



Strengthening
Conflict Sensitive Coverage
in Ukraine's Regional Media

EVALUATION REPORT FOR THOMSON FOUNDATION OF THE EU-FUNDED UKRAINE REGIONAL VOICES PROJECT: SEPTEMBER 2017



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David Quin, Director of Development, Thomson Foundation
davidq@thomsonfoundation.org

Olena Sadovnik, Project Coordinator, Thomson Foundation
olenkas@thomsonfoundation.org



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ACRONYMS

CSO
Civil Society Organisation

EC
European Community

EU
European Union

KII
Key Informant Interview

IDP
Internally Displaced Person

RV
Regional Voices

TF
Thomson Foundation



Executive Summary

Surrounded by six countries, Ukraine sits at the crossroads between the sphere of influence of Russia and the European Union.

Executive Summary

With a population of some 43 to 46 million, and an expansive geographical footprint, Ukraine has prime access to the Black Sea, and significantly, several important gas pipelines that run across the country. Ukraine's geopolitical importance has been well-documented, and since the Orange Revolution of 2004, tensions between the pro-Europe West and the pro-Russia East parts of the country have led to a very divided nation. The tension and conflict that resulted from Russian military intervention in 2014, and its subsequent annexation of Crimea, along with the unrest and aggression in Donetsk and Luhansk, resulted in the displacement of some 1.6 to 1.7 million people in Ukraine,¹² not to mention the ever-present societal and political upheaval felt by Ukrainians ever since.

Against this backdrop the Thomson Foundation (TF) launched the EU-funded, 1.8 million Euro, 18-month Regional Voices (RV) project in 2015 in response to the growing number of internally displaced people (IDPs)³ and the ensuing regional instability. The RV project has focused on supporting media and civil society as positive agents of social change, and as key drivers to helping to bring about a peaceful solution to the insecurity and instability associated with the IDP crisis. Regional Voices has addressed issues pertaining to attitudes and actors; conflict prevention through access to information; media credibility and public confidence; economic independence of the media; journalistic quality and inclusive

content; and overall IDP coverage patterns as well as regional and national portrayal of IDP issues and concerns.⁴

RV seeks to support local capacity building of independent regional media to better help journalists and media outlets provide coverage of the social, political and economic concerns of both the IDP population and Ukraine's response to it. Having a media development organisation like Thomson Foundation to focus closely on Ukraine's IDP population has helped civil society organizations (CSOs) raise awareness about the plight of the displaced and to humanise their experience. Their task was to show Ukrainians that the IDPs are neighbours, relatives, and fellow countrymen. The Regional Voices project sought to support local Ukrainian media and civil society organisations to dispel the myth that IDPs are not refugees in the classic sense of the term, but rather people who considering the Russian invasion, found themselves suddenly homeless in their own land. RV was also able to support the ongoing need to channel aid to fund media development priorities like professional journalism education, mobile and digital journalism, media literacy efforts, and how to develop stories and long-term coverage of issues reflecting a conflict-sensitive approach.

RV was organized around three objectives – detailed below – to decrease potential areas of conflict through balanced news output in the regional media. RV activities seek a decrease in communal tensions, specifically between IDPs

and their host communities. TF believed that the regional media's frontline position made them both valuable and vulnerable actors in the IDP story. They were valuable in that they could assist in de-escalation and stabilization around IDP issues, alongside being less prone to entrenched politicization of national media in Kiev and of great importance as an early warning mechanism to wider audiences nationally, with the EU and beyond.

Yet, regional media are vulnerable in that they operate on often very weak financial foundations, debilitated by regional economies heavily affected by the conflict, particularly in the Eastern oblasts, and subjected to often intense political pressure from pro- and anti-Russian positions particularly in. RV objectives built on the value of the regional media whilst supporting areas of vulnerability, harnessing stabilization and a conflict de-escalation agenda to the commercial necessities of audience growth for mutual benefit.

This report offers an end-of-project evaluation of the Regional Voices project; it is an independent external evaluation carried out by Cross-Pollinate Consulting for the Thomson Foundation. The evaluation was done during the month of August 2017, and carried out by independent consultants Susan Abbott, Davor Marko, and Dr. Maureen Taylor. The evaluation utilized a mixed methods approach drawing on 121 survey responses, an expert panel content analysis study of five media outlets, and 25 key informant interviews. In addition, the evaluation team considered TF RV project monitoring data and research-media monitoring reports, participant feedback forms, and project reports—and drew upon these for the evaluation.

Key Highlights

The evaluation done for the Regional Voices project, reveals the following key highlights:

1) Objective 1: To strengthen regional media's ability to respond to the conflict through enhanced independence and quality of content.

a. There is more content. A 50% increase in the total amount of content devoted to IDPs was self-reported by respondents who took part in a survey for this evaluation. Yet, the media monitoring reports suggests that the amount of news about IDPs did not significantly increase

over the life of the project.

b. The content for TF-trained journalists and media outlets demonstrated higher quality than before the program.

c. High quality, professional, and consistent media monitoring reports and live events were successfully carried out, and thus supported a robust research-based approach to understanding the context and challenge of improving IDP coverage across Ukraine.

d. Local CSOs in communities most impacted by the IDP crisis received tailored capacity-building support to better communicate with journalists and media outlets, thus strengthening their ability to advocate for the needs and interests of the displaced.

2) Objective 2: To strengthen regional media access to networks, both within Ukraine and beyond its borders. While TF may have had to temper its original approach in terms of activities designed to regional media's access to networks, over the past 18-months the program has built a solid basis for a strong inter-regional network that previously didn't exist. The following insights were gained during the evaluation:

a. There is an emergent regional media network but more work is needed to ensure its long-term survival, and that the network that has been seeded with this project will continue to receive the support it needs.

b. The study tour to Brussels had benefits for both those who travelled as well as for the networks of people with whom the journalists chosen for the trip could share their experiences. Participants conveyed to TF and the evaluation team that, because of their study tour to Brussels, they could share insights about the EU's commitment to Ukraine and its democratic transition.

c. The TF Online Platform [←regionalvoices.eu→](http://regionalvoices.eu) provides a great opportunity for local and international journalists to get unbiased information on different regions and the status of IDPs. The platform is good for networking, contains a valuable cross-section of journalists, different stories and raw materials, and users both within and outside of Ukraine are using the site. More work could be done to continue to promote it and to ensure its long-term

use and survival, and this could be linked to further work to support the network of regional media outlets that has crystalized because of the TF project.

3) Objective 3: To enhance regional media business and production sustainability to strengthen their editorial independence and expand and maintain IDP coverage.⁵

a. The evaluation team found Thomson Foundation is one of the only media development organizations working with regional media and in an in-depth way on improving niche journalism related to coverage of IDPs.

b. Eight outlets received tailored, user-centred, capacity-building support that included equipment training, mentoring, business skills savviness, and support that allowed TF to leverage grants from the US National Endowment for Democracy and Internews Global to support the work of the Regional Voices project, and specifically, to work closely with targeted media outlets that are vital for the coverage of news about IDPs and conflict-affected regions.

c. The project has had a direct and indirect impact on fostering a culture of supporting public service broadcasting, and emergent media that are independent, in the public interest, and that champion diversity and pluralism.

4) A survey done for this evaluation showed that 94% of respondents felt that the RV program met their expectations; 100% said they are likely to recommend this training program to others, and 95% indicated that their coverage of IDP issues improved because of the TF training.

5) Findings from the Expert Panel that assessed journalism content from five media outlets with which the Thomson Foundation worked with during RV indicate that the quality of reporting generally increased in most of the sampled media (with one exception); the most notable improvement is seen in reporting from a human angle and engaging readers.

6) Key highlights from the media monitoring revealed poor coverage of IDP issues has many root causes that a media development program like the Regional Voices program is well-suited to address. These problems, how-

ever, will be difficult to rectify in an 18-month period, and may require ongoing efforts to further professionalize the media and address the social stigmatization that IDPs experience. According to analysis of the media monitoring reports, the most common topics in Ukrainian media relevant to IDPs are social adaptation, and government assistance. Analysis of the media monitoring reports reveals the poor quality of IDP issues is due to a lack of active engagement of media and journalists, stories that contain a shortage of facts, a high level of protocol reporting and reliance on official / state sources, a dearth of analytical pieces, a deficiency of communication between regions, and common use of improper vocabulary, i.e. derogatory or insensitive terms.

7) Site visits at two of the media outlets that Thomson Foundation worked closely with both demonstrate how they benefited from the EU-funded program. These outlets—one public and one private—demonstrated a significant improvement when it comes to production. At one outlet, RTV Ltava, the improvements are visible in the new structure of their newsroom, communication between different production team members, and the quality of their outputs. For the private media outlet TV Hromadske, trainings and mentoring on the production process within their documentary department led to high quality productions that they were able to disseminate and present internationally.

8) The evaluation team was impressed with the value for money aspect of the Regional Voices project. The range of activities, trainings, mentoring, and scope of the project was unusual in terms of how much Thomson Foundation and its partners were able to accomplish in an 18-month period.

9) Interviews with Thomson Foundation staff, trainers, and partner representatives indicate that this project has led to some key outcomes that merit further discussion and exploration in terms of their next steps, how they can be leveraged to continue supporting independent media in Ukraine, and how Thomson Foundation can best support regional, local media to report on IDP and other niche public interest issues that may go otherwise unreported or be poorly communicated to the Ukrainian people.

Standout observations include:

a. The viability of a network of local, regional media is a real possibility for further development;

b. The regionalvoices.eu platform presents one way to keep content sharing and ideation alive for regional media;

c. The extension activities piloted show a proof of concept and merit further development. Long-term strategies to support sensible, realistic, and achievable business development plans for local, regional media are warranted. Media development in Ukraine remains very Kyiv-centric. Without proper development of media systems, journalists and outlets outside the capital, democratization efforts and conflict resolution are put at risk.

10) The evaluation also revealed the importance of the consortium that TF put together as part of its Regional Voices strategy. The cooperation among the partners was noticeable. The Institute of Regional Media and Informa-

tion, Memo98, and the Association of Spilnyi Prostir were frequently highlighted by key informant interviews carried out for this evaluation as important to the project's success. They were also highlighted for the value-added they offered in terms of research, training, logistics, and their deep understanding and knowledge of Ukraine, its social and political history and the media landscape. ●

¹<http://www.internal-displacement.org/assets/country-profiles/UKR-Ukraine-Figures-Analysis.pdf>

²According to Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre <http://www.internal-displacement.org/europe-the-caucasus-and-central-asia/ukraine/figures-analysis>: IDPs in Ukraine have fled Crimea and eastern Ukraine. The IDMC estimate of 1,476,226 internally displaced persons is a composite of two figures: IDPs in Ukrainian gov-

ernment-controlled areas and IDPs within Crimea.

³<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/ID-Persons/Pages/Issues.aspx>, "Internally displaced persons (also known as "IDPs") are "persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized border."

⁴From Thomson Foundation proposal to European Commission Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace.

⁵Note: deliverables that were part of this objective were part of the "extension activities" and therefore their implementation happened later in the project.



1. Evaluation Purposes, Evaluation Questions

Evaluation Purpose

This is an end-of-project evaluation aimed at understanding the impact of the Regional Voices program, its methodology, and the Thomson Foundation approach in the target communities across Ukraine.⁶ The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the progress of the project in terms of implementing its workplan, assessing whether TF met its targets, goals, and programme indicators. Additionally, this evaluation sought specifically to look at the impact of the Regional Voices project on its key beneficiaries – journalists, editors, media outlets, and civil society organisations in IDP communities. Focal points for the evaluation also looked at the project’s impact on national and international uptake of the content and impact of targeted work on IDP media coverage as well as a set of “extension” activities that were added

on to the project at a late stage—activities designed to support media business and sustainability goals.

Evaluation Questions

This evaluation seeks to answer thirteen questions around three broad areas: 1) Approach, Strategy and Outcomes; 2) Relevance; and 3) Sustainability. The guiding questions of the Regional Voices Ukraine project evaluation included:

Approach, Strategy and Outcomes

- 1) Was the approach and strategy to improve IDPs coverage in Ukraine, as designed by the Thomson Foundation, an appropriate one?
- 2) Was the project design right in terms of outputs and activities (viable)?
- 3) Were all activities necessary (efficient)?
- 4) Has the project complemented or duplicated other media projects implemented in Ukraine in 2015-2017?
- 5) Was a series of extension activities designed efficiently (last 6 months of the project, March – September 2017)?
- 6) Did the project achieve its overall and specific objectives?
- 7) What are the most notable changes in the newsrooms/lessons learned by participants?
- 8) Is there measurable impact of the project’s activities?

Relevance

- 9) How relevant to beneficiaries was the Regional Voices project and why?
- 10) Did the Regional Voices workshop meet journalists and CSOs communication officers’ expectations?

Sustainability

- 11) Are benefits delivered by the project likely to be lasting; if so, what are these benefits and why is their sustainability of value?
- 12) If the Regional Voices were to continue after the initial two years, what could be organized/delivered differently?
- 13) Did documentaries on IDPs appeal to international audiences? ●

⁶Journalists from Cherkasy, Chernivtsi, Crimea, Dnipro, Donetsk, Ivano-Frankivsk, Kharkiv, Kherson, Khmelnytskyi, Kyiv, Kirovohrad, Luhansk, Lviv, Mykolayiv, Odessa, Poltava, Rivne, Sumy, Ternopil, Vinnytsia, Volyn and Zakarpatya participated in the programme.



2. Program Background, Context, Objectives

Program Background

As noted in the in the TF Interim Report, the Regional Voices Project carried out the following activities⁷:

The RV 18-month project was launched in September 2015. During the first year of the project the following activities were offered (months 2015 to 2016):

- 5 field production mentoring programmes for ex-Donbas and Crimea media
- 10 field broadcast production mentoring programmes for regional media
- 10 field-print production mentoring programmes for regional media
- 2 months (1+1) of production consultancy for Hromadske TV
- 5 workshops within pre- and post-election coverage media monitoring programme
- 4 waves of media monitoring as part of the full programme for ongoing conflict/IDP coverage analysis in regional media
- 8 regional CSO media literacy campaigns
- 8 Regional CSO advocacy workshops and media group roundtables
- A Ukraine Regional Media Exchange Platform has been launched
- 4 inter-regional media editorial exchange forums were conducted
- 8 inter-regional mentoring sessions

During the second year, the following activities were implemented:

- Two re-scheduled programmes for ex-Donbas and Crimea media
- Hromadske TV grant implementation
- A media study tour to Brussels for 16 journalists

- 8 media houses were selected for a pilot project referred to below as the “Extension Activities” and as part of Objective 3 of the project with a variety of activities designed to strengthen their business component

Program Context

- Events leading up to Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014, have resulted in some 5,000 casualties, and deep divisions between pro-European and pro-Russian factions in Ukraine. The uneasy relationship was set off by Russian disagreement with Ukraine’s pro-EU stance and support for a trade agreement with the EU. This led to a wave of civil unrest and military conflict that resulted in some of the worst violence Europe has experienced since the Yugoslav wars in the 1990s. One of the major consequences of Russian invasion was the displacement of some 1.7 million people from the ex-Donbas region and Crimea⁸.

- Media has long been considered an essential aspect of conflict resolution and stabilization efforts. Unfortunately, for Ukraine, the media and power it yields can be both a force for peace and used as a weapon, as an instrument of propaganda, hate speech, misinformation, and negative forms of nationalism.

- Thomson Foundation, a UK-based media development NGO, and a leader of professional journalism skills and capacity building, recognized the dangers posed by ignoring the journalists, media outlets, and civil society organizations in the conflict-affected areas of Ukraine. Similarly, TF noted the Kyiv-centric approach of most media



development programs working in Ukraine. In response to the many social and political challenges created by a sudden massive number of internationally displaced people throughout Ukraine, and in recognition of the plight of local, regional independent media, Thomson Foundation partnered with the European Union to support regional journalists, editors and civil society organizations in Ukraine, particularly those closest to the ex-Donbas region and Crimea. Thomson Foundation partnered with four other organizations to implement an 18-month project that involved training and mentoring of media and CSOs engaged in IDP-related support in ex-Donbas and Crimea media as well as with media, including journalists and editors from around Ukraine, including Kharkiv, Lviv, Poltava, Kyiv, Chernivtsi, Ivano-Frankivsk, Vinnytsia, and Odessa.

Program Objectives

The purpose of the project was to address the risk of social tensions caused by the conflict through better and more balanced coverage of IDP issues⁹. Activities contributed to three programmatic objectives:

Objective 1: To strengthen regional media's ability to respond to the conflict through enhanced independence and quality of content.

Objective 2: To strengthen regional media access to networks, both within Ukraine and beyond its borders.

Objective 3: To enhance regional media business and production sustainability to strengthen their editorial independence and expand and maintain IDP coverage. (extension activities)

Program Design and Management

TF led day-to-day project management, under the leadership of David Quin and Olenka Sadovnik. TF put together a consortium of partners who helped it carry out the project's objectives, including: 1) Institute of Regional Media and Information (IRMI), 2) Memo98, 3) European Journalism Centre (EJC), and 4) Association Spilnyi Prostir (ASP).

As noted in the Regional Voices project proposal, the roles of each partner were described in the following way:

The **European Journalism Centre** was supposed to provide, in consultation with both

the EC delegation to Ukraine and The Thomson Foundation, the essential programme elements of the online Ukraine Regional Media Exchange, which will enable participants to interact with each other, share content, receive online, remote mentoring and interact with colleagues within the EU 28.

Spilnyi Prostir was responsible alongside MEMO 98 for delivering the project's media monitoring components, both specifically related to the pre- and post-election periods and the subsequent IDP/conflict coverage throughout the life of the project.

MEMO 98 was to be responsible for overall coordination and development of pre- and post-election media monitoring programme and the ongoing conflict/IPD coverage analysis in regional media, delivering the monitors' training sessions to this end.

The **Institute for Regional Media and Information** provided all regional logistics, assisted in participant recruitment and evaluation for all the mentoring production sessions, inter-regional mentoring programme and the establishment and initial set up of the Ukraine Regional Media Exchange.

Program Staff

The Regional Voices project is based out of Kyiv, and day-to-day program management and implementation was carried out by Thomson Foundation staff, with the following key positions: Supervisor TF HQ; Project Manager TF HQ; Project Coordinator TF Kyiv; Project Local Accountant; Secretary TF Kyiv; Local Media Coordinator IRMI Kharkiv; Election Monitoring Coordinator ASP Kyiv; and Project Assistant IRMI Kharkiv. ●

⁷Thomson Foundation Interim Report on file.

⁸See: CNN report, Ukraine: Everything you need to know about how we got here, February 3, 2017, available at: <http://www.cnn.com/2015/02/10/europe/ukraine-war-how-we-got-here/index.html>

⁹From interim report

Media has long been considered an essential aspect of conflict resolution and stabilization efforts. Unfortunately, for Ukraine, the media and power it yields can be both a force for peace and used as a weapon

3. Evaluation Methods & Limitations



Study Design and Methodology

The evaluation of the TF RV project was an independent external evaluation that utilized a mixed methods approach. The evaluation team selected a mixed methods approach combining qualitative and quantitative data to capture both the measurable outcomes and impacts of the RV project and to describe the impact of the project on beneficiaries. The data collection included both a desk component and a field component.

Evaluation Management

The evaluation was conducted by Susan Abbott, Davor Marko, and Dr. Maureen Taylor. See bios in the Appendix. Abbott and Marko worked together on designing the research framework and instruments used—the survey questionnaire, the in-depth interview guides, and the content-analysis coding sheet. Taylor provided methodological advice and quality control. Marko travelled to Ukraine the week of 5 to 12 August 2017, and carried out interviews and site visits with stakeholders who participated in the Regional Voices project. Abbott carried out in-depth interviews with Thomson Foundation staff and consultants, project partner Memo 98, and the donor (See Donor Satisfaction Survey in the Appendices). Taylor provided support to analyse the content analysis and survey

results, and provided feedback on the media monitoring.

Four data points provide the information used to answer the evaluation questions.

I. Desk Review and M&E Assessment

First, the team reviewed all reports and made use of TF's original data and research as well as monitoring and evaluation data for this report, especially participant feedback forms, media monitoring data, digital media metrics, and project records.

● Assessment of Memo98 prepared Media Monitoring reports

Brief assessment of the Media monitoring reports and results is based on the review and presentation of its methodology, for which details are provided in the Media monitoring methodology document from October 2015¹⁰. Final results and observations, that are also briefly presented, are contained in the Final Summary Media Monitoring Report from February 2017 and which is also available online.¹¹ (See Appendix)

● Analysis of Participant Feedback Forms

The evaluation team used evaluation forms provided by the TF, in which participants to three different training activities—field production, in-house mentoring, and inter-regional editorial forum—were able to evaluate several aspects of these activities. These

aspects include—overall impressions, skills they gained or improved, likelihood of using those skills in professional career, logistics, and possibility to propose these activities to their colleagues. All data are summarized and averages are presented in the table format. (See Appendix)

See Appendix for a full list of documents reviewed and data analysed.

II. Key Informant Interviews

Second, the team conducted in-depth interviews with TF project staff, journalists and editors who took part in the training program. The qualitative data gathered from these interviews provided rich descriptions of the perceived impact of the program and the tangible outcomes for beneficiaries.

A total of 25 KIIs were done to offer a qualitative assessment of the program. Interviews were conducted in Ukraine and via Skype and telephone to:

- Provide descriptive information,
- Help understand motivation, behaviour, and perspectives of the beneficiaries and partners,
- Assess the project's successes and short-coming,
- Provide insight on recommendations for TF and the EU, and

BREAKDOWN OF REGIONAL VOICES PROGRAM ACTIVITIES SURVEY RESPONDENTS REPORTED ATTENDING:

Activities Survey Respondents Participated in:	% Participation
5-day production workshops for TV and online	42.02%
5-day production workshop for online and print	35.29%
Business consultancy programme	18.49%
Brussels study tour	11.76%
Workshops for media monitors	8.40%
Media literacy and advocacy for CSOs	5.04%

● Put into context how and why specific results were achieved or not in the context of the overall program and considering other data collected as part of Regional Voices project monitoring and as part of this external evaluation¹².

The key informant/in-depth interviews were selected from a convenience sample based on Thomson Foundation's network, accessibility and availability of the interviewees. Interviewees were chosen based on their involvement in the program. See Appendix for a full list of people interviewed and the interview guides that structured the conversations. The interviews provided context for the quantitative survey of beneficiaries.

III. Perception and Behaviour Survey of Beneficiaries

Third, the evaluation team created a web-based survey for journalists and editors who took part in the training program. The goal of this data collection was to quantify the relevance, impacts and changes in media coverage of IDP issues in Ukraine. See Appendix for the survey.

The survey was sent to approximately 400 to 500 people from the TF's distribution list -- the list contains a number of duplications

and it was difficult to determine the precise number of beneficiaries; this was also hard to determine because the Thomson Foundation lost some of its roster/distribution list due to the decision of Ukraine's President Petro Poroshenko, who "banned the country's two most popular social networks, its most popular email service and one of its most widely used search engines as part of sanctions against Russian companies."¹³

A total of 121 journalists completed the online survey. Of the respondents, 67% were male and 33% were female. Over 86% of the respondents were under 45 years old. The respondents represented all type of media with 20% working at print outlets, 34% working at TV, over 39% working in online media and early 7% working in radio. The respondents had participated in TF activities with the five-day production workshops garnering the highest attendance.

¹⁰The Media Monitoring methodology document: http://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/regionalvoices/downloads/Media-monitoring-methodology_Ukraine_FINAL_161115.pdf

¹¹The Final Summary Media Monitoring Report: <http://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/>

regionalvoices/downloads/Final-Summary-Media-monitoring-report_Ukraine_2017.pdf

¹² See USAID's TIPS sheet on Key Informant Interviews on justifications used by international development agencies for the inclusion of this methodology: http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pnabs541.pdf

¹³<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/may/16/ukraine-blocks-popular-russian-websites-kremlin-role-war>. According to The Guardian, A decree by Poroshenko ... expanded sanctions adopted over Russia's annexation of Crimea and backing of separatists in eastern Ukraine to include 468 companies and 1,228 people. Among them were the Russian social networks VK and Odnoklassniki, the email service Mail.ru and the search engine company Yandex, all four of which are in the top 10 most popular sites in Ukraine, according to the web traffic data company Alexa. The decree requires internet providers to block access to the sites for three years.

Survey respondents came from across Ukraine, but five areas: Dnipro, Donetsk, Kharkiv, Lviv, and Poltava account for most of the survey respondents. The table below shows the percentage breakdowns of where survey respondents came from in terms of their hometown/percentage sample. ●

Cherkasy	2.48%
Chernivtsi	0.83%
Crimea	1.65%
Dnipro	9.92%
Donetsk	13.22%
Ivano-Frankivsk	1.65%
Kharkiv	8.26%
Kherson	3.31%
Khmelnitskyi	3.31%
Kyiv	3.31%
Kirovohrad	4.96%
Luhansk	5.79%
Lviv	8.26%
Mykolayiv	3.31%
Odessa	4.13%
Poltava	11.57%
Rivne	3.31%
Sumy	4.96%
Ternopil	0.83%
Vinnytsia	0.83%
Volyn	0.83%



of journalism produced by the beneficiaries with which the Thomson Foundation has worked. To assess changes in quality of content over time, we used an Expert Panel approach to review five media outlets to assess journalistic content and programming produced as part of Regional Voices.

The coders were asked to keep in mind the scope and goal of the TF project (Thomson sought to address the risk of social tensions caused by the conflict through better and more balanced coverage of IDP issues) and the duration of the RV project's performance. To evaluate changes in the quality of content that could be attributed to TF training and being part of the overall RV project, the coders reviewed the content with seven considerations/criteria of professional journalism in mind:

Content Analysis – Seven Key Considerations/ Scoring Criteria

1. Objectivity: Story is based on facts; it doesn't promote or impose a particular idea, ideology, narrative or interest. The author does not take a stand as prosecutor, judge or the jury.

2. Multi-sourcing: Story includes many viewpoints, it is thorough, moderate in tone, includes all facts or details that would influence readers, even those that tend to disprove the thesis of the story.

3. Accuracy: Story provides not only right and accurate facts but also deep and complete context. The author seeks to accurately reflect the tone of interviews and quotes. There is no usage of hearsay, innuendo or rumour.

4. Structure and clarity: Story is written in simple words and language, well organized with beginning, middle and end, respecting the importance of context in a way that even the most casual reader should be able to follow and understand the complex issues of the story.

5. Advocacy for the IDP cause: Story is solution-oriented; it gives a voice to protagonists.

6. Ethical conduct: The story pursues the highest ethical standards. There is no conflict of interest. Respect for protagonists/heroes have been shown. Anonymity is ensured when requested.

IV. Expert Panel Evaluates the Professionalism of the News Stories

Fourth, the evaluation team convened an expert panel to evaluate the quality of the training participants' stories about IDPs. Expert Panel/ Content Analysis: Part of our effort was to look at whether there has been a change in terms of the quality of content



7. Appeal to readers: Usage of multimedia tools and production for popular media platforms to engage wider audience.

The consultant team hired two Ukrainian coders, selected for their background in media, journalism and social change, and who are aware of the overall media landscape and IDP issues in Ukraine. The coders—Iryna Slavinska, a well-regarded Ukrainian journalist working for Hromadske Radio and Dr. Tetyana Lokot, Assistant Professor at the School of Communications at the Dublin City University, specialized in information manipulation and media propaganda in crisis situations—provided assistance with the expert panel.

The coders were given a one-day training session that offered them a chance to work with the coding tool the consultant team developed, and to test out the tool by reviewing and coding actual media content from Ukraine that dealt with IDP issues. Following testing of the tool and practice coding, the two coders and Marko discussed the tool and the core terms used, as part of an effort

to ensure that the coders agreed on how to score the seven categories of media professionalism.

Limitations:

Although the data collection methods and triangulation of the qualitative and quantitative data carried out in support of this end of project evaluation aimed to offer a thorough examination of the Regional Voices project using a variety of qualitative and quantitative methods, there were some shortcomings. Limitations included:

1) Sampling for the survey was challenging because the sample group was based on Thomson Foundation’s distribution lists for journalists, media outlets, civil society organizations and other groups and individuals involved in the project. Not every person who participated in a TF training received an email to take the survey and this means that the results need to be interpreted cautiously as those with negative experience may not have provided their feedback.

2) Sampling for the content analysis/expert

panel was limited. Due to time and budget requirements, it was necessary to limit the scope of the content analysis, including the number of articles/news packages examined and the number of outlets chosen for the study. Content-analysis methodology is a reliable way to measure the professionalism of content but the sample was quite small and only featured five outlets. A larger sample of pieces to be analysed and more outlets represented in the sample would have increased the generalizability of the outcomes.

3) In these type of evaluations, respondent bias means that they sometimes provide overly positive reviews of programs in the hopes that the donor will continue. We believe that the triangulation of multiple data sources will minimize respondent bias.

4) Time has also impacted their evaluation. With more time, the team could have carried out more interviews, expanded the content analysis. One member of the team was able to travel to Ukraine for a period of one week to interview stakeholders and beneficiaries on the ground. While the evaluation consultant interviewed 19 people, more time on the ground would have enabled the consultant team to get a more comprehensive picture of the RV project dynamics, and to interview more people, and visit more media outlets as well as CSOs (Note – a total of 25 interviews were completed overall). The project trained and mentored hundreds of journalists, editors and civil society leaders in the target regions of Ukraine. While these interviews capture key perspectives of the programme, respondents’ views and experiences may not be as comprehensively representative of all participants as we would have liked. ●

4. Summary of Findings of the Regional Voice's Evaluation Questions

The findings section answers the evaluation questions to give TF insight into the project. This section is organized thematically around the areas of:

- I. Approach, Strategy and Outcomes
- II. Relevance and
- III. Sustainability

For each series of questions, the evaluators will provide evidence from the four collection methods. Following this Summary section are the Conclusions and Recommendations sections.

Approach, Strategy and Outcomes

Eight questions comprise this evaluation area. The first questions to be answered deal with the approach and strategy of the programme, and the remaining questions deal with outcomes.

Question 1: Was the approach and strategy to improve IDPs coverage in Ukraine, as designed by the Thomson Foundation, an appropriate one?

Question 2: Was the project design right in terms of outputs and activities (viable)?

Question 3: Where all activities necessary

(efficient)?

Question 4: Has the project complemented or duplicated other media projects implemented in Ukraine in 2015-2017?

Question 5: Was a series of extension activities designed efficiently (last 6 months of the project, March – September 2017)?

Question 6: Did the project achieve its overall and specific objectives?

Question 7: What are the most notable changes in the newsrooms/lessons learned by participants?

Question 8: Is there measurable impact of the project's activities

Question 1: Was the approach and strategy to improve IDPs coverage in Ukraine, as designed by the Thomson Foundation, an appropriate one?

Answer: Data from the four evaluation methods – the interviews, survey data, project records reviewed, and the content analysis confirm the TF approach to improve coverage of IDPs in Ukraine was appropriate in light of the realities on the ground in the various regions in Ukraine.

Evidence: Support to regional media in

Ukraine is crucial, according to KIIs, since the quality of reporting is poor, journalists and editors lack skills of how to look for stories, and are performing their usual routines and very rarely think 'out of box' looking for something new, and fresh. Also, 'the life in the provinces is much slower than in the capital'. Some media, especially those that operate closely to the conflict zones are producing biased materials.

According to one KII who lives close to the conflict line, during 2014 and 2015, reports were predominantly negative and with the donor support the situation has been changed. Her media worked with both Thomson Foundation and Internews Global and she considered this cooperation to be crucial. As a result, since 2016 there is much more positive reporting, and even in Donetsk region, the overall attitude towards IDPs has become quite positive. This claim corresponds with the main observations/conclusions of the Monitoring Media Report from 2017, in which they "noticed the appearance of materials about different international projects aimed to help with the IDP related problems." The most significant improvement has been noticed during the third monitoring period (February to June 2016), when media from Donetsk demonstrated a more professional approach and shifted their thematic focus from 'fake IDPs' and 'tourist pensioners' toward highlighting the fight of the IDPs for their civic rights.

KIIs differentiate between two types of journalism related to media coverage of IDPs. The first tendency relates to stories that are professional, show hallmarks of human interest, are likely to promote change. This type of journalism was, according to the interviewees, done by journalists involved in this project. This was considered to be the legacy of the RV project. The second tendency is related to reporting within the framework of crime, "if it bleeds it leads" style journalism as well as stories full of hate speech and negative information that are widely shared via social media, and re-broadcasted by national media without fact checking.

Interviewees shared:

"Two years ago, there was a story shared by many online platforms about IDPs who

turned down [damaged] the flag of Ukraine in one village, and many online media shared this story. Only one journalist went there to investigate and found this was misinformation, and only this media checked the information.” (Journalist of PSB, local branch in Dnipro)

“What I used to noticed earlier, when some incident or criminal events happened, media underlined that IDPs were involved. This is rarer today.” (Editor, Do TeVe, Kramatorsk)

“This topic of IDPs is not so covered. Only loud events, when something happened or some politicians are doing something this attracted attention of media (opening a dormitory). Unfortunately, this is the situation with

media.” (CSO activist)

In addition, the TF approach and strategy didn't just focus on training and working with journalists. The approach was a holistic one that included research—with Memo98 and local partner Spilnyi Prostor, playing a major role with popular media monitoring events and regularly produced research as well as in working with regional civil society organizations, many of which were newly formed in response to the IDP crisis. The TF approach was unique in this regard, as they included a component on how CSOs could speak to the press, how to do interviews, share information, and improve public awareness. The CSO advocacy and communications training offers an interesting model for other media

development programs seeking to improve the state of independent media, CSO communications and outreach strengthening may be a significant contributing factor to long-term success democratic, free media reform efforts.

Upon reviewing the media monitoring approach and methodology, however, the evaluation team wanted to comment that going forward, the media monitoring approach could be improved for purposes of supporting a media development project. The media monitoring was a great thing to do. It was popular with respondents, however, the coverage as a whole has not improved or increased.





Question 2: Was the project design right in terms of outputs and activities (viable)? Thomson Foundation, an appropriate one?

Answer: M&E records show that TF successfully carried out nearly all the activities and trainings in regions that have been underserved by other media development implementers. Survey and KII data support the finding that project outputs and activities were appropriate.

There were some lessons learned, however, as in the programming aimed at increasing networking ties to EU institutions faced a few challenges. Moreover, while the activities planned for Objective 3—the extension activities—were highly warranted and needed, they may have been started a little too late in the overall programming sequence to see their full potential. This is not to say that there were inadequate results seen, rather the timing and different nature of the work tied to business skills and organizational development is a very different line of programming than newsroom and journalism skills training. That said, the justification for the holistic approach is understandable, and commendable, especially given the relatively

short timeframe of 18-months for such an ambitious project.

Evidence: When asked if the Thomson Foundation's approach to the issues of IDPs and conflict sensitive journalism adequately met their needs as journalists, editors and civil society actors in Ukraine, 90% of survey respondents answered yes.

This high positive response by the target stakeholders for the Regional Voices project is a very strong indication that the project design was right. In terms of assessing the project's viability, i.e. was the workplan (with the outputs and activities put forward for implementation) capable of being successfully implemented, and were the outputs and activities feasible. Based on a month-long review of the Regional Voices program, the consultant team has found that for the most part TF designed a very viable, innovative, and timely media development program. Nearly all the anticipated set of activities were carried out on time, on budget, and tailored to the needs of the local journalists, editors and media outlets as well as CSOs with which the project sought to work.

The media monitoring points to trends that show more attention is still needed to build up the quantity and quality of media coverage of IDP issues. The current amount of coverage is still quite small and regional media continue to struggle to find the more objective and professional way to cover the issues.

There was also need for adaptation, as with the changes made between the proposal's set of activities for Objective 2, and what was carried out in the life of the project, and there were some new additions to the project, i.e. the extension activities. These two cases both illustrate Thomson Foundation's ability to be responsive, flexible, and to adjust the workplan as the circumstances dictated. The need for adaptation and flexibility are both to be expected in an environment such as Ukraine.

Question 3: Were all activities necessary (efficient)?

Answer: Based on the high level of satisfaction with the project activities, the experience beneficiaries had with the trainers, and the thoughtful, focused approach TF took to this project, it is fair to say that the way they designed the project was efficient, and the activities were necessary. The TF has a "unique touch" in that their brand of media development is very much centred in the business of journalism, and draws from very experienced, knowledgeable trainers who worked closely with journalists, editors and media outlets. The approach is not a generic, one-size-fits-all approach, the project is thoughtfully designed, and in this case, was rooted in both a user-centred design approach as well as in recognition of the active state of conflict in Ukraine and the sensitive and fragile state of the regional environments that media were operating out of.

Evidence: In looking at output efficiency, the consultant team assessed program inputs vs. outputs, that is whether implemented activities helped to achieve improved coverage of IDPs in quality and quantity and whether these activities were necessary to achieve the proposed program results and goals. Additionally, the evaluation team considered issues of technical efficiencies, i.e. the number of stories before and after. One of the

goals of the Thomson project was to increase the number of stories about IDPs. There is a notable increase in the number of stories written by the journalists before and after the training. Survey respondents were asked to identify how many stories about IDP issues they had written before the TF trainings. This self-report measure was created to identify the baseline of stories generated around the topic. The average number of stories written before the training was 7.64 stories (833 stories by 109 participants self-reporting).

To ascertain whether or not there were more stories afterwards, the survey respondents were asked to identify how many stories about IDP issues they had written after the TF trainings. After the training, respondents

report that that have written an average of $M= 11.02$ (1202 stories written by 109 respondents). This is a 50% increase in the reported number of stories about IDPs.

This is a major data point to show that the program was an efficient generator of stories about IDPs. The 50% increase means that Ukrainians now have more stories about IDPs, and the content analysis suggests that the quality of the stories has improved as well. The RV project delivered more stories of higher quality to citizens.

To support the assessment of Regional Voices in terms of efficiency (as well as issues of program design), the evaluation team looked at the **feedback forms** collected by Thomson

Foundation during the life of the project, and found that a majority of beneficiaries reported that that the training and other support they received through the Regional Voices Project met their demands (for summary tables and details see Appendix).

When it comes to their **overall** impression, most of participants rated these activities as excellent:

88.5 % participants from field production activities, 77 % participants to inter-regional mentoring sessions, and 73 % of those took part in editorial exchange forums. (it is worth noting that 25 % in editorial exchange forums rated their overall impression as good, while a small portion rated is as fair and nobody said it was poor.)





While rating skills and knowledge gained, a majority of those who took part in field production (72%) and editorial forums (56%) said these activities were useful with lot of new insights, while only 38% of participants who took part in inter-regional mentoring sessions indicated this activity was useful with a lot of new insights; whereas 54% found it interesting.

The most important skills participants gained and improved during these activities are the following:

- defining the storyline and angle of the story
- using multimedia in creating the online stories
- use of digital tools to write stories for online content
- ensuring the balance of opinions
- how to create a captivating story for the audience
- how to structure the story.

The vast majority of participants **will use skills gained through their Regional Voices participation** in their everyday work. This was reported by 96% participants from field production, 92% participants from inter-re-

gional mentoring sessions, and 88% from editorial forums.

Participants were generally satisfied **with logistics**. For 85% of participants, field production logistics were excellent, for 11.5% they were good, for 3% they were fair and only one participant (out of 217) said they were poor. For participants in inter-regional mentoring sessions, 88% rated them as excellent, while for one person (out of 26) the sessions were good, for one they were fair, and for one they were poor. For 97% participants in editorial forums logistics were excellent and for 3% they were good.

Also, the clear majority of participants **would recommend these activities** to their colleagues and other professionals. This was the case with 98% participants of editorial forums, 98.5% from field production activities, and 92% from mentoring sessions.

Question 4: Has the project complemented or duplicated other media projects implemented in Ukraine in 2015-2017?

Answer: The TF project complemented, not duplicated, other media projects im-

plemented in Ukraine in 2015-2017, and in many aspects, provided a range of innovative, unique activities and trainings for regional media. Its reach across Ukraine, specifically the border towns close to the conflicts, was unique. The focus on working with regional media, improving coverage of IDPs, and providing business support consultations for select media also stands out as unique. While one other project that was implemented by Internews Global had an IDP and regional media aspect to it, the Internews efforts to support improved IDP coverage was minimal and part of a much larger countrywide and to some extent Kyiv-driven program, according to people interviewed for this evaluation.

Evidence: Since the early 1990s, there has been a considerable amount of funding devoted to supporting independent media in Ukraine from European, American, and private foundation donors, like the Open Society Foundations.¹⁴ Yet, the nation's media system and specifically the media outside of the capital continue to struggle with financial viability, editorial independence and professionalism. The media situation in Ukraine reflects the Soviet approach to media and the transition has been long and hard.

Although Ukraine has long received donor funding for media and journalism oriented projects, the Thomson Foundation Regional Voices project stands out because of its focus on media, CSOs and IDPs. Based on the evaluation team's interviews for the end of project assessment there are few NGOs that focus specifically on local, regional media and that also deal with media and IDPs. KIIs could mention only one project which was implemented by Internews Global (as compared to the Kyiv-based Internews Ukraine) and was not entirely focused on IDPs (it had a wider focus, and IDP related issues were just one aspect of its programme). Interviewees also mentioned that certain embassies and development organizations, mostly those from Scandinavia countries and Canada, demonstrated their interest to support IDP and media-related activities, but were not able to mention specific projects or activities.

The survey and KII responses suggest that it was TF training, not other trainings, that

helped them and their media outlets improve coverage of IDPs. Over 77% agreed with the statement: “Because of my participation in the Thomson Foundation Regional Voices Program, I feel that my media outlet has improved its coverage of IDP issues.”

The KIIs suggest that the RV program was unique. According to Valentyna Kuzyk from Internews Global, they had one IDP-oriented project—strengthening conflict-affected communication towards displaced persons, funded by Canada—but the project has already ended. According to Kuzyk, “compared to TF we have a little bit different approach, less trainings, we provide materials, but we didn’t follow each beneficiary.” Kuzyk elaborated: “I heard about RV when

they [TF] presented the programme’s monitoring report.¹⁵ When UNDP asked for materials on IDPs, I was on a jury; I realized that the best materials (journalistic stories) were produced within the RV project.” [For] “Up to 4 years I worked with regional journalists, and I know that reporting quality is pretty poor, but materials produced through RV are very balanced, outstanding comparing to other materials produced.” In summing up her thoughts about RV, the Internews Global representative relayed, “I would say that good approach is not just lectures and good tasks... I would say that RV has a good approach because it went to different regions to visit people there and to be present and do their stories.”

¹⁴For a history of media development in Ukraine 1990 to 2000, see the Gates Foundation funded, Internews/World Bank study on Mapping Media Assistance, for which Ukraine was one of the countries profiled – <http://www.mediamapresource.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/Ukraine.pdf>

¹⁵<https://regionalvoices.eu/en/monitoring>





Project beneficiaries also weighed in on the issue of whether the RV was a unique project in the Ukrainian context:

“With TF it is very narrow topic. Internews has a wider spectrum of activities, but also provides trainings.” (KII, Kramatorsk)

“Internews only provides theoretical base support, without workshops and providing skills learning for participants.” (KII, PSB - Dnipro)

“Similarity is the topic, IDPs. Internews supports production of materials. Thomson provides us with the knowledge and skills on how to produce materials. We can re-use those skills for reproducing and development.” (KII, Vchasno Agency)

“Compared to the workshops I previously took part (in), the TF workshops were on a higher level. Trainers were professionals and provided us with a lot of interesting information; it was done in a comprehensive way. Also, I can say that these workshops raise my interest in these topics...” (KII, Spilna Dia)

Question 5: Was a series of extension activities designed efficiently (last 6 months of the project, March to September 2017)?

Answer: This is covered below under the answer to Objective 3.

Question 6: Did the project achieve its overall and specific objectives?

Answer: The project accomplished many of its specific objectives but was too short to accomplish all of them.

In reviewing the data for this question, a very strong case can be made to say that Objective 1 has definitely contributed to regional media’s ability. This can be seen through the improved quality of journalism in the content analysis and the perceptions and experiences of the people who completed the survey and the KIIs.

In terms of Objective 2, a very solid case can be made to show that Thomson Foundation has built a strong regional and national network of independent media. It is a little less clear the extent to which regional media can access networks beyond Ukraine’s borders.

Steps have been taken, however, to support regional media with which TF worked to link to these networks. A popular web platform has been set up, is frequently used and has contributed to: more accessible information (it provides unbiased information on conflict and IDPs), plurality / diversity (it provides decentralized picture of Ukraine, since it is not Kiev-based) and networking (both local and international journalists can find contacts from various regions in Ukraine).

Finally, with regards to Objective 3, TF has set up a solid foundation for supporting media business and sustainability needs of the regional media outlets that are part of this program. The pilot project that was initiated at the end of the RV project has shown a proof of concept that merits further support and continuation.

Evidence: The Regional Voices project has three key objectives:

- Objective 1: To strengthen regional media’s ability to respond to the conflict through enhanced independence and quality of content;
- Objective 2: To strengthen regional media access to networks, both within Ukraine and beyond its borders; and
- Objective 3: To enhance regional media business and production sustainability to strengthen their editorial independence and expand and maintain IDP coverage. Each objective will be evaluated separately.

Objective 1: To strengthen regional media’s ability to respond to the conflict through enhanced independence and quality of content.

Each data set provides insight into the contributions of TF for enhanced independent and quality of content. The survey responses suggest that people who participated in the trainings believe that they are writing higher quality stories about the IDPs. Nearly 90% agreed that “my ability to cover issues of importance to the situation of IDPs in Ukraine has been enhanced.” Additionally, the benefits were not limited just to the people who participated in the trainings. There was an amplifier effect where media outlets were also perceived to have developed improved coverage. Nearly 75% of respondents agreed that “Editorial quality of IDP coverage at my

Table 1: Media Monitoring Analysis

	TV	PRINT	ONLINE
TIME	Total: 17 h 25 min Daily: 19 seconds per day / per TV channel	Total: 258 pages of A3 format Daily: 0.06 pages per day on each of the monitored newspapers	Total: almost 1586 pages of A4 format Daily: approximately 504 characters per day
TOPICS	Social adaptation and living in the community (29.7%) Government assistance (16.6%) Employment (7.1%) Accommodation (6.5%)	Social adaptation and community life (40%) State aid (15.9%) Accommodation (6.2%)	Social adaptation and community life (32%) The government assistance (13.8%) Elections (6.8%).
SUBJECT	IDPs (50.5%) Government (16.5%) Administrations (12.2%) NGOs (12%)	IDPs (60.1%) Government (15.1%) NGOs (9.3%) Regional authorities (7.3%)	IDPs (55.6%) NGOs (14.4%) Government (13.3%) Regional authorities (7.1%)
TONE	Mainly neutral or positive	Mainly neutral or positive	Mainly neutral or positive

Source: MEMO98

media outlet has improved” because of the TF trainings.

The media monitoring analysis of IDP content in the Ukrainian media suggests that the topic has not really risen to high levels of coverage. TV stations are only devoting about 20 seconds a day to topics and print outlets are devoting only a small portion of space to IDPs. Online media are only rarely covering the topic. The analysis does show that coverage of the IDP situation is often neutral (a desirable outcome in journalism).

Table 1 (above) shows that media coverage addresses IDPs as the most frequent topic in the analysed news stories followed by social adaptation and living in the community, government assistance, employment and accommodation. Sources matter and it appears that IDPs are the dominant source in these stories. This is important because media coverage is giving IDPs the chance to tell their story to their country and the world.

Qualitative analysis of media monitoring detected indicated two general trends in media reporting: amount of coverage and

professionalism of coverage. The coverage of IDPs in selected media sample is marginal in terms of amount of time or space devoted to the topic. There was actually a downward trend in the number of IDP-related stories overtime.

Regarding professionalism, there were some strong stories in which media presented different viewpoints. Media generally avoided sensationalism while reporting on IDPs. The most visible examples of improved quality of media content related to IDPs were witnessed during the third monitoring period.

There is room for more improvement. The journalists usually do not take an active stance, but rather transmit the official statements of officials and authorities from the local and national level. For example, while transmitting official statements, journalists rarely verify the given facts. There are no analytical materials or investigative stories on IDP-related issues and problems in the coverage. The use of improper and incorrect language when addressing IDPs is common. Some materials look like paid content (advertisements or editorials). In some regions,

mostly the Eastern region, bias still is apparent.

The panel content analysis provides a second set of data to consider for Objective 1. Two media experts reviewed and analysed content from five media outlets that Thomson Foundation worked with as part of the RV project. The five media outlets that were selected for the Expert Panel included: LOT TV, RTV Ltava, Dyvys info, Donbass Press, and Slobidskyi Krayi. A total of 44 media stories merely reflected on the current situation with IDP, without aiming for a long-term vision or more profound public discussion on how to resolve problems. pieces of content were analysed from a period of performance from 2015 to 2017.¹⁶

¹⁶44 in total – the sample comprises of stories produced during the trainings or mentoring sessions, and those published / broadcasted a day or two before trainings took part in selected media outlets.

Content analysis methodology (CA) is a social science research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of media. It is a social scientific method that seeks to minimize the human tendency to interpret material selectively. To do so, “coders” are trained to identify and classify variables of interest. Reliable content analysis is premised on coders achieving inter-coder reliability, which means that the coders could independently watch a program and code for the variables of interest, and when these independent scores are compared, the evaluations should be the same. In addition to the quantification of data, content analysis can

also provide descriptive or qualitative understandings of trends and patterns in media coverage.

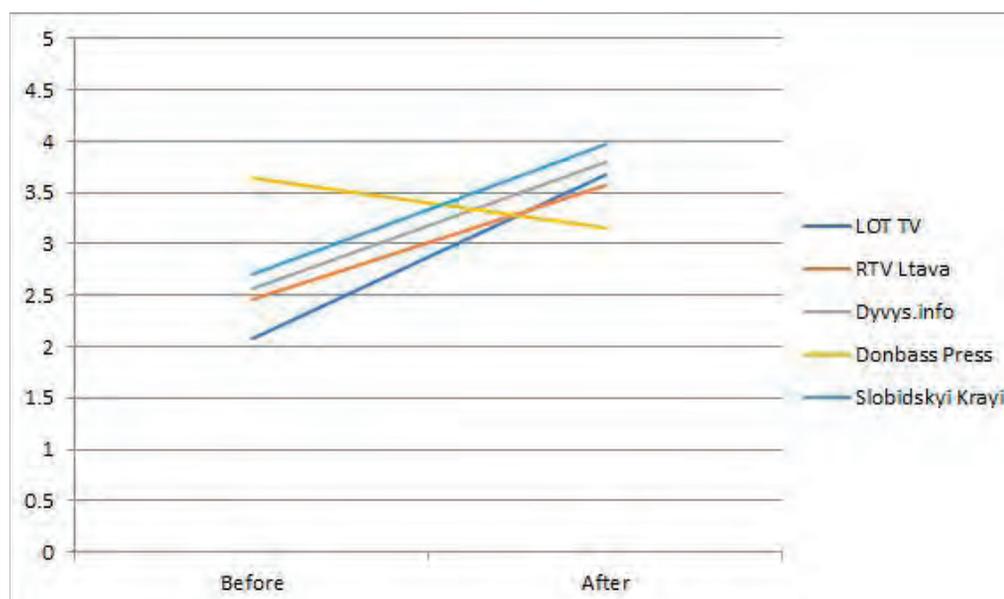
In past international development media projects, stories are coded on a five-point scale with: 1 = missing, 2 = poor, 3 = average, 4 = good and 5 = excellent. Scores above 3.75 are considered to be reaching professional levels. For instance, Table 2 and 3 shows that four of the five media outlets started off below 2.75 on the professionalism scores. This means that their content did not come close to professionalism journalism standards on relevance, story quality, sourcing, etc. But,

after the TF training, four of the five media outlets' coverage of IDP issues were coming close to or meeting standards of professional coverage.

Table 2 shows that overall, analysis of the quality of the content from before the TF program to end of the program. After the trainings suggests that journalists have improved the quality (with one exception).

The data suggest that four of the five outlets (80%) improved. The panel provided a possible explanation for Donbass Press: they already have good and experienced journal-

Table 2: Expert Panel, Content Analysis Scores (Before and After)



The data suggest that four of the five outlets (80%) improved. The panel provided a possible explanation for Donbass Press: they already have good and experienced journalists

Table 3: Content Analysis Scores for Individual Outlets Evaluated

MEDIA	Professionalism scores BEFORE TF activities	Professionalism scores AFTER TF activities	Trends/differences
LOT TV	2.07	3.67	+1.60
RTV Ltava	2.46	3.58	+1.12
Dyvys.info	2.56	3.79	+1.24
Donbass Press	3.64	3.16	-0.48
Slobidskyi Krayi	2.71	3.98	+1.27

ists, producing stories with a better quality and more professionally compared to other outlets. Their starting score (3.64) is the highest among all other media outlets.

Before activities and trainings: Average scores for all seven criteria have been lower for stories produced by selected media before trainings and related project activities. The lowest scores before trainings were for multi-sourcing (2.38), story quality (2.62) and advocacy for IDP causes (2.69). The best scored criteria in stories produced before activities took part is objectivity (3.27).

After activities and trainings: The best scored criteria in stories produced during and after training/activities are: human criteria (4.11) and engaging readers (3.89). The most notable improvement when it comes to criteria is related to human angle (+ 1.57), and engaging readers (+1.12) (see table below).



Table 4: Content Analysis, Average Scores for Five Media Outlets on Professional Journalism Categories

CRITERIA	Professionalism scores BEFORE TF activities	Professionalism scores AFTER TF activities	Trends/differences
Objectivity	3.27	3.68	+0.41
Multi-sourcing	2.38	3.34	+0.96
Accuracy	2.81	3.48	+0.67
Story quality	2.62	3.50	+0.88
Human angle	2.54	4.11	+1.57
Advocacy for the IDP cause	2.69	3.56	+0.87
Engaging readers	2.77	3.89	+1.12

COMPARISON OF ACCURACY

BEFORE
Thomson Foundation trainingAFTER
Thomson Foundation training

The expert panel's scoring and commentary of the five outlets sampled for the content analysis, also provided an opportunity for the evaluation team to look a little more closely at the seven areas assessed as part of the content analysis. Using the scoring sheets and commentary provided for the stories, we developed word clouds offering a before and after comparison of elements of the IDP stories for which TF sought to improve quality and quantity. The word clouds visually depict elements of accuracy, story quality and multi-sourcing from the comments of the coders. The larger the word, the more often the term appeared in their comments.

For instance, on the journalistic category of accuracy the panel made the comparisons shown above. Notice that in the stories written before the TF trainings, (left hand) the coders had observed that there was very little context, very few facts and only one quote. The word cloud on the right shows the comments of the coders when they evaluated stories written after the TF trainings. The stories provided context, very good research, issues explored in depth, well-chosen quotes with accurate numbers and story details.

The story quality also appears to have improved when comparing the stories that were developed before the journalist attended TF trainings and afterwards. On story quality, the word cloud below depicts coder comments on the early stories. Note that the words that are largest are about

poor structure, dry, unclear, and very short material and seem to come from a press release. Compare these comments to the stories written after the TF trainings and you will see that the terms reflection, well edited, follows investigative logic and excellent structure are used to describe the post training articles.

The same trend continues in how the coders observed stories in the multi-sourcing category. The stories written before the training had impersonal sources and hinted opinions. The stories after had multiple, broad, varied sources, that were excellent in tone and range.

observed stories in the multi-sourcing category (next page). The stories written before the training had impersonal sources and hinted opinions. The stories after had multiple, broad, varied sources, that were excellent in tone and range.

To delve deeper into the accomplishments under Objective 1, KIIs confirm that there was significant quality improvement in journalists' ability to write professional stories. One example has been shared by experienced journalist and editor that took part in RV trainings from the real beginning:

"I can say for example, from my experience, from the first workshop that I was part of. We were divided into two groups. I heard it was an incident in the house of IDPs, since journalist asked questions that were not tolerant. For example, "Looking at your guys, I can see that you don't like Ukraine." Two or three workshops later, that journalist behave totally different. This journalist is from Turnopol, West Ukraine." (Experienced journalist from Don Press)

Objective 2: To strengthen regional media access to networks, both within Ukraine and beyond its borders.

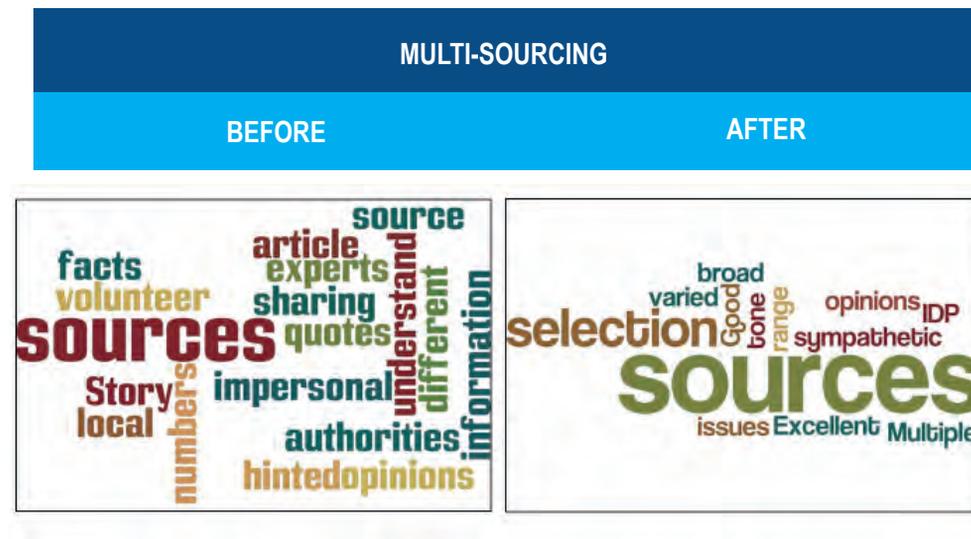
Regional media outlets have been marginalized, intimidated and often act alone. The TF program sought to strengthen regional media access to networks, both within Ukraine and beyond.

STORY QUALITY

BEFORE

AFTER





Activities, including, regional media editorial exchange forums, the development of the web platform regionalvoices.eu, information and experience sharing that was supported through inter-regional mentoring sessions, and a study tour for journalists to learn more about the EU resulted in the following:

- Fifty percent agreed that the RV program deepened inter-regional media cooperation to enable greater access to comparable news stories, fact checking and sources between regions of high IDP density.
- Nearly 30% agreed that the TF project helped them to improve long-term relationships between EU member states media and Ukrainian regional media
- M&E data suggest that 77% of participants appreciated the inter-regional mentoring sessions, and
- The study tour provided one clear opportunity to build relationships.

Feedback from the KIIs about the Brussels Study Tour illustrate the benefits of the inter-regional programming on relationship building:

“During the study trip in Brussels, I met a journalist from Bulgaria. This contact was highly important for me since now I am covering some topics related to Ukrainian EU integration process and Bulgarian experiences are interesting.” (female journalist, Don Press)

“This was my first trip to the EU. I had an ide-

al picture about it and now it is changed. From a Ukrainian perspective, you got an impression that the EU will solve all our problems, but when you start talking to people who live and work there you get the different perspective. We were introduced to the association of Ukrainians in Belgium, and after that we had a big plan to spread our program and content to them.” (female journalist, Online TV channel ‘Displaced’)

On the Regional Voices web platform:

Of those who submitted stories to the Ukraine Regional Media Exchange, respondents averaged about 3 stories. Most journalists and editors interviewed are actively using the Regional Voice platform and its archive with footage, videos and raw materials. Some of them are taking videos, and some are uploading themselves. This is a very valuable source for journalists since it not only provides a good material for stories, and information about other regions, but also contains a database of journalists living in different regions of Ukraine. Editors and journalists at the only TV show with national coverage on IDP-related issues highly depend on the webpage as their resource:

“This summer, while we were preparing our next season of ‘Polilogue’ we strategically embraced the platform of Regional Voices, and opportunities for networking and exchanging information it offers. This is a real hub where journalist working on IDPs can

seek help and support.” (Editor and journalist, Association of Independent Broadcasters / TV show ‘Polilogue’)

“We strategically embraced the platform of Regional Voices, and the opportunities for networking and exchanging information that it offers. This is a real hub where journalists working on IDPs can seek help and support”



This is the only case in which a beneficiary strategically embraced the platform. Other interviewed journalists use it occasionally, mostly to get contacts of journalists from other regions, to download raw material, and very rarely to upload their own stories and share them with others.

The evaluation team also had a chance to meet with a foreign journalist, working for a French news agency, who randomly found this platform and regularly uses its content:

“I found that information provided there are not biased. I also see as a benefit the network of journalists from Ukraine who live and work in different regions of the country. This is very important since I would like to get know more about this country. There are no good and reliable data on the situation in Western part of Europe” (Foreign journalist working for French News Agency)

Beneficiaries use the FB page much more to communicate and exchange information.

Following the end of the project, an important question is how to preserve it as a useful archive and resource since TF only has money to cover hosting for one more year.

Objective 3: To enhance regional media business and production sustainability to strengthen their editorial independence and expand and maintain IDP coverage.

TF’s extension activities helped outlets that face very real dangers. TF provided support to business development, and strategic support to media organization’s long-term sustainability and viability. KIIs suggested that the regional, local voices and concerns that these media serve will diminish and possibly die out without more support. It will be difficult to sustain a regional media sector in the current Ukrainian context.

TF implemented a series of extension activities in the final months of the RV project. These activities recognize the sustainability issues of local media outlets who have worked with TF on IDP coverage. The state of the media business in Ukraine, the reality of the oligarchic controlled media landscape, and the Kyiv-centric focus of media puts regional media at risk. As such, one of the impacts of the TF RV project is that it has given new life to independent, local, regional media, and set the tone for what could be a very interesting way forward for media development support and continued programming.

The 2016 IREX Media Sustainability Index noted that Ukraine’s freedom of speech, plurality of news, professional journalism and the business management are “unsustainable” or “near sustainable” range. “The country’s lack of economic growth and the media’s slim prospects for financial independence perpetuates its dependence on owners and fuels the declining quality of journalism and the public’s growing distrust of media”. With this stark reality in mind, TF put forward the following range of support for business and sustainability, also referred to as the “extension activities”:

- Support was offered to eight media houses (3 online, 3 TV and 2 print). The outlets were selected through an open call as pilot companies for business and production coaching. Private, local government owned (soon to be privatised) and regional outlets were eligible. Five-month contracts were issued to ensure their involvement and commitment to work (to search/develop) on their business model. To support the business development of these outlets, TF offered the following:
 - Baseline studies/ SWOT analyses were performed to assess skills and knowledge; the results serve as the basis for development of teaching modules and online courses.
 - Senior managers attended three modules courses on media management and developed business plans.
 - Participants received small grants up to 5,000 Euro to conduct audience surveys and find out other necessary data for competitive business plans.
 - Out of eight, the four most competent plans will receive 8,000 Euro grants for content production.

Also, online courses on various aspects of media management will be developed for all media professionals on the project website www.regionalvoices.eu. The E-LEARNING platform hosts four e-learning courses (in Ukrainian and Russian only), and the courses were launched in mid-August and has had 223 e-students as of 1 September 2017, and TF expects more people to enrol after September 1, as traditionally August is a holiday month and people are away from their computers. The e-learning courses offer skills in:

- Media management in transition
- Audience research
- Journalism across different platform - intro here in English and one more link in English: <https://vimeo.com/227941341>
- Advance filming and editing: people with traumatic experience intro half English/half Ukrainian.

Was a series of extension activities (Objective 3) designed efficiently (last 6 months of the project, March to September 2017)?

Answer: The design of the activities was well-conceived and fulfils an unmet need in Ukraine, especially for the target media that TF has built this program around. The results and long-term effects of these activities will require more time to really see the full impact. The range of support being offered to the eight outlets is needed, and an often-overlooked aspect of media development support, especially to the types of local, regional media with which TF is working. The e-learning platform is popular and innovative and offers a relatively low-cost way of reaching interested learners, and a potentially sustainable way forward for future training, though it would be best coupled with in-person meetings, workshops or other offline

gatherings to support teaching and learning.

Evidence: Also see above summary of evaluation team impressions of Objective 3.

In terms of assessing whether the extension activities were designed efficiently, it is the opinion of the evaluation team that since these activities were implemented as a pilot project, the work so far demonstrates a proof of concept. Upon review of the baseline studies/SWOT analysis for two of three of the outlets (list these here), TF has managed to collect essential foundational information that is needed to proceed with business planning and management related activities of the media outlets chosen. It is important to keep in mind that some of the outlets are start-up operations, and the founders are very young, and have limited professional media experience—some were pursuing activities that fell into the work of media and journalism. They will require additional support to continue on with their professional development, and to support their long-term efforts to survive in what is otherwise a very challenging media landscape.

“We did conduct audience research and this clearly showed us what our audience likes at the moment and what they would like to see improved... These will become part of our development strategy.” (female, News Agency Vchasno)

improved. We found they trust us. We also found they would like more analytical pieces. They also pay attention on sources of information, expecting balance and diversity. All these will become the part of our development strategy.” (female, News Agency Vchasno)

“We did conduct audience research and this clearly showed us what our audience likes at the moment and what they would like to see improved... These will become part of our development strategy”



Outlets that participated in the extension activities
TV
Ltava TV, Poltava region (Regional PSB)
LOT TV, Luhansk conflict affected region (regional PSB)
Expert - KR, Kryvyi Rig (young dynamic team)
ONLINE
Vchasno Information Agency, Pokrovsk, Donetsk conflict affected region (equipment training)
Dyvys Info, Lviv region (Western Ukraine)
Mariupol City Site, Donetsk conflict affected region
PRINT
Slobidskyi Kray newspaper, Kharkiv region hosts the largest number of IDPs
Zaporizka Pravda, Zaporizhzhia region borders Donetsk region and has highest IDPs numbers.

Survey respondents reported the following key insights in terms of the most notable changes that resulted from their involvement in the TF RV project:

62%
Respondents who indicated that they “often or always” discuss with their manager how they would use the learning on the job after their training with TF.
95%
Respondents who indicated that they “often or always” discuss with their manager how they would use the learning on the job after their training with TF.
65%
Respondents who indicated that they “often or always” discuss with their manager how they would use the learning on the job after their training with TF.

Question 7: What are the most notable changes in the newsrooms/lessons learned by participants?

Answer: The most notable changes the RV project helped to bring about for the participants were improvements to journalists’ skills related to covering IDP issues – 95% as noted below reported that their coverage of IDP issues improved because of the TF training. In addition, more than half indicate that they discussed the training with their managers. KIIs also indicate that technical literacy (knowledge and skills) was something that they gained a lot from. Participants also shared because of the Regional Voices project, they are now more aware of the importance of IDPs as a topic and its importance to their communities, so they are more likely to produce stories on IDP issues.

Evidence: During the course of the evaluation, a member of the evaluation team had two site visits to observe and discuss any sig-

nificant changes in the newsroom and to assess the impact of the RV activities. The two media houses that were visited were TV Hromadske, based in Kiev, and RTV Ltava from Poltava, city located in the central part of the country. Both media were supported intensively through the project through trainings and intensive in-house mentoring sessions. The aim of supporting Hromadske TV, a private station with a public interest mission, was to improve the skills and knowledge of their documentary crew. RTV Ltava, the other media outlet observed, is a local/regional branch of the PSB system in Ukraine. Thomson Foundation help RTV Ltava improve its transformation towards public service media, skills and practices of its editors and journalists, and newsroom practices in terms of flexibility and efficiency. These site visits offered great insight for the evaluation team to understand the impact of Regional Voices on the newsrooms and what the participants got out of their involvement in the project.

Hromadske TV:

The documentary crew from Hromadske TV significantly improved its how it thought about the methodology of work while preparing complex video stories such as documentaries, as they described it, they improved their logical thinking skills. What they acquired through trainings was not only important for production of two documentaries (under the project), but also, they embedded this knowledge and skills in their everyday work.

Hromadske TV representatives shared with the evaluation team:

- “We had several workshops, and not only the team who worked on this documentary profited from this. David held it for whole team of Hromadske... he told us very fundamental things about storytelling, who to make it visually... people approached him, asking constantly how to improve their work or approach...”
- “People who were involved in the project fi-

nally started to think about what they want to shoot. When you are doing documentaries, you don't know what to expect from protagonists... he has this sentiment how to turn camera in a right moment to a person... and he taught us how to follow these instincts..."

RTV Ltava:

During our field visit to RTV Ltava – a regional branch of public broadcaster in Poltava – wa member of the evaluation team met with the stations entire staff and had a chance to observe their daily operation and regular production planning, program production and realization. They were supported by the TF with one-week in house mentoring. At RTV Ltava the consultant met with the director, deputy director, editor of news, and entire newsroom staff consisting of 25 young people (journalists, cameramen, editors). For RTV Ltava, in-house trainings provided by the TF were highly relevant and important since it helped them to:

- Acquire new knowledge and skills (technical literacy),
- To cope with the trend on the local market,
- To lean towards integrated newsroom in which journalists from different departments (radio, tv, online) will work together (as result they introduced the position of online news editor),
- To research their audience and get familiar with the trends and their needs, and expectations, and finally,
- To create a short-term (2 years) strategic development plan that consists of audience research findings, new specifications for jobs within the media outlet, and an indication of main trends in relation to their competition – local TV stations.

RTV Ltava also appointed an editor of online news, which was a quite new position and strategically important in the process of their internal reorganization. The editor shared how TF's training was effective because it helped them to improve their web page (it used to be 11th ranked online source in the region, and now is 7th – they have the goal of being in the top three very soon), and it offered a chance to acquire new knowledge and skills. Notably, they now use their mobile phones in a more efficient and productive way, they established a joint group /

platform to share information and material, and they also bought an external WiFi server to upload information while reporting from different events in order to make it available for editors to use it and publish it quickly.

A young journalist from RTV Ltava's news section explained how trainings changed her approach to journalism. Before getting training from TF, she would go to different conferences and present only the official's statements in the form of quasi facts; now she will seek protagonists for the topic she addresses. "Let the story flow" is the message she got from the TF trainers, and now she will start and end her stories with protagonists.

One final observation from the site visit revealed that the topic of IDPs was not so relevant for the local community before the project, but now they are more aware of its importance and produce more stories on the topic. The cameramen from the RTV Ltava said that training was very important for his profession and his colleagues and because of the training they acquired improved team communication skills.

"We had several workshops, and not only the team who worked on this documentary profited from this. [Trainer] David held them for the whole team at Hromadske... he told us very fundamental things about storytelling"

Question 8: Is there measurable impact of the project's activities?

Answer: Yes, there were measurable impacts in terms of journalists' greater understanding of IDP issues, an increase in the number of stories generated by TF training participants, and improved professionalism in coverage IDP issues. These three impacts are substantiated by the M&E data and the four data collection methods.

Evidence: TF's intervention logic sought to reduce potential areas of conflict through balanced news output in the regional media, thereby contributing to a decrease in communal tensions, specifically between IDPs and their host communities. The implicit theory of change guiding the RV programme was that regional media outlets had difficulty covering IDP issues and the lack of balanced professional media coverage was having detrimental effects on IDPs and communities that they shelter in.

Survey data indicates that the Regional Voices has made measurable impact in the following ways, as reported by project beneficiaries:

89%
% of respondents who reported that their ability to cover issues of importance to the situation of IDPs in Ukraine has been enhanced
77%
% of respondents who reported that because of their participation in the Thomson Foundation Regional Voices Program, they felt their media outlet has improved its coverage of IDP issues
74%
Editorial quality of IDP coverage at my media outlet has improved
60%
Improved my understanding of conflict-sensitive journalism
71%
Improved my awareness and understanding of how journalism/ media can cover IDP issue

The first piece of evidence shows that RV-trained journalists have a greater understanding of the issue of IDPs. This can be seen in the self-reported answers about understanding the IDP issue. The survey respondents overwhelmingly agree that they have improved their ability to cover the IDP situation. They also believe that their media outlet has improved its coverage of IDP issues. They also have a better understand of conflict sensitive journalism and are more aware of the role that media plays in explaining how IDP issues affect communities.

Second, the Thomson project sought to increase the number of stories about IDPs. Survey data collected for this evaluation indicates that there is a notable increase in the number of stories written by the training participants. Data show that TF journalists who took the survey reported an average of a 50% increase in the reported number of stories written before and after the TF training. Compare this finding to the Memo 98 report that suggests that media coverage of IDP issues was flat throughout the life of the project and you can surmise that TF-training participants prompted journalists to write more stories about IDP issues than non-TF journalists in the Ukraine. The table above

shows what percentage of survey respondents believe that they are more empowered to write about IDP issues.

A third piece of evidence can be found in the content analysis. TF worked with many news outlets and with 400 to 500 journalists. The content analysis of five of the partner media suggest that four of the five outlets (LOT TV, RTV Ltava, Dyvys Info, and Slobidskyi Krayi) improved the professionalism of their news stories on IDP issues. Table 4 shows that were significant improvements in sourcing, story quality, the human angle, advocacy for IDP cause and for engaging readers.

These quality improvements are a major impact of the programme and suggest that a continuation of the RV programme may create significant impacts with other outlets. Remember that IDPs have often been treated as pariahs in their own nations and that host communities have not been as tolerant or welcoming as they should be. Public perception of the IDPs and their hope to return home matter a great deal in the overall internal resolution of the IDP crisis in Ukraine. Any journalism product, including news, documentaries, or programming that humanizes the people and the situation will contribute

to the resolution of the issue. It is within the media's capacity to decrease communal tensions through the professionalism in their coverage the IDP issue. Likewise, thoughtless or unprofessional media treatment of the IDP issue could exacerbate tensions.

What TF funding accomplished was the support of a cadre of journalists and regional media outlets that allowed them to better understand the issues, write more stories about the issue, and more importantly, write better stories about the IDPs. These are major impacts of the RV programme. Regional media had the skills and the confidence to become a part of the solution, not the problem.

Relevance

This set of evaluation questions examined the relevance of the Regional Voices project for media and CSOs and how it met expectations.

Question 9: How relevant to beneficiaries was the Regional Voices project and why?

Answer: The Regional Voices project was relevant to beneficiaries. It provided timely and useful skills to beneficiaries that respond to a real need(s) for information about the IDP context.

Evidence: The evaluation team operationalized "relevance" as providing timely and useful skills to beneficiaries that respond to a real need(s).

The media context in Ukraine is characterized by persistent lack of access to information about the conflict and IDP situation in Ukraine. Media have low credibility and lack the public confidence. Many media outlets are not independent of political or government control. Journalistic quality is often low. More importantly for the TF project, overall coverage of IDPs as well as regional and national portrayal of IDP issues and concerns is weak. It was in this context that TF implemented the RV project.

The survey and interviews carried out with TF beneficiaries for the RV project found the project highly relevant to their work. Survey respondents reported that the training topics were relevant and that they were able to apply the knowledge to their jobs. Of the

survey respondents, 99.17% reported that they found the topics and seminars relevant to their work; and 97.52% indicated that they were able to apply the knowledge and skills that they learned through TF training to their job.

In assessing relevance, one of the consultant team sought to understand the major problems that news media and journalists face when covering IDP issues. In doing so, the evaluators used KIIs to understand how IDP's are portrayed in the local/regional/national media in Ukraine, whether and how media impact public opinion of IDPs; and whether, in their opinion, journalism adequately covers the social issues and key challenges of IDPs in Ukraine.

The KIIs offered the following reasons for why the project was relevant to their work. The trainings provided were skills-oriented, very practical, and offered new perspectives. One KII noted:

"The RV has inspired me once again for new achievements. While filling out the registration form, I had not had any doubts, because the RV forums are always at the highest level. The trainer David impressed me with the information and experience. The important part for me was the mixture of theory and practice. I will use the received knowledge immediately and would like to come back for more trainings of this kind." (Editorial Forum, Kyiv, September 2016).

The trainers were respected by the participants. For example, "Mark is great. It's a pleasure to work with him. His extensive experience speaks for himself." Another noted, "In a nutshell, the trainers are professionals with capital P." (Vinnytsia). Other comments about the relevance included:

"Every time when I go to your training, I think that it can't be better than last time. Yet every time exceeds previous!" (Odessa)

"I'm thankful to trainers for the new knowledge. Thank you for deserved critique and for commending us for our efforts. It's pleasant that trainers are striving to teach us, and not just get this week over with." (Kharkiv)



There was appreciation for the specific and timely focus of the RF programme, i.e. the focus on IDPs. For the RV participants, the topic of the project (IDP's and media covering related issues) was of the highest relevance when the project was launched (in 2015) and since then approaches/topics have evolved from rising awareness of the problems of the displaced, towards a more sensitive and focused approach on reporting on IDPs rights among beneficiaries today.

The programme was also relevant because of the places where journalists worked. The TF program did not just conduct trainings for media in the capital. It worked to recruit journalists from some of the most affected regions and towns in Ukraine such as Kharkiv, Dnipro, Zaporizhzhia, Mykolayiv and Odessa.

The programme created opportunities for networking (mostly between different regions in Ukraine on individual basis). This networking focus mattered because isolated media outlets can sometimes buckle under

pressure by powerful influences. A loosely or tightly networked media sector can help each other resist pressure and share content.

Question 10: Did the Regional Voices workshops meet journalists and CSOs communications officers' expectations?

Answer: Did the Regional Voices workshops meet journalists and CSOs communications officers' expectations?

Evidence: According to the survey conducted for the evaluation, **94% of respondents reported that the Thomson Foundation Regional Voices Program met their expectations.** Additionally, the respondents reported additional important feedback about the TF RV programme as highlighted in the table below.

Insights gleaned from the KIIs related to TF training also conveyed how the RV met beneficiary expectations:

"After passing all these useful trainings, we are able to transform any boring and protocol event into a story with a human face." (Journalist and editor of 'Polilogue', TV show aired at national TV)

"After these sessions, I started to abandon some bad habits I had, and to avoid mistakes I was making before." (editor, Znamya Industrii, Donetsk region)

"Trainers also showed us how to communicate with other team members, for example with cameramen. Here, people do not pay much attention to this, but it seems to be crucial for the story production" (Journalists Press Club & PSB local branch in Kropyvnytskyi)

Sustainability

Question 11: Are benefits delivered by the project likely to be lasting – if so what are these benefits and why is their sustainability of value?

Answer: Sustainability will be difficult.

As noted in the survey data above, 98% of respondents felt then training was a worthwhile investment in their career development.

It is difficult to know the sustainability of the project activities as the situation on the ground is still fluid. Yet, the survey, KIIs, media monitoring, M&E data and content analysis point to some areas that may see sustainable benefits.

First, the dire economic state of independent, local regional media will continue to influence the sustainability of the training, network and business development. The financial training should increase the media's sustainability.

The TF programme partners face the challenge of getting continued space for IDP issues. Some KIIs noted that there is also a sense that at some point there is saturation. No one know how many of these stories will continue to garner readership or viewership since the situation on the ground is not changing.

% of respondents reporting additional important feedback about the TF RV program:

100%

I would recommend this training to others

94%

This training has improved my coverage of IDP issues

95%

Given all the factors, estimate how much your coverage of IDP issues has improved as a result of this training

65%

Based on your response to the prior question, estimate how much of the improvement is a direct result of this training

62% often or always

After training, my manager and I discussed how I would use the learning on the job

98%

The training was a worthwhile investment in my career development



The content analysis suggested here was indication that the stories improved over time, and that there has been a shift from very boring, wooden coverage of IDPs, to coverage that is more human interest oriented and that personalizes the plight of IDPs, makes them human. Indeed, one story that was very popular in this regard was a love story that happened when two IDPs met each other, fell in love, and are now together—one of the TF beneficiaries reported on this.

KIIs with trainers and MEMO 98 suggest that the most important aspect of this project was to keep the issue of IDPs in the public eye. This enhanced the potential for it to be picked up and to potentially reach a national level. Improved awareness and understanding at a national level is critical. The outlets need to continue to run stories on IDPs as much as possible. This will be the long-term yardstick to measure one of the key indicators of sustainability for RV.

TF's support for skill building, individual capacity building is key. RV partners do not get this type of training from any other media development implementer. The access to TF trainers and their approach to journalism skills and understanding of the media business is not something they get exposed to everyday or even have easy access to. TF would need to do some kind of time analysis of content and media monitoring in the future to really assess this. At the moment,

analysis shows there has been significant uptake of the skills and training, but media monitoring trends across the board show significant challenges the media development community must address in terms of the type and range of content covered.

Another marker of sustainability is the project's website. It will continue to receive traffic, posts and content sharing long after the programme ends. Finally, the documentaries made as part of this project will have additional uptake and value after the programme ends, and for project's like this one, this type of content may go on to have additional use, sharing and value well into the future.

Question 12: If the Regional Voices were to continue after the initial two years, what could be organized/delivered differently?

Answer: All parts could be revised considering the end of project evaluation.

Evidence: The research/ media monitoring piece should be continued, but the Regional Voices project should revise the Memo98 media monitoring to provide some context. For instance, did other topics such as women, youth and environment also get as much or as little time? The reductionist approach to the data presentation in the reports diminishes the value of the great data set.

“After passing all of these useful trainings, we are able to transform any boring and protocol event into a story with a human face”

The programme could do more in terms of marketing, advertising and regional and international outreach. For instance, the programme could do more to widely distribute documentaries. There could be a Facebook or other social media campaign to share information about them.

TF has done a great—model job—in terms of programme monitoring and regular data collection, including media monitoring, participant feedback forms, mentoring reports, and overall research and learning related to the project. This should be maintained, and perhaps add in more components related to English-language training, and more opportunities for travel and engagement with EU countries.

All interviewees said there is an essential need for trainings, and this is something that should be somehow preserved and followed up after this project ends. The most important thing is to continue to work with regional journalists because very often people in the regions are left in the hands of local and corrupted authorities. In addition, the following were suggested by KIIs as ideas that they would like TF to consider for future projects like Regional Voices:

- The focus (topic) for a new project should be changed, since not only IDPs are affected by conflict but also other groups such as ATO veterans, their families, children.

- When it comes to skills, TF should provide courses on news and breaking news from the region.

- Relatedly, TF could also offer training on mobile journalism (MoJo) since journalism in Ukraine will increasingly be driven by technology and ICTs that drive communication practices and reporting.

- Journalists and editors as well as CSOs lack skills in project management; they would benefit from training and skills for how to launch, manage and run projects by themselves.

- Some participants said more time could be spent on providing feedback on the stories that participants complete. They would like more explanation and insight from the trainers.

- Trainings should be certified. It would be helpful for the participants to have documentation and certification of the training and level of knowledge or skills they have obtained.

- Trainings and activities should be organized in smaller places, and not just big cities, which also have regional significance.

One interesting observation shared with the evaluation team about the RV programme:

“I think these online courses and TF initiative are very timely and would be very effective. We need to see how people will react. It is for free, you have no obligations. It is up to you to use or not to use those recommendations.

Once you get a certificate – that’s it, nothing is supposed to happen. Course is great, but we need to think about follow up activities. We need to think about knowledge management, topics management. We need to change people’s way of thinking in order to make this works. People here in regional media cannot do this on a daily basis. It is up to their mentality. Once we change them, we can influence other groups as well.” (Director, Media Business Association)

Additionally, open-ended comments from the Participant Feedback forms was also notable:

“To provide hand out materials to share with colleagues at workplace, to provide training certificate.” (Kharkiv)

“Invite for trainings not only NGO speakers but also from State Social Service etc., but not boring speakers. Some jurists couldn’t answer the questions and forwarded to other public services.” (Kharkiv)

“In my opinion, in the very beginning, when the group was being formed as a team, we should have paid more attention to bringing the group together closer for the sake of a more productive teamwork.” (Kharkiv)

“It would be helpful if trainers could comment on technical mistakes, or Tilda should be ad-



The most important thing is to continue to work with regional journalists because, very often, people in the regions are left in the hands of local and corrupt authorities

vertised in the announcement, so we could prepare at home.” (Zaporizhzhia)

Question 13: Did documentaries on IDPs appeal to international audiences?

Answer: This question was difficult to answer, as there was limited opportunity to gather data and insight from international audiences in terms of their feedback about the documentaries. However, based on feedback from Hromadske TV, the documentaries on IDP have real appeal for other markets, and at least two broadcasters outside of Ukraine—in Austria and Serbia—will air the documentaries. Screenings were held in a variety of European embassies, and at least one of the documentaries is up for a prize at an international film festival. Continued monitoring of the documentaries made possible due to funding from this project is encouraged to keep track of where they have aired and what audience reaction has been.

Evidence: Based on an analysis of Thomson Foundation’s Interim Report and interviews done with Hromadske TV, the evaluation team found the following:

- TV Hromadske documentary crew has been supported with two one-month long consultancies (February 2016, and from 9 May until 3 June 2016) which resulted with two 45-min documentaries: “Looks like home” and “Cheese and Bread”.

- The first documentary titled “Looks Like Home” follows three IDP’s as they try to integrate into their new host society. The vessel for the integration is an IDP theatre that allows them to express and share their experiences as displaced persons. The topic and methodology of the documentary are very powerful and it has a high potential to be screened at international festivals and possible commercial value.

- The second documentary, “Cheese and bread,” became a sequel to the “Displaced” from 2014 to 2015. It was filmed in the Carpathian Mountains and highlights challenges faced by IDPs from Crimea in an economically depressed rural area. This story is about Muslim family living in Western Ukraine



and trying to be integrated in community there.

Quote for this movie: “The very number of conflicts people from Europe [have experienced means they] really do feel empathy for these kinds of stories. I really felt it was something important” (Head of news, TV Hromadske).

According to a representative from Hromadske TV about what happened with two documentaries:

“We signed contracts with Austrian and Serbian broadcasters to show first documentary - “Looks like home”. Another one (“Bread with Cheese”) is short listed for the Dok Leipzig, 60th edition of international festival for documentary and animated movies...”

We had screenings in embassies in Austria, Serbia, France, Germany... this was enabled through our Ministry of Foreign Affairs, since they signalled us in which of European states embassies would be interested to show the movies.” ●

5. Conclusions

One of the main takeaways of this evaluation is that Thomson Foundation has identified an important niche area where there is a lot of need and value added, not just in terms of developing independent, democratic media, but in terms of support local media that will help Ukraine through this and future periods of unrest and transition. IDP issues, like other niche reporting areas, require skill and great storytelling. The ability for the media to serve their Fourth Estate function and to hold leaders and the state accountable requires regional voices as much if not more than simply relying on “Kyiv voices”.

Organizations like Internews and IREX have been working on media development more than 20 years, as has the Open Society Foundations, and the National Endowment for Democracy. Their work is important, but as this project has revealed with each new generation there are not only new problems that challenge Ukraine’s democratic transition, but also new journalists, new media outlets, and new technologies and communications platforms that benefit from partnerships to organizations like Thomson Foundation.

Thomson Foundation has achieved significant success with the initial project that was designed specifically to address the sudden and very real humanitarian crisis that was posed by the IDP crisis. Ukraine was unprepared, and the media – local and national – did not adequately cover IDP issues. The TF has helped to change this, but the challenges faced by independent, democratic media in Ukraine go well beyond this project. Simultaneously, while providing a tailored media development program designed to support local, regional media as well as CSOs in terms of IDP coverage, the program was at its heart also a classic media development program that helped to provide individual and institutional capacity building to support high quality journalism. At the journalist, editorial, and media outlet levels, it was clear, based on the interviews done for this evaluation, that the Regional Voices project has provided a very strong foundation for what could become a targeted and strategic future program that would work with local and regional media—the same outlets and networks of journalists who are at the heart of the RV project.

In addition to the journalism professionalism training and mentoring, the extension activities aimed at bolstering business savviness and chances for long-term sustainability were valued by the eight outlets that were chosen to take part in this pilot. It is, however, important to keep in mind that these outlets are in survival mode. They are operating in difficult contexts, and in some cases

Thomson Foundation has achieved significant success with the initial project that was designed to address the sudden and very real humanitarian crisis...

run by activists turned journalists. They will require additional support (from donors and experts like Thomson’s trainers) to maintain their market presence, and to compete in a challenging media landscape. The evaluation revealed that there are positive indications that the extension activities are indeed a good strategy and that the SWOT analyses and mentoring reports should be continued and further supported. In the long-term, specific targets and goals need to be drafted, with milestones and benchmarks outlined for the station, its management and financial backers to endorse.

One final consideration to bear in mind, the Regional Voices project was the first type of training like this for many of the beneficiaries – some of the media outlets, journalists and CSOs had never had the opportunity to do anything like this. It’s a lot of information to absorb. For instance, some of the outlets



are still coping with the opportunities from the assistance—like implementing audience research—and they need time to process and put into motion what they have learned and gained from this opportunity. In this regard, periodic check-ins or perhaps distance mentoring or Skype sessions with some of the familiar faces of trainers and experts who were part of RV would be of added value and appreciated by the programme's beneficiaries.

Recommendations

1) **Content analysis** would be a good monitoring and evaluation tool to add to future project's like RV, and programmes should embed a mechanism for aggregating news stories from training participants and archiving the stories. Additionally, content analysis methodology should be embedded throughout the programme so that trainers can review the outputs of trainees and identify ways to help them capitalize on the training.

An iterative process whereby articles are uploaded to a clearinghouse, expert trainers evaluate the quality of the news and then identify ways to address deficiencies in training or mentoring, would create a full circle approach to monitoring professionalism of TF trainees' coverage of IDP issues. TF needs to keep a record of all stories produced within the project lifetime, not only those produced during the training or mentoring, but ask beneficiaries, to send them links for all stories on periodical basis. This is important to have a representative sample.

2) TF could consider ways to integrate **English-language training** as part of its overall package; this type of support was deemed important for Ukrainian media's long-term needs and its ability to function and participate in EU-based trainings, activities and future opportunities.

3) Furthermore, future projects like RV may

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benefit from an **increased pool of funds to support further travel to Brussels** and to learn more about the EU. This experience was very valuable for those who got to take part in the Study Tour for the RV project. Their experience had ripple effects for people in their networks and communities as well.

4) Future **media monitoring** should also be revised. The current categories could be refined to better capture subtle changes in media content quality and quantity.

5) A more robust social media aspect could also be introduced to further the reach of stories about IDPs.

6) For the regional networking, both within and outside of Ukraine, it may be beneficial for TF to help interested media in Ukraine to develop **better ties to the PSB/ PSM networks**. Ukraine has shown, in an interesting and surprising way, that one way forward in terms of supporting independent media is through public service media.

If Thomson Foundation could help the local partners poised to become PSM or who operate with a public interest/public service remit in mind to better access public media experts, networking opportunities, confer-

Seventy-three per cent of journalists said they broadened their perspectives and worldview, 71% said they improved their awareness and understanding of how the media can cover IDP issues

KEY OUTCOMES FROM REGIONAL VOICES



- 67% reported that they made great contacts



- 73% said they broadened their perspectives and worldview



- 54% said they exchanged ideas with other people



- 60% indicated they improved their understanding of conflict-sensitive journalism



- 71% said they improved their awareness and understanding of how journalism/ media can cover IDP issues



- 25% had an improved understanding of business skills and management issues

ences, and professional development opportunities related to public service/public broadcasting media in Europe, this could be a great way of both supporting the regional networking and in furthering Ukraine's integration into Europe. With regards to PSM/ PSB, there is a lot of interest in this in Ukraine now, and making sure that regional media are part of current and future strategies to support PSB/ PSM in Ukraine is important.

7) The regional media that this project supported indicate that there may be other ways to engage or work with what could be described as an emergent regional network in the making. It may be worthwhile to explore the idea of regional network formation, in a

manner like the ANEM Network in Serbia, which could present a model for the smaller, regional media partners that RV worked with. Such a formation could address issues like sustainability as well.

8) The extension activities that sought to support business development practices of running independent media outlets could be augmented, mainstreamed and further developed. This could be bolstered with coming up with a system of benchmarks and milestones to better track and understand how individual and institutional investments to support business acumen are making a difference and better tracking results achieved. ●