

TAJIKISTAN

INTRODUCTION

Social and political events in Tajikistan, especially the civil war that followed the country's independence, had a dramatic impact on the nation's media. During the period before the civil war, the media became an instrument of the competing parties. In the opinion of most journalists in Tajikistan, media were at least partially responsible for the antagonism that was perpetuated before the war. In contrast, journalists in the post-conflict period are deliberately restricting their reporting on certain issues, fearing that their coverage of controversial issues could contribute to another conflict. While journalists strive to cover the most important issues, they also try to maintain a social balance and not "draw the fire to themselves." Meanwhile, minimal direct state censorship exists, but self-censorship is flourishing. Panel participants pointed out examples of self-censorship based on their own experiences.

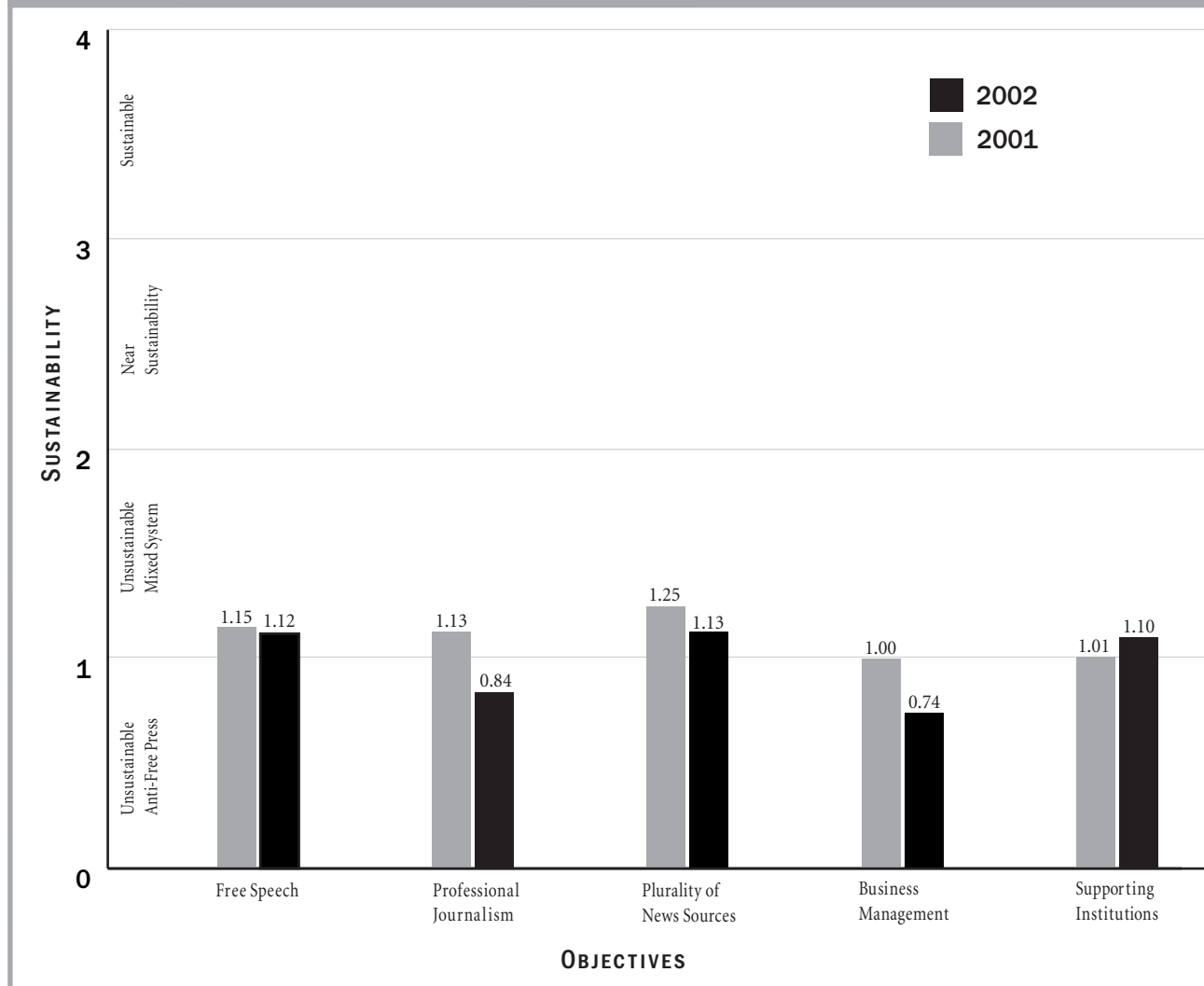
The legislative framework for the freedom of speech has been established, but it is somewhat archaic. The main obstacle to the sustainable development of media is the poor state of the economy. Newspaper and magazine circulation numbers are very low, and all but one national and regional newspaper are weeklies. Newspapers are published in Tajik and Russian for the national audience, as well as in minority languages.

A multitude of print media, including privately owned special advertising publications, political propaganda, and religious publications, exist in Tajikistan. In recent years, independent television stations and radio stations have emerged with the support of international donors.

The panelists expressed their concern about a range of problems in the media sector. For example, the media lack technical resources and professional journalism training. Furthermore, the shortage of quality printing facilities and limited opportunities for professional advancement hinder media development. The panelists were also concerned that low living standards in Tajikistan do not allow citizens greater access to media. Additionally, the extremely low salaries of journalists and the poor working conditions in many media outlets do not attract qualified candidates to the industry.

Although media laws and the Constitution guarantee freedom of speech and there is no official state censorship, the dangers of practicing journalism in Tajikistan impose real limits on press freedoms.

TAJIKISTAN-MEDIA SUSTAINABILITY INDEX



OBJECTIVE SCORING

The averages of all the indicators are averaged to obtain a single, overall score for each objective. Objective scores are averaged to provide an overall score for the country. IREX interprets the overall scores as follows:

3 and above: Sustainable and free independent media

2-3: Independent media approaching sustainability

1-2: Significant progress remains to be made; society or government is not fully supportive

0-1: Country meets few indicators; government and society actively oppose change

Note: The 2001 scores for the four Central Asian countries in this MSI have been modified from last year's report to more accurately reflect benchmark data compiled by IREX and USAID in 2001.

INDICATOR SCORING

Each indicator is scored using the following system:

0 = Country does not meet indicator; government or social forces may actively oppose its implementation

1 = Country minimally meets aspects of the indicator; forces may not actively oppose its implementation, but business environment may not support it and government or profession do not fully and actively support change

2 = Country has begun to meet many aspects of the indicator, but progress may be too recent to judge or still dependent on current government or political forces

3 = Country meets most aspects of the indicator; implementation of the indicator has occurred over several years and/or through changes in government, indicating likely sustainability

4 = Country meets the aspects of the indicator; implementation has remained intact over multiple changes in government, economic fluctuations, changes in public opinion, and/or changing social conventions

OBJECTIVE 1: FREE SPEECH

Tajikistan Objective Score: 1.12/4.0—Tajikistan was the first former Soviet republic to adopt a Law on the Press after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Freedom of speech is guaranteed both in this law and in the Constitution of the Republic, which contains a special article on freedom of speech. In addition, media laws such as the Law on the Press and Other Mass Media and the Law on Television and Radio Broadcasting have been adopted. But these laws do not fully function because they are difficult to implement. Although Tajikistani society greatly needs the freedom of speech, in practice this freedom is rarely demonstrated. In fact, foreign media—and to a far lesser extent, the independent media in Tajikistan—are the best source of objective information.

Although media laws and the Constitution guarantee freedom of speech and there is no official state censorship, the dangers of practicing journalism in Tajikistan impose real limits on press freedoms. So far, government officials do not trust the independent media and keep them from obtaining information. In Tajikistan, nine laws regulate media activity. According to the panel, all of them—excluding the Law on Televi-

sion and Radio Broadcasting and some articles of the Law on the Press and Other Media—meet international standards. But these provisions do not clarify the implementation of these laws in any detail, leaving journalists unable to stand up for themselves.

Some media laws are subject to harsh criticism by independent journalists, human-rights groups, and international organizations. According to the head of the Department for Media Affairs of the President's Office, Mr. Abdumannopov, "the Law on the Press and Media has become very antiquated. It was adopted 12 years ago and does not account for many aspects of the media's activities, such as advanced technologies and the Internet. The Law on Television and Radio Broadcasting is also considered imperfect, especially the part dealing with the licensing of independent TV and radio channels." According to Djunaid Ibodov, a lawyer representing the international organization Internews, the process of issuing broadcasting licenses has been monopolized. The broadcast licenses are issued by the Committee for Television and Radio Broadcasting, which is not interested in developing a competitive media environment.

Freedom-of-speech violations do not presently cause any palpable public indignation, since a civil society has not yet taken shape in the past five years after the civil war. Such violations do not spur Tajikistanis into action because the general population is uninformed about such transgressions and their implications.

Thus, legal and public regulations exist, but in practice they do not function effectively enough. If the media report on government policies, media protections are ignored. A recent trend features nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) bringing key issues to the attention of the government, in the absence of media coverage. A special constitutional law is necessary for the successful implementation of media laws. Such legislation would thoroughly outline the functions of the journalists and the obligations of the government bodies in providing access to information.

Journalists often lack access to information. The law does not detail further steps for those cases in which journalists are denied information.

One of the most burning issues is the fair issuance of broadcasting licenses. The licenses are issued by a quasi-secret commission made up mostly of government officials with specific media interests. Therefore, the commission would not benefit from issuing licenses to potential competitors. Licensing is not a transparent process. Therefore, it is necessary to establish an inde-

| Legal and social norms protect and promote free speech and access to public information. | |
|--|---|
| Free Speech Indicators | Legal/social protections of free speech exist and are enforced. |
| | Licensing of broadcast media is fair, competitive, and apolitical. |
| | Market entry and tax structure for media are fair and comparable to other industries. |
| | Crimes against journalists or media outlets are prosecuted vigorously, but occurrences of such crimes are rare. |
| | State or public media do not receive preferential legal treatment, and law guarantees editorial independence. |
| | Libel is a civil law issue; public officials are held to higher standards, and the offended party must prove falsity and malice. |
| | Public information is easily accessible; right of access to information is equally enforced for all media and journalists. |
| | Media outlets have unrestricted access to information; this is equally enforced for all media and journalists. |
| | Entry into the journalism profession is free, and government imposes no licensing, restrictions, or special rights for journalists. |

pendent body for issuing licenses in a fair and open manner. The Committee for TV and Radio Broadcasting of the Republic controls the issuing of television and radio broadcasting licenses in Tajikistan. Over the course of many years, the committee did not issue broadcasting licenses to private radio stations such as Asia+ and NIC. Only after intervention by President Rakhmanov were these radio stations awarded their licenses. In defiance of all the regulations, the licensing commission has been denying licenses to independent private stations for years in order to avoid competition.

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The tax structures are the same for media as for other market participants. Because the media serve an important social function, this seemed unfair to some panelists. It also does not take into account common practices elsewhere in the world, where media have a more beneficial tax structure.

More than 20 journalists have been murdered in recent years, and not every murder case has been closed. Journalists do not feel safe, as cases of persecution and reprisals are frequent. According to data from the Foundation for Commemoration and Protection of Rights of the Journalists of Tajikistan, 80 journalists have perished in Tajikistan within the past 10 years. Meanwhile, only four criminal cases regarding the murders of journalists have been solved. There are other cases in which journalists were blackmailed and threatened for covering certain issues. For example, panelists mentioned a case in which a female journalist who was covering a legal event was repeatedly blackmailed and threatened. As a result, she not only quit her job, but left the journalism profession altogether.

There are many cases where journalists are dismissed for covering sensitive issues. For example, the Tajik journalist Savlatkhoshi Khovari was fired for his coverage of the problems regarding Sariazsky

Lake. Therefore, many journalists choose not to cover controversial topics—a common form of self-censorship. Various threats directed against journalists are frequent. However, media cases are rarely brought to court because journalists and their accusers give no credence to the judicial system.

The Tajikistani media do not always have access to important information. Such information is often obtained from foreign media and the Internet. However, it is difficult to find no-cost access to international sources such as the Internet, satellite broadcasting, and foreign publications. Internet access is mainly offered by commercial providers who charge high fees for their services. Fortunately, the number of international and local organizations that provide free Internet access is growing. Today many media tap the resources of their Western colleagues for news. Access to international information is limited for most journalists in Tajikistan, especially those in the regions. Access to information is also particularly limited for independent media.

The criminal code contains an article on libel, but it is written in such a way that any undesirable information published by the media could be interpreted as libel. Because they exercise caution, no journalists have been accused of libel.

Only one law, the Law on the State Secret, limits access to information. Article 162 of the Criminal Code clearly states that obstruction of the professional activity of journalists to any extent should be punishable. In practice, this is not the way it works. The law covering the press states that when information is denied, an appeal must be submitted to the authorities twice in written form. Only then can the issue be brought to court. To avoid this process, journalists procure information via alternate sources.

State-run print publications have special privileges. For example, the state-run printing plant Sharki Ozod gives state publications a 50 percent discount. Newspapers such as *Jumkhuriyat*, *Sadoi Mardum*, *Narodnaya Gazeta*, *Khalk Ovozi*, and *Payemi Andoz* all benefit from these privileges. In one case, the leadership of the Ministry for State Income and Revenue and Duties instructed all the tax authorities in the nation to force businesses to subscribe to a state publication.

The state-run print media have preferred access to the most significant information. State-owned publications are directly funded by the state, and government institutions and officials watch the subscription process closely. The management of the state-run

media is usually appointed by the officials, and these media have no difficulties obtaining accreditation.

The journalistic trade is not very popular among young people. Parents do not want to see their children become journalists because the profession is dangerous and underpaid. The government does not in any way control entry into the journalism departments of colleges and universities; nor does it dictate a specific curriculum.

OBJECTIVE 2: PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISM

Tajikistan Objective Score: 0.84/4.0—Journalism in Tajikistan is not always fair and is often unreliable. Although journalists attempt to verify information as best they can, subjective reporting still occurs due to the lack of professional skills throughout the media sector. With political parties influencing media coverage, multiple opinions of two or more parties are difficult to find. Journalists mainly reflect the official viewpoint and do not take an objective stand on key issues. Political commentary that might contradict the government viewpoint is practically nonexistent. There are instances when journalists tried to write objective articles, but they were suppressed. Only a few publications offer objective reporting. However, alternative

political views are not evident in television and radio broadcasting.

The population's low purchasing capacity limits public access to media. Only about 20 to 30 percent of the population can afford to buy newspapers.

Socially significant information is equally inaccessible to all journalists. Government authorities do not often willingly assist the independent media. Journalists have a very difficult time obtaining information from the government. The public finds out about most important events primarily from Western radio broadcasts.

A Code of Ethics for journalists in Tajikistan has not yet been adopted. An association of journalists, NANSMIT, has drafted a Code, but it is not yet complete. As a result, media have established their own ethical standards. In other words, although there are no clearly defined ethical standards, journalists try to adhere to certain basic rules.

Journalists practice self-censorship, so editors and publishers generally do not have to restrain their employees themselves. During and after the civil war, a great number of journalists were killed, and many were forced to leave the country. With this recent history as a reminder, journalists are far more prone to exercise self-censorship, despite a low level of government censorship. Journalists in Tajikistan are also forced into self-censorship to protect their colleagues. There are no guarantees for their safety.

The state-run media today have more access to government information than private media. On the other hand, independent media are better equipped than the state-run media and receive support from international organizations. Independent media managers are not appointed by politicians. Unfortunately, certain journalists have been paid for made-to-order reporting, showing that independent media are not completely independent. Many media outlets do not cover important issues for fear of persecution, but some independent publications are willing to take risks.

Journalists in Tajikistan operate in a difficult environment. They earn extremely low salaries, prompting many to leave the profession or produce made-to-order

| Journalism meets professional standards of quality. | |
|---|--|
| Professional Journalism Indicators | Reporting is fair, objective, and well sourced. |
| | Journalists follow recognized and accepted ethical standards. |
| | Journalists and editors do not practice self-censorship. |
| | Journalists cover key events and issues. |
| | Pay levels for journalists and other media professionals are sufficiently high to discourage corruption. |
| | Entertainment programming does not eclipse news and information programming. |
| | Technical facilities and equipment for gathering, producing, and distributing news are modern and efficient. |
| | Quality niche reporting and programming exists (investigative, economics/business, local, political). |

news. Information is obtained after significant delays. Only the salaries of journalists who work for international media outlets are relatively high. So far there is no specialization in the journalism community. Most publishers and journalists try to earn money on the side by supplying information to foreign media. Because of the authoritarian nature of the existing regime and the corruption of the authorities, investigative journalism covering subjects such as corruption, the illegal drug trade, and assassinations are taboo.

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The lack of technical resources at state-run media translates into poor-quality reporting. The equipment at many state outlets has become obsolete. Journalists in the regions, as well as in Dushanbe, have no access to computers. More than 80 percent of the capital city's journalists do not know how to use a computer, not to mention the Internet.

Entertainment programming dominates state-run television. This situation is even more unbalanced in the regions, where music and dancing are popular. News programs are mainly official news broadcasts. However, independent television stations are attempting to diversify their programs by including more and more objective information in their programming. This information is supplied by the Internet.

Unfortunately, there are no specialized journalists in Tajikistan who could cover a specific subject like economics. Media outlets do not have the technical or financial means to hire staff for niche reporting. In fact, each editorial department generally consists of two to three people who are forced to cover multiple topics.

OBJECTIVE 3: PLURALITY OF NEWS SOURCES

Tajikistan Objective Score: 1.13/4.0—Regular public sources of information in Tajikistan are available only for the select few. For many Tajikistanis, the most accessible media are state-run television channels. Poor newspaper circulation and the poor performance of the postal services limit access to print media. Access to television is also limited due to the lack of electricity in the provinces. Those who can afford to buy private newspapers draw a significant regular salary. But not all journalists are able to buy the newspapers of other publishers. In Tajikistan, there is no daily paper. The purchasing power of citizens is low, so print media cannot afford to publish dailies.

The number of media outlets in Tajikistan has grown, particularly in the capital. According to the Ministry of Culture, 250 media entities have been registered. Private and public television and radio channels have emerged. However, the quality of news available nationwide has not improved. The media do not fully cover national events. Instead, they recycle the same sources of information, the same news, and the same presentation style.

There are various state-run and public sources of information such as official press centers, government committees, and several data analysis centers.

| Multiple news sources provide citizens with reliable and objective news. | |
|---|--|
| Plurality of News Sources Indicators | A plurality of affordable public and private news sources (e.g., print, broadcast, Internet) exists. |
| | Citizens' access to domestic or international media is not restricted. |
| | State or public media reflect the views of the entire political spectrum, are nonpartisan, and serve the public interest. |
| | Independent news agencies gather and distribute news for print and broadcast media. |
| | Independent broadcast media produce their own news programs. |
| | Transparency of media ownership allows consumers to judge objectivity of news; media ownership is not concentrated in a few conglomerates. |
| A broad spectrum of social interests are reflected and represented in the media, including minority-language information sources. | |

The press is almost inaccessible to rural residents, due partly to the fact that many postal workers have been laid off in rural and even in urban areas. Therefore, the only accessible media for rural audiences are television and radio broadcasts, although only for limited periods of time due to power outages. Even with electricity, these residents can only tune in to the one state-owned television channel, TVT. Some villages in Tajikistan are so remote that they do not even have access to television.

The government does not obstruct access to the Internet and foreign media. However, there is no cable television service in many rural and urban areas. The government has not yet made any attempts to restrict access to international publications or Western news on the Internet. A number of Internet providers offer easy, unobstructed access in Tajikistan. In comparison with previous years, Internet access has become more widespread, especially in the capital city. However, most residents and journalists cannot afford to use the Internet on a regular basis. Internet cafés are also expensive. Access to Western information, mainly via the radio, is not limited. Of the foreign stations, most of the population can access only the Russia channel. Western print media are rarely distributed, as there is no state-run distribution channel.

The independent media do not receive any state subsidies, although local authorities sometimes contribute to particular outlets.

All media in the capital city attempt to cover world events, although newspapers are issued on a weekly basis and international news is often outdated by the time of distribution. Circulation numbers are low, since only a few residents can afford to buy a paper even once a week, especially in the regions. News sources in the provinces are insufficient, and the readers have no choice of publications. They simply read whatever falls into their hands.

Independent information agencies such as Asia-Plus and Verovur provide information to all media throughout the republic. The state has monopolized some of the print and electronic media, and the authorities have limited the media's access to information by filtering news to the journalists through government spokespersons. Although there is no close cooperation among media, there is a certain selection process in how information agencies disseminate news to print publications. In short, the independent media are often forced to buy important information or resort to other sources.

The law on the press does not allow preferential treatment of the state-owned media. But, in reality, this provision is not observed. Moreover, all media managers, except those from the independent press, are appointed by politicians or on the recommendation of government bodies.

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Ownership of the media is transparent. Newspapers list their ownership structures, and the public is aware of who owns which outlet. Tajikistanis largely choose their publication based on this criterion.

Tajikistan does have minority-language media, as permitted by law. These media are accessible to everybody. At present, due largely to the country's leadership, the national minorities' interests are not curtailed in any way. In theory, minority groups could issue their own publications without government interference. The Russian-language press operates nationwide. Newspapers are published in six languages: Tajik, Russian, Uzbek, and Kyrgyz, with some materials in English and Persian-Arabic scripts. The government does not discriminate against journalists who write on minority issues.

By the panel's estimate, only 8 to 10 percent of the overall population can afford to buy print publications. According to our observations, the government of Tajikistan does not restrict accessibility to Western news. A network of satellite antennas that allows access to international information has tripled in size within the past two years.

Only Asia Plus, Samoniti TV, and Poytacht produce their own programming. They are public stations that do not produce any news. Rather, they retransmit news from Euronews and Mir, as well as news from Iran. Independent news agency Asia-Plus supplies informa-

tion only to its affiliated newspaper and radio stations. The leading media conglomerates in Tajikistan are the newspaper concern Charkhi Gardun, consisting of six newspapers; the public association Asia Plus, comprised of a news agency, a radio station, and a newspaper; and Tochikiston, made up of six newspapers.

Independent television and radio broadcasters produce their own programming, and they feature their own local news. Independent agencies such as Verorud, Asia-Plus, Charkhi Gardun, and Spekhr produce their own news. Only one radio station, Asia Plus, produces its own programs and news.

OBJECTIVE 4: BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Tajikistan Objective Score: 0.74/4.0—There are practically no business structures that support the media in Tajikistan. Pochtai Tochikiston serves as one of the few distribution channels. Newsstands are inefficient, and the media have so far been unable to establish an alternative distribution channel. Print media are mostly disseminated by individual distributors. One publisher prints practically all the national publications. There is virtually no network of private printing plants in the country.

Businesses associated with media, such as printers and distributors, operate inefficiently and unpro-

fessionally. The resources of these companies are in short supply. To date, the Ministry of Culture claims that more than 225 periodicals have been registered. Although *Sodom Mardum* and *Djumkuriyat* are issued three to five times a week, other media, mainly private papers, are published only once a week. Therefore, it is very difficult to talk about the effectiveness and efficiency of media when information is out of date by the time the newspaper appears in print.

One of the biggest problems experienced by Tajikistani media is the lack of independent printing plants. All newspapers are printed at the only major printing plant, Sharki Ozod, which is under state control. Therefore, Sharki Ozod can refuse to print some newspapers or delay their printing as it sees fit. It uses old equipment and operates far from its full capacity. The distribution of print media in Tajikistan is largely ineffective, as deliveries are often delayed. In reality, the wealthier customers are given preference.

Print media outlets earn their money mainly through circulation and subscription, as well as via advertisement and international donor aid. State and local publications are funded by the Ministry of Culture and Press. The advertising industry is in the initial stages of development, and is not a major force in the media sector. On the other hand, advertising constitutes up to 90 percent of broadcasters' total income. This means many independent media are forced to raise money on their own. The advertising market is only starting to develop, and fledgling advertising agencies are taking an active part in it.

Much of the data regarding circulation and ratings are inaccurate. Furthermore, advertising and marketing research are poorly conducted. Some improvements have occurred, however. For example, Asia Plus radio is obtaining advertising orders from small businesses. For the most part, however, private media are funded by international donors and increasing advertising revenue. Many newspaper editors believe that subscription makes it a lot easier for their papers to survive.

Subscription to state-run media has become compulsory. Many newspapers survive based on these required subscriptions.

Private media are forced to be self-sufficient. They have to generate advertising and must also look to international organizations as sponsors for certain projects. Television advertising leaves much to be desired. Most ads appear unprofessional, and commercials are never updated. Stations can replay ads for years without any changes. As a result, stations have difficulty attract-

| Independent media are well-managed businesses, allowing editorial independence. | |
|---|---|
| Business Management Indicators | Media outlets and supporting firms operate as efficient, professional, and profit-generating businesses. |
| | Media receive revenue from a multitude of sources. |
| | Advertising agencies and related industries support an advertising market. |
| | Advertising revenue as a percentage of total revenue is in line with accepted standards at commercial outlets. |
| | Independent media do not receive government subsidies. |
| | Market research is used to formulate strategic plans, enhance advertising revenue, and tailor products to the needs and interests of audiences. |
| | Broadcast ratings and circulation figures are reliably and independently produced. |

ing new advertisers. Independent newspapers are not interested in subscriptions, because certain risks are involved.

Businesses associated with media, such as printers and distributors, operate inefficiently and unprofessionally. The resources of these companies are in short supply. To date, the Ministry of Culture claims that more than 225 periodicals have been registered. Although Sodom Mardum and Djumkuriyat are issued three to five times a week, other media, mainly private papers, are published only once a week. Therefore, it is very difficult to talk about the effectiveness and efficiency of media when information is out of date by the time the newspaper appears in print.

Small-scale digital printing plants are gradually emerging, and they are already starting to compete both in the quality and quantity of products. In the oblasts (regions), there are no large-scale modern printing plants, while the small-scale plants have a limited capacity. Materials necessary for publishing are bought with cash, so publishers are vulnerable to exchange-rate fluctuations.

Marketing research is rarely conducted, and ratings are not compiled at all. Newspapers or television stations occasionally try to determine ratings on their own, but the resulting data are often subjective. The research center Zerkalo (Mirror) attempted a ratings study for print media, but since this center lacks any competition, there is no way to compare the quality of its work. Zerkalo did at one point publish its ratings of local publications. However, these studies do not play a key role because they are not used to help determine possible readership. Overall, ratings and other data are not important, because the notion of supply and

demand is still nonexistent in the industry. The main concern for media is simply to issue the publication.

OBJECTIVE 5: SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS

Tajikistan Objective Score: 1.10/4.0—In Tajikistan, the professional associations that protect journalists' rights are not active enough and are not well established. Although there are no associations representing publishers and television and radio broadcasters, there are organizations that attempt to protect the interests of the media. For example, the Union of Journalists of the Republic of Tajikistan, and NGOs like 4-ya Vlast (The 4th Power), Armugon, and Social Partnership are all active in the media community. The association of journalists, NANSMIT, is also active. While the so-called Union of Journalists is nominally existent, it does not fulfill its mandate of supporting and protecting the interests of the media and protecting the rights of the journalists. The union is not considered to be a viable source of assistance for journalists.

The operational level of NGOs in Tajikistan is extremely low, and there is no established link between the NGOs and the media. The Foundation for Commemoration and Protection of Rights of the Journalists of Tajikistan is just getting started, but in general, supporting institutions are lacking.

Trade unions mostly represent the interests of private media owners. There are also international

| Supporting institutions function in the professional interests of independent media. | |
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| Supporting Institutions Indicators | Trade associations represent the interests of private media owners and provide member services. |
| | Professional associations work to protect journalists' rights. |
| | NGOs support free speech and independent media. |
| | Quality journalism degree programs that provide substantial practical experience exist. |
| | Short-term training and in-service training programs allow journalists to upgrade skills or acquire new skills. |
| | Sources of newsprint and printing facilities are private, apolitical, and unrestricted. |
| | Channels of media distribution (kiosks, transmitters, Internet) are private, apolitical, and unrestricted. |

organizations that conduct freedom-of-speech research, analyze media issues, and protect the interests of the journalists.

At present, the professional training of journalists at local institutions of higher learning is the weakest link in the nation.

There is no national association of publishers and radio and television broadcasters. In recent years, the rights of independent media have been protected only by NANSMIT, which also lobbies the government in support of journalists' interests. This association is experiencing significant growth. In Tajikistan, human-rights organizations such as the Foundation for Commemoration and Protection of Rights of the Journalists have been active since 1996. However, there are practically no NGOs that would support the media regarding freedom-of-speech issues.

All of the aforementioned NGOs conduct seminars and legal studies, and are not restricted in doing so. Training is mainly conducted by international organizations, and participants are largely journalists working for private media. Training of journalists working for electronic media is mainly conducted by Internews. But it is not enough. One needed change should be the qualitative improvement of instruction at the journalism departments of colleges and universities. Practical training is extremely important for beginning

journalism students, but it is not often available. Today there are no non-academic organizations that teach journalists a broad range of professional skills. Nor are there special institutes for advanced learning. Organizations such as IREX and ACCELS provide journalists an opportunity to go abroad and raise the level of their skills.

The level of professional training of Tajikistani journalists is low. Most of the young journalists are not independent. Job placement is difficult for many journalists, and many of the graduates of journalism departments do not seek employment as journalists. Similarly, most of the journalists working at various media do not have journalism degrees. Such journalists are in extreme need of training, but can only participate in that funded by international organizations. Furthermore, the same group of journalists participates in the training sessions, so a majority of "ordinary" journalists have limited access to training. Short-term courses and trainings are conducted by such international organizations as Soros, Internews, OSCE, and Counterpart Consortium, as well as by local NGOs such as the Foundation for Commemoration and Protection of Rights of the Journalists, NANSMIT, the AJT, and Chetviortaya Vlast (The Fourth Power).

At present, the professional training of journalists at local institutions of higher learning is the weakest link in the nation. There are simply no state-funded opportunities for study abroad. Media are able to employ journalism graduates, but the quality of their training is such that they do not stay with their employers for long. Young journalists are also deterred by low salaries. Many try to find other, more lucrative, positions outside of the media profession.

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