



FINAL REPORT

SECURITY SECTOR SCHOOL FOR JOURNALISTS 2nd Edition

29th March- 2nd April 2010

On behalf of



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Executive Summary

It is the pleasure of KCSS¹ to use this opportunity to write, on behalf of our team, on the successful completion of the second incarnation of this project. In both our personal and organizational capacity, we have closely overseen the developments throughout each phase of the project from the planning, through to the implementation and evaluation, and finally the culmination of the project- marked by this final report. In all aspects, the benefits of this training have been widespread and many security sector actors and journalists, directly or indirectly involved, will recall project activities that offered the participants valuable lessons, new experiences and new approaches with regard to team work, networking, and the possibility for exploring new windows of opportunity. Further to this, from the perspective of the lecturers, however experienced, the second edition of security sector school showed that one may benefit from challenges related to preparation and delivery on specific topics. In the second edition, the core values of UNDP were more robustly represented and displayed by the school. UNDP's actions and cooperation can be seen as a best practice for interaction with NGOs at the local level.

The students commented on how the lessons, training, presentations, lectures, and experience of teamwork have surfaced and served their practical and academic needs in many different areas, especially with matters regarding the security sector. At its core, our tailor- made project was both about purpose and audience. We embraced a contemporary orientation to realize a concrete objective – in this case, we thought and envisaged a project implementation process where every participant would be able to show their potential, to exchange ideas, impressions, information and material. It is equally important to reflect upon specific cases from surrounding countries and the local communities, from which each individual contributed to the overall experience and which gave the project far greater depth. The fact that this objective was fully realized will have a long lasting and sustainable effect for everyone who participated in this project, in whatever capacity. There are participants who still write to thank and enquire about future projects in which they look forward to participate. They were very appreciative of the holistic nature of the school and how each lecturer discussed the scope of their work.

In addition to the points mentioned above, the project contributed by further strengthening democratic oversight of the security sector in Kosovo and the region. This event enhanced the horizontal dimension of democratic oversight, which primarily refers to the role of the media and civil society in scrutinizing the performance of security actors. The participants showed extreme satisfaction with regards to the knowledge they gained throughout the school. That said, preparing these journalists and students for work concerning security issues is a step forward in strengthening the capacities of civil society and media. The outcome of the project marked the full and complete implementation of the objectives set out in the project proposal.

However, while the overall impression is that this project attained a 'five star' mark, the culture and the need for future cooperation and activities with all participants, partners, and other interested parties still leaves room to be strengthened. Thus, our organization will commit to come up with new ideas, new projects and new ways to increase civil society awareness of the security issues in Kosovo and the region.

¹ The implementing team of this project was made up of core KCSS officers and those hired only for this project. The KCSS team was composed by Ramadan Qehaja, Kosum Kosumi, Skender Përteshi, Gerard Scott, Florian Qehaja, Edona Kosumi and Mentor Vrajolli. For more details about KCSS see www.qkss.org

Overview

The second edition of “Security Sector School for Journalists” which took place from 29th March to 2nd April 2010 can be considered successfully implemented. Taking into account the very short period for which KCSS, in cooperation with UNDP, was afforded to plan and implement the project, the fulfillment of all of the goals foreseen in the Memorandum of Understanding and project proposal can be seen as a very positive result for both partners.

Throughout the project, 32² participants actively attended all of the lectures hosted by KCSS held at the conferencing facilities at Hotel Afa in Pristina. There were 18 female participants out of 32 due to KCSS attention on giving priority to the gender dimension. The project informally began on Sunday 28th March with the arrival of the regional students and foreign lecturers from Pristina’s airport and bus station. KCSS organized an orientation evening to greet all of the regional participants and inform them about the structure of the project, what they should expect to gain from the experience and inform them about the necessary amenities in Pristina. This was also an opportunity for the students and lecturers, both local and regional, to mingle and meet each other in a less formal environment before the course began.

Altogether there were 21 Kosovar participants, made up from journalists covering security sector and other related fields and students studying journalism in the last year of an Undergraduate or Master’s degree. As a matter of successful promotion the Kosovar participants were mainly from the key media institutions in Kosovo: RTK, KTV, RTV 21, Radio Kosova, Radio Blue Sky and Radio Dukagjini. In addition the project was enriched by journalists working at the local radio stations: Radio Kamenica and Dodona.

Out of the 21 local participants 1 was journalist from minority community: a Bosnian working at Radio Kosova – Bosnian Section. There were 12 participants from the wider region: 3 from Albania, 2 from Croatia, 2 from Serbia, 1 from Bulgaria and 3 from Macedonia. Most of them were working for key media networks in the region, such as: HRT Croatia, Vijesti Croatia, Alsat Albania, CCMR Serbia and other. There were researchers from across the region in the body of participants and they contributed to the discussion, provided different perspectives and conveyed their experience to some of the younger students.

Each day lectures commenced no later than 09:00 and finished around 17:00. There were regular coffee breaks and a lunch break between 12:30 and 14:00 each day, this recess amply served the purpose of maximizing the interaction between participants and allowing them to discuss the day’s topics outside of the lecture environment.

Programme and Lectures

DAY 1 – MONDAY 29th March

Opening Ceremony

² As explained in the lessons learned part, 4 of the students cancelled their attendance in the last moment. However, there were some representatives of the international organizations and the government who actively attended the lectures and enjoyed the lectures and discussions provided in the school.

The Security Sector School for journalists officially began with the project's opening ceremony. There were welcome speeches from the Director of KCSS, Mr. Ramadan QEHAJA, the Communications Specialist from the UNDP Support to Security Sector Development project (3SD), Mr. Abit HOXHA and the first lecturer of the School, Mr. David LAW, the Senior Fellow at the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF). The Minister of Internal Affairs, Mr. Zenun PAJAZITI cancelled his attendance at the last minute due to a scheduling crisis. Due to the high interest for this event there was a large amount of media coverage from the local television networks. The speeches made reference to the contributions of the donors and KCSS officials for organizing second edition of its kind in Kosovo, and praised the participants for their selection and motivation to improve the professional portrayal of security issues through the media, in accordance with the UNDP's ISSR recommendations for security sector reform.



**Figure 1. Mr. Ramadan Qehaja
Director of KCSS**

Lecture 1 - Security Concept- An Introduction into Security Sector Governance and Security Sector Reform

The first lecture was conducted by Mr. David LAW DCAF Geneva. This lecture provided participants with a general overview of the new security challenges and environment facing modern society. The lecture focused on the following issues:

- The definition of "Security"
- The interlocking structure of National Security (domestic political systems, national security policing and strategy and international security systems)
- States and Power
- Global Society
- SSR across Europe

Practical exercises involving past cases of SSR and Security issues portrayed in the media from across the region.



Figure 2. Mr. David Law, Lecturer from DCAF Geneva.

Lecture 2 - Mapping Monitoring of the Security Sector

Mr. David LAW from DCAF, Geneva also presented the second lecture of the opening day. During this session the students received a practical explanation of the divisions of the security institutions, through the demonstration of mapping.

Working groups took place during this session to discuss the practical application of mapping of the security sector. Participants found this session very interesting and it was a topic of much discussion

throughout the rest of the day. The start of the school in working groups very much set the tone



Figure 3. Working groups: local and regional participants during the SSJ 2010

for the rest of the school by engaging all participants in a meaningful and constructive way.

The Mapping and Monitoring project, which is run by DCAF, across the Balkans was an ideal way to introduce the participants to the different kinds of resources available for research and use when dealing with Security Sector issues and their reporting.

DAY 2 – TUESDAY 30th March

Lecture 1 - Security Sector Reform Case Study: Macedonia

The first lecture of Day two was the first of three case studies on SSR in the Balkans. Mr. Islam Yusuf from Analytica Macedonia presented on SSR in the neighbouring state of Macedonia and the challenges it has faced since declaring independence from Yugoslavia in 1991.

- The generations of reforms since 1991
- Regionality and the Adriatic Charter
- The challenges ahead for Macedonia and its government
- Community interaction in the Security Sector

Lecture 2 - Security Sector Reform Case Study: Serbia

The second session was led by Jelena RADOMAN of the Centre for Civil and Military Relations in Belgrade. As the second day progressed, the participants began to build up a much more comprehensive picture of SSR across the Western Balkan states.

- What is Security Sector Reform (SSR)?
- Serbia's foreign and security policy
- Transparency and democratic governance
- Participation of citizens and their organisations from civil society
- SSR accountability and the media's dimension



Figure 4. Mrs. Jelena Radoman, CCMR Belgrade

Lecture 3 - Security Sector Reform Case Study: Albania

For the third lecture of the day we welcomed Mr. Arian DYRMISHI, an experienced IR expert and senior fellow at the Institute for Democracy and Mediation in Tirana. This lecture was the final regional case study of the day.

This lecture focused on the following:

- The First Period: 1991- 1997
- The Second Period: 1997-2000
- The Third Period: 2000-2009

- The Democratization process in Albania
- Emergence from Political and Economic crises
- The depolarization of politics with regard to the security sector.

Lecture 4 - Media Development and Security in a Post Conflict Environment

The last lecture of the second day was conducted by Mr. Abit HOXHA from UNDP Kosovo, who took the opportunity to guide the students through the challenges of an impartial media in times following ethnic conflict and governmental change.

This lecture focused upon:

- The accountability of the media
- The vague legal framework that the United Nations Interim Administration in Kosovo (UNMIK) operated within in its early days of establishment
- Media control by editors and the administration's interference
- The consequences of media manipulation

DAY 3 – WEDNESDAY 31st March

Lecture 1 - Integrated Border Management Strategy: The Perspective of Kosovo

Day three was initiated with a lecture by Mr. Behar SELIMI, Deputy Director of the Kosovo Police and Head of the Border Department. This lecture comprised seven chapters and gave the participants a more than comprehensive overview of the political environment in which the Kosovo Police (KP), in particular the Border Section, operates, the theory of Integrated Border Management and asylum and immigration issues, to name but a few of the topics.

The main areas covered were:

- The three main pillars of IBM
- Institutional authorities
- Interaction with international bodies and the NATO military force KFOR
- Intra service and intra agency cooperatio
- Monitoring and assessment of successful border management



Figure 5 Mr. Behar Selimi, General Director of KP

Lecture 2 □ Democratic Oversight of the Security Sector: the Role of the Parliament and Civil Society

The second lecture of the day was conducted by Mr. Armend BEKAJ. Mr Bekaj is a specialist in Parliamentary oversight and civil society's role in reforming the Security Sector in Kosovo. As with day three, Mr. Bekaj's lecture can be seen as a smaller case study in relation to the others, but none less pertinent.

This lecture comprehensively covered:

- Civil society's existence and voice in Kosovo in comparison to other states in the region
- Advocacy and constructive dialogue with the government
- The question of a buffer zone between citizens and the government
- The potential for synergy between the parliament, government and civil society actors.

Study Visit: Kosovo Center for Public Security, Education and Development

The study visit to the Kosovo Centre for Public Security, Education and Development was an interesting part of the project for all participants.

The visit began with a lecture from the Director of the Centre Ms. Taibe CANNOLI who made a presentation about the history of KCPSED. She also spoke about the training process of new police, customs and emergency service recruits at the centre and the curriculum which new cadets undertake to graduate as public safety employees as well as the process of upgrading their specialist training and expertise.



Figure 6. Study Visit at KCPSED in Vushtrria

After the lecture participants had an opportunity to visit the virtual shooting range. During this visit the participants had a chance to closely observe what conditions and in which scenarios the Kosovo Police members are allowed to use weapons.

Participants also had an opportunity to tour the facilities of KCPSED, such as: classrooms, exercise fields, shooting field and other recreation areas within the institution. The director of KCPSED accompanied the SSSJ group throughout their visit, showing them the details of the centre and answering any questions they posed.

The students found the visit extremely enjoyable as it provided a different learning environment and far more practical insight into the workings of a security institution.

DAY 4 - THURSDAY 1st April

Lecture 1 - Classification of Information and Security Clearances

The first session was taken by Dr. Robert MUHARREMI, the senior research associate of the KCSS and a former legal advisor to the Kosovo government. His lecture was one of the most appreciated of the entire school- the participants found a legal grounding to security clearances and risks extremely helpful.

Dr. Muharremi's lecture covered:

- The Kosovo Constitution
- The legal framework of the security



Figure 7 Mr. Robert Muharremi

- sector
- Access to secure documents
- Classification of data and sensitive documents
- The legacy of UNMIK in this area
- The competent authority for access decision and restriction of information

Lecture 2 □ Security Challenges: Organized Crime and Corruption □ Introduction

This lecture provided a deeper understanding of issues related to the most concerning security challenges and risks in the global level. Mr. Rifat MARMULLAKU delivered the presentation on the basis of his professional experience in the security field.

Mr. Marmullaku's lecture covered:

- Understanding Organized Crime
- Definition and Trends of Organized Crime
- Risks and Threats from Organized Crime and Corruption
- Characteristics of corruption as phenomenon

Lecture 3 □ Kosovo's Pathway towards the European Union: the Ministry of Internal Affairs Perspective

The penultimate session of the day was lectured by Mr. Artan DURAKU, Advisor and Chief of Staff to the Minister of Internal Affairs. During this lecture Mr. Duraku gave the participants an overview of Justice and Home Affairs and Regional Cooperation in Kosovo and how that will relate to the transition of Kosovo into a European Union candidate state in the years ahead. He provided relevant examples and case studies regarding the steps taken to build Kosovo's capacity in this area. This lecture was followed by a general discussion with participants, who had the opportunity to voice their opinions on the new structures in place and have any specialist questions answered regarding this field, especially with regard to visa liberalization negotiations.

Lecture 4- A Western Balkan Perspective on NATO's New Strategic Concept

The final lecture of day 4 saw the director of the Institute for Mediation and Democratisation in Tirana, Mr. Sotirajq HRONI talk on the new strategic concept which NATO works to and that concept's impact on Albania, a new NATO member state.

His informative lecture covered:

- NATO as a global player and its interaction with other IGOs
- The western Balkan view of NATO
- Future policy and strategy
- Global vs. Regional and NATO's regional profile
- Euro-Atlantic Security

DAY 5 – FRIDAY 2nd April

Lecture 1 - UNDP's Activities in Kosovo

The first lecture of the final day was a special event hosted by Mr. Armend MUJA, Head of Communications at UNDP Kosovo. This session was consultative and lasted longer than many of the

other lectures as UNDP Kosovo wanted the opportunity to reach out to the journalists and other participants in an attempt to fully brief them on the work of the Kosovo country office. This briefing included the Millennium Development Goals, cluster structure behind development and the interaction between regional offices of the UN family to promote cohesive development.

Lecture 2 - Media Oversight of the Security Sector

The final lecture of the school was given by Mr. Alex STANDISH, a programme manager from UNDP Kosovo and former journalist. Mr. Standish lectured on the global perspective of reporting and the impact that media oversight can have upon policy decisions in relation to the security sector. The participants found this final lecture on the global implications of reporting and the methods of data transmission very helpful in understanding the context in which they would be working.



Figure 8 Mr. Alex Standish

The KCSS team decided to finish the week-long training in the way that it was initiated, with a day of fewer lectures but longer, more interactive sessions with two excellent, current practitioners of work with UNDP in Kosovo. Not only is KCSS a major partner of the UNDP, but its work Kosovo-wide is of great importance to the development of the region.

Graduation Ceremony

On the successful completion of the SSSJ programme the graduation ceremony took place. Each of the participants received a certificate of attendance, presented by Mr Parviz FARTASH, UNDP Kosovo Director and Mr. Ramadan QEHAJA, Director of the KCSS.

The KCSS team used this opportunity to hand in a CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION to Mr. Fartash, the Director of UNDP for the support and contribution in implementing this important project.



Figure 9 Certification Ceremony of the SSJ 2010



Figure 10 Security Sector School for Journalists 2nd

Organisation and Logistics

ACCOMMODATION

KCSS arranged and provided accommodation for all lecturers and participants at Hotel Afa in Sunny Hill, Pristina. In a departure from the organizational plan of the previous school, all events save the study visit and social activities were conducted in the same location. The team felt that this was a better alternative to using private coaches each day to transport all concerned to an external site would not only risk delaying some of the activities but would also deprive the participants of time and opportunity to use their time outside the comprehensive lecture schedule to the fullest. Many participants used this time, after the final lectures each day, to see Pristina as well as to enjoy some hard-earned rest.

Local participants that lived more than 60km from Pristina were also accommodated in the hotel for ease of timings and logistics. Although many of the Kosovar participants came from nearby towns and villages such as: Glllovoc/Gllogovac, Kamenica, Gjilan/Gnjilane, Ferizaj/Urosevac, the KCSS team still some made arrangements for them to be provided with accommodation in Pristina due to construction taking place on the roads leading into the city. This initiative was undertaken to ensure the consistent participation of all of the selected journalists.

TRAVEL

All international lecturers received complimentary transport to and from Pristina. Most participants arrived by car; bus or train and these costs were also covered by KCSS.

FOOD

Food was provided for all participants. Those staying in the hotel had the added opportunity to have breakfast each day. The hotel also hosted lunch in order to avoid losing time before afternoon lectures. Evening meals were more special, with the KCSS officers taking the opportunity to show the students restaurants in central Pristina, utilizing different venues each evening. All comments received regarding the food were very positive.

FINANCES

KCSS provided travel reimbursements for all regional and local participants. Some payments were made directly to participants at the time of the Security Sector School, while additional payments were conducted within the two weeks following the course; this was possible as all of the KCSS officers were focused upon the logistical dimension of the project at that time.

FACILITIES

The facilities at Hotel Afa were ideal for the situation. The auditorium fulfilled the European standards for organizing such events by having the possibility of using all necessary lecturing techniques. The lecturers almost exclusively used the projector system for interactive electronic presentations. Some of them used working groups to reinforce the impact of their presentations and provide more practical training on security and reporting issues.

We received very positive feedback from the participants, both students and lecturers alike, regarding the facilities offered by the venue and its more than capable staff.

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

The KCSS project officers also made provisions to offer guidance on the local nightlife and other social activities. Most nights the participants took the opportunity to meet with the KCSS officers and their fellow participants. The KCSS team worked tirelessly to achieve one of the subsidiary aims of the project: social interaction and networking. Given the upwardly mobile nature of work in the Balkans, especially within the journalism community, a special focus was given to fostering professional and personal relationships between the participants.

Assessment of Security Sector School for Journalists

METHODOLOGY

KCSS drafted the evaluation questionnaire in advance of the Security Sector School's launch. The questions were designed to encourage the students to provide a fair reflection of their experience and provide us with constructive criticism and recommendations for future events, not least the potential

next occurrence of this activity. On completion of the course all participants provided anonymous feedback on the lectures, topics, facilities, logistics, and overall impressions of the Security Sector School. They had the opportunity to rate each question from 1 to 5 (1 being very unsatisfied and 5 very satisfied) and they were also encouraged to provide additional comments.

The comments were very optimistic and gave our team valuable feedback for the planning and organization of the next week- long event.³ The students were almost unanimously extremely appreciative of the project and rated it accordingly. Generally the Security Sector School for Journalists was rated as satisfactory to very satisfactory across the board, with the lectures, local and international speakers, discussion topics and presentation methods of the speakers all highlighted as being of extremely high quality. Through the qualitative answers provided by the participants, along with their suggestions and criticisms, we feel we have a clear platform to build upon the already positive outcome of the third SSSJ, which will help us in the organization of future events and will also be useful to events held by similar organizations.

QUESTIONNAIRE FORM

INDEX:

1. Very Unsatisfied 2. Not satisfied. 3. Satisfied 4. Very satisfied

QUESTIONS:

- Q1. Have you been satisfied with the themes and content of the Security Sector School for Journalists?*
- Q2. Have you been satisfied with the performance of the speakers?*
- Q3. Have you been satisfied with the organization of KCSS? What would you change?*
- Q4. How valuable was project to you?*
- Q5. Have you been satisfied with the accommodation, transport and catering facilities?*
- Q6. What kinds of topics were missing from this programme?*
- Q7. Which topics should be cancelled next year?*
- Q8. How will you be able to use the experience gained from this school in your current form of work?*

³ KCSS holds the originals of the completed evaluation forms.

RESULTS

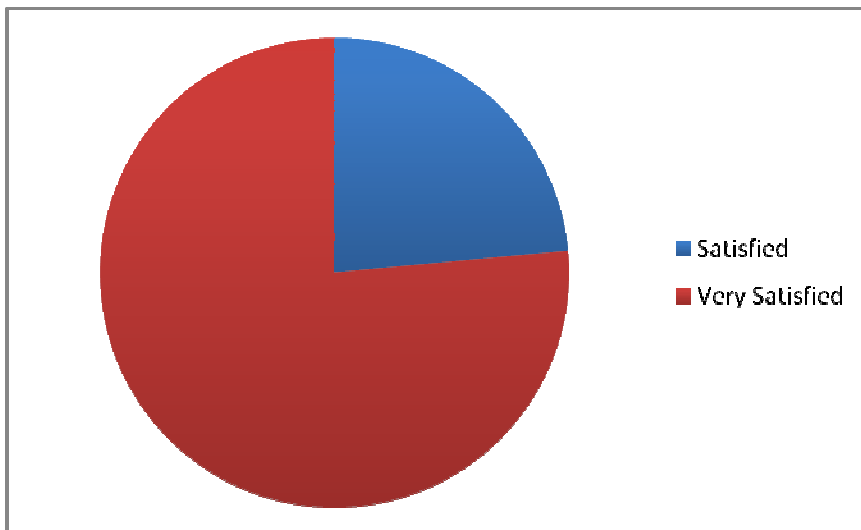
INDEX:

1. Not satisfied at all 2. Not satisfied 3. Satisfied 4. Very satisfied

QUESTIONS:

Q1. *Have you been satisfied with the themes and content of the Security Sector School for Journalist?*

Not satisfied at all = 0 Not satisfied = 0 Satisfied = 8 Very satisfied = 26



The majority of the participants were very satisfied with the themes and content of the SSSJ. Those who left comments on why there were not satisfied cited a concentration on issues in Kosovo, rather than the wider Balkan region. However the majority of students indicated that the content and topics of the lectures and discussions had been more than adequate and provided for a very interesting and topical learning experience.

A significant proportion of the feedback noted the wide range of topics and themes covered throughout the week and commended the intensity and immersion of the course. Key topics highlighted as highly informative were: parliamentary oversight of security institutions, civil control of armed forces and Mapping and Monitoring of the security sector.

Q2. *Have you been satisfied with the performance of the speakers?*

Feedback for the speakers was generally very positive. In the students opinion the majority of the speakers were very successful in conveying their topics and provided a lot of information on the security issues under discussion. They noted some of the best speakers as David Law, Robert Muharremi and Behar Selimi. The perceived quality of the lectures and speakers will be taken into account when selecting experts for future events. Several participants highlighted the strong

combination of international speakers lecturing on generalized security issues and the local experts who discussed the specific case studies of the region.

Q3. Have you been satisfied with the organization of KCSS? What would you change?

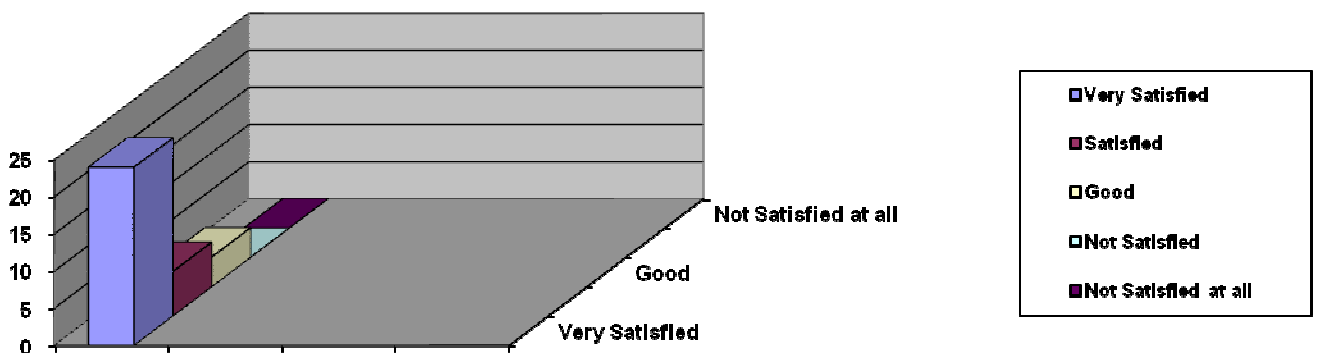
Not satisfied at all = 0 Not satisfied = 0 Satisfied = 5 Very satisfied = 29



The majorities of the participants were very satisfied with the organization of KCSS and wrote that the project team had performed very professionally during the period of the SSSJ, successfully performing their roles in implementing the project.

Q4. How valuable was project to you?

Not satisfied at all = 0 Not satisfied = 0 Good = 4 Satisfied = 6 Very satisfied = 24



The Security Sector School for Journalists was seen as a very valuable experience by all concerned. All of the students found the project worthwhile and many registered their interest in future similar events. Particular appreciation was voiced by the journalist students for the opportunity to gain experience of new issues regarding parliamentary oversight of the security sector, Security Sector Reform and Governance, the structure of the Security Sector in Kosovo and the risks and threats facing the Balkans with regard to regional cooperation on security issues.

Q5. *Have you been satisfied with the accommodation, transport and food provided?*

Not satisfied at all = 0 Not satisfied = 0 Satisfied = 0 Very satisfied = 34

According to entirety of the SSSJ participants the opinion was one of being comprehensively satisfied with the provision of transport, accommodation and food facilities. KCSS was praised for its choice and standard of accommodation for students not local to Pristina. Nearly all students noted the lengths to which the KCSS officers went to during the evening meals to entertain and include all participants and make them feel welcome, encourage student interaction and organize meals in some of Pristina's finest and most congenial restaurants.

Q6. *What kinds of topics were missing from this program?*

This question was not widely answered by the participating students. Those who did provide recommendations suggested the following topics for future SSSJ events: Cooperation between NATO and the EU and regional cooperation in the security sector. The participants would also have appreciated more information about the Kosovo Security Force and Intelligence Agency.

Q7. *Which topics should be cancelled next year?*

Although several topics were noted as missing from the curriculum this year, none of the participants signaled that any specific lectures/topics should be removed from the programme of future events, however, there were some individuals who responded that the weighting of the topics could be shifted to represent the wider security issues of the Balkans, most specifically terrorism and organized crime.

Q8. *How will you be able to use the experience gained from this school in your current form of work?*

Nearly all students noted that the subjects lectured during the school would be extremely helpful to them when writing journalistic reports focused on the security sector, as well as writing and composing different analyses concerning the sector.

The participants that were still studying and researching journalism and communications felt that the working groups in particular had contributed positively to their approach to their studies and aspirations to become journalists.

Evaluation

RESULTS AND NEW DEVELOPMENTS

The results of the projects are considered to be evident. The following outcomes were identified:

- Journalists and students journalists received significant knowledge on the security issues the western Balkans and how they relate to Kosovo.
- Excellent exchange of knowledge and experience between local and regional journalists. Networking was a key aspect of the school.

- As indicated by most of the participants in the evaluation sheets, this activity will help to write the reports in the security sector and help to make a research in the security sector
- Promotion of the media's role in oversight of the security sector.
- Promotion of the UNDP's cooperation with local NGO's in this field, therefore strengthening the civilian oversight of the Kosovar security institutions.
- The follow up ability of a specialized Kosovar NGO to initiate and to organize the second edition of such a course in a very professional manner.
- The opportunity for the most eminent security experts from the Western Balkans to come to Kosovo and conduct lectures in their specific fields.

UNEXPECTED DIFFICULTIES AND LESSONS LEARNED

Throughout the project we were faced with some unforeseen challenges both directly and indirectly involved with the project.

The lack of knowledge of the English language by some local participants caused difficulties in understanding and the flow and exchange of ideas. While this was the case with very few participants, it did not affect the SSSJ. However a more timing in the selection would create better space for KCSS to select these participants who has good command of English, both oral and written. The upcoming edition should pay particular attention in assessing the English knowledge of applicants. Depending on the timeframe, it would be good if the applicants submit a short essay on a related topic, so the Committee could have an overview of the applicants' knowledge of English language as well as the writing skills.

In order to implement this project smoothly, a period of three months is required for the preparatory activities. Two months' preparation was not enough to implement the full potential which this project had to offer. The need for early planning for future similar events can therefore be seen as inevitable.

Some of the participants that confirmed their attendance in the last moment cancelled it. This caused some logistical difficulties and gave limited space to invite the others from the reserve list. This was in particular the case with two journalists from Bosnia and Herzegovina and two locals. From the operational point of view is rather difficult to launch any alternatives should there be repetition of these cases in the upcoming SSSJ editions. Looking the experiences of other events organized throughout Europe there might be an option if the confirmed participants from the region would be asked to deposit a symbolic amount by way of returnable deposit, which would be binding for them should they wish to withdraw at the last moment.

Although this project has a specific target group – journalists and student journalists, KCSS realized that the selection of few participants who hold the position of researchers at NGO's and Think Tanks both in Kosovo and the wider Balkan region would undoubtedly assist the overall project. It is foreseen that the selection of researchers would increase the academic approach of the school and enhance the professional discussions conducted during the lecturers' presentations, as these discussions constitute a crucial part of the school.

The participants particularly appreciated the lectures that had working group components. Lecturers should be encouraged to give part of their time to working groups in the upcoming editions.

Recommendations

- The successful outcome of the second edition opens the opportunity for organizing the third edition in 2011. The SSSJ could be a traditional event in which the journalists and researchers could find it very useful.
- More timing in the preparatory stage is crucial in order to fully promote the project and attract more participants to apply.
- The application procedure should require more proof of the candidates especially their ability to write and knowledge of English language.
- Should this project reach its third edition, more should perhaps be done to ensure that there are more international lecturers from farther afield, given the globalizing nature of journalistic comparison and comment regarding issues common to countries outside the Balkan Peninsula.
- The scope of the participants should be expanded into also selecting other civil society actors- in particular researchers and other individuals from academia.