



Technical Assistance for
Civil Society Organisations
Kosovo Office



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Better cooperation- mutual interest
Report on relations between Media and CSOs in Kosovo
Prishtina, May 2013

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Foreword

Technical Assistance for Civil Society (TACSO) project, office in Kosovo has prepared this report that examines the relations between media and civil society in Kosovo. This report is prepared based on the perceptions and outcomes from interviews and questionnaires responded by civil society organisations (CSOs) and media outlets in Kosovo. TACSO press clipping reports are also used to analyze the level of presence of CSOs in the media.

Considering that both sectors, media and civil society play an important role in supporting democratic processes in the country, with this report we tried to identify the cooperation links, contribute to strengthening both sectors and advancing communication and cooperation among them.

Protection and promotion of the rights of citizens, improving the quality of the work of public institutions and generally the life of citizens are objectives of civil society as well as media sector. Challenges listed by media and those by CSOs in reaching their objectives and advancing cooperation between these two sectors do not have at least one matching point.

This is a significant indicator, which shows that facilitating discussions among them should be the first step of any engagement toward improving relations among media and civil society. Therefore this report emphasises the necessity for better cooperation and coordination between both sectors.

TACSO Kosovo office thanks all civil society organisations and media outlets for their time and contribution to this report making it close to issues of relevance for both sectors.

We hope that you will find this report useful in your work.

Ardita Metaj-Dika
Resident Advisor
TACSO Kosovo Office
20 May 2013

Executive Summary

This report provides an analysis and evaluation of the relations between Civil Society Organizations (CSO) and media outlets.

Methods of analysis consist of surveys with civil society and media representatives, combined with individual interviews, where necessary, in order to provide a clearer picture of the matter through qualitative evaluation, as well. TACSO press clipping reports and analysis of three month monitoring on the quantitative and qualitative presence of the CSOs in Kosovar media is also part of this study.

Results of data analyzed through surveys show that the presence of CSOs in media is rather low - once in two months, being the trend of majority of the CSO representatives. Media representatives elaborate that civil society events are attractive when they provide quality information and innovative ways of transmitting their messages. CSOs argue that media are more interested in covering political developments and scandals. Media monitoring shows that media almost always cover reactions of CSOs after a certain political or economy development.

That's when a certain and very limited number of CSOs are more active through statements and grab the momentum. This explains a bit larger presence in media of CSOs that do not belong to the abovementioned low trend.

Surveys show that the most common case when CSOs approach media are when they organize press conferences or through press releases. If "pale" information is provided, or if the information is not related to the very actual issues, these forms of activities do not particularly grab media's attention.

Challenges listed by media and those by CSOs in advancing cooperation between these two sectors do not have at least one matching point. This is a significant indicator, which shows that facilitating discussions among them should be the first step of any engagement toward improving relations among media and civil society.

The overall findings of this study show that CSOs need to strengthen their efforts and their capacities when it comes to reaching the public.

Recommendations do not include only technical or financial support, which is obviously needed. The most important segment is raising awareness among the civil society itself about the importance of building tailored communication strategies and measuring their performance through tangible impact within the society, not only report publishing or flyer/poster printing.

The report below elaborates the qualitative and quantitative information gathered through surveys conducted with different civil society organisations, from all five regions of Kosovo and from small to the most prominent ones and media outlets – three national televisions, four daily newspapers and one national radio. It also includes data from analysis of monitoring the presence of the CSOs in four daily newspapers through a period of three months.

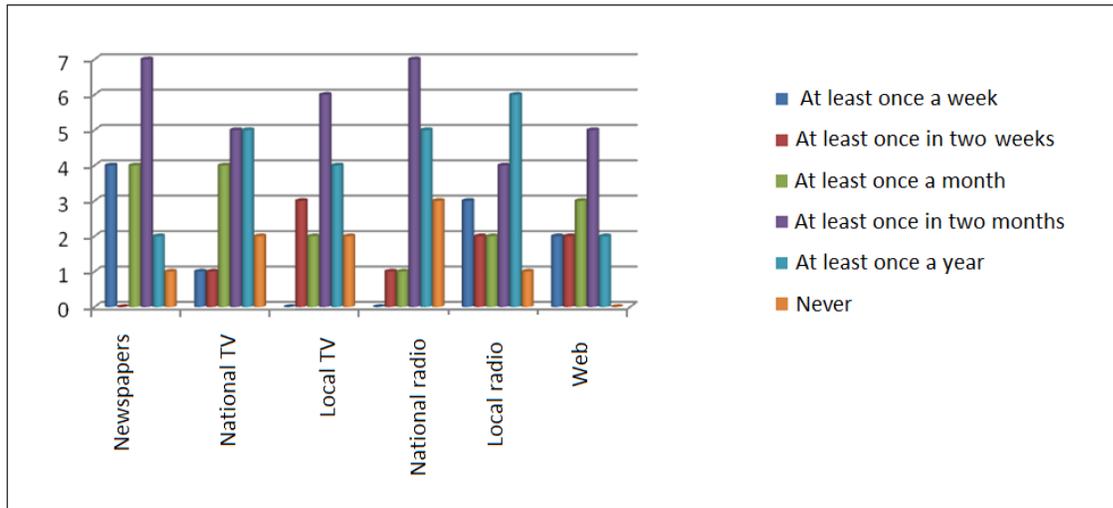
The general objective of this report is to identify gaps and needs in building better communication and cooperation between civil society organisations and media as well as to provide grounds for discussions between parties involved.

Presence of the civil society organizations in media

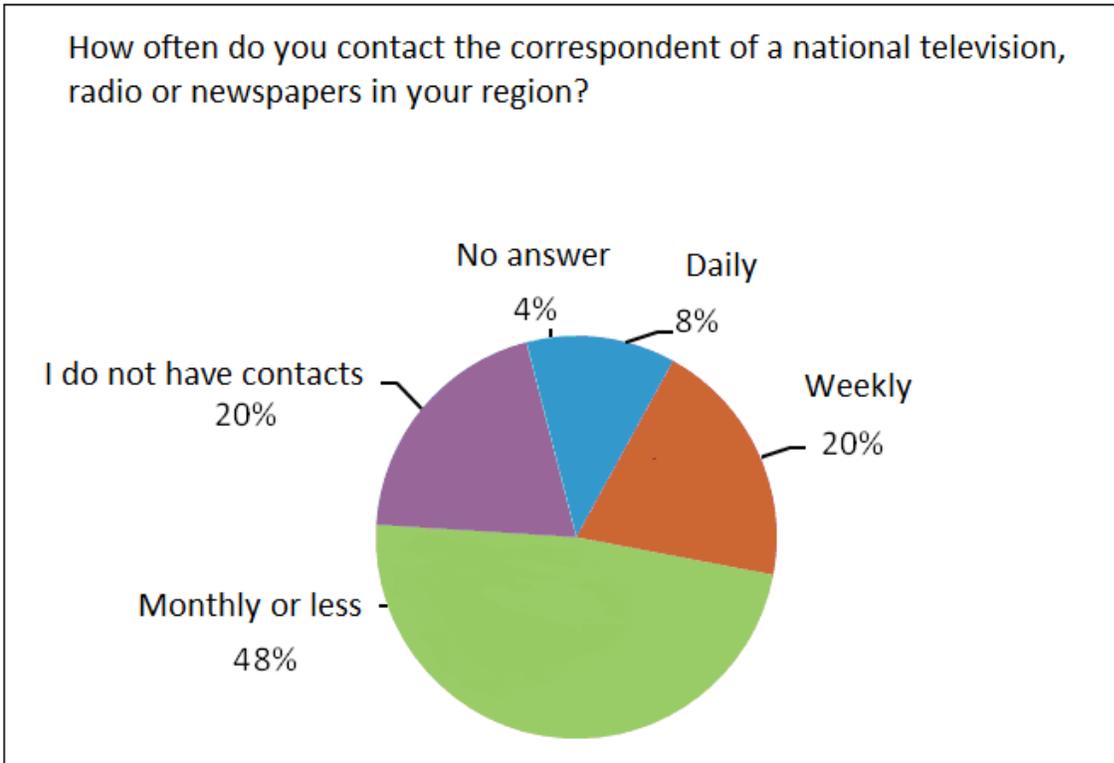
Civil Society Organizations in Kosovo need to strengthen their capacities and review their approach in reaching the public through media. This study, which is conducted with CSOs and media representatives, as well as media monitoring, shows that civil society presence in traditional media is rather low and not particularly qualitative, in the sense of information and approach. However, there is a rising trend among CSOs in establishing contacts with groups of interest through social media.

When asked about how often they are represented in media, vast majority of CSOs said that this happens at least once in two months. A number of CSOs however claimed a steady coverage of once a week in newspapers. These are mainly institutes or foundations based in Prishtina that are mostly engaged in policy studies and analysis.

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It is rather worrisome though the trend of a considerable number of CSOs that are present in media only once in a year or less than that. According to the answers from the field, reaching media is rather difficult for local and smaller CSOs. Organizations that function outside Prishtina have fewer contacts with national media, while their presence in local media is slightly higher. Results of the study show that 20 % of CSOs have no contacts at all with local correspondents of national televisions or newspapers, and almost half of them establishes contacts only once in a month or less than that, as shown below.



Respondents from civil society believe that national and more prominent media are not interested enough in their activities, especially of smaller CSOs, considering that journalists are more concentrated in covering political events and “bombastic news” or scandals. A small portion only categorized “real news” when asked what attracts media the most.

While listing reasons for media coverage of their activities, CSOs mentioned the importance of the events they organized; the need to pass the message; raise awareness of the society; reach objectives of the organization and being transparent.

Challenges in getting media attention for these reasons that they pointed out, according to CSO representatives, have to do mainly with media outlets, except two that relate to them: lack of PR staff and lack of contacts. CSOs argue that: media are not interested in their work; journalists are not specialized; civil society’s activities have to be real big in order to be covered; media are controlled by politics; and so on. However media representatives have an almost completely different perspective of approaching this issue.

How do media see it?

Media representatives however argue that CSOs lack innovative ideas in transmitting their messages and being attractive for media and public. They also discussed the issue of credibility of information provided by CSOs, as well as their challenges when it came to reaching “politicized media”.

According to editors of the media surveyed, invitations for press conferences and press releases are the most common way in which CSOs contact them. While journalists are rarely invited to cover concrete field engagements, or just for a catch up - informally for discussing new or background information.

“CSOs are content with representing in media their daily activities, press conferences or round tables. There is no initiative from their side to establish genuine information relations about their work or the situation within the field of their interest”, said an experienced editor, in one of the largest newspapers in Kosovo, when asked about how much do CSOs pay attention to building relations with media. Discussing civil society’s challenges in being present in media, the editor said that organizations should be more creative with their activities and try to organize them outside the city, in the field.

Head of information section in one of the national televisions in Kosovo also raised the question of innovative ways of serving information, especially in regard to visual media. “When activities are organized with a symbolic performance, they attract more attention”.

Editors that took part in the survey also discussed the issue of credibility of information that CSOs provide. All of them raised doubts that certain CSOs are influenced by different groups of interest - be they political parties or donors themselves.

“If we get convinced that reports they (CSOs) publish, especially those related to economy, are based on facts then we regard them as credible. We have lately noticed how civil society is divided on certain issues, which makes them seem more like lobbyists of certain interests than the interest of the public itself”, said an editor of an other newspaper in Kosova.

While another editor as well from the written media, when discussing CSO challenges said that they should work more on their reputation.

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“There is an opinion created among citizens that CSOs are being used as a springboard for jumping into politics or certain positions in the Government. Due to this, some activities are seen with doubts by the media as well”, she said.

While on the other hand, the influence of politics in some of the media was identified as a challenge for CSOs that are active mainly as government watchdog organizations or for citizen initiatives.

“One of the challenges that some CSOs face is politicization of media that purposely ignore their activities”, said the editor from the television.

The level of trust that citizens have in civil society varies depending on civil society sectors, with humanitarian and charitable organisations enjoying the highest level of trust among citizens and advocacy and democratization organisations at the bottom¹.

Counting the articles – which are the champions?

Although the number of CSOs registered in Kosovo reaches thousands, only 28 of them were mentioned in four of the newspapers monitored through the period of three months. Certain think tanks, unions or advocacy organizations were present the most, due to their up-to-date activities.

Data from the monitoring discover that media articles bring in responses on political developments in national level, which are always a hot topic in Kosovo; research reports mainly linked with elections, economy trends, performance of state officials, different unions or advocacy groups’ reactions on certain policies. There were no articles on initiatives outside the mainstream and no particularly innovative ways of CSOs in reaching the public could be noted.

Given the role of media in creating a public opinion for the work and role of civil society organizations a survey was conducted to find out the presence of the CSOs in the media. The results of the TACSO survey show the existence of a relatively positive climate especially within the daily print media² in Kosovo. On a quarterly basis CSOs were present with their work in a total of 92 press articles in daily newspaper “Koha Ditore”, 57 press articles in “Kosova Sot”, 53 articles in “Zëri” and 35 articles were published in “Express”. A relatively good attention was given provided that the majority of articles were published in the first 15

¹ Civil Society Index Analytical Country Report for Kosovo, march 2011,

² The daily newspapers “Koha Ditore”, “Zëri”, “Kosova Sot” and “Express” were part of the survey.

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pages of the newspapers. The articles mainly described the activities of NGOs and were written in a news format³. Urban CSOs were much more often represented in the media in comparison with grass root organizations. Civil Society organizations in Kosovo lack capacities to better attract the media and inform the public about their role and activities that are closely linked with the interests of the citizens.

The maximum presence within three months in one newspaper was 16 times, by the think tank INPO. The maximum coverage of civil society activities throughout this period was 92 articles published by the newspaper KOHA Ditore. Three other newspapers monitored published 58, 57 respectively 35 articles. As far as the presence of CSOs is concerned, majority of the 28 mentioned in this study appeared in newspapers once or twice in three months. Only two CSOs were present more than ten times (11 and 16), while one appeared 8 times, and four others five times. Their presence was measured in the newspaper that gave civil society most attention. So these are the best cases.

Better cooperation- mutual interest

A need for better cooperation was stressed by all media representatives involved in this study, considering the current rather poor. CSOs on the other side are more positive about it, although they identified joint trainings with media and partnerships as ways of enhancing their relationship. It is also the fact that both sides listed different challenges when asked to identify difficulties in cooperation that signifies the need for establishing media-CSO communication as a starting point toward building better relations.

The importance of it was stressed by the editor of another national television in Kosovo: “A serious engagement and commitment is needed in order to advance the cooperation between media and civil society, as they should see each other as allies in their work”. Same approach was expressed by the editor of a national radio: “Advanced relations are our mutual interest. CSOs reach the public through media, whereas media reach information through CSOs”.

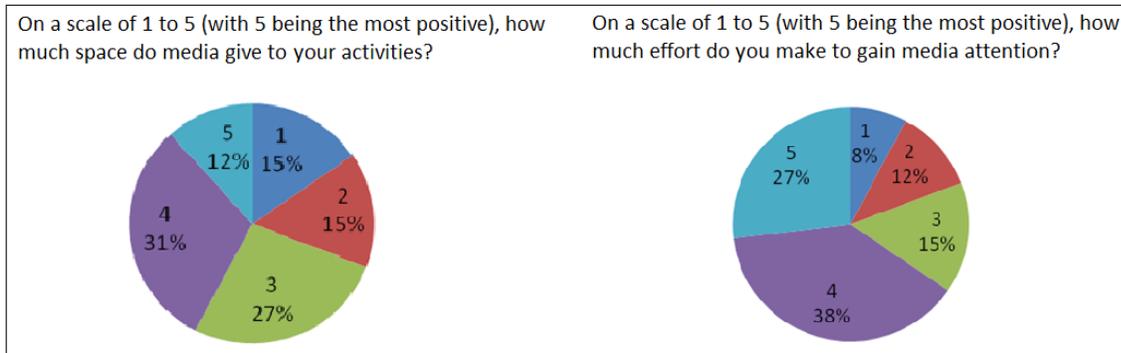
However, this study shows that the latter is currently not the case. Most of the media representatives said that it is only too rare when CSOs provide them with any exclusive information. While, media representatives were limited when asked to list names of CSOs that operate outside Prishtina, compared to those that function in the capital. CSOs based in

³ Examples: XX NGO published a report, or organised a conference.

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Prishtina that were more active in analyzing and assessing political and economy developments were most often mentioned.

On the other side, regardless of the complaints brought about when discussing challenges, majority of the CSOs were quite positive, when asked to evaluate overall space that media offers them as well as their engagement in grabbing media attention. See below:



However, CSO representatives listed several ideas when asked which forms of support would be helpful for them in improving their PR. Beside those that required directly “media promotion” and “continuous cover of their activities”, many organizations identified strengthening of capacities as key undertaking. Organizing trainings with media; creating partnerships between media and CSOs; organizing trainings on PR and communication; building capacities; raising awareness among donors on the importance of PR persons, were some of the needs that civil society identified.

CSO’s that were part of this survey operate nationally (42%), Peja (23%), Mitrovica (12%), Prishtina (11%), Prizren (8%) and Gjilan (4%). According to the number of staff, 35 % has up to 5 employees; 19% has 6 to 10; 38% has 11 to 20, and 8% has more than 21 employees. Period of time when CSOs were founded varies from 1990 to 2012. Most of them do not have a PR person (62%), mainly because of financial limitations. In these CSOs it is the project manager or the organization coordinator the person responsible for dealing with media.

Conclusions

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- The level of trust that citizens have in civil society varies depending on civil society sectors, with humanitarian and charitable organisations enjoying the highest level of trust among citizens and advocacy and democratization organisations at the bottom.
- According to the information gathered from both sides, the most evident need in developing cooperation between CSOs and media is establishing communication among them. Civil society is not aware of why they are not attractive for media and public.
- The challenges of civil society in reaching the public, listed by CSO representatives and by media representatives do not match.
- The main challenge in enhancing relations with the public is changing CSOs approach on communication of information, ideas and messages, and its importance. Therefore this objective does not involve only the need for technical and capacity assistance, but also a serious commitment and persistence from the side of CSOs, and availability from media.
- Advanced relations between civil society and media present a mutual interest. CSOs reach the public through media, whereas media reach information through CSOs.
- Civil Society organizations in Kosovo lack capacities to better attract the media and inform the public about their role and activities that are closely linked with the interests of the citizens.
- Civil Society Organizations in Kosovo need to strengthen their capacities and review their approach in reaching the public through media.

Recommendations

- Raise awareness among CSOs on the importance and ways of reaching public through media;
- Establish and maintain communication between Civil Society Organizations and media. It which would help better understanding and create a foundation for a productive interaction;
- Organize seminars in which experienced editors of the media will inform CSO staff how media function, and train them on how to serve information, be credible and attractive;
- Organize trainings with PR experts on developing innovative approach and lateral way of thinking;
- Organize trainings on developing and adopting communication strategies;
- Provide sources of information on Media and Public Relations.
- Create database of media contacts, especially correspondents in different municipalities.
- Organize events in which especially local and small CSOs will get the opportunity to meet them;

List of the respondents

Civil Society Organisations	Region
CivKos Platform	Prishtina-Kosovo
Democracy for Development D4D	Prishtina-Kosovo
Kosovo Center for International Cooperation	Gjilan
Humanitarian Law Center	Prishtina-Kosovo
SHE-RA (Association of Business Woman)	Gjakova
Syri i Visionit	Peja
Youth Center	Klina
NGO - 7 ARTE	Mitrovica
Academy for Training and Technical Assistance	Prizren
CIPOF – Childproof	Prishtina-Kosovo
Handikos	Prishtina-Kosovo
IADK (Initiative for Development of Agriculture)	Mitrovica
NGO Venera	Peja
IAEA (Education and Cultural Center)	Gjilan
NGO ZANA	Klina
NGO VISTA	Prishtina
RIINVEST Institute	Prishtina-Kosovo
Advocacy Training Resource Center	Prishtina-Kosovo
BSPK	Prishtina -Kosovo
Durmish Asllano	Prizren
ERA Group	Peja
Mother Theresa	Prishtina-Kosovo
DokuFest	Prizren

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Down Syndrome Kosova	Prishtina-Kosovo
IDE- Initiative for Ideas and Alternatives	Prishtina
Youth Initiative for Human Rights	Prishtina-Kosovo
IKS Institute	Prishtina-Kosovo
KRCT	Prishtina-Kosovo
Community Building Mitrovica	Mitrovica
Media	Region
Koha Ditore – Daily Newspaper	Kosovo
Zeri – Daily Newspaper	Kosovo
Kosova Sot – Daily Newspaper	Kosovo
Radio Television of Kosovo -RTK	Kosovo
Kohavision TV-KTV	Kosovo
Radio Dukagjini	Kosovo
Radio Television 21- RTV 21	Kosovo

Sample of Questionnaires for CSOs

1. Info about the respondent

- 1.1. Name and surname: _____
- 1.2. Organization: _____
- 1.3. Position: _____
- 1.4. Year the organization was established: _____
- 1.5. Sector: _____
- 1.6. Region: _____

2. Capacities and relations with media

- 2.1. How many employees does your organization have: _____
- 2.2. Do you have a PR person: **Yes** **No**
- 2.2.1. If not, why: _____
- 2.3. Who contact media and is in their disposal: _____
- 2.4. Who prepares the material for the media (invitations, statement, or other information material):

- 2.5. In which cases you contact media:

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never	N/A
Presentations/press conferences/ Press statements					
Field activities					
Informally, to provide them with the info related to our field of interest					
To maintain contacts with journalists/editors					

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2.6. In which cases are media interested:

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never	N/A
Presentations/press conferences/ Press statements					
Field activities					
Informally, to provide them with the info related to our field of interest					
To maintain contacts					

2.7. (For the CSOs that operate in the region) How often do you contact with the correspondents of national media in the region you operate?

- a. Daily
- b. Weekly
- c. Monthly
- No contacts

2.8. How often you are present in media: _____

2.9. On a scale from 1 to 5 (with five being the most positive), how much space do media give to your organization? _____

	At least once a week	At least once in two weeks	At least once a month	At least once in two months	At least once a year	Never
Newspapers						
National TV						
Local TV						
National radios						
Local radios						
Web						

2.10. On a scale from 1 to 5 (with five being the most positive) how much effort do you make to get media attention? _____

2.11. What do you think that media finds more attractive?

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2.12. Give three challenges that you face in relation to access to the media:

3. Relations with the public

3.1. How do you communicate with the public/citizens:

	Always	Mainly	Sometimes	Never
Through traditional media (newspapers, TV, radio)				
Through social networks (Facebook, Twitter, etc)				
Direct contacts with the groups of interest				
Other forms (campaigns, posters, performances...)				

3.2. Which is the reason why you are, respectively you are not, active as CSO in social networks:

3.3. How often do you update the webpage of the CSO?

- a. Every day
- b. Following a project/report.
- c. You do not remember the last time you updated it
- d. You do not have a webpage

2.5. Which are the forms of support that would be helpful for your organization to advance its relations with the media and public?

Sample of the questionnaire for Media:

1. Info about the respondent

1.1. Name and surname: _____

1.2. Media: _____

1.3. Position: _____

2. Civil Society Organizations in Kosovo (CSOs)

2.1. Name three sectors in which CSOs are more active:

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

2.2. On a scale from 1 to 5 (with five being the most positive) how do you evaluate the role of CSOs in:

	1	2	3	4	5
Supervise the performance of institutions					
Raising awareness on important issues					
Citizen inclusion in processes					
Initiating changes in specific sectors					

3. Relationship between media and CSOs

3.1. Name some of the CSOs that are more present in your media:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

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3.2. Name at least one regional CSO that is more present in your media:

- a. Prishtina: _____
- b. Mitrovica: _____
- c. Gjilan: _____
- d. Peja: _____
- e. Gjakova: _____
- f. Ferizaj: _____
- g. Prizren: _____

3.3. In which cases do CSOs contact your media the most:

	Regularly	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
You are invited in presentations/press conferences					
You are invited in specific field activities					
You are sent press statements					
Informally, they provide you with the info related to their field of interest					
Other forms:					

3.4. In which cases your media cooperates with CSOs?

	Regularly	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	NA
When you are invited in presentations/press conferences						
When you are invited in specific field activities						
When you are sent press statements						
You take part in activities without being invited						

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You ask from them statements on certain issues						
When you are contacted informally and provided with the info related to their field of interest						
Other forms:						

3.5. To what extent CSOs 'use' media to communicate with public?

- a. Maximum
- b. Much
- c. Moderately
- d. Little
- e. At all
- f. N/A, because _____

3.6. To what extent media 'use' CSOs to provide specific information?

- a. Maximum
- b. Much
- c. Moderately
- d. Little
- e. At all
- f. N/A, because _____

3.7. How often do CSOs provide you media with exclusive information?

- a. Regularly
- b. Often
- c. Sometimes
- d. Rarely
- e. Never

3.8. Elaborate on how much can CSOs be reliable and uninfluenced by donors, as a source of information?

3.9. When you publish an article on a certain CSOs activity, it is more important:

- a. The information itself
- b. The sector covered
- c. Other _____

4. Capacities

4.1. How much do CSOs pay attention to building relations with media:

4.2. Which are three challenges that CSOs face in relation to communicating with the public through the media:

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