdotal evidence and from some of the interview evidence found during the evaluation process.
- Media Incubator's approach to increasing media outlets interaction with their audiences and **encouraging citizen engagement is unique and fills an important gap** not addressed by the interventions of other donors and international and local NGOs in Serbia and Kosovo thus, FPU should attempt to build on this pilot with a larger-scale project.

4.1 Relevance

In order to assess the extent to which the project supported the priorities of the intended beneficiaries, target groups, implementing partners and the donor, and the extent to which the objectives of the project contributed to the overall project objective, the evaluator addressed the following questions:

4.1.1 To what extent has the project purpose responded to the needs and interests of local media and media organisations?

4.1.2 Have the activities implemented been relevant for achieving the project's objective?

4.1.3 How do the partners perceive the adaptive approach applied by FPU? Was this approach relevant for their specific needs? Would they have preferred a different approach?

4.1.4 Was the project's innovative approach relevant for the specific needs of the target audiences? Would they have preferred a different approach?

4.1.1 To what extent has the project purpose responded to the needs and interests of local media and media organisations?

The project purpose responded to the needs and interests of local media organisations which took part in this project to a large extent. This is because FPU made sure the relevance of the purpose of the project was established before project plans could be devised. The FPU Programme Co-ordinator held a series of in-depth discussions with each partner organisation about what they thought their challenges were and how they might overcome them.

One of specific values FPU strives for in partnerships with local **implementors is in capacity building** and in **co-developing** project plans. In particular, the projects implemented in the South and projects of other FPU partners were analyzed specifically to identify useful elements that could potentially be relevant for the Western Balkan region attempted through the MIWB.

Some 100 links to reports and examples were sifted through and relevant selections shared with each partner organisations. Key to this search was to find examples that would be relatively easy to tweak to local circumstances and not take up too much available capacity nor necessarily require expensive additional expertise.

In addition to this “toolbox”, the FPU Programme Co-ordinator also prepared a short **document named “Guidelines”** that helped partners in the pre-project phase to identify the team that would be involved and list problems and ideas they think are important to address and prepare a brief project description. This document also included reference to the need for evidence for the problem or need they identified which they would base their project ideas on.

Each partner acknowledged the FPU Programme Co-ordinator’s value, special efforts and commitment demonstrated during this very important phase of the project which led partners and the FPU MIWB project to the very first outcome of this process: a realization that none of the partners were used to conduct any kind of meaningful research. As such, FPU’s requirement for research was established as the essential first step.

After this phase, FPU required from all three partners to conduct audience needs assessment either in the form of surveys and or direct talks with their audiences before they would start together with FPU to co-develop project activity plans towards identified target audiences.

This was the first time that the local media participating in the project had asked local audiences if what they do is needed, good and relevant as well as what they should do to be more relevant to them.

The impact that the needs assessments findings had on partners was the second direct outcome of this pre-implementation phase -- as it was the first time for all partners to apply such an approach and they all agreed that - thanks to the surveys’ findings - they only then became aware of the level of detachment they had from their audiences and the need to reconnect and even expand them.

Local Press Association, with the help of FPU, designed and conducted the survey on its own, while Kosovo 2.0 commissioned a local agency and the Novi Sad School of Journalism commissioned a local media expert to conduct the survey on the needs and interests of journalists.

Novi Sad School of Journalism (NSSJ) is the only partner in this project which started project implementation before the findings of the survey were fully revealed and, consequently, had less visible results than Kosovo 2.0 and Local Press Association. NSSJ engaged a renowned media expert to conduct the survey on the educational needs of working journalists and to test relevance of the five topics planned to be addressed in the five-day Media Lab workshop they had envisaged: Digital storytelling; New technologies and journalism; Investigative reporting techniques; Safety of journalists, and Data journalism. The survey that was conducted had 77 responses and the findings were expected to be presented before NSSJ hosted its workshop but, due to illness of the expert, the NSSJ was given only raw data before the workshop, while findings were revealed fully only after the workshop ended.

4.1.2 Have the activities implemented been relevant for achieving the project's objective?

FPU's insistence on establishing the relevance of the project with partners as early as possible in the pre-project phase and on devising activities accordingly was of crucial importance for planned activities to achieve the project's objective: **strengthening public interest journalism and civic engagement in innovative ways.**

Once the relevance was established, FPU "gave" partners flexibility in the implementation phase to test out different tools and resources that FPU equipped partners with, while implementing innovative approaches until they found their right niches.

Owing to the flexible implementation framework, there were some minor adjustments made in partners' activity plans that didn't affect the overall relevance of the project, with the exception of the case of the Novi Sad School of Journalism which implemented the planned activities but not with the audience initially targeted: young already working journalists.

Had NSSJ team waited for the findings, it would have been able to adjust their programme and leave out the topics that didn't resonate well among surveyed journalists such as Data journalism, and this would probably have led to higher interest from the initial target audience: working journalists. Due to the low interest from this target group (only one local young journalist applied), NSSJ switched the focus of their workshop to students of journalism.

The reason was already explained in chapter 4.1.1. In retrospect, the NSSJ team came to the conclusion that the most effective way to get local young journalists to take part in some sort of similar training would be to offer shorter and/or "on the job" training. NSSJ saw this as an important lesson learned, but it didn't try to test this approach out during their implementation of this project.

Particularly popular and perceived as innovative and relevant among audiences were: #Citizensreport" campaign initiated by Local Press member JUGpress and #Lifeintimesofcorona Facebook campaign where another Local Press member GRAD invited their followers to share with them photos of views from their terraces during COVID-19 moments during the Easter holidays, and photos from their immediate surroundings.

Five video stories from Kosovo 2.0, that were published during the project implementation period within their #Iwanttotell" campaign, were also well received by their target audience according to the feedback storytellers received from their local community. But it is too early to support this statement by the volume of viewers and interactions, as the campaign has only started in February 2020.

4.1.3 How do the partners perceive the adaptive approach applied by FPU? Was this approach relevant for their specific needs? Would they have preferred a different approach?

Both partners and the external consultant noted that donors, international but even more so Serbian (usually governments) had made local media dependent on short-term financing where the themes were more driven by donors' priorities than they were in addressing the real needs of the local media and the audiences they serve.

- **FPU** worked closely with selected media organisations in "pre-project" phase and equipped partners with sources and ideas for potential innovation with the aim of inspiring them, motivate

them to get out of their comfort zones and to try out something new and relevant in communication with their audiences. All partners claim they felt positively challenged and that because of the experience with FPU MIWB, they changed also the way they are now thinking and operating.

- Equipped with the ideas, resources and tools FPU gave them and having clear project plans FPU co-developed with them, **partners felt highly motivated** to significantly adapt and modernize their way of working and thinking to achieve the MIWB project objectives.
- **Due to high level of the project adaptability, it was interesting to notice that - as the project was progressing - partners felt increased ownership** of their projects, even in those cases where the ideas for them did not necessarily originate from them, and belief that the MIWB project's purpose truly mirrored their and their audiences' needs and interests, otherwise they say – they wouldn't have done it. This is perceived as a positive change.

4.1.4 Was the project's innovative approach relevant for the specific needs of the target audiences? Would they have preferred a different approach?

The accumulated number of citizens' stories, comments, requests to media organisations that took part in this project to assist them in addressing problems in their communities, increased content about youth and for youth, and the feedback the evaluator received from **target audiences who all noticed the positive and new approach to them**, confirms that, overall, the project's innovative approach was **relevant to the specific needs of the target populations** and shows the potential of these media outlets to bring lasting changes to their communities.

All target audiences the evaluator interviewed (youth and citizens in the case of Local Press and youth activists in the case of Kosovo 2.0) confirmed that they noticed a change in the content, which they now see as more relevant for them than it was six months ago. More importantly, they see these media outlets as new possibilities for citizens engagement which they didn't have before this project.

Participants of NSSJ workshop evaluated the workshop programme as innovative and relevant because it provided them with new set of skills they needed but couldn't acquire at their respective universities: especially MoJO (mobile journalism) and fact-checking.

4.2 Effectiveness

This chapter addresses the MIWB's registered overall results as well as activities and results on partner's levels that contributed to the attainment of the overall Media Incubator goal.

Deviations from planned activities and results of each partner organisation that hindered the achievement of results and project objective are also listed and explained in this chapter.

The questions that helped in evaluation of the project's effectiveness were:

4.2.1 What have been the results (positive and negative) of the Media Incubator project and what, if anything, was unique about the project for achieving the results?

4.2.2 What factors hindered the achievement of results and project objective?

4.2.3 How has the context in the two countries affected the project and consequently effectiveness of the project?

4.2.4 What are the 'success factors' that increased the chances for certain media to achieve more in experimental, innovation-led projects in comparison to the rest of the participants?

4.2.5 What are the lessons learned?

4.2.6 To what extent were the target groups reached?

4.2.1. What have been the results (positive and negative) of the Media Incubator project?

As already explained in 4.1.1, one of FPU's specific values in partnerships with local implementors is in their capacity building while co-developing project plans. The following is a project goal hierarchy FPU co-developed with local partners where there was one main overall MIWB project goal set and each partner defined their specific sets of goals that would contribute to the achievement of the MIWB goal:



4.2.1.1 MIWB MAIN OVERALL PROJECT RESULTS:

- **Links to reports and inspiring examples that FPU collected** for each partner organisation helped partners source for ideas that will be most suitable for their local contexts. In addition to this “toolbox”, FPU equipped all the partners with **Guidelines** that would help partners in pre-project phase to: identify the team that would be involved, list problems and ideas they think are important to address and prepare a brief project description.
- FPU’s insistence on needs assessments and assistance in their preparation with each partner of the MIWB Pilot was of crucial importance for the projects to be clearly designed and with specific goals. **The impact that the audience research findings had on partners was the direct outcome of this pre-implementation phase as it was the first time for all partners** to apply such approach after five to seven years and made them aware of a level of detachment from their audiences and the need to reconnect and even expand them.
- With a co-developing partnership approach, FPU contributed significantly to partners’ capacity building and their changed behavior and to more innovative ways of thinking by partner organisations that are relevant for the sustainability of certain aspects of the project (listed in chapter 4.5 Sustainability).
- Survey findings are helping partners stay relevant to their audiences; develop long-term strategies and plan future projects.
- The project led to a change of mind sets of the partner organisations’ teams:
 - Local Press partners utilize gained knowledge about innovative ways of engaging with their audiences, while audiences welcomed the positive change they experienced when able to increase their interaction with respective media.
 - Local Press partners became aware of the advantages of engagement and interaction with citizens via online media platforms and face-to-face campaigns versus traditional media forms.
 - Local Press Association and Kosovo 2.0 registered increased engagement with their audiences and intend to continue interaction with them through the activities started with this project.

MIWB Negative Project results:

There were no negative direct results of the pilot project registered in the evaluation process, nor negative feedback received from the partners and end-users. There is one negative unintended consequence of the intervention on partners’ organisational level and is listed in chapter 4.3.2 *Indications of impact*

4.2.1.2 EVIDENCE OF RESULTS OF PARTNERS' SPECIFIC PROJECTS:

Evaluation limitations: The evaluator would have liked the chance to collect more feedback from Workshop participants of the Novi Sad School of Journalism (only four gave feedback: two from Nis, one from Novi Sad and one from Belgrade) and a random sampling of the audiences of “JUGpress”, “Glas Podrinja”, “Loznicke Novosti” and “Kosovo 2.0” could not be explored due to limited time for the evaluation. Despite these limitations, the evaluator obtained enough information to be able to provide reliable findings, come to evidence-based conclusions and provide recommendations in line with the purpose of the evaluation.

Main finding of the project effectiveness when it comes to the partners' level of contribution to attainment of the main project goal is: There are clearly inconsistencies in the progress made across the projects, **with Local Press Association having made the most progress**; Kosovo 2.0 having made more limited progress and Novi Sad School of Journalism making the least visible overall progress.

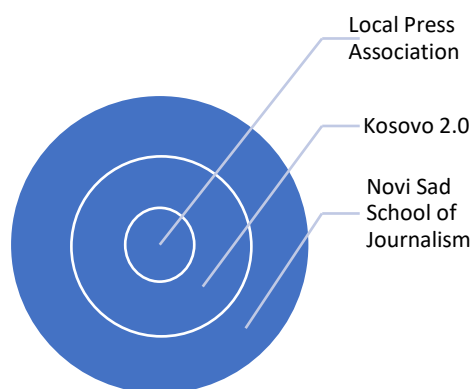


Figure 1. Partners' level of contribution to the MIWB main project goal

Novi Sad School of Journalism (NSSJ) “Media Lab”

Project Idea: Media Lab aims to improve the knowledge of young journalists in a way to benefit newsrooms they will work in the future and thus improving the future state of media in Serbia. Regaining the trust of young audience in journalism, by promoting young journalists who are able to produce the content in a modern manner, that has been fact-checked and without misinformation.

Main goal listed in partner's project proposal: Empowering young journalists to use new ways of media reporting in Serbia.

***Specific goals listed in partner's project proposal:** Teaching journalists about Data journalism and data visualization; Giving the participants set of skills needed to make professional grade story by using simple tools such as their smartphone, as well as how to present it in an approachable and interesting way. Training the Media Lab participants on ways to debunk misinformation and how to check any piece of information provided for their work. Providing the knowledge of innovative practices in reporting. Strengthening the position of women media professionals, by having at least 50% female participants.

**Some of the specific goals were defined as outputs and activities while project idea was formulated as a goal so it was challenging to harvest actual outcomes of this intervention.*

Target group: 15-20 aspiring young journalists (aged 20-27, from different cultural settings) to be selected from a pool of young media professionals, local newsrooms (Serbia), and online media dealing with specific subjects (fake news debunking).

Outcomes reported by partner:

- 15 young journalists have been equipped with the basic knowledge of the new media trends and techniques that they will be able to use in their future work. During the duration of the programme a pair of participants has been hired by different news outlets to work for them as factcheckers and journalists.
- Another big outcome of the project is the insight received by the report on journalist's educational needs that will have a big role in all the future planning of similar workshops, trainings and seminars.

Evaluation findings of Intended vs. Actual project activities and outcomes

	Intended	Actual
Specific goal	Young journalists empowered to use new ways of media reporting in Serbia thus benefitting their newsrooms and their future as journalists.	Limited evidence: Students of journalism were empowered instead to use new ways of media reporting in Serbia. The goal has not been fully attained as initially planned target group was working journalists so the goal with the actual target group can potentially be attained only when the students get employment in newsrooms.
	Strengthening the position of women media professionals, by having at least 50% female participants.	Confirmed: Ten out of 15 selected participants were female.
	Intended	Actual
Activities	Survey among journalists aimed to answer the questions concerning the working journalists' opinions on innovative approach to profession.	Done, but findings were delayed. Due to the illness of the expert who conducted survey, the full findings came in later than expected, and NSSJ decided to conduct the workshop before the complete findings were revealed.
	Media Lab - a five-day workshop covering the latest trends in journalism	Done but with 14 students of journalism and one working journalist. (10 female and 5 male).
	Five-month mentorship: Five teams of three trainees mentored by NSSJ instructors while working on five different stories.	Confirmed. Five stories that have been published at the end of the project are: <i>Failure of the Public Transportation</i> : https://cutt.ly/ri3ZaZ9 <i>History and Future of the Public telephone units</i> : https://cutt.ly/8i3Zlna <i>Fake news and Coronavirus</i> https://cutt.ly/Xi3ZHf5

	<p>Young people and poverty –Link: https://cutt.ly/ci3ZQbl</p> <p>Origin of clothes in second hand stores in Serbia –Link: https://cutt.ly/0i3ZY6H</p> <p>Video course: Media Lab lecturers will be separately filmed for the video course. Videos will be published at the end of the project so that journalists who didn't enroll in this year's Media Lab still can learn about the subjects, journalism students and general audience interested in the subject.</p> <p>FPU introduced NSSJ to Journalism Lab of Hogeschool Utrecht School of Journalism with aim to explore potential for collaboration and long-term partnership between the two institutions.</p>	<p>Not confirmed. NNSJ didn't publish video course but five 2-minute video tutorials on Mobile Journalism, Factchecking, Investigative journalism, Advanced Google search and Open access Database sets. Link: https://cutt.ly/5i3lkia</p> <p>One Skype session materialized between NSSJ and Dr. Yael de Haan, lead researcher of Journalism Lab but did not lead to further actions.</p>
	Intended	Actual
Outputs	<p>15-25 young journalists learned how to use Data journalism and data visualization and are applying new skills.</p> <p>Survey findings will have an important role in all the future strategic planning across all platforms Kosovo 2.0 utilizes.</p> <p>Participants equipped with the knowledge necessary to tackle all the tasks demanded by the modern newsrooms, as well as to improve the current state of the newsrooms in Serbia.</p> <p>Research of journalists' needs will potentially present other problems that Media Lab could solve in the future installments.</p>	<p>Confirmed. Participants equipped with the knowledge necessary to tackle all the tasks demanded by the modern newsrooms, as well as to improve the current state of the newsrooms in Serbia produced five stories and aer</p> <p>Confirmed. Research of journalist' needs presented 40 more educational topics that Media Lab should address in the future.</p> <p>Limited evidence. According to interviews with 4 participants that responded to call for evaluation – their knowledge on new Has increased and as a result they feel better equipped to meet the demands of modern newsroom.</p> <p>Confirmed. Research of journalist' needs presented 40 more educational topics that Media Lab should address in the future.</p>
	Intended	Actual
Outcomes	<p>15 young journalists have been equipped with the basic knowledge of the new media trends and techniques that they will be able to use in their future work.</p>	<p>Confirmed. 14 students of journalism and one employed journalist trained in how to use Data journalism and data visualization and the 4 trainees who gave their feedback claim they use new skills especially Mobile Journalism (MoJo).</p>

Insight received by the report on journalist's educational needs that will have a big role in all the future planning of similar workshops, trainings and seminars.

To be confirmed at later stage. According to interviews with NSSJ staff, they intend to use the findings for future planning (due to lateness in delivery). This information should be confirmed/re-checked in 6 months to validate the findings.

Registered unintended outcome: Three students were offered employment as factcheckers and data journalists by mentors of this workshop.

Innovation aspect and evidence of its impact:

It was the first time that NSSJ organized workshop of this intensity and pace: five-day course followed by five-month mentorship. This approach was suggested by the FPU coordinator, who had good experience with this model in a number of innovative training projects she had designed for other countries. She also advised NSSJ to incorporate mobile phone reporting into the curriculum.

According to NSSJ and four participants who responded to call for evaluation, it was an inspiring new experience for all. Participants indicated that they liked the interaction and discussions with the trainers/mentors and found particularly useful sessions on debunking of misinformation and mobile journalism as these are the topics not addressed at the curriculum of their respective universities.

Registered project deviations:

Target audience: NSSJ initially planned to host workshop for 15-25 local young journalists but due to the low turnout (only one journalist registered for participation) they moved the focus to students of journalism. This change of focus has resulted in a significant decrease of probability of attaining their project goal that stated: Empowering young **journalists** to use new ways of media reporting in Serbia **thus benefitting their newsrooms and their future as journalists** as only one workshop participant was employed. According to mentors, only few students were willing to get out of their comfort zones during the mentorship part of the project and try out new techniques and skills learned at the workshop, while the majority preferred to stay in the zone of traditional "old-school" reporting style.

Media Lab lecturers were planned to be filmed for the online video course so that the workshop would be made available to all journalists and students interested in the subject. However, only five short video tutorials were made on Mobile Journalism, Factchecking, Investigative journalism, Advanced Google search and Open access Database sets and are available on NSSJ website.

	Set	Verified
Indicators	15 journalists will finish the Media Lab	Not verified. 14 Students of journalism and one working journalist finished the Media Lab workshop.
	5 cross-regional stories will be made and published in relevant Serbian media	Limited evidence. Five stories were produced but were published on NSSJ website.
	Number of people taking the survey and the report with commentaries made by an expert from Novi Sad School of Journalism	Verified. Expert collected and analyzed feedback from 77 local journalists who suggested 40 educational topic NSSJ should consider.

15 pieces of media content made during the production of the major story **No evidence.**

At least 5 educational videos in the online course will be published for other who didn't enroll in the Media Lab so they can still learn about the subjects, journalism students and general audience interested in the subject. **No evidence.**

Kosovo 2.0 (K 2.0) "I Want to Tell"

Project Idea: Taking into account that youth lack the means to share thoughts, as well as the opportunity of engaging with what is shared to them, K2.0 through this project seek to reevaluate its approach, depending on what youth have to say and those conversations with youth will be turned into immediate action by K2.0.

Furthermore, while K2.0 is continuously introducing new, innovative formats of journalism, the age group that engages mostly with K2.0 content is from 25-34. This project is an opportunity for K2.0 to revisit their activity, and identify ways of strengthening its connection with youth, and to tailor its production in a way that youth absorbs and interacts with it best.

Main goal: Explore how youth in Kosovo interacts with media, in order to find new ways of exposing them to professional journalistic content.

***Project specific goals as presented in project proposal:**

- Countering youth's exposure to negative portrayals of groups and issues by online media.
- Lack of media consumption research/ behaviors of youth, and their engagement with media.
- Lack of knowledge on how youth can utilize media/loss of trust in media.

**In project proposal the specific goals that were defined presented more problems the partner wants to address so it was challenging to compare intended versus actual outcomes of this intervention.*

Target group:

Youth of age 18-30 is the target of the project.

Outcomes reported by partner:

- K2.0 gained more insights on youth's views on how they interact with media
- Young people introduced to more critical media content

Evaluation findings of Intended vs. Actual project activities and outcomes

	Intended	Actual
Specific goal	Countering youth's exposure to negative portrayals of groups and issues by online media	Confirmed.
	Lack of media consumption research/ behaviors of youth, and their engagement with media	Not clear definition of the intended goal.
	Lack of knowledge on how youth can utilize media/loss of trust in media	Not clear definition of the intended goal.
	Intended	Actual
Activities	Survey "How youth interacts with media in Kosovo?" conducted	Confirmed, but findings took longer than expected, which resulted in delayed launch of the video campaign. External agency was commissioned to conduct survey on how Kosovar youth engage with the media. A sample of 416 people living in the 38 municipalities in Kosovo aged 18-30 was used. The majority of the respondents (73%) were Albanian, 13 percent were Serb and the remaining 14 percent consisted of the other ethnicities that live in Kosovo.
	Focus groups will be designed to create space for youth to share their opinion without being directed towards any kind of responses. The overarching goal of the focus-groups will be to respond to the question HOW do youth engage	Confirmed. The focus groups aimed at targeting the same age group, held in the seven regional centers of Kosovo.
	Social media promotion of video campaign	Confirmed. The video campaign was promoted on K2.0 online Facebook and Instagram platforms and was viewed by 50K viewers.
	Implementation of #IWantToKnow video campaign	Total of five videos were published but with frequent change of the campaign's focus. Partner frequently changed the name and the focus of the video campaign before it launched and kept adjusting it to the circumstances (COVID-19) even after it was launched. What was initially planned to be #IWanttoKnow" campaign changed to "IWanttoTell" and due to COVID-19 it switched temporarily to I #IWanttotellAboutSolidarity" campaign.

	Kosovo 2.0 Network of Vloggers launched after the fifth video is published		Yet to be confirmed.
	Intended	Actual	
Outputs	Survey findings will have an important role in all the future strategic planning across all platforms Kosovo 2.0 utilizes	To be confirmed at later stage. According to interviews with K2.0staff, they intend to use the findings for future planning (due to lateness in delivery). This information should be confirmed/re-checked in 6 months to validate the findings).	
	Youth exposed to more critical media content, by giving them the opportunity to ask questions, broaden their views and be more critical in the information they accept	Limited evidence. Five video stories produced by youth activists published so far mainly on Kosovo 2.0 YouTube channel and its Facebook page but not all the five were translated from Albanian to Serbian and English languages as partner planned, only the first three stories.	
	Intended	Actual	
Outcomes	K2.0 will gain more insights on youth's views on how they interact with media and why they choose a specific medium to follow, which will help K2.0 in our future production of content, thus producing content that fits the needs of youth.	Confirmed. 416 young people ranging between 18 to 30 years old from 38 municipalities in Kosovo shared their opinion about Kosovo media, their needs and interests.	
	Young people introduced to more critical media content, by giving them the opportunity to ask questions, broaden their views and be more critical in the information they accept.	It was not possible to assess directly because of the timing of evaluation. Hence the findings reflect the views of Kosovo 2.0. project team and those who participated in preparing the videos.	
		Registered unintended outcome: Kosovo 2.0 planned to be in charge of the whole video production process of "I want to tell" stories with youth activists from pre- to post-production phase but, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, they realized the process should be more participatory from storytellers/activists and this approach was perceived as positive and engaging by activists who contributed with their stories.	

Innovation aspect and evidence of its impact:

A nation-wide **survey with specific focus on youth audiences** and their interests and perceptions of media, was a novelty because no one has done it before.

It was the first time that Kosovo 2.0 launched a video campaign aimed at promotion of stories of youth about youth positive activism. The campaign promotional video inviting youth to send in their stories was posted on K2.0 Facebook and Instagram channels and was seen by ca 100.000 viewers while five vide stories were seen by ca 8000 viewers and counting.

Registered project deviations:

Because the survey findings took longer than expected, K 2.0 was late with the video campaign launch and once it started it kept changing the name and the focus of the campaign which is most likely one of the reasons why it doesn't have higher number of viewers.

The initial working title of the pilot developed by Kosovo 2.0 was #IWantToKnow campaign (#Podumedita). However, following the results of the audience research this changed to #IWantToTell (#PoDuMeTKallxu) campaign.

While in #IWantToKnow campaign citizens would have had the chance to raise questions about a variety of issues they wanted to have more information on, the #IWantToTell campaign created a platform for young citizens not to just ask questions, but to be the ones telling and making the stories.

Kosovo 2.0 project team initially planned to be in charge of the whole video production process of the "I want to tell" campaign, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the team decided to invite storytellers to record stories themselves. This deviation was welcomed by storytellers who saw this as "promotion" from passive storytellers to active filmmakers of their stories.

Because of COVID-19, Kosovo 2.0 adjusted the name of the campaign to #IWantToTell About Solidarity" and after the third video was published, the name and focus of the campaign was readjusted back to #I WantToTell. This most likely is one of the reasons why the number of viewers is not as high as expected as frequent adjustments of the main theme makes it more difficult for audiences to follow the thread of the campaign.

Kosovo 2.0 planned to develop a network of local reporters-citizens but that didn't materialize before the project ended.

	Set	Verified
Indicators	Number of respondents of the survey based on their age	Verified. A sample of 416 people living in the 38 municipalities in Kosovo aged 18-30 was used. The majority of the respondents (73%) were Albanian, 13 percent were Serb and the remaining 14 percent consisted of the other ethnicities that live in Kosovo.
	Number of respondents from rural and urban areas	
	Findings from the survey on the section of social media interaction	
	Number of participants in the focus groups	
	Number of participants from different communities in Kosovo	Limited evidence. Five youth (four Albanian and one Turkish) produced five stories in

Albanian language that were seen by 8,000 people before the project ended. Three out of five stories were translated into English and Serbian languages.

Local Press Association – Local Press Lab

Project Idea: “Local Press Lab” was envisaged as a collaborative effort to exchange ideas and know-how and test various options to increase audience and audience engagement **in four local media outlets** that participated in the project. The project idea was inspired by an initiative in the U.S. called the Local News Lab, which was one of the examples shared by the FPU Programme Coordinator. Together with FPU, the Local Press Association tailored the model of the Local News Lab to suit their members and local conditions.

The key assumption upon which the idea was built on, is that selected local media have varying degree of knowledge and experience, which can be utilized, to design and implement innovative actions that will be tested individually. It was also assumed that a collaborative approach will foster the connections between these media and inspire a dose of healthy competition. The main idea was to study easy, non-costly ways to increase responsiveness to audience/community needs even for media that have only two or three employees.

Main goals:

- To increase the audience and/or audience engagement of four local media outlets, members of Local Press, by deploying collaborative approach in designing and testing innovative, low cost strategies and tactics.
- Additionally, the whole project will be one big experiment for the Association in identifying new ways to collect and disseminate knowledge among members.

Target groups:

The four media outlets selected for the programme were: Glas Podrinja, Loznicke Novosti, Grad and JUGpress. According to preliminary surveys newspaper Grad and agency JUGpress are recognized as trustworthy and relevant by their local communities. Two remaining media – Loznicke Novosti and Glas Podrinja were chosen based on their previous engagement with targeted audiences (youth) and on the merits of their experience and capacity for meaningful audience engagement.

Outcomes reported by partner:

- Enhanced capacities of four local media to increase audience and audience engagement using combination of tested and innovative approaches.
- Established capacities of Local Press key staff to closely analyze members’ needs and capacities in order to strategically provide services for each member.
- Tested model for collection and dissemination of knowledge among Local Press members.
- Assembled training resources (guidelines, manuals, presentations) for the members of the Association together with the outline for the new section (knowledge base) on LP’s web site

Evaluation findings of Intended vs. Actual project activities and outcomes of Local Press Lab

	Intended	Actual
Outputs	Developed new competencies and skills to work with the members	Mostly achieved. Several important skills and competences were developed by Local Press staff during the project, such as: capacity assessments, audience engagement appraisals, methods to organize group exchange, video production, mentoring, coaching etc. However, the association still heavily relied on external trainers and consultants to finalize the project.
	Improved understanding of members' capacities and needs for the coming period	Achieved. The interviews conducted with the LP Association Secretariat, 4 media and the external consultant appointed by FPU all confirm that LP Secretariat has significantly improved their knowledge and understanding of the specific capacities and needs of their members, prompting the Association to adjust their strategy, plan for new activities and include some of the fresh ideas and findings into projects with other donors. <u>Indicators and MoVs:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Membership needs survey (with 50+ respondents) - 10 field visits and in-house trainings with 4 partners - 3 trainings organised for all project partners - 4 audience surveys (with app 400 respondents)
	Intended	Actual
Outcomes	Strengthened relationship with targeted members	Achieved. Although this was one of the results that was not mentioned in the project application, members confirmed that more regular contact and visits by LP Secretariat have additionally strengthened their bond and commitment to joint values.
	Enabled new educational resources and tools.	Achieved. This is the part where the results achieved exceeded initial expectations. During the course of the project, LP Secretariat and its external associates produced the following resources and tools. <u>Indicators and MoVs:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A tool for assessment of audience engagement capacities - Two guides on how to use Google and Facebook analytics - Guide - Facebook for promotion and audience engagement - Newsletter with 20+ ideas for local media during pandemic - 10 video tutorials on how to write project applications
	Gained experience and lessons learned from implementing LP Lab project	Mostly achieved. To be confirmed in 6 months. Some lessons learned and strategic (re)directions were already integrated into LP's daily work and visible in new projects with donors such

as Deutsche Welle and NED. Still, LP is yet to test and promote its new web site, services and tools with their members and wider public. The Association is expected to organise presentations and lessons learned workshops during annual Assembly in September 2020 (if the circumstances allow for it)

Indicators and MoVs:

- Compiled 65 ideas for engagement and attracting young audiences
- Total of 20 ideas tried and tested by 4 media in the Local Press Lab
- 4 sets of videos describing achievements and lessons learned produced by project partners
- Final video compiling experiences and lessons learned produced by the Association

Registered unintended outcomes:

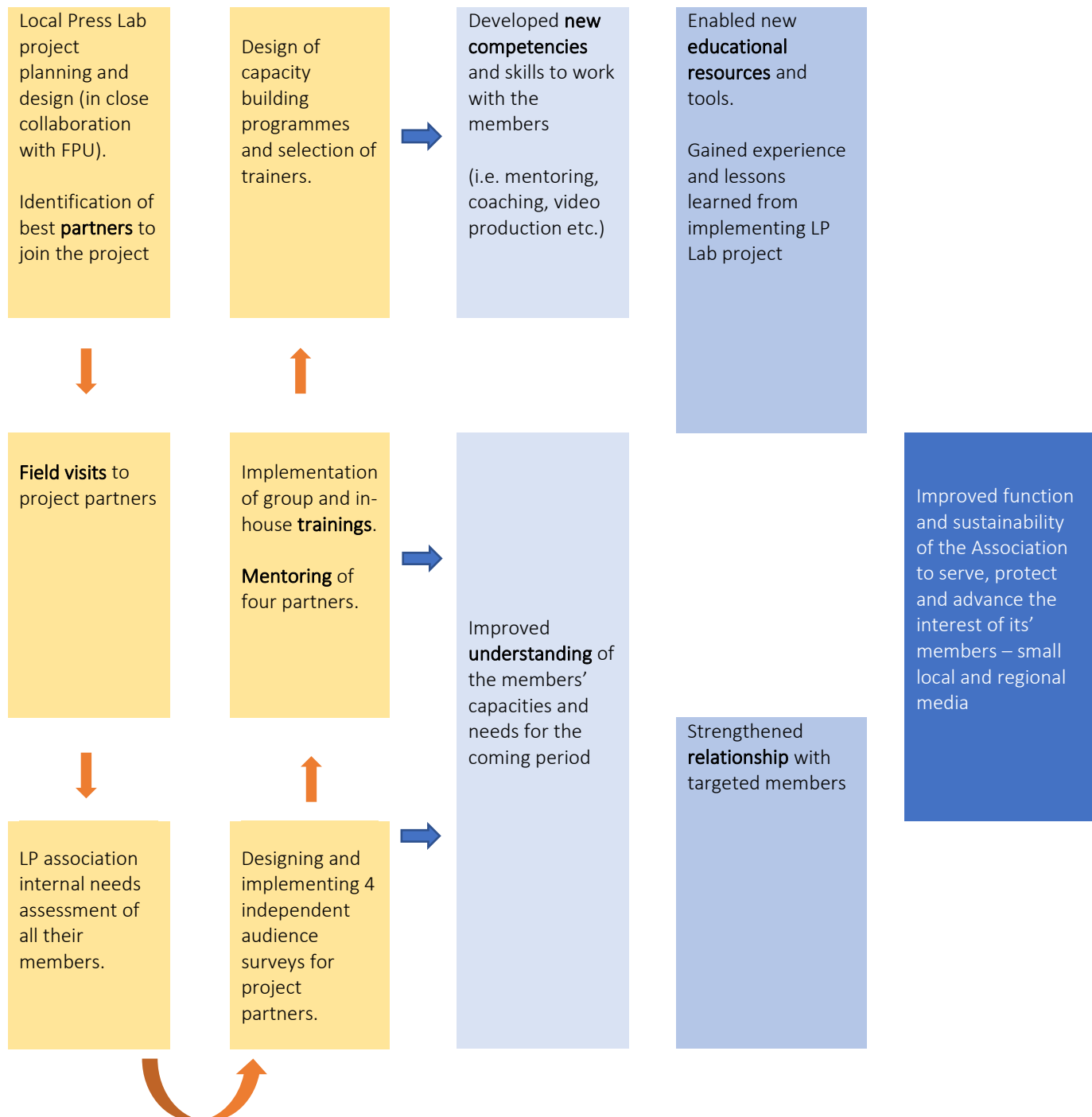
The extent to which LP Association integrated new ways of working with the members can be confirmed by Association's decision to design a whole **new web page** and introduce **special section for members' online education**. Also, LP to the largest possible extent, integrated LP Lab project with ongoing initiatives (such as DW Youth Academy) and included some LP Lab follow up actions - in applications to other donors. In result, LP educational section had additional 40 video tutorials, based on the membership needs – produced under the auspices of a different project.

Local Press Lab was the most complex of all three pilot projects to evaluate: it had five teams (Local Press Secretariat team and four media members' teams) pursuing three specific goals and targeting three different audiences. The teams were mentored by local external consultant that significantly contributed to the attainment of the project results. The tables below present evaluated activities and results per each specific goal targeting specific audience

Local Press Association Specific Goal 1

Capacity Building of the Association

- Activities and Results -



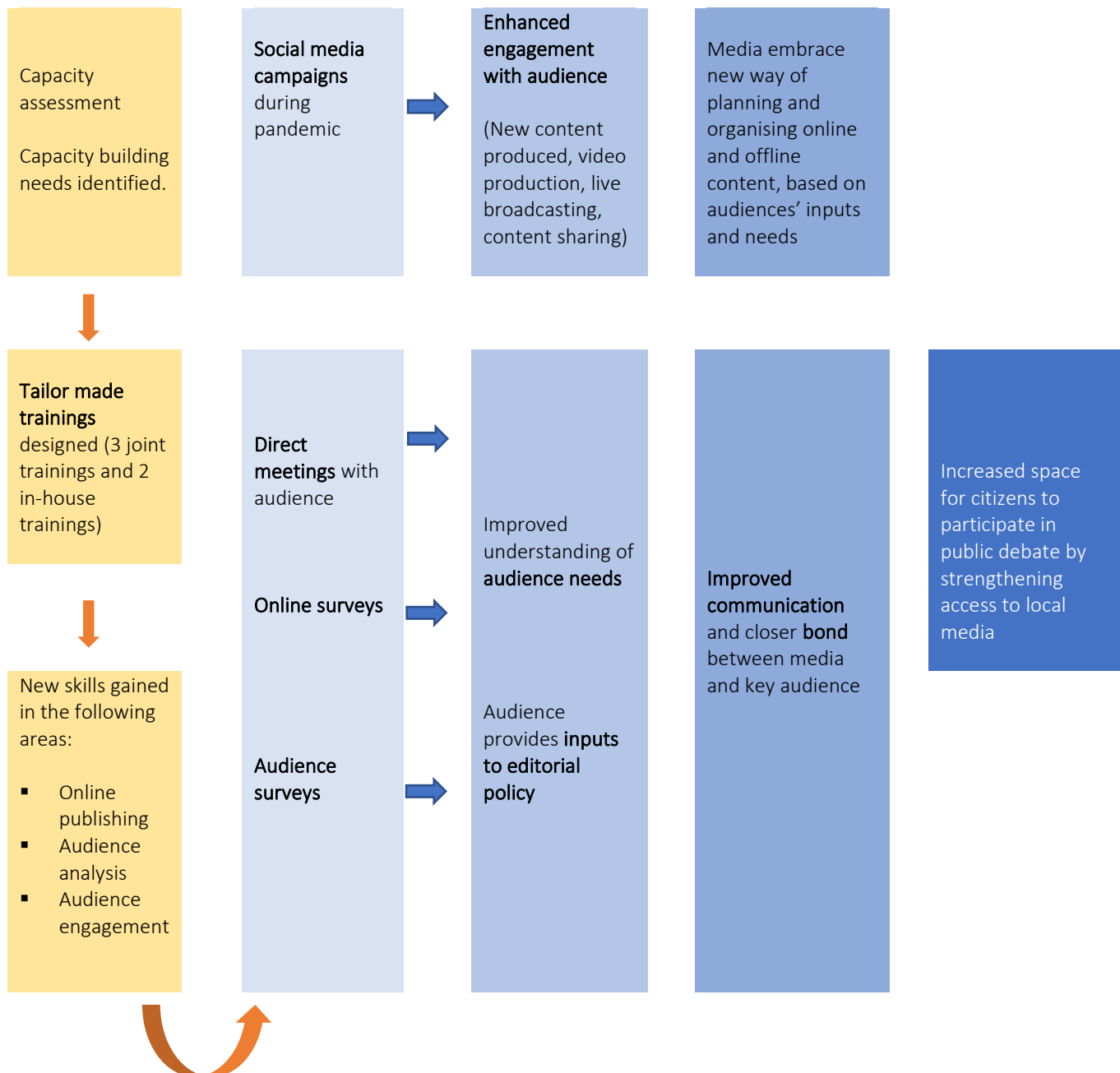
INDICATORS (color coded to match the graphic presentation)

	10 field visits to project partners, including capacity assessments and in-house trainings
	3 joint meetings/trainings delivered with all participants (2 in Kragujevac, one in Sabac)
	4 audience surveys designed and implemented in cooperation with FPU (app 400 respondents)
	2 young audience surveys designed and implemented during pandemic (app 150 respondents)
	Total of 65 ideas for engagement and attracting young audiences – compiled
	One tool for (self)assessment of audience engagement capacities delivered and tested
	Newsletter containing 20+ ideas for local media during pandemic developed and distributed
	Two guides on how to use Google and Facebook analytics developed and distributed
	Guide on how to use Facebook for promotion and audience engagement developed and distributed
	Total of 20 ideas tried and tested by 4 media participating in the Local Press Lab
	Website of the Association re-designed to reflect new strategy, services and resources
	10 video tutorials on how to write project applications – produced and published
	Four sets of videos describing achievements and lessons learned produced by project partners
	Final video compiling experiences and lessons learned produced and shared by the Association

Local Press Association specific goal 2

Increased engagement with citizens

(Partners: GRAD, Krusevac and JUGpress, Leskovac)

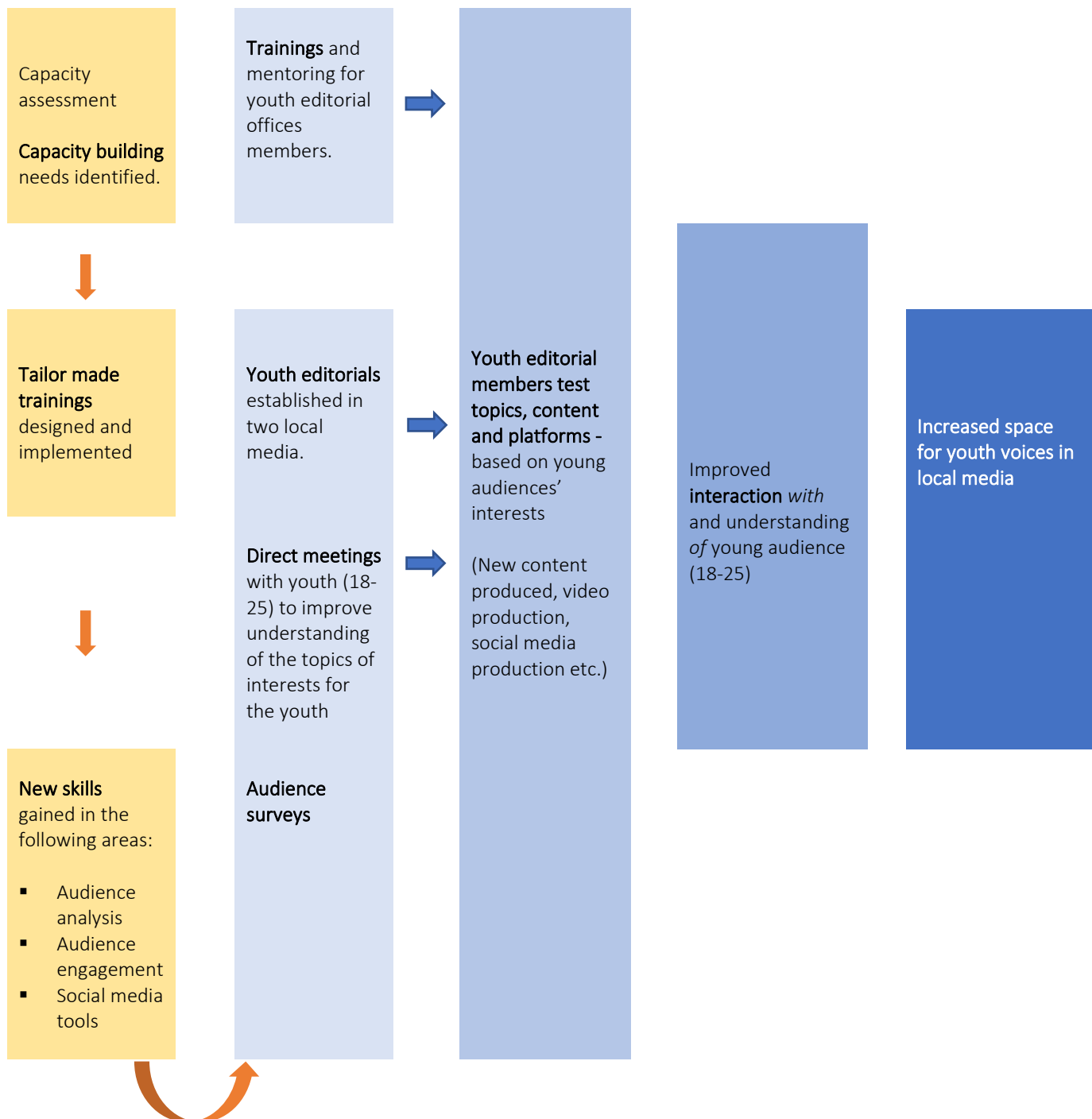


INDICATORS (color coded to match the graphic presentation)	
	Pre-project audience survey to investigate audience needs (106 responses in Krusevac)
	Pre-project audience survey to investigate audience needs (100 responses in Leskovac)
	4 online surveys in Krusevac
	4 online surveys in Leskovac (with average 400-1400 responses)
	Direct meetings with app 100 readers to discuss ideas and interests of audience in Krusevac
	Two direct meetings with app 70 readers to discuss ideas and interests of audience in Leskovac
	38 texts produced based on audience inputs and interests in Krusevac
	58 texts produced based upon questions and requests from audience in Leskovac
	Number of visits to web portal increased 220% in Krusevac (from 20,000 Page views to 64,000)
	Number of visits to web portal increased 130% in Leskovac (from 145,000 Page views to 337,000)
	Web page audience increased 32% in Krusevac (from 19,000 visitors/month to 25,000 visitors/month)
	Web page audience increased 58% in Leskovac (from 55,000 visitors/month to 87,000 visitors/month)
	Number of visits to Facebook page increased 127% in Krusevac (from 15,000 Page views to 34,000)
	Number of visits to Facebook page increased 43% in Leskovac (from 2,200 Page views to 3,150)
	Krusevac Grad gained 1320 Instagram followers since the launch during spring 2020

Local Press Association specific goal 3

Increased engagement with youth

(Partners: Glas Podrinja, Sabac and Loznicke Novosti, Loznica)



INDICATORS (color coded to match graphic presentation)	
	13 young people joined GrmiLO Youth Section (Loznicke Novosti – LN)
	9 out of 12 high schoolers joined Glas Podrinja (GP) “Local Press Lab” Youth Section
	2 surveys (182 responses) and two direct meet ups with the youth in LN (30+ participating)
	2 surveys (69 responses) and two direct meet ups with the youth in GP (37 participating)
	25 texts and 10 videos produced by Youth Section GrmiLO, LN
	38 outputs produced by young editorial office of GP
	54,5% increase in Instagram followers, 26% increase in Facebook followers in LN
	20% increase in Instagram followers, 12% increase in Facebook followers in GP
	Audience 18-25 comprises 14% of Instagram followers in LN
	Audience 18-25 comprises 24% of Instagram followers in GP
~	Youth Section “GrmiLO” probably continues, but in a different format
~	9 members of Youth Section “Local Press Lab” in Glas Podrinja continue to work, mentored by senior reporters

The knowledge that four members of Local Press Association gained at Local Press Lab trainings, workshops and bazaar of ideas they had with the consultant at the start of the project implementation, combined with a great team spirit (as in the case of Grad); the feeling of accountability towards the citizens in the case of Grad, Nova Nasa Rec and JUGpress; the new energy that youth infused in Glas Podrinja and Loznicke Novosti gave extra impetus to the four members of Local Press and made them stand out more.

Innovation aspect and evidence of its impact:

It was the first time that Local Press had conducted an audience survey on its own and with 400 respondents in four towns. Thanks to this pilot project, Local Press for the first time tested out its potential for providing capacity building and educational services to its members.

What was new and different with the Local Press members was that their project activities were closely monitored by the Local Press Secretariat and mentored throughout the whole project by an external consultant, a seasoned and tactful media development expert who played a crucial role by timely adding more tools for innovation to members and giving them a needed push without scaring them away.

Registered project deviations:

As noted by the external consultant, Local Press had a lot of unknowns in the preparation period - how to start implementing innovative approaches with local media in Serbia that are focused mainly on project co-financing. It was a great challenge to stimulate them to think differently and find new methods.

However, the first joint meeting of the participants resulted in the creation of a large number of ideas and completely changed the attitude of the participants in the project. By exchanging ideas with each other, almost all newsrooms opted for more activities than was realistic at the time. They simply recognized more things they could and wanted to do. Hence, during the project, there was a change of activities and adaptation to the situation.

Loznicke Novosti planned to have two mentors on the team, but one got ill at the very start of the project implementation and there was no replacement found.

Glas Podrinja formed the youth section later than anticipated but caught up with the rest of the Local Press members and delivered all planned outputs before the project ended.

The impact of COVID-19 has been particularly visible in case of the youth sections of Glas Podrinja and Loznicke Novosti where the planned field journalistic experience had to be replaced with online meetings and online mentoring, so to a certain extent the energy and motivation of youth decreased because of the necessary adjustments to the programme. When discussing this challenge with youth groups in Glas Podrinja and Loznicke Novosti they all agreed that COVID-19 prevented them from pursuing many ideas that were emerging during this project implementation period. Fatigue among youth is not less important factor that affected the presence of youth on social networks and other digital platforms.

In the process of the project implementation it was noticed that not all the partners utilized to the maximum extent the content offered in the newsletter and guidelines so the Local Press Secretariat is working on making a new format that will be more attractive to all the members.

4.2.2 What factors hindered the achievement of results and project objective?

Based on the project's final reports reviews and discussions with stakeholders, some risks and unforeseen challenges impacting on the satisfactory achievements of expected MIWB project results were detected.

These include:

- Nation-wide lockdowns in Kosovo and Serbia due to COVID-19 pandemic significantly limited not only partners' freedom of movement but their access to sources of information they planned to utilize.
- Not all projects started on time: Kosovo 2.0 analysis of survey took longer than expected and Local Press Member "Glas Podrinja" didn't form the youth section as fast as planned due to initially low response from the target audience.
- Novi Sad School of Journalism went ahead with the planned workshop **before** the full survey findings were in and changed the target audience focus from working local journalists to students of journalism.
- Members of youth sections of "Glas Podrinja" and "Loznicke" Novosti were surprised to see how many people were camera-shy and did not like to go on record/camera or be filmed, so they found it difficult to conduct vox-pops or get statements from people they wanted to write about. "JUGpress" reported similar experiences. It seems citizens loved to be engaged only so long as they stayed anonymous. **This, likely, points more to the political climate** than anything related to the professionalism of the journalists. Seemingly, citizens only like to be engaged with the media when they know they can maintain their anonymity.

- In the last month of the project implementation Kosovo 2.0 project team was focused on organizing its 10-year anniversary series of events so had to put the project on hold for at least two weeks.

4.2.3 How has the context in the two countries affected the project and consequently effectiveness of the project:

National contexts in Serbia and Kosovo have clear differences but there are also clear similarities especially when it comes to the position of professional media.

Independent media in the two countries do not enjoy the same benefits provided to pro-state media and are all struggling to stay relevant and viable. Meanwhile, they are subject to various and often complex **forms of pressure** from local governments (Local Press members) and state institutions as has been documented in numerous reports over the last year.

The challenges faced by independent media were further exacerbated by the outbreak of the corona pandemic. The subsequent nation-wide lockdown in both countries affected the project implementation process and to certain extent the effectiveness of the overall project:

Due to COVID-19 pandemic, all the partners had to take precautionary measures to ensure that their teams and target audiences continue the project implementation in safely manner. As such, they all moved communication and planned activities to online platforms and adapted the themes to the new situation they found themselves in.

“Kosovo 2.0” initially planned to film storytellers and do the whole production but due to pandemic they asked interested activists to produce the content themselves by self-recording their stories about solidarity during COVID 19 and upload them. This change can be also perceived as a positive outcome of the crisis because it allowed this form of ‘citizen journalism’ which ultimately resulted in increased the effectiveness of the project.

Local Press Association and its four partners, on the other hand, had both positive and negative evidence of effects of COVID19 lockdown on the project:

- Switching to online communication was challenging for partners who had youth as their target audience: “Glas Podrinja” and “Loznicke Novosti”. It was more difficult for Youth Sections’ mentors to do the mentoring job online. At the same time, all the school activities moved also to online platforms so youth section members had less time and motivation to continue the activities with the same vigor that was registered before COVID-19 when they had more direct interaction with their mentors and peers.
- Two members of Local Press who had citizens for their target audiences (“GRAD” and “JUGpress” adapted very easily to the new normal and digital forms of interaction with their audiences (Instagram and FB campaigns, surveys, online vox-pops).

Nation-wide lockdowns in Kosovo and Serbia due to COVID-19 pandemic significantly limited not only partners’ freedom of movement but their access to sources of information they planned to utilize in their projects.

Novi Sad School of Journalism had to put on hold production of one Media Lab investigative story about unknown ownership of the previously state-owned cinemas for after-COVID19 time because it requires more sources of information and face-to-face interaction.

4.2.4 What are the ‘success factors’ that increased the chances for certain media to achieve more in experimental, innovation-led projects in comparison to the rest of the participants?

It was evident in the evaluation process that **the main success factors** that increased the chances of Local Press Association to achieve more in innovation-led project in comparison to Kosovo 2.0 and Novi Sad School of Journalism were:

- A high level of commitment from all sides (FPU, partners, beneficiaries, project mentors and **the external consultant**), professionalism, team spirit, the courage to get out of comfort zones and the curiosity to try out new approaches and new tools.
- The number of citizens’ stories, comments, requests to media to assist them in addressing problems in their communities, increased content about youth and for youth, reconfirms that overall project design was relevant to the specific needs of their target populations and shows the potential of this association and its members to bring lasting changes to their communities.
- Close and frequent guidance by an expert with knowledge of the local context proved to be a unique success factor for the partners which had such a consultant, namely Local Press Association and its four members.
- This leads to the conclusion that: have the other two partners had external consultant to assist and mentor their teams their results would be more significant and visible.

4.2.5 What are the lessons learned?

- Results terminology should be clarified before the projects are designed to avoid confusions and misinterpretations about different results levels expected. It seems that some partners were confused about terminology, which made the actual assessment of their contributions challenging.
- Selection of partners with different capacity levels, profiles and potential target audience sizes who were using a variety of platforms to communicate to their target groups, made good testing sample for the MIWB pilot project so the lessons learned were not difficult to draw.
- Projects that were implemented with a media association and media outlets had larger target audiences and attained more visible and tangible results than the project that was implemented with an educational institution.
- The project design and flexibility partners had to experiment within the project framework led to a change of mind sets of partner organisations’ teams and the way they operate:
 - Partners utilize gained knowledge about innovative ways of engaging with their audiences, while audiences welcomed the positive change they experienced when able to increase their interaction with respective media.
 - Partners gained knowledge about online analytics tools and how to use them.
 - Partners became aware of the advantages of engagement and interaction with citizens via online media platforms and face-to-face campaigns versus traditional media forms.
- However, there are both strengths and weaknesses of this “adaptive” project implementation approach: Some partners perceived this as freedom to significantly change project activities, names of campaign and approach to target audiences (Kosovo 2.0) while one partner changed the target audience (NSSJ). The result in both cases was that there was significantly less evidence

of success. Local Press Association, a partner which kept focus on initially planned target audiences and on its core of set activities realized much bigger success in achieving their planned results.

- FPU co-developing role in the project contributed to number of results registered in the process of evaluation:
 - **A selection of relevant links to reports and examples that FPU collected** and tailored for each partner organisation helped partners source for ideas that will be most suitable for their local contexts. In addition to this “toolbox”, FPU project leader equipped all the partners with another **document named “Guidelines”** that would help partners in pre-project phase to: identify the team that would be involved, list problems and ideas they think are important to address and prepare a brief project description.
 - FPU’s insistence on audience research and surveys and assistance in their preparation with each partner of the MIWB Pilot was of crucial importance for the projects to be clearly designed and to have specific goals. **Impact that research findings had on partners was the second direct outcome of this pre-implementation phase as it was the first time for all partners** to apply such approach after five to seven years and they all agreed that thanks to the surveys’ findings they only then became aware of a level of detachment from their audiences and the need to reconnect and even expand them.
 - With its co-developing approach, FPU contributed significantly to changed behavior and to more innovative ways of thinking by partner organisations that are relevant for the sustainability of certain aspects of the project (listed in chapter 4.5 *Sustainability*).

4.2.6 To what extent were the target groups reached?

As explained in Chapter 4.1 the overall target audiences remained the same throughout the entirety of the project’s implementation with exception of the Novi Sad School of Journalism audience who, due to the low interest of local professional journalists to register for training, had only one employed journalist taking part and 14 were students of journalism.

There is no data available at the moment about the full reach that the Kosovo 2.0 video campaign had as the video stories are still newly published. It was only noticed that the Kosovo 2.0 team didn’t translate the fourth and fifth video to English and Serbian languages as planned and some members of target audience suggested to add one more language to the video content translation (Turkish) to have wider reach. In statistics 1.6% of Kosovo population speaks Serbian and 1.1% speaks Turkish but these communities might feel more included and motivated to share their stories if the content was translated to their mother-tongues.

One core activity from their project plan: creation of Kosovo 2.0 Network with reporters/storytellers from communities who will be communicating with K2.0 about the new stories they see happening in their communities with aim to deepen the K2.0 connections with the community and expand the reach has not been created yet.

4.3 Indications of Impact

It is beyond the scope of this evaluation to fully assess the impact of the project and the changes it brought about only one month after the local pilot projects ended, which is why impact had a secondary focus in this evaluation. Nevertheless, there is some evidence of the project contributing to important effects on partners' organisational structures and on the registered levels of interactions with target audiences.

The questions that were addressed in the evaluator's interviews with implementing partners and target audiences were:

4.3.1. To what extent did the project manage to change perceptions and behavior of the participating partner organisations regarding innovation and engagement with audience/target groups?

4.3.2. Are there any positive/negative unintended consequences of the intervention?

4.3.1.1 Indications of impact of MIWB on changed perceptions and behavior of participating partner organisations regarding innovation and engagement with their audiences

By equipping the partners with the tools to innovate and helping them test out different models of engagement with their target audiences, FPU helped partners build their capacity through this project and change the perception about themselves and audiences they serve.

There are clear indicators of impact that support this statement:

- None of the partners conducted audience research in seven years and thanks to this project experience, are now more aware of the importance of conducting needs assessment before designing projects as the findings of the surveys conducted for this pilot were for most "eye opening".
- Applying new techniques and feeling comfortable about it is another indication of changed perceptions and behavior - especially with Local Press members which previously had not been tech-savvy.
- As a consequence of this project, partners are now more comfortable with communicating and engaging with their audiences through Instagram, Facebook, YouTube and other online platforms which they were not as familiar with prior to their participation in this pilot project.
- All the partners are using innovative approaches and technologies and are thinking "digital first" as a consequence of this project.
- Partners learned about and used analytics tools that they were not familiar with before this project.
- All partners admitted that this project was **unique in many ways** because **FPU** provided them with sources, insisted they stop and reflect on themselves and their audiences first - which they haven't done in a long time and to be creative about it.
- All partners claim that conducted assessments/surveys provided them with important insights on their audiences' needs. They also said that the information gathered will be factored into all of their future organisational planning and across all projects they plan in future.
- Local Press Secretariat has better understanding of what additional roles it should play with its members to serve them better.

- Kosovo 2.0 became aware of the higher potential for engaging with audiences through “I want to tell” video campaign when the actual production is done by storytellers themselves and not by Kosovo 2.0 as had initially been planned.

4.3.1.2 Indications of impact of MIWB on target audiences:

- Audiences that were reached through this evaluation report indicate that they feel empowered by being provided with new spaces where they can voice their opinions and share their stories and problems and see media as their partners (audience of GRAD, JUGpress and Kosovo 2.0).
- Local activists feel more visible as they are recognized by their peers and their local communities as agents of positive change (Kosovo 2.0 storytellers).
- In the case of the four Local Press members and Kosovo 2.0: All target audiences noticed increased engagement and openness of the media during the past six months and now view them as more relevant partners and as creators of the kinds of spaces where they can voice their opinions, concerns and contribute with their own content; while the Novi Sad School of Journalism students who provided feedback stated that they use the knowledge acquired at the workshop on regular basis, particularly MoJo.
- Because of their increased focus on problems in their respective local communities, some local media (JUGpress, GRAD and Kosovo 2.0) are increasingly perceived by citizens as their partners and by local governments as watchdogs (head of local police department stopped JUGpress editor on the street to ask her if she received any complaints from citizens about the work of police).
- Youth sections’ mentors and trainees feel empowered and are using skills acquired in this project (youth sections of Glas Podrinja and Loznicke Novosti and NSSJ trainees).

4.3.2. Are there any positive/negative unintended consequences of the intervention?

4.3.2.1 Partner organisations:

a) Registered positive unintended consequences of the intervention on partners’ organisations:

- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic all partners had to move all their project activities to digital platforms faster than planned and to test out innovative methods of engagement with their audiences. LPA members Grad and JUGpress were “rewarded” by registering increased engagement with their audiences who also (due to national level lockdowns) were spending most of their time informing themselves online.
- Kosovo 2.0 planned to be in charge of the whole video production process of “I want to tell” stories with youth activists from pre- to post- production phase but, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, they realized the process should be more participatory from storytellers/activists and this approach was perceived as positive and engaging by activists who contributed with their stories.
- The Local Press Secretariat, with the help of an external consultant for the first-time, produced educational material (guidelines and a manual on how to use FB and Instagram analytics and a tutorial “Writing projects for beginners”) that they published on the Association’s website and which will remain available to all members who want to adopt new technologies.
- Local Press produced a video about their Media Incubator project that will help them promote it with other members at the Annual association meeting in Autumn.
- As a consequence of the Media Lab project experience, one of the Local Press members, GRAD, felt more confident and empowered to apply to the European Journalism Fund for a 25,000 Euro

COVID-related grant and was one of only eight media partners in the Western Balkans selected (out of 500 applicants) ¹

b) Registered negative unintended consequences of the intervention on partners' organisations:

- The flexibility which all partners were given to experiment and apply innovative approaches during the project implementation unfortunately led to one partner starting the project without waiting for the needs assessment findings and changing their previously agreed upon target audience (NSSJ) while another partner changed the focus of the content they had initially agreed with FPU to produce (Kosovo 2.0).

4.3.2.2 Target audiences:

a) Registered positive unintended consequences of the intervention on target audiences:

- Three participants of the Novi Sad School of Journalism "Media Lab" workshop received job offers after the workshop (one with Novi Sad School of Journalism, one with Independent Association of Journalists of Vojvodina and one with Radio 021).
- One NSSJ workshop participant was elected editor-in-chief of her university web portal "University Echo" after this workshop and is in the process of organizing a workshop for the "University Echo" team with an NSSJ mentor who had given a lecture on investigative reporting techniques and multimedia in Media Lab workshop.
- One Local Press Lab youth section participant at Glas Podrinja was hired by Glas Podrinja after the project ended.
- While the main objective of the NSSJ survey was to test out the relevance of the topics for the Media Lab workshop with local journalists, it provided the NSSJ team with forty new and very concrete ideas for future programmes.

b) Registered negative unintended consequences of the intervention on target audiences:

- Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, all youth section members had to move to online communications with their mentors, which decreased their levels of engagement and slowed down the whole learning process for youth section members and for their mentors.

❖ **Gender equality component:**

Although the MIWB pilot project didn't have gender equality for its main focus, FPU insisted partners think how gender will be mainstreamed in their project activities.

Judging from partners profiles and their history of projects and activities, it was evident that all partners organisations had high level of gender equality awareness before this project.

Gender composition of target audiences: Except in the case of NSSJ Media Lab project where two thirds out of 15 participants selected were female, there is no statistical data registered with other partners about directly gender-driven or gender-oriented actions in the composition of target audiences nor production of the content as a consequence of this intervention.

¹ <https://europeanjournalism.fund/grantees/organisations>

Gender composition of end users: No data available except the end users who evaluator spoke to were mostly female.

Even where there is a registered higher percentage of female members among target audiences (Youth Section members for example) or among end users it cannot be interpreted as direct consequence of this intervention but more as evidence that the overall project design was highly inclusive and attracted higher interest of female participants in the project.

4.4 Efficiency

Local Press Association (LPA), the partner which had four members taking part in this project and an external consultant mentoring the project, was the most efficient in the MIWB pilot – as LPA's performance, progress and results were more evident than the results of the other two partner organisations - NSSJ and Kosovo 2.0.

Efficiency was of secondary focus in this evaluation and the questions that helped the evaluator assess the efficiency of the project while reviewing project documentation and interviewing the FPU project leader, implementing partners and external consultant were:

4.4.1 Have the project costs been realistic compared to the finance proposal made at the beginning of the project?

4.4.2 Were the objectives achieved on time? Was the time invested in this project as planned or did it require more or less time than expected?

4.4.3 Did the project staff manage the projects as planned?

4.4.4 Were the activities cost-efficient? / Are there more cost-effective methods in achieving results

4.4.1 Have the project costs been realistic compared to the finance proposal made at the beginning of the project?

From a very superficial review of financial documentation and in talks with partner organisations and the FPU project leader, it was found that project costs were realistic overall and seem to be budgeted carefully and in an efficient manner.

FPU allocated 20,000 Euro to each partner organisation for project costs. The budget included costs of research and additional costs needed to cover the planned activities. Only a very small percentage, on average less than 10%, was used on local project management staff costs.

4.4.2 Were the objectives achieved on time? Was the time invested in this project as planned or did it require more or less time needed than expected?

MIWB Pilot was to last 12 months. Instead, it lasted 18 months in total as the initial phase of the Media Incubator took longer due to a busy schedule of all three partners at the time, so FPU had to request a budget neutral extension of 6 months. FPU used that time to work on lists of relevant innovation sources and tailor them to each partner.

Once the project implementation started, Local Press Association completed all outputs within the specified time frame and within the allocated budget; Kosovo 2.0 utilized the allocated budget but unilaterally extended its project for one month and NSSJ, in agreement with FPU, extended the project duration for two months and didn't utilize the whole budget.

4.4.3. Did the project staff manage the projects as planned?

Not all partner organisations managed the project as planned. As already explained, NSSJ decided to go ahead with the workshop before the complete survey findings were in and changed the focus of their target audience from local journalists to local students of journalism.

Kosovo 2.0 initially planned to focus its video campaign on "countering youth's exposure to negative portrayals of groups and issues by online media" but, instead, decided to promote positive stories of youth activism, which is a less direct way of countering youth exposure to negative portrayals of youth groups than had initially planned.

When speaking to the FPU project leader, it was noted that these two partner organisations were not always consulting with FPU about the changes they wanted to make in the project before they had made them. She had impression that Kosovo 2.0 and NSSJ were "burdened" with other projects they were involved in simultaneously. In addition, Kosovo 2.0 had its 10-year anniversary series of events during the last month of the project and that consumed their whole team.

Local Press Association, the partner which had an external consultant mentoring the project, was the most efficient in the implementation of the MIWB.

4.4.4 Were the activities cost-efficient? / Are there more cost-effective methods in achieving results?

When looking at the budgets allocated, activities of the Local Press Association which had four members participating in MIWB project, were the most cost-efficient.

Kosovo 2.0 contracted an external agency to conduct its audience survey and NSSJ contracted an external consultant to test out the topics for its workshop, whereas Local Press Secretariat did their survey on their own and by doing it, further increased their capacity.

In summary, Local Press Association (LPA), the partner who had external consultant mentoring the project was the most efficient in MIWB and LPA's performance, progress and results were significantly different from the partners which did not have external consultant (NSSJ and Kosovo 2.0). This was evident throughout the whole project cycle because Local Press Association regularly reported to FPU on project progress and consulted FPU about challenges they were encountering throughout the implementation of the project.

4.5 Sustainability

The sustainability component of the project was of secondary focus in this evaluation because it is too early to provide substantial evidence of the project's lasting benefits, but it is evident that:

- The project led to a change of mind sets of partner organisations' teams which is sustainable in itself
- There are many elements of the MIWB that can be continued without funding, as they pertain more to how things are done and are now integrated in partners' regular work processes: surveys for instance - partners do not necessarily need funding to do them – a good example is Local Press Association which conducted the survey on its own; or campaigns "Citizens report" and "I want to tell" aimed at strengthening public interest journalism and civic engagement are to a great extent sustainable as they are mostly self-produced and thus do not incur significant investment in time and/or money.

Questions that were addressed in the evaluator's interviews with implementing partners related to sustainability of the projects were:

4.5.1 Do partners wish to continue this project and in what way?

4.5.2 Are there certain aspects/parts of the project (or the whole project) that partners can continue on their own?

4.5.1 Do partners wish to continue this project and in what way?

The Local Press Secretariat seems enthusiastic about the future of the Local Press Lab project. The Local Press Secretariat intends to continue this project and plans to include more members. Local Press Association plans to promote the video results of this project with other members at their next General Assembly meeting planned in Autumn 2020, with the aim of motivating them to join the Local Press Lab project. In order to expand, they would need continued funding from FPU or other donors.

Local Press Association's three members expressed willingness to continue with the same or similar project activities targeting the same groups even though FPU's project support ended.

These members are: GRAD (most likely to become sustainable), JUGpress (very likely with their campaign "Citizens report"), Glas Podrinja (very likely, as they plan to add one more mentor to the youth section team and to expand the youth section) and to a certain extent Kosovo 2.0 (with its video campaign "I want to tell")

As already mentioned, the JUGpress campaign #Citizens report has proven to be popular with the citizens of Leskovac and Jablanica County. Citizens report on daily basis about local problems to JUGpress - which does fact-checking and then reports on those issues. Meanwhile, it is apparent that local authorities now perceive JUGpress as an effective watchdog and they actually react to the reports for which they are identified as being accountable for and try to find solutions.

A reader of JUGpress told the evaluator: "I reported to 'JUGpress' that the grass was not being cut at the children's playground for months, and immediately after they published it, the local communal service came and cut it!"

Another reader said: “I sent to JUGpress photos documenting the problem of one illegal dumping ground and potholes in Kukulovce village, they immediately investigated my claim and reported about them. I also took shots of the local official who wanted to secretly meet with villagers of Kukulovce who he was trying to convince to vote for him at the elections. I sent the photos to JUGpress and they immediately published it. He wasn’t happy!” (**For more anecdotal evidence see Annex IV*)

When it comes to Loznicke Novosti, the evaluator received mixed signals about the future of their Local Press Lab youth section. Some members of the youth section think it will continue and some haven’t heard anything about it continuing.

The Novi Sad School of Journalism (NSSJ) team stated that the findings of the survey conducted within this project will help them in future planning of their activities. The team is working on a publication that would serve as a follow-up to the educational level of this programme where each mentor will write two articles on additional subjects concerning different journalism practices. Said publication’s publishing date was agreed to be middle of August, and it will contain texts on subjects including covering presidential elections, ways for journalists to deal with maltreatment by the police and government, etc.

The NSSJ team didn’t say whether they will continue with the Media Lab project but indicated they would like to try another experiment: They would like to conduct training in solution journalism with local journalists after which they will be given assignments and small budgets needed for the completion of their assignments and/or organize the first ever media hackathon in Serbia with focus on solution journalism.

Kosovo 2.0 The partner continued with video campaign promotion after the project cooperation with FPU ended and plans to pursue a plan to establish the Kosovo 2.0 network with Kosovo youth activists, that they believe would increase chances for the project’s sustainability.

FPU contribution to the sustainability of the MIWB pilot project:

The capacity building and know-how FPU gave to partners in the co-developing phase of the MIWB was crucial for ensuring relevance and setting the focus of the Incubator projects with each partner.

With this approach, FPU contributed significantly to changed behavior and to more innovative ways of thinking by partner organisations that are relevant for the sustainability of certain aspects of the project:

- Partners became aware of the need to conduct audience surveys on a regular basis
- Partners utilize gained knowledge about innovative ways of engaging with their audiences, while audiences welcomed the positive change they experienced when able to increase their interaction with respective media
- Partners gained knowledge about online analytics tools and how to use them
- Partners became aware of the advantages of engagement and interaction with citizens via online media platforms and face-to-face campaigns versus traditional media forms

FPU wished it had secured support and funding for the follow-up activities before the pilot ended. The MIWB is at an important stage where the gained momentum must be preserved to increase chances of the project to become sustainable and further develop in coming two to three-years.

It is the evaluator’s understanding that FPU had meetings with the Embassies of Netherlands in Belgrade and Pristina and discussed potential assistance in advocating for this project with other embassies in the

field, or through continued support to the most successful partners in this project. FPU was told that when it comes to providing support to the most successful partners, the partners are most welcome to apply for funds through the embassies general call for proposals but cannot be guaranteed any support in advance.

4.5.2 Are there certain aspects/parts of the project (or the whole project) that partners can continue on their own?

There are certain elements of the MIWB that can be continued without funding, as they pertain more to how things are done and are integrated in partners' regular work processes:

- Surveys/needs assessments - for instance – as partners do not necessarily need funding to do them as was witnessed in the case of Local Press Association.
- Online media engagement with audiences is more sustainable than traditional media presence and has a wider reach.
- Campaigns like “Citizens report” and “I want to tell” aimed at strengthening public interest journalism and civic engagement by directly involving the citizens are to a great extent sustainable as they are very popular among audiences and are mostly driven by audiences.

5 CONCLUSIONS

All of the partners had different capacity levels, profiles and potential target audience sizes. They also used a variety of platforms to communicate to their target groups, thus making this pilot project quite interesting to test, observe and evaluate.

The Modus operandi of previous donors, both international and domestic (local governments), had led local media to the point where they had become dependent on short-term financing with short-term objectives, rather than allowing them to focus on addressing the real needs of the local media and the audience they serve.

That is why FPU, with its co-developing partnership approach and the capacity building role it played, was perceived as unique in taking a novel approach that motivated all selected partners' organisations to look at their audiences closer and to try to find common niches with them while innovating.

The audience surveys FPU insisted all of the partners to undertake before they finalized project plans was supposed to help partners understand the needs and interests of their audiences and keep the focus on their intended goals during the project implementation phase. None of the partners had conducted surveys for the last 5-7 years, and they all claim that the findings of the surveys done for the purpose of the MIWB will help them also in their long-term strategy planning.

Once the agreed framework was in place with each partner, FPU encouraged partners to innovate and experiment as much as they deemed necessary during the project implementation in attempts to attain their intended project goals.

However, there are both strengths and weaknesses of this “flexible” project implementation approach: Some partners perceived this flexibility as freedom to significantly change project activities, names of campaign and approach to target audiences (Kosovo 2.0) while one partner changed the target audience (NSSJ). The result in both cases was that there was significantly less evidence of success. Local Press Association, a partner which kept focus on initially planned target audiences and on its core of set activities realized much bigger success in achieving their planned results.

As such, there are clearly inconsistencies in the progress made across the projects, **with Local Press Association having made the most progress**; Kosovo 2.0 having made more limited progress and Novi Sad School of Journalism making the least visible overall progress.

The transformative individual and organisational capacity indication of impacts are clear from anecdotal evidence and from information gathered through interviews for this evaluation.

In addition, the overall success of the Local Press Association Local Press Lab project would not have been attained had there not been: A high level of commitment from all sides (FPU, partners, beneficiaries, mentors and **the external consultant**), professionalism, team spirit, the courage to get out of comfort zones and the curiosity to try out new approaches and new tools. The number of citizens’ stories, comments, requests to media to assist them in addressing problems in their communities, increased content about youth and for youth, reconfirms that the overall project design was relevant to the specific needs of their target populations and shows the potential of this association and its members to bring lasting changes to their communities.

There is also significant difference in quality of performance and results delivered between partners which had external consultant throughout the project implementation process and the partners who didn’t and FPU would benefit more from having a pool of external consultants with knowledge of the local operating context to work with its future implementing partners on any follow on to the MIWB pilot project.

It seems that some partners were combining outputs and outcomes making it more difficult to evaluate their contribution to the MIWB.

Based on discussions of the options for taking the project forward, FPU should consider continuing the MIWB project only in partnership with media outlets and associations – as they were and can be more successful in directly engaging with citizens in attaining the Media Incubator’s main project goal: **strengthening public interest journalism and civic engagement in innovative ways**, while educational institutions can only have indirect impact and achieve limited results in attaining this goal.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS TO FPU

There is scope for FPU to explore a range of options for different contexts. These options include:

- Given the short period and the timing of the evaluation (just one-month after the project ended), systemic, long-term outcomes cannot yet be determined. As such, it is recommended that FPU revisits the partners six months after the project's end to better understand the long-term impact of their participation in the pilot. This can be done in form of interviews with implementing partners and conducting surveys with their target audiences. Even if FPU's project support does not continue in Serbia and/or Kosovo, such data would be useful resource for FPU's strategy and involvement elsewhere, as well as for other donors which might be interested in building on FPU's pilot.
- FPU should be systematic in collecting data points in any such follow-on assessment.
- Based on results achieved in pilot project, **if FPU can continue with the Media Incubator in Western Balkans project it should focus on partnership with media associations and/or media outlets** as they are more successful in directly engaging with audiences and in attaining the main project goal: "strengthening public interest journalism **AND civic engagement** in innovative ways" while educational institutions have only indirect impact and limited results in attaining this goal.
- It is recommended that a baseline study should be conducted with each potential future partner.
- FPU's expectations of partners and their obligations should be refined with more specifically set milestones and more frequent reporting duties.
- Results terminology should be clarified with partners before the projects are designed to avoid confusions and misinterpretations about results levels expected.
- Evaluation has clearly shown that there is a significant difference in quality of performance and results delivered between partners which had a mentor throughout the project implementation process and the partners who didn't. An expert with knowledge of the local context proved to be a unique value-added factor for the partners which had such a consultant, namely Local Press Association and its four members, and FPU should consider having a pool of external consultants with knowledge of the local operating context to work with its future implementing partners in any continued MIWB project.
- Given the feedback from participants about how this project increased their relevance and allowed them to focus on their needs and the needs of their target audiences, FPU should promote relevant results of this pilot project with other international organisations/donors and discuss potential partnerships with them.
- FPU should, if at all possible, attempt to build on this pilot with a larger-scale project.

ANNEX 1 - FPU MEDIA INCUBATOR INCEPTION REPORT

INCEPTION REPORT

Free Press Unlimited has engaged Ivana Kahrman to conduct a final evaluation of the project Media Incubator for Western Balkans.

According to the Terms of Reference for the evaluation (ToR) I should submit this Inception report at the end of the first phase, the Inception Phase, that was implemented as outlined in the Expression of Interest I submitted and was agreed upon with FPU.

It has been developed following a start-up conversation with FPU Project leader, as well as initial desk review of documents related to the project evaluation, I was provided by FPU. It is expected that this report, once approved by FPU, will regulate the scope, focus and methodological approach of the assignment with ultimate goal to determine if the Media Incubator project managed to achieve its objective, and learning being the primary purpose of the evaluation.

The report presented here, contains:

1. Evaluation questions and evaluation matrix (Annex 1_Evaluation Matrix, pages 7-11)
2. Methodology to be used
3. Data collection tools
4. List of Informants
5. Workplan/Schedule

1. EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The Terms of Reference includes a set of evaluation questions against three evaluation criteria: relevance, effectiveness and indications of impact. To clarify and sharpen the focus of the questions, I propose a few small but important changes to the questionnaire – marked with red in the table below including addition of two more evaluation criteria categories: efficiency and sustainability, that, not being part of the official ToR, will be treated as secondary and will help evaluator in the process of evaluation.

The questionnaire below is further elaborated in the evaluation matrix that is attached to this document as Annex 1 (see pages 7-12) and, besides evaluation questions, contains: indicators for questions to be asked, methods and sources. I also added one column for comments to be added by FPU and the evaluator if needed.

QUESTIONNAIRE:

RELEVANCE	
Suggested by TOR	POSSIBLE ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS THAT CAN HELP EVALUATOR GET MORE INFORMATION
To what extent has the project purpose responded to the needs and interests of local media and media organizations?	
Have the activities implemented been relevant for achieving the project's objective?	
How do the partners perceive the adaptive approach applied by FPU? Was this approach relevant for their specific needs? Would they have preferred a different approach?	
	To what extent has the project managed to respond to the needs and interests of target audiences? (more engagement with local media, more relevant content/content of public interest produced, improved representation of youth voices, more relevant offer in skills training, etc.)

EFFECTIVENESS	
Suggested by TOR	POSSIBLE ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS THAT CAN HELP EVALUATOR GET MORE INFORMATION:
What have been the results (positive and negative) of the Media Incubator project?	
What if anything was unique about the project for achieving the results (e.g. persons, particular approach, sources, etc.) for achieving the results and project objective?	
What factors hindered the achievement of results and project objective?	
How has the context in the two countries affected the project and consequently effectiveness of the project?	
What are areas for improvement and what are the gaps that the Media Incubator has been unable to address?	
What are the 'success factors' that increase the chances for certain media to achieve more in experimental, innovation-led projects in comparison to the rest of the participants?	
What are the lessons learned?	
	To what extent were the target groups reached?

EFFICIENCY - Not suggested by ToR (This will have a secondary focus)	
Not suggested in ToR but I recommend asking these questions as secondary:	POSSIBLE ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS THAT CAN HELP EVALUATOR GET MORE INFORMATION:
	Have the project costs been realistic compared to the finance proposal made at the beginning of the project?
	Were the objectives achieved on time? Was the time invested in this project as planned or was it less/or more time needed than expected?
	Did the project staff manage the projects as planned?
	Were the activities cost efficient? /Are there more cost-effective methods in achieving results?

INDICATIONS OF IMPACT (This will have a secondary focus)	
Suggested by TOR	POSSIBLE ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS THAT CAN HELP EVALUATOR GET MORE INFORMATION:
To which extent did the project manage to change perceptions and behavior of the participating partner organizations regarding innovation and engagement with audience/target groups?	What real difference has the activity made to the beneficiaries?

SUSTAINABILITY - Not suggested by ToR	
Not suggested in ToR but I recommend asking these questions as secondary:	POSSIBLE ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS THAT CAN HELP EVALUATOR GET MORE INFORMATION:
	Do partners wish to continue this project and in what way?
	Are there certain aspects/parts of the project (or the whole project) that partners can continue on their own? If yes, how?

2. METHODOLOGY

Overall, the evaluation will be characterized by a strong participatory, utility and learning focus. This will be manifested in the form of inclusion and consultations with FPU and all stakeholders during all main stages of the evaluation. It is of crucial importance that throughout the whole process of the evaluation the evaluator will be able to interview all partner organizations' teams and, to an extent, end-users that were involved in FPU Media Incubator project.

The FPU's Terms of Reference (ToR) provides important guidance for the development of an appropriate evaluation methodology. It is clear on the purpose and focus of the evaluation and provides advice regarding lines of inquiry, data collection strategies, deliverables and the time plan that should be adhered to.

More specifically, the final evaluation aims to:

- a) measure and document the results and possible indications of impact achieved by the project — both intended and unintended. Where it comes to impact measurement, the evaluation will specifically investigate how the participants have been enabled to experiment and what change, if any, this brought about for them.
- b) gain an understanding whether the adaptive approach applied by the Media Incubator was effective in achieving the project results and contributing to impact
- c) provide recommendations for improvement of future similar actions

By identifying its main project goal: To stimulate with the media and media organizations to *innovate* in every form possible and enable them to develop ideas tailored to their needs or that of their audiences - FPU had clearly stated that the *innovation* in this context is about creating opportunities that enlarge spaces of expression and citizen engagement and that may help increase the reach and impact of independent media that are not necessarily solely propelled by technology but through storytelling and other creative solutions.

As ToR further stipulates that this project was to be an *experiment* itself and sought to be as flexible and adaptive as possible, I suggest using the following methodology: "Outcome Harvesting".

Outcome Harvesting is particularly useful when outcomes, and even, inputs, activities and outputs, are not particularly specific and are flexible at the time of planning an intervention and involve more than one implementing partner. Thus, Outcome Harvesting is well-suited for evaluation in dynamic, and complex projects such as Media Incubator for Western Balkans.

3. THE DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

As soon as this Inception Report has been approved, evaluator will start using the following data collection tools:

- 1. Project documentation: partners proposals, progress and final reports – narrative and financial (provided by FPU); self-assessments
- 2. Partners production materials (online and offline): video stories, articles, etc. (provided by FPU and implementing partners)
- 3. Individual interviews by phone or ZOOM video conference platform with:
 - 3.1 Implementing partners (three from each project team)
 - 3.2 FPU project leader
 - 3.3 External consultants
- 4. There will be anonymous surveys conducted with: Local Press Lab project end users of Glas Podrinja in Sabac and Loznicke Novosti in Loznica (youth); Grad from Krusevac, JugPres and Nova Nasa Rec in Leskovac (citizens), partners/audiences who contributed to Kosovo 2.0 project and trainees of Novi

Sad School of Journalism. As outlined in the evaluation matrix (Annex 1) all interviews will be semi-structured and adapted to reflect the respondent's expected area of experience and knowledge.

4. PROPOSED WORK PLAN/SCHEDULE:

Assuming that informants will be available and data will be gathered in the week of July 12-16, I propose the following workplan:

Work plan/Schedule	Date
Inception Phase	July 2 -9
Start-up discussion, initial desk review	July 5
Elaboration of methodology and drafting of inception report	July 6-8
Submission of inception report	July 9
Data Collection Phase	July 10 -16
Desk review	July 10
Finalizing data collection from partner organizations	July 11
Skype/ZOOM interviews with informants: July 13: Local Press, Snezana Milosevic, Secretary General July 14: GRAD newspaper and Krusevacgrad portal and their users July 15: Nova Nasa Rec and Jugpress team and their readers July 16: Glas Podrinja team and their youth section members July 17: Loznicke novine and their youth section members *July 20: Kosovo 2.0 team and contributors to video stories (they were not available in the week of July 13-17, that is why interviews had to be conducted on this date) *July 21: NSSJ team and their trainees (they were not available in the week of July 13-17, that is why interviews had to be conducted on this date) July 22: Final interview with FPU: Nada Josimovic and the project's external consultant Natalija Bratuljevic	July 13-17

Analysis, Debriefing & Reporting Phase	July 16-28
Analysis, triangulation of data and report writing	July 16-July 22
Oral presentation of findings	July 23
Submission of draft report	July 24
Revisions and preparation of final report	July 25
Submission of final report	July 27

EVALUATION MATRIX FOR FPU MEDIA INCUBATOR WESTERN BALKANS

Questions to be asked:	Indicators to be used in evaluation:	Methods:	Sources:	Comments (FPU):
1. RELEVANCE				
1.1 To what extent has the project purpose responded to the needs and interests of local media and media organizations?	- Evidence of their ownership and contribution in the project design planning	- Documentation review - Interviews with stakeholders - Online surveys	- FPU project leader - Implementing partners' project managers - Trainers - Trainees (NSSJ) - Youth, readers and social media users	
1.2 Have the activities implemented been relevant for achieving the project's objective?	- Evidence of progress towards objectives as confirmed by project participants and end users	- Documentation review - Stakeholder interviews	- FPU - Implementing partners - End users	
1.3 How do the partners perceive the adaptive approach applied by FPU? Was this approach relevant for their specific needs? Would they have preferred a	Awareness and perception of outcomes among partners - Perceived benefits of this project in comparison with other activities partners implemented	- Stakeholder interviews	Implementing partners	

different approach?				
1.4 How do the target audiences perceive the adaptive approach applied by FPU? Was this approach relevant for their specific needs? Would they have preferred a different approach?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Awareness and perception of outcomes among end audiences - Perceived benefits of this project in comparison with other activities end users were part of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stakeholder interviews - Audience surveys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Audience: youth, citizens and students reached by this project 	
Questions to be asked:	Indicators to be used in evaluation:	Methods:	Sources:	Comments (FPU):
2. EFFECTIVENESS				
2.1 What have been the results (positive and negative) of the Media Incubator Project?	Evidence of progress towards project objective and continued momentum in implementation (Assessment and self-assessment of the implementing partners, positive/negative feedback from the partners and end-users)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stakeholder interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - FPU - Implementing partners - End-users - External consultants 	
2.2 What, if anything, was unique about the project for achieving the results? (e.g. persons, particular approach, source, etc.)	Evidence of individual and structural improvement of capacity: Evidence of effects that have contributed to the achievement of project objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project's reports - Stakeholder interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implementing partners - External consultants 	
2.3 What factors hindered the achievement of	Evidence of analysis of monitoring data and use of analysis for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mid-term reports - Final reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - FPU - Implementing partners 	

results and project objective?	adjustments to efforts across the project; Evidence from lessons learned within the project of factors influencing achievement or non-achievement of objectives	- Interviews with stakeholders, FPU and external consultants	- External consultants	
Questions to be asked:	Indicators to be used in evaluation:	Methods:	Sources:	Comments (FPU):
2. EFFECTIVENESS - CONTINUED				
2.4 How has the context in the two countries affected the project and consequently effectiveness of the project?	Evidence of adjustments in projects in response to the changing contexts	- Project reports - Stakeholder interviews	- Implementing partners - Mentors/ External consultants	
2.5 What are areas for improvement and what are the gaps that the Media Incubator has been unable to address?	Awareness and perception of project implementors, external mentors and trainers about the challenges met during the course of the project implementation and the way they were addressed.	- Project reports - Interviews with Interviews with stakeholders - Interviews with trainers, mentors and external consultants	- Implementing partners - Mentors/trainers - External consultants	
2.6 What are the 'success factors' that increase the chances for certain media to achieve more in experimental, innovation-led projects in comparison to the	Evidence of commitment and engagement by local partners; team spirit; Sense of accountability towards target audiences	- Interviews with stakeholders - Interviews with mentors and consultants	- Implementing partners - Mentors/External consultants - FPU	

rest of the participants?				
2.7 What are the lessons learned?	Partners awareness of what worked and not and why? Evaluator's review and triangulation of different data input.	-Project documentation (reports and surveys) -Interviews with stakeholders	-Implementing partners	
2.8 To what extent were the target groups reached?	Evidence of inclusion of projects' target groups in project design, implementation and assessment.	- Audience surveys - Analytics data Interviews/surveys of the end users - Interviews with external consultants	- End users (audience, vloggers and trainees) - External consultants	
Questions to be asked:	Indicators to be used in evaluation:	Methods:	Sources:	Comments (FPU):
3. EFFICIENCY - SECONDARY				
3.1 Have the project costs been realistic compared to the finance proposal made at the beginning of the project?	Potential changes/adjustments made during the course of implementation	-Financial proposals and reports analysis - Interviews with stakeholders - Interview with FPU	-Project documentation -FPU	
3.2 Were the objectives achieved on time? Was the time invested in this project as planned or was it less/or more time needed than expected?	Evidence of compliancy with the project plan and adaptiveness to potential challenges during the project implementation	-Reports (mid-term and final) - Interviews with stakeholders	-Project documentation -Implementing partners	
3.3 Did the project staff manage the	Self-assessment of project staff as evidenced in	-Reports	-Implementing partners -Mentors	

projects as planned?	interviews and in reports	-Interviews with stakeholders		
3.4 Were the activities cost efficient?/ Are there more cost-effective methods in achieving results ?	Self-assessment of project staff as evidenced in interviews and in reports	-Reports - Interviews with stakeholders	-Implementing partners	
Questions to be asked:	Indicators to be used in Evaluation:	Methods:	Sources:	Comments (FPU):
4. IMPACT - SECONDARY				
4.1 To which extent did the project manage to change perceptions and behavior of the participating partner organizations regarding innovation and engagement with audience/target groups? (What real difference has the activity made to the beneficiaries?)	Evidence of benefits for the beneficiaries achieved through the project.	-Interviews with stakeholders -Surveys and or interviews with end users -Testimonials of stakeholders and the project end users	- Implementing partners - End users: audience and trainees -Project documentation	
4.2 Are there any positive/negative unintended consequences of the intervention?	Evidence of lessons learned that were adopted and integrated by local partners for their future work	-Interviews with stakeholders -Interview with FPU - Project reports analysis	-Implementing partners -FPU	

Questions to be asked:	Indicators to be used in Evaluation:	Methods:	Sources:	Comments (FPU):
5. SUSTAINABILITY -- SECONDARY				
5.1 Do partners wish to continue this project and in what way?	Evidence of sustained action or commitment to continued engagement with target audience	-Interviews with stakeholders	- Implementing partners	
5.2 Are there certain aspects/parts of the project (or the whole project) that partners can continue on their own? If yes, how?	Evidence and description of the extent to which partners have continued to utilize newly gained knowledge and skills after the project has ended	-Interviews with stakeholders -Results analysis	- Implementing partners	

ANNEX 2 – LIST OF SOURCES

1. IMPLEMENTERS:

FPU Project Leader (by ZOOM, phone and email):

Nada Josimovic

Project's External Consultant (meetings):

Natalija Bratuljevic

Kosovo 2.0 Project Implementation Team (via ZOOM):

1. Aulone Kadriu
2. Besa Luci
3. Dibran Sejdiu

Local Press Secretariat Implementation Team:

1. Snezana Milosevic (via ZOOM and phone)
2. Marija Obrenovic (phone)

Glas Podrinja (via ZOOM):

1. Tanja Trifkovic
2. Zoran Zivkovic

Loznicke Novosti (via ZOOM):

1. Nebojsa Trifunovic

GRAD/Krusevac Grad (via ZOOM):

1. Nadezda Budimovic
2. Dejan Miladinovic
3. Danijela Pavlovic

Nova Nasa Rec/JUGpress (via ZOOM):

1. Ljiljana Stojanovic
2. Aleksandar Stojanovic

Novi Sad School of Journalism Project Implementation Team (via ZOOM):

1. Dubravka Valic Nedeljkovic
2. Milovan Nikolic
3. Tijana Femic

Novi Sad School of Journalism Trainers/Mentors (by email):

1. Dina Djordjevic
2. Zoran Strika

2. TARGET AUDIENCES:

Novi Sad School of Journalism Trainees (by email):

1. Danijela Djukic
2. Iva Gajic
3. Una Arsic
4. Marija Maljevic

Loznicke Novosti Lokal Pres Lab/Grmi Lo youth section (by telephone):

1. Andjela Lukic
2. Nikola Petrovic
3. Vladimir Terzic
4. Kristina Dragicevic
5. Jana Grbic
6. Milena Jovanovic
7. Ivan Trifunovic
8. Tamara Savic

Glas Podrinja Lokal Pres Lab Youth section (by ZOOM, Email and telephone):

1. Katarina Srdanovic
2. Violeta Katic
3. Ognjen Djukic
4. Zeljana Pantelic
5. Jovana Pantic
6. Katarina Simic
7. Jelena Zivanovic
8. Nevena Mitrasinovic
9. Teodora Randjic

Kosovo 2.0 – Storytellers: People whose stories were featured through “#IWantToTell” video campaign (by email):

1. Urall Boshnjaku
2. Besnik Shabiu
3. Elza Ramadani

Grad, Krusevac: (by phone)

1. Milan Lazarevic
2. Jelena Curkovic

3. Jasenka Jovanovic
 4. Stefan Markovic
- and 28 respondents to evaluator's survey that GRAD posted on its website.

JUGpress and Nova Nasa Rec end users (by phone):

1. Bratislav Stamenkovic
2. Olivera Zivkovic
3. Marina Djordjevic
4. Bosiljka Papacek
5. Zoran Zivkovic
6. Violeta Stankovic

ANNEX 3 – LIST OF DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

Free Press Unlimited:

- Free Press Unlimited in Western Balkans brief
- Pilot project proposal - Media Incubator Western Balkans
- Guidelines for partners
- List of useful links
- FPU Interim Report for Media Innovation in Western Balkans 02.03
- Financial report Media Incubator for the Western Balkans

LOCAL PRESS ASSOCIATION – “Local Press Lab”:

- Local Press Lab
- Ideation phase document
- Survey Krusevac - 2019
- Survey Leskovac - 2019
- Grad Krusevac Ideas – 16.10.2019
- Ideas Leskovac
- Local Press Needs
- Local Press Media Lab Application, FPU, Nov 7th 2019
- Local Press Association - LP Lab - Budget, Nov 7th 2019
- Local Press Contract

Project briefs:

- Glas Podrinja Brief Project Description
- Grad Krusevac Brief Project Description
- Loznicke Novosti Brief Project Description
- NNR and JugPress Brief Project Description

Interim reports:

- Priprema za sastanak – 27.3
- Interim report 19.02.2020- LP 2 eng-2
- Annex - interim report

Local Press Products:

- LP Lab Google analitika za pocetnike
- Lokal Press Lab Bilten #1 (10.04.2020.)
- List of links to published content 1
- List of links to published content 2
- Video clips – interviews with Local Press Lab participants

Reports by Local Press External Consultant:

- Status report - Local Press Association and partners, Nov 19 2019
- Status Report for FPU, NB Feb 2020
- STATUS REPORT - Local Press Lab Apr 3 2020
- LOCAL PRESS LAB (Pilot Project) Consultant's Final report

KOSOVO 2.0 - "I want to tell":

- #IwanttoKnow - Campaign pilot project 04 Nov
- #IwanttoKnow FINAL BUDGET
- Kosovo2.0 contract
- #podumetkallxu PROGRESS REPORT No.1 - Kosovo 2.0
- FINAL Report K2.0 #IwanttoTell

NOVI SAD SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM - "Media Lab":

- Media Lab Pilot Project Proposal
- Media Lab Budget
- Full Contract NSSJ
- Interim Report
- Media Lab FINAL Report
- Lecture material
- Agenda

ANNEX 4 – ANECDOTAL EVIDENCE OF PROJECT IMPACT AND IMPRESSIONS

Evaluator asked all the implementers and their target audiences “What was the “A-HA!” moment when you knew this project was the right thing to do, or maybe not? “

It was interesting to see how all of them remembered exactly when and where that moment of realization took place and they shared their anecdotes with me. Here are some of them:

In Glas Podrinja, the mentor of “Local Press Lab” youth section said that she was very excited to start working with youth but she was equally terrified of the generation gap that she thought was so big that they they’ll never be able to bridge it together. She also thought that they may find her and her colleagues old bores who write long boring articles and wear old-fashioned clothes.... but after the first meeting she had with the youth in the premises of Glas Podrinja - it was already late so all the youth left, but she stayed in the office to finish some work. When she exited the building one hour later, she found the whole group standing in front of the building and chatting about Glas Podrinja and ideas they should suggest to their mentor. That was her A-ha moment!

In the case of Local Press Secretariat, the Secretary General said her “A-ha” moment was when she realized in April, in the middle of the project implementation, how much the four members were using social media platforms, and she knew then that they had overcome that digital hurdle which they had all been afraid of for many years. She said she knew then that that was the point of no return to the traditional style of content creation and publishing they had been using. She said the four members were calling her every day to tell her what new reactions they got from their readers and how many new followers and readers they got.

For Novi Sad School of Journalism (NSSJ) team that moment was when they saw the originality of topics their students chose to work on in teams after the workshop, namely: the history and future of public telephones; origin of second-hand clothes in Serbia; fake news and coronavirus, youth and poverty.

For most members of both youth sections of “Loznicke novine” and Glas Podrinja” it was when they saw an increased number of likes and followers on their Instagram account and when they saw articles published attributed to them.

The JUGpress editor-in-chief said that she lives an “A-ha” moment every day when she opens her inbox in the morning and sees numerous mails from citizens asking their media to report on local communal problems thanks to their “Citizens report” campaign, or sharing pictures and videos from their neighborhoods.

The Kosovo 2.0 team’s A-ha moment was when they saw the potential of podcasts in survey results and when they saw an increase in their audience reach and views after publishing their first “I want to know” video.

For NSSJ workshop participants: Learning Mobile Journalism techniques.

Quotes of some of the partners and beneficiaries' impressions about the project:

- I feel like I was born again! (GRAD team member)
- I want to be a journalist! (most of youth sections members)
- This project was so needed awakening for us! (Local Press Secretariat member)
- They have improved so much, and I really enjoy reading them! (GRAD and JUGpress audiences)
- So many people contacted me now because Kosovo 2.0 shared my story and they want to join my initiative (Kosovo 2.0 "I Want to Tell" storyteller)
- I was thinking of quitting journalism studies but after the workshop with Novi Sad School J I realized this is what I love and want to do in life (NSSJ Media Lab participant)
- I learned so much about youth! (youth section mentor)
- Older colleagues are not boring and old-fashioned (youth section member)
- When I see a problem now in my community, I immediately report it to JUGpress and they immediately react! (reader of JUGpress)
- I only go to GRAD portal to get information as they are the only media where I can get all the unbiased information I need (GRAD reader)
- This is the first time ever I filmed the whole TV package without assistance of the cameraman! (NSSJ workshop participant)
- I made TV packages reports on elections by using only my mobile phone thanks to MoJo techniques I learned from NSSJ (Media Lab participant)
- Without Natalija (external consultant) we wouldn't be able to weed out important from less important ideas and activities, and she helped us to stay on the course to the very end (Local Press secretariat member)
- This is my main "channel" of information, I get all the information from them, knowing that the content is produced by the team of honest people, professionals who know how to report even on the topics not many would dare and still keep their heads on. Because of those qualities, they enjoy great respect of the community (GRAD reader)

ANNEX 5 – RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PARTNERS

All partners:

- All partners should continue to conduct surveys with their audiences on a regular basis, meaning not just for the purpose of better defining potential projects but to keep being relevant with their audiences.
- All partners should focus more on short video content production and make room to try out citizen journalism. These innovative forms could amplify the project outcomes and increase outreach to target audiences and are a great addition in terms of human capacity especially for those outlets which are not able to hire more staff. It is also a great way to connect with their local communities.

Specific recommendations for each partner:

1. Local Press Secretariat:

- Split the tasks and responsibilities more evenly among team members.
- Find way of sharing educational material produced and make it more attractive to their members (this is also suggestion of the external consultant): Split the manuals and newsletter content by topics and distribute as smaller teasers/cheat sheets: something like “Local Press tip of the week”.
- Secretariat should not take on more tasks if there is no capacity in the team to deliver them without affecting other projects’ or project activities.
- Promote the Media Incubator - Local Press Lab results with other members of the Association.

2. Local Press members:

2.1 Loznicke novosti, Local Press Lab – Youth Section GrmiLO:

- Be clear with youth section members if you are continuing with Local Press Lab- GrmiLO youth section, as I received mixed signals from youth section members. Some members think it will continue and some didn’t hear anything about continuing.
- Should Loznicke Novosti decide to continue with youth section, they’ll need at least one more mentor and ideally a space for youth section in the media outlet premises.
- Youth section’s structure was pretty loose, there were no deadlines given but the work was based on number of ideas they had in given moment, so maybe there should be more hands-on mentoring: introducing weekly deadlines for example for ideas and production of new content and establishing certain dynamics of publishing the youth section content.
- Have more youth content produced by youth
- Long articles should be avoided and more video content should be produced.

- If conditions permit, more real journalism practice by following/"shadowing" older journalists to the sites and events they are reporting on.
- Give youth section more access to Loznicke Novosti's online portals.
- More visible branding of GrmiLO - the Local Press Lab youth section local name. GrmiLO logo for example was made and was one of the outputs of this project but couldn't be found anywhere on Loznicke Novosti's platforms.
- Promote GrmiLO section content across all the online platforms.
- More live broadcast of events.
- Hold at least once-a-month integral office meetings: where youth will feel more included and can share their ideas with older colleagues about how to improve even more content for youth.

2.2 Glas Podrinja, Local Press Lab - Youth Section:

- At least one more mentor should be added to the team and, ideally, there should be space made for youth section in the media outlet premises
- Long articles should be avoided
- There should be more illustrations, photos and videos
- There should be more youth content produced by youth
- Youth should be more present on the online platforms of this media outlet
- Glas Podrinja is considering expanding youth section and maybe they could introduce peer-to-peer mentoring where "old" youth section members would mentor new members.
- If conditions permit, more real journalism practice by following/"shadowing" older journalists to the sites and events they are reporting on.
- Integrate more youth section by inviting their members to at least once-a-month office meetings: youth will feel more included and empowered to talk with older colleagues about how to improve overall content of this media outlet and make them more relevant for youth (suggestions from youth section members as well)

2.3 JUGPress:

- More video content production
- Work on engaging with youth more as there is an audience potential in that pool
- Keep working on "Citizens report" campaign and be consistent about hashtag they use
- Have at least one more staff member fully committed to "Citizens report" campaign

2.4 GRAD:

- Readers who responded to survey GRAD posted on their website during the evaluation, suggested more topics about: youth delinquency, health protection of people with different abilities, protection mechanisms for teachers from violent parents,

infrastructural problems of people who live in villages; problem with public toilets in Bagdala and illegal construction stories

3. Novi Sad School of Journalism (NSSJ):

- Do not start the project implementation before you have full understanding of the needs of your target audience.
- Honoraria for participants of workshops is something that NSSJ see as important factor in getting good response from their target audience (working journalists) to register for NSSJ trainings and workshops. However, evaluator believes that rather than offering honoraria, messaging and promoting of the similar workshops in future as a free investment in their (target participants) own future and future of the media they are currently working at, can secure higher turnout. Getting the spot in NSSJ's workshops and trainings should be perceived as honor and privilege and not as a paid job.
- Consider splitting content and days planned for workshop and offer online courses for local journalists

4. Kosovo 2.0:

- Ten-minute "I want to know" campaign videos should be shorter.
- There should be consistent name/hashtag of the campaign: "I want to tell": Changing frequently the name of the campaign on social media from "I want to know" to "I want to tell" to "I want to tell about solidarity" as Kosovo 2.0 did, added to the very short time left for the campaign, diluted the messaging and made it more difficult to track for the audience.
- Kosovo 2.0 should promote video stories across all online platforms they have and not just on YouTube. They did promote the campaign on their Facebook and Instagram accounts but only on their YouTube channel all five video stories produced so far can be found easily.
- Kosovo 2.0 should be consistent with the translation of the "I want to tell" video stories from Albanian to English and Serbian languages and translate the fourth and fifth video story to the two languages.
- The team should consider translating the videos to Turkish language, too.
- When conditions permit, organize outreach campaign to connect more with their target audience outside of capital Pristina, something like "Kosovo 2.0 caravan": where they would travel to different towns in Kosovo and will get to know better their audience while promoting their media at the same time. This could be good opportunity to get more "I want to know" video stories.