

Young reporters from South East Europe develop ideas for start-ups

KAS MEDIA PROGRAM SOUTH EAST EUROPE ORGANISES THE SEMINAR "ENTREPRENEURIAL JOURNALISM" FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MOLDOVA

More and more young journalists in South East Europe want to work independently from big media outlets. The advantage of this option is that freelance media professionals can often report more critically. At the same time, journalistic web content attracts attention and can be profitable if reporters have a good business model. Young professionals often do not possess enough know-how to develop successfully their own online projects. For this reason, the KAS Media Program South East Europe offers seminars on entrepreneurial journalism.

The workshop took place from 20th to 23rd February 2017 in Chişinău, Moldova. Marko Nedeljković from Belgrade University, Miloš Petrović, owner of the online agency MWEB and the web expert Veroljub Zmijanac had organised the innovative training together with KAS Media Program South East Europe for the first time in 2013. A product of this collaboration is the manual „[Entrepreneurial Journalism](#)“ in English and Serbian languages. This year the seminar took place outside Serbia for the first time. KAS welcomed 16 participants from Bulgaria, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania and Serbia.

At the beginning of the training **Christian Spahr**, Head of the KAS Media Program South East Europe, emphasised that the work of freelance journalists on the web can contribute to media diversity and thereby to democratic standards in South East Europe. He underlined that online projects can offer an attractive job perspective to young journalists. Especially in an environment

where various media outlets are under political pressure, freelance journalism is an option gaining importance. This is one of the reasons for the KAS Media Program South East Europe to educate young people in online journalism.

Interactive exercises with the participants

“Think about a new project as your potential main job,” said lead trainer **Marko Nedeljković** at the opening. He taught the participants how to prepare good web content. Nedeljković revealed the differences to print journalism with various practical examples. He explained what techniques are required in order to design multimedia content for the internet. A special attention was given to the usage of keywords and metadata, which are important factors for search engine rankings of online articles. For the workshop, the trainers have developed a website where participants could do interactive exercises. They analysed an online article in groups and later produced their own texts with multimedia elements.

Miloš Petrović presented aspects of the marketing and business development. He provided basic knowledge on branding of online platforms and development of business ideas. According to him, it is not enough to master the craft of journalism in order to have success. The entrepreneurial spirit has to be constantly kept alive: “Start with small steps. Firstly, do a detailed research.” He underlined that quality is more crucial for freelancers than quantity. If

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MANUELA ZLATEVA

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Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung
Media Program
South East Europe

19, Konrad Adenauer St.
1st floor, apt. 2
1504 Sofia
Bulgaria

Telephone
+359 2 942 49-71
Telefax
+359 2 942 49-79

E-Mail
media.europe@kas.de

Web
www.kas.de/medien-europa/en/

they produce good texts, these will be read not only once, but attract steady readership. It is possible to boost that effect with linking to other publications.

Veroljub Zmijanac clarified in the next part of the workshop how online platforms can be created technically. He introduced different stages of the process: from the definition of the objectives over the determination of the stakeholders up to the design of a website prototype with WordPress. Zmijanac gave individual advice to the participants about subscription models and user-friendliness.

Discussion about alternative media

During the workshop a discussion with Moldovan experts about the media situation in Moldova and alternative business models took place. The conversation was moderated by Christian Spahr, Head of KAS Media Program South East Europe. **Nadine Gogu**, Executive Director of the Independent Journalism Center (IJC), gave an overview on the media situation in the country. She explained that current obstacles for the media freedom are deficits in regulation and media law enforcement. She criticised the increasing number of fake news publications on the internet, in particular during the last presidential elections in Moldova. The issue with Russian propaganda activities in the country was also raised. **Alina Radu**, Director of Ziarul de Gardă daily, emphasised how important it is to prepare content in accordance to the target group. "We have to bring fresh ideas", commented Radu. Following the line of the discussion, **Dumitru Ciorici**, Managing Editor of Agora news portal, presented examples of alternative business models of independent online media. He gave insights, amongst others, into the financing and online strategy of his website.

Moldovan media expert **Liliana Vițu** joined the group to speak about the political situation in Moldova and obstacles for media freedom. She criticised that media content is often dictated by the people in power.

The young entrepreneurs presented their ideas for own online projects in four working groups. The first concept was dedicated to the topics of migration and EU security. A website with information for citizens and immigrants was drafted. It was intended to illustrate legal and socio-political aspects and offer practical advice. Potential financial sources would be EU grants and crowdfunding. The second project proposal was a news portal on economic topics in Moldova. A website with news, analyses and events suggestions was designed by the participants. The third group developed the idea of a networking website for investigative journalists. A fourth project dealt with tourism in Moldova. A website with journalistic articles on tourism was drafted, to be financed by advertisements.

The participants were highly motivated and underlined that the workshop was very useful for their future professional development. The KAS Media Program South East Europe plans further editions of the seminar "Entrepreneurial Journalism".

Collaboration: Dobrina Trifonova