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Media Literacy and Education needs of journalists and the public in Macedonia



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Author: Zoran Bojarovski

Research assistant: Slavco Milenkovski

Zoran Bojarovski is an Editor in Alfa TV and a researcher with years of journalistic experience behind him as well as a trainer in the area of media. Slavco Milenkovski is a Program Assistant in the Macedonian Institute for Media; he works on projects related to hate speech, interethnic integration, media research and production of multimedia contents.



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the European Commission. The Macedonian Institute for Media is one of the partners of the Project, together with the Albanian Media Institute, the Foundation for Development of the Media and the Civil Society - Mediacentar and the Media initiatives - Association for Development of the Media and Promotion of Professional Journalism, both from Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Institute for Media in Montenegro, the Foundation Center for Media and the Center for Media and Reforms in Nis, both from Serbia and the Center for Media Development from Bulgaria.

The research methodology was developed in cooperation with the partners of the Project and the researchers and appropriately applied in the research work carried out by the Macedonian Institute for Media. Beside the desk research, which encompassed an analysis of the legal framework and various publications and analyses in relation to the theme, in-depth interviews were conducted with 16 journalists/editors in the media in Macedonia, followed by interviews with civil servants in the sectors of the public administration that cover education and media, as well as with experts from civil society organizations that work with media and in the area of education, in the period of May and June 2016.

1. INTRODUCTION

The quality of journalism and media education in the Republic of Macedonia is one of the first questions being asked when seeking answers why the assessments of journalism in the

Republic of Macedonia, as well as for the professional standards in media, are at such a low level.¹

Macedonia is positioned on the 118th place out of 180 countries in the regular research by the Reporters Without Borders and it marks a fall of one place compared to 2014. The dilemma imposed is to which extent this situation is a result of the quality of education for journalists at the higher education institutions in the country.

The following question was how citizens perceive this situation and whether they have the possibility to recognize the bad media practices and the ways in which they can react to them. This, in turn, opens the topic for the level of media literacy among citizens.

Despite of the number of universities that offer graduate and postgraduate studies in journalism and communications, they have no significant effect in the media practice. Additionally, the number of students is decreasing. The main reason could be found in the general political and media context, which has resulted in derogation of the journalistic profession, thus influencing the decision to study journalism.²

The editors in chief and the managers in the media involved in this analysis raised an issue about the quality of skills of the graduated students in the media industry. The remarks mainly refer to the low level of practical skills and the low level of general education.³

These findings point out the attention to the theme media literacy as a missing chain in the comprehensive system for a media education, as well as the education of professionals and citizens.

Media literacy in the Republic of Macedonia has increasingly become a topic for a continuous discussion in 2009, when the Macedonian Institute for Media implemented the Project "Improving Media Literacy Education in Macedonia"⁴, while digital literacy was included in the strategy for development of education in a more systematic and structured manner with the project „E-Macedonia, Information Society Developed“ of the Ministry of Information Society and Administration in 2007.⁵

¹Reporters Without Borders, *2016 World press freedom index, Country Report – Macedonia*, 2016. Available at: <https://rsf.org/en/macedonia>.

²Sevrieva, M., „The number of students declines: Young people do not want to study journalism“, *Telegraf.mk*, Skopje, 16 January 2016. Available at: <http://www.telegraf.mk/ns-newsarticle-233484-opagja-brojoj-na-studenti-mladite-ne-sakaat-da-studiraat-novinarstvo.nspX>.

³ Interview with Branko Geroski, Journalist, Editor in Chief of the *Sloboden Pecat* daily, 19 May 2016. Interview with Muhamed Zekiri, Editor in *TV Senja*, 20 May 2016.

⁴ More about the Project „Improving Media Literacy Education in Macedonia“ implemented by Macedonian Institute for Media on the following link: <http://www.mediumskapismenost.edu.mk/mk/mediumska-pismenost>.

⁵ Ministry of Information Society and Administration, *E-Macedonia, Information Society Developed*, Skopje, 2007. Available at: http://www.mio.gov.mk/files/pdf/Broshura_MIO_design_FINALNO.pdf.

This state project coincided with two more initiatives of the civil society organizations. The Youth Education Forum implemented a project whose objective was to expand the network of youth centers throughout the country with an objective to immediately prepare young people to advocate for their rights. One of the components was the preparation and training for young people to communicate with the media and several trainings were implemented which were practically aimed at increasing media literacy among young activists⁶.

With one component of its activities, the Foundation NGO Infocenter made its contribution towards affirmation of the media literacy benefits, through a public presentation of the regular monitoring activities about the degree and quality of professional standards in the work of media and journalists.⁷

The fact that the efforts to introduce media literacy, as a topic in the society and in the educational programs, come from the civil society organizations speaks for itself. The civil society sector, through its activities and lobbying, remains loud advocate for the promotion of this topic.

As result of the lobbying, the media literacy was introduced in the legal framework. In the last and official version of the Law on Audio and Audio Visual Services, the media literacy is mentioned in four articles.⁸

The inauguration of media literacy as one of the objectives in the Law, as well as a set of activities, is under the competence of the regulatory body – the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services and the Public Service Broadcaster, the Macedonian Radio Television.

The role of journalists and media has been dramatically changed. Today they are considered guardians of democracy and advocates of public interest. Their role is to encourage the public to make decisions itself. Therefore, they have two important roles:

- To acquire appropriate education and skills in the super dynamic environment, in which rapid social changes are equally fast as the changes which are imposed by the technological progress, and
- To give their contribution in the promotion of media literacy and contents and in the production of contents that enable media literacy so that there is a public that

⁶Interview with Stefan Aleksic, Program Manager at Youth Education Forum, 12 May 2016.

⁷Interview with Violeta Gligorovska, media expert, former manager of the program for media in the Foundation Open Society Macedonia, 18 May 2016.

⁸ *Law on Audio and Audiovisual Services*, 2013, Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia No. 184. Available at: http://www.avmu.mk/images/Zakon_za_audio_i_audiovizuelni_mediumski_uslugi_mkd_1.pdf.

recognizes shades in the media contents and has a critical approach to social changes.

This study aims to determine the quality and use value of education of journalists and the degree of media literacy level of the audience and to identify the recommendations that will lead to better journalists and an emancipated audience.

2. FACTORS FOR SUPPORT OF MEDIA LITERACY

For the first time ever and in a more systematic manner in a state public institution, media literacy as an activity was included in the Strategy for Development of the Public Broadcasting Activity 2013 - 2017⁹ of the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services. It provides a brief overview of the context for the development of the media literacy in the Republic of Macedonia. The Strategy concluded that until that moment a most active actor in media literacy was the civil society, because most of the projects were implemented by civil society organizations, which also included the safe use of the Internet and social networks.

The legal framework, which encompasses the competencies of the institutions for organizing, implementation, monitoring and assessment of the project activities on media literacy, are set forth in the Law on Audio and Audiovisual Services of 2014. The Ministry for Information Society and Administration initiated, prepared and presented the Law to the public and to the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia.

According to the Law¹⁰, the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services has a duty to organize and implement the activities on media literacy and to support and monitor the activities that involve media literacy as a recommendation for the commercial media. The parties concerned and the experts greeted the institutionalization of the media literacy. However, they are still restrained because legislation is too general and the action plans are still not developed. "This concept is still not clear. The role of media and civil society is unclear. All

⁹ Broadcasting Council, *Strategy for Development of the Broadcasting Activity 2013-2017*, Skopje, 2012. Available at: <http://www.avmu.mk/images/stories/Predlog-Strategija-i-Akciski-plan.pdf>.

¹⁰ *The Law on Audio and Audiovisual Media Services*, 2013, Official Gazette of RM No. 184. Available at: http://www.avmu.mk/images/Zakon_za_audio_i_audiovizuelni_mediumski_uslugi_mkd_1.pdf.

of this should be explained by the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Services because the implementation of these provisions is under its competence".¹¹

Article 26 of the Law on Audio and Audiovisual Services, named as "Social inclusion and Media Literacy", obliges the Agency to conduct certain activities aimed at supporting media literacy in the Republic of Macedonia, which also implies that it should cooperate with non-governmental organizations, associations of citizens, educational institutions and other stakeholders, and to publish information about those activities on its web site, as well as to include them in the annual report for the previous year.

In accordance with the Law, the Agency started its activities one year after its adoption, in the first quarter of 2015. In this direction, a tender was announced for a research which should have identified the level of media literacy of two categories of citizens – children and adults. For this purpose, the EuroBalkan Institute was selected, as the only institution that applied to the tender. The implementer defined the sample of respondents to be involved in the survey, a questionnaire was made, but the third phase, the field survey, was not conducted.¹²

Since there was no reasonable justification for this act, the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Services terminated the contract with the implementer and the entire "operation" should be repeated again, Emilija Petreska – Kamenjarova, Head of the Department for Media Literacy and Human Rights in the Agency said. "We should now make the call again in the second half of 2016. This time we will go with the research aimed for the adults first"¹³.

Petreska – Kamenjarova says that the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services has in the meantime prepared a "Programme for stimulating of media literacy in the Republic of Macedonia"¹⁴, which „has an objective to provide guidelines for development and promotion of media literacy"¹⁵. This document „summarizes media literacy as an ability of citizens to effectively use, understand and consciously participate in all forms of communication, as well as in the democratic and the political process".¹⁶

In the strategic documents of the Ministry of Information Society and Administration, which offer an overview of implemented activities in the period 2012 – 2015, as well as a list of projects until 2018, media literacy is mentioned as an activity at only one place of the document "Strategic plan for the period 2016 - 2018"¹⁷. It is stated that „in 2015 it is expected

¹¹ Interview with Zaneta Trajkoska, Executive Director of the School of Journalism and Public Relations, 23 May 2016.

¹² At the moment this report was published, the second attempt for conducting the survey was ongoing.

¹³ Interview with Emilija Petreska Kamenjarova, Head of the Department for Media Literacy and Human Rights in the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services, 26 May 2016

¹⁴ Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services, *Programme for stimulating media literacy in the Republic of Macedonia*, Skopje, 2015. Available at: http://www.avmu.mk/images/Programa_za_mediumska_pismenost-1.pdf.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ministry of Information Society and Administration, *Strategic Plan for the period 2016 - 2018*, Skopje, 2014.

to continue with the results accomplished from 2014“, as it is a case with those on media literacy, even though the Ministry did not have any activities in this regard.¹⁸

In the strategic and other documents of the Ministry of Education and Science available at the web page, media literacy is not mentioned in any document. The document “Politics of quality of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Macedonia”¹⁹ is the only one that mentions “information literacy” as “one of the key competencies for increasing of the efficiency in the education system”.

The Bureau for Development of Education within the Ministry of Education and Science transforms the Ministry's policies into specific curricula for all levels of education and for all categories of students in the country. In the Bureau's documents available, information about whether media literacy is part of the plans for future teaching programs in the primary and secondary education is not available. Media culture, which in the programs of the Bureau is called a thematic unit that includes teaching units for the media, is currently included with 10 hours per year in the subject "Macedonian language and literature" from fifth to ninth grade in the nine-year primary education.

The topics related to the media, as non-compulsory, are included as a recommendation for inclusion in the elective course “Speaking and expression” in the secondary education. The teachers of “Macedonian language and literature” may or may not have to include topics related to media literacy in their activities within this course.

Marina Dimitrieva Georgievski, Advisor of Macedonian language in the Bureau for Development of Education, for the purposes of this analysis, informed us that so far there are no changes planned that would make a twist in the way in which the topics of media literacy in primary and secondary education are practiced.²⁰

On the other hand, Tamara Kjupeva, teacher in Macedonian language and literature in one of the gymnasiums in Skopje, says that media literacy should be included as a separate course at least in secondary education:

"I absolutely think it should be a compulsory subject. Just under the condition if restrictions are made on other courses that are being introduced year by year. Ideally and more easily is to make a final reorganization of the curriculum and insert it as a whole in the annual program"²¹.

¹⁸ Ibid, p. 15.

¹⁹ Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Macedonia, *Politics of Quality of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Macedonia*, Skopje, 2014. Available at: <http://mon.gov.mk/index.php/ministerstvo-meni/politika-kvalitet..>

²⁰ Interview with Marina Dimitrieva Georgievska, Advisor of Macedonian language in the Bureau for Development of Education, 19 May 2016.

²¹ Interview with Tamara Kjupeva, Professor of Macedonian language in the gymnasium “Orce Nikolov”, 13 May 2016.

Professor Kjupeva was one of the 1.100 teachers in primary and secondary education involved in the project “Improving media literacy education in Macedonia”²² that was implemented by the Macedonian Institute for Media, in partnership with the Bureau for Development of the Education, in the period from 2009 through 2011.

Out of the results from implementation of this Project, the partners²³ concluded that the activities of the Project were positively accepted by the target groups – teachers and students. It is obvious that the contents and the manner in which the training on media literacy was conducted had a real impact on the preparedness of the teaching staff and on the capacity building for implementation of the curricula in this area.²⁴

The information confirms the good cooperation with the Bureau for Development of Education, particularly regarding the quality control of project activities and their products in all stages, resulting in high support of the project among the teachers and students. The recommendations of the project were that media literacy should be included in the curriculum in the mother tongue. The arguments for this recommendation are that the students and teachers will receive a higher quality education in the field of media culture and will develop skills to analyze, evaluate, create and use media messages in various forms (from print to video via the Internet). In a broader context, these curricula will contribute to understanding the role of the media in the information society, improve critical awareness as well as the self-expression of citizens in the democracy.²⁵

Despite this comprehensive and successful pilot project, the curricula in media literacy i.e. media culture, were not accepted as obligatory, nor the number of hours on these topics was increased.

There was not a proposal at all from the Bureau for the Development of Education for inclusion of media literacy as a special subject in the curricula.

The last information obtained, thankfully to this research and from the interview conducted with the representative of the Bureau, Marina Dimitrieva Georgievska, partly related to the topic of media literacy, is that they prepare changes and amendments in the teaching methodology for all courses which is called a digital pedagogy, that includes work with Internet based tools and locations for teaching contents.²⁶

²² Macedonian Institute for Media, “Project: Improving media literacy education in Macedonia”, 2011-2013. Available at: <http://www.mediumskapismenost.edu.mk/mk/mediumska-pismenost>.

²³ The Project was implemented by several partners: The Macedonian Institute for Media, the Institute for Democracy Societas Civilis, the European Journalism Centre and the Bureau for the Development of Education.

²⁴ Information on the implementation of the Project „Improving Media Literacy Education in Macedonia“, Macedonian Institute for Media, the Institute for Democracy Societas Civilis, the European Journalism Centre and the Bureau for the Development of Education, Skopje, 2012.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Interview with Marina Dimitrieva Georgievska, Advisor of Macedonian Language in the Bureau for Development of the Education, 19 May 2016.

This activity of the Bureau for the Development of Education is possible thanks to the digital information infrastructure provided with the action "Computer for every student", which started with its implementation in 2007. This Project of the Ministry of Information Society and Administration provided 17.818 personal computers and 98.710 LCD monitors, with complete equipment for the primary and secondary schools in the Republic of Macedonia, with an objective to use them as tools for teaching and for access to educational digital contents on Internet. As part of this Project, training was conducted for the educational workers, in order to prepare them in the teaching process with e-tools²⁷.

3. JOURNALISM AND MEDIA EDUCATION

University education in journalism can be acquired at three state universities and one private-public institution. Those are the Studies in Journalism, Media and Communications at the Faculty of Law "Justinian I" at the University "St. Cyril and Methodius" in Skopje, then the Study program in journalism and public relations at the Law Faculty of the State University "Goce Delchev" in Stip, Studies in journalism and media at the State University in Tetovo and at the Faculty of languages, cultures and communication at the University of Southeast Europe.

In addition to these universities, there are master's programs in Media and Communications at the Institute for Sociological and Political Research (Study program of second cycle of studies in communications) and at the Institute of Communication Studies (Management of media and multimedia).

There are opinions that these studies should be separated into autonomous faculties and not remain as study programs. Kiril Barbareev, Vice-Principal at the University "Goce Delchev" in Stip shares such an opinion. "The study programs in journalism at the state universities should be independent faculties."

In terms of this aspect of the institutional education for journalists, the interlocutors involved in this research emphasize that this may be the solution which will enable changes in the curricula for journalism studies, which is now dominated by non-journalism courses due to the interdisciplinary model, which imposes a conglomerate of courses taken from other universities such as those of economy, law, political sciences and other communication disciplines.²⁸

According to the Executive Director of the School of Journalism and Public Relations, Zaneta Trajkoska, the state universities offer a „basic, static system or a curricula”. „It means a lot of law and economy courses. In the last several years, certain re-branding of the curricula occurred, some new subjects were introduced, but they do not reflect the contents that the students learn during the studies”²⁹, Trajkoska says.

²⁷ Ministry of Information Society and Administration, *E-Macedonia, Developed Information Society*, Skopje, 2007. Available at: http://www.mio.gov.mk/files/pdf/Broshura_MIO_design_FINALNO.pdf.

²⁸ See Table 2, as an Appendix to this research, with provides an overview of the courses by semesters of the study programs in journalism in the Republic of Macedonia

²⁹ Interview with Zaneta Trajkoska, Executive Director of the School of Journalism and Public Relations, 23 May 2016

This model of curricula in journalism brings another feature as well – much more theory, in comparison to practice and skills. According to Trajkoska *“even this theory is an old-fashioned one, to the extent that is totally depersonalized at some faculties because you can learn about everything except for journalism”*.³⁰

There are varying opinions. The Head of Studies in Journalism, Media and Communications at the Law Faculty “Justinijan I” at the University “St.Cyril and Methodius” in Skopje, Jasna Bacovska, has an opinion that the need of skills is overemphasized and the process of intellectualization is neglected, such as reading of theories, critical thinking, logic, methodology, sociological knowledge, analytical skills.

„The studies last only three years, with a possibility for additional two, which means that students graduate at the age of 21. This means that entire life is ahead of them to learn the craft skills“, Bacovska explains.³¹

On the other hand, an important factor in this story are the media. What journalists they can recruit from universities which educate such a personnel? Branko Geroski, an experienced journalist, editor and publisher does not have a positive opinion for this issue:

*„People that come in the newsrooms with diplomas from these universities come not just with a lack of practical knowledge that they should obtain with practices, through different programs, but they also come with a lack of basic information and basic knowledge in several areas which are key for the journalistic profession and craft.“*³²

Muhamed Zekiri, TV host and an Editor, shares almost identical opinion. He has gained his education at the Studies of International Communications at the Faculty of Languages, Cultures and Communication at the South East European University in Tetovo.

„During the studies I did not have any practice at all. You cannot see how the media work with only 15 days of practice in the year or you cannot learn anything practical. It is overloaded with theory and learning of other courses“, considers Zekiri.³³

Therefore, there is a need of a much better and essential connection of the education of journalists with the media industry. In that direction Zaneta Trajkoska stresses that *„it is exceptionally important that the journalistic courses are taught by people from the profession. Those should be people who both have an education and an experience. Not everyone can teach radio journalism if he/she hasn’t been a journalist or to have someone teaching about news and hasn’t written any news at all“*³⁴.

If we start from some causal connection, according to the theory, the quality of media education affects the quality of journalism. But in the case of the Republic of Macedonia there

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Interview with Jasna Bacovska, Head of Studies in Journalism, Media and Communications at the Law Faculty “Justinijan I” at the University “Ss. Cyril and Methodius” in Skopje, 25 May 2016.

³² Interview with Branko Geroski, Journalist, Editor in Chief of the *Sloboden Pecat daily*, 19 May 2016.

³³ Interview with Muhamed Zekiri, Editor in *TV Shenja*, 20 May 2016.

³⁴ Interview with Zaneta Trajkoska, Executive Director of the School of Journalism and Public Relations, 23 May 2016

are certain exceptions. According to the latest rankings of Reporters Without Borders, Macedonia is at the 118th place in terms of journalistic freedom.³⁵

The survey by Freedom House for 2015 ranked Macedonia in the group of non-free countries when it comes to the topic of media freedom.

*„Self-censorship among journalists is usual, mostly due to the pressure from media owners with particular business and political interests and, since recently, there is a concern from wiretapping. Journalists have low salaries and they face threats and harassment if they start with investigative or critical reporting“.*³⁶

The experts and heads of study programs in journalism think that this situation influences the declination of interest for enrollment at these faculties. The number of newly enrolled and graduated students declines from a year to year.

*„Less and less students have an interest to study journalism. For instance, in 1977 more than 200 students enrolled at journalism studies, while 40 years after only 20 students competed for enrollment at the studies in journalism. But these students i.e. journalists should be the core of the profession,“ Bacovska stresses.*³⁷

The Director of the School of Journalism and Public Relations Zaneta Trajkoska states additional reasons for this phenomenon:

*„We have a journalism which every year is ranked as worse and worse, we have journalism which is low paid, one of the lowest paid professions in Macedonia. Students see that very few journalists live well and those who live well are not journalists, but political mercenaries in the newsrooms who work for other goals. Therefore, we have this negative picture“.*³⁸

As a result of these phenomena, the School of Journalism has closed its undergraduate studies in journalism, although these studies have been rated over the years as the best ones and journalists graduating from there are the best ones in the industry.

Table 1: Number of enrolled and graduated students at the studies of journalism

Faculty	Title of studies	Enrolled students	Graduated students
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³⁵ Reporters Without Borders, *2016 World press freedom index, Country Report – Macedonia*, 2016. Available at: <https://rsf.org/en/macedonia>.

³⁶ Freedom House, *Freedom of the Press 2016, Country Report – Macedonia*, 2016. Available at: <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2016/macedonia>.

³⁷ Interview with Jasna Bacovska, Head of the Studies in Journalism, Media and Communications at the Faculty of Law “Justinijan I” at the University “Ss. Cyril and Methodius” in Skopje, 25 May 2016.

³⁸ Interview with Zaneta Trajkoska, Executive Director of the School of Journalism and Public Relations, 23 May 2016.

		School year			School year		
		2012 / 2013	2013/ 2014	2014/ 2015	2012/ 2013	2013/ 2014	2014/ 2015
University “Ss.Cyril and Methodius“ / Law Faculty – Justinijan I	Studies in Journalism	48	55	34	11	8	8
University „Goce Delcev“ Stip / Law Faculty	Studies in Journalism and Public Relations	15	30	30	/	/	/
University of South East Europe / Faculty of Languages, Cultures and Communication	International communication	39	48	40	28	19	27
State University Tetovo	Studies in Journalism and Media	54	99	122	7	8	11
School of Journalism and Public Relations	Studies in Journalism	10	15	/	4	9	13

Source: Data are provided from the web-page of the State Statistics Bureau (www.stat.gov.mk) and from the professional services of the educational institutions.

3.1. The role of information education and the journalistic associations and civil society organizations in media education

The Council of Media Ethics of Macedonia (CMEM) is in the phase of implementation of the project "Building trust in the media in South East Europe and Turkey"³⁹ supported by the European Union and UNESCO.

The CMEM, amongst other, works on preparation and presentation of case studies related to self-regulation, debate shows, simulation of the Press Complaint's Committee work to students and professors, meetings and cooperation with owners of media, editors and journalists, etc.

The Project is aimed at strengthening of freedom of expression, access to media, improvement of the mechanisms for media transparency, as well as for internal management of the media. The Project is focused on supporting media literacy among citizens and strengthening of the support to the media by the civil society, as well as supporting the demand for journalistic contents of high quality.

The Macedonian Institute for Media (MIM) is one of the oldest civil society organizations in the field of media education and media Literacy. MIM's portfolio contains hundreds of projects that provided the most appropriate support and access to most comprehensive knowledge for journalism and media sphere for journalists and media workers. Special attention was paid to the programs of the civil society organizations, institutions and all those that need to communicate with the media and with the public.

The Institute applies the concept of lifelong learning in the media education. All training programs are created in accordance to the latest world standards in journalism and communications with the public, and implemented through a series of learning practices.

MIM is a pioneer in the introduction of media literacy in Macedonia through the project "Improving media literacy education in Macedonia."⁴⁰ Taking into consideration the definition that media literacy is a skill for effective communication (sharing, reading or spreading) of information and knowledge through the media or from them, one of the objectives of the project was acceptance of media literacy as an integral part of the efficient social transformation and as a skill which helps in the engagement of the public and for the establishment of standards for public accountability and transparency.

The project was supposed to help children and young people to advance their knowledge on the role and function of the media in a democratic society. The focus was put on training to critically analyze and assess the media content and messages that come from different types of media - print, electronic media, internet, advertising, which would enable them to take part in the democratic processes in a more engaged way.

The concept of media literacy was promoted and implemented within the course of native language in all years of primary and secondary education in Macedonia, and for this purpose a training was conducted for about 1,100 teachers and professors from primary and secondary schools from Macedonia, who were supposed to be further involved in the topics of media literacy within the framework of the course in native language. A web-page was developed, which was intended to present and popularize the concept of media literacy among young generations in Macedonia⁴¹. A Manual for media literacy in Macedonian, Albanian, Serbian and

³⁹ The Project is supported by the EU and UNESCO. Available at: <http://semm.mk/novosti/2015-08-11-15-03-18/218-2016-03-24-13-00-00>.

⁴⁰ More information about the project on: <http://www.mediumskapismenost.edu.mk/mk/mediumska-pismenost>.

⁴¹ Website of the project: <http://www.mediumskapismenost.edu.mk/index.php>.

Turkish language was also produced, for professors of primary and secondary schools, as well as for media professionals.

As a follow up to this Project, the newspaper *Medium* has been published by high school students aimed for their peers. Beside as an Internet platform, the Project “Medium” also has a printed edition with the same title and there is a cooperation established with the *Nova Makedonija* daily. This is the only type of a cooperation among a media, civil society organization and high schools, which is assessed as an exceptionally positive and attractive for the high school students and their professors.

*“Our goal is to support journalism among high school students, because that thing is taught from early age. ‘Medium’ is rich with resources and advice for writing media news and other media contents. Here, at one place, you can learn about the basic rules for writing of reports or to express through photography, sound, images or all together, in multimedia. Our goal is to enable high school students to have journalistic skills, which are necessary in order to survive in the modern media jungle that that was brought by the new media”.*⁴²

As an independent, autonomous, non-governmental and non-partisan association, whose purpose is to be a promoter and protector of the professional standards and the freedom of expression, the Association of Journalists of Macedonia (AJM), occasionally conducts training for capacity building of journalists to achieve these objectives. The AJM’s activities so far include training on ethical and professional reporting, training on hate speech, fiscal transparency, coverage of elections and others.⁴³

Digital literacy and new media are in the focus of the Foundation Metamorphosis’s activities. The Foundation conducts numerous trainings for Internet, protection of privacy and freedom of expression on Internet, information – communication tools, e-society, web-journalism, social media and others.

The activities of this civil society organization overlap with the issues in education related to information – communication technology (ICT) defined in the “National short-term ICT Strategy 2016 - 2017”⁴⁴ of the Ministry of Information Society and Administration, such as lack of structured and organized student’s practice and practical working experience; imbalance between the required set of knowledge and skills by the ICT sector and the current curricula for education; lack of high schools with specialized ICT programs; or insufficient acknowledgement of the knowledge and skills acquired through experience (practice) and informal education.

Starting from 2013, “Metamorphosis” implements the single “*fact-checking*” project in Macedonia, “Media fact-checking service”.⁴⁵ This Project is aimed at enabling citizens of Macedonia to require a greater accountability by the media, as well as to help journalists in the

⁴² Website of *Medium*, Section: Why does *Medium* exist?. Available at: http://www.medium.edu.mk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=309&Itemid=114.

⁴³ Association of Journalists of Macedonia, Website Section: Projects, reports, analyses. Available at: http://znm.org.mk/?page_id=1357 and at http://znm.org.mk/?page_id=818.

⁴⁴ Ministry of Information Society and Administration, *National short-term ICT Strategy 2016-2017*, Skopje, 2015. Available at: http://mioa.gov.mk/files/dokumenti/Kratkorocna%20IKT%20Strategija_avgust2015.pdf.

⁴⁵ Foundation „Metamorphosis”, Media Fact-checking service. Available at: <http://proverkanafakti.mk/>.

implementation of their professional standards, by providing online – tools and resources for public education and public awareness raising. The intention of the online Media fact-checking service is to increase the demand for objective news and information based on facts and professional journalistic standards.

It should be emphasized that the “Media fact-checking service”, beside for the media professionals, is aimed for the citizens of the Republic of Macedonia. It makes it a unique project for media literacy aimed for this target group.

The Youth Educational Forum, a civil society organization which covers issues of young people and youth policies, focuses its activities on the perception of young people for their benefits from the media and a media for their media presence and profiling. In this direction, it especially works on projects for media literacy at individual level, but also at the level of youth organizations and their presence and profiling in the media.

The Forum’s activities include recognizing of hate speech in the media, youth education for media literacy, as well as work with young people as creators of media contents.⁴⁶

It should be emphasized that, beside these civil society organizations which have included media education and media literacy in their activities, there are a lot more organizations which work on training, research and other activities in these areas.

3.2. Professional development and a tracking system for journalistic careers

According to the Law on High Education in the Republic of Macedonia, each university or its unit, must have a career center that needs to keep separate records on former students (alumni) and organize fairs for the career at each college/university where a career center exists.⁴⁷

Career centers are also established to organize practical training for the students and for the preparation of expert staff to apply innovative techniques and technologies in the teaching process. These centers exist at all study programs of journalism.

The Executive Director of the School of journalism and public relations, Zaneta Trajkoska, says that on paper all of this sounds good, but there is no any essential benefit when it comes to the bigger universities as they are too bulky and have a huge number of students from different faculties and cannot simply achieve the objectives set.

⁴⁶ Youth Educational Forum, *National report for Macedonia from the research „Youth and media“*, Skopje, 2014.

Available at: <http://see youthmedia.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Youth-and-Media-Research-Macedonia.pdf>.

⁴⁷ Ministry of Education and Science, Law on High Education. Available at: http://www.mon.gov.mk/images/documents/zakoni/zakon_za_visoko_25-02-2016.pdf. Accessed on: 31 May 2016.

„Each faculty has to have its own Career center“⁴⁸, Trajkoska says, emphasizing that the Center in the School of Journalism and Public Relations has been a functional one just because of the optimal number of students whose needs can be precisely defined.

Jasna Bacovska has almost an identical opinion. She says that, as far as the journalists' academic education is concerned, there are clearly established schemes: undergraduate studies, postgraduate and doctoral studies. Unlike academic education, in relation to the formation of a professional career, a clearly established scheme does not exist, because there are no recognized and published requirements by specialized media professionals.⁴⁹

It brings us to the relationship between the media industry when the career and the development of the media workers is concerned.

Branko Geroski thinks that there is no defined and systematic cooperation between the media and the educational institutions for journalism. “The cooperation is almost always a result of a personal initiative and that is not a complete system in any case”, Geroski says.⁵⁰

3.3. Promotion of media literacy and journalistic education

The first conclusion of the theme of this chapter is that there is no systematic and continuous promotion of media literacy and education for journalists who should be an important factor in overcoming the negative perception of the journalist professionals and the work of the media.⁵¹

The biggest responsibility for promotion and constant affirmation of the media literacy belongs to the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Services, when these responsibilities became its competence in accordance with the law.⁵²

In the period when it worked on the development of the “Program for supporting of media literacy in the Republic of Macedonia”, the Agency of Audio and Audiovisual Media Services provided and promoted two short movies. They were broadcasted at the programmes of the national and local TV stations.

⁴⁸ Interview with Zaneta Trajkoska, Executive Director of the School of Journalism and Public Relations, 23 May 2016.

⁴⁹ Interview with Jasna Bacovska, Head of the Studies in Journalism, Media and Communications at the Faculty of Law “Justinijan I” at the University “Ss. Cyril and Methodius” in Skopje, 25 May 2016.

⁵⁰ Interview with Branko Geroski, journalist, Editor in Chief of the *Sloboden pecat* daily, 19 May 2016.

⁵¹ Freedom House, *Freedom of the Press 2016, Country Report – Macedonia*, 2016. Available at: <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2016/macedonia> and Reporters Without Borders, *World press freedom index 2016, Country Report – Macedonia*, 2016. Available at: <https://rsf.org/en/macedonia>.

⁵² Law on Audio and Audiovisual Media Services, 2013, Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia number 184. Available at: http://www.avmu.mk/images/Zakon_za_audio_i_audiovizuelni_mediumski_uslugi_mkd_1.pdf.

The objective of the first one, titled as “Where is Goran?”, was to focus the attention of parents to the fact that there is a software which can be used for efficient control over the Internet contents that can be accessed by their child.⁵³

The second one, titled as “Adventures through the media literacy”, was to focus the attention at the importance of media literacy.⁵⁴

However, the more organized activities in this area were delayed for two years since 2014, due to the unsuccessful tender for conducting of a survey which was supposed to identify the level of media literacy among citizens.

Partially continuous activities which include promotion of this topic are the already mentioned projects, such as the newspaper *Medium* of the School of Journalism and Public Relations, the competition for high school students “Express yourself through the media” or the Media fact-checking service, through their continuous reviews of the journalists’ products.

In the meantime, the promotion of media literacy is done occasionally, in cases when promoting specific projects for media literacy by the civil society and other organizations.

There is an opinion among media professionals and educators that these activities are not sufficient. Kristina Ozimec, young journalist – researcher, thinks that journalists and media activists should double the efforts and campaigns for introduction of media literacy as a regular course in primary and secondary education.

“We should struggle for this together with the teachers. We should make pressure in the Bureau of Education, so that they can start working on a plan and a strategy for inclusion of media literacy as a regular subject.”⁵⁵

Zaneta Trajkoska from the School of Journalism and Public Relations thinks that media should be more involved in the promotion of media literacy and to accept it as a concept and a tool for establishing of a serious link between them and their public.⁵⁶

4. CONCLUSION

It seems that the number of higher education institutions satisfies the need for the interest shown in studying journalism and media. Considering the fact that there are no precise data on

⁵³ Agency for Audio and Audio Visual Media Services, “Where is Goran?”, Skopje, 2014. Available at: <https://youtu.be/W1IUBsOlaa8>.

⁵⁴ Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services, “Adventure through the media literacy”, Skopje, 2014. Available at: <https://youtu.be/TdcUk-xgBX8>.

⁵⁵ Interview with Kristina Ozimec, journalist at the web-portal *Nova TV*, 19 May 2016.

⁵⁶ Interview with Zaneta Trajkoska, Executive Director of the School of Journalism and Public Relations, 23 May 2016.

the needs of the media industry about the number of jobs, and having in mind that journalistic education is not a crucial prerequisite for an entry into the journalistic profession, there are no indications that the market lacks potential media professionals.

On the other hand, again due to the insufficiently expressed specific demands for quality and for the specialization of the potential media professionals, there are no precise findings about the profiles which are lacking. The practice shows that the media solve this accidentally depending on their immediate needs.

From 2014 onwards, there is a trend of closing undergraduate studies in journalism, and the number of newly enrolled students decline. Until that year, these studies were included at 6 faculties, but today they exist at only four.⁵⁷

The quality of high education for media mostly suffers from a lot of media theory and little practice. Experts warn about the fact that the study programs are still dominated by non-journalistic courses and that the majority of professors do not have a practical journalistic *background*.

Hence the next conclusion follows, which refers to the necessity of a closer, more creative and more productive relationship of the educational institutions with the media industry.

On the other hand, the stage of the informal and additional media education is quite dynamic. Students and young journalists have a wide selection of training for specific skills and knowledge that can be acquired in a more dynamic and interactive way that makes them quite applicable.

In relation to media literacy, interviews and desk research for this analysis show that, contrary to the certain progress on this plan until 2009, there has been a regress in the last couple of years.

This makes the phenomena even more paradoxical if we take into consideration that exactly in this period the legal frameworks were adopted that enabled an institutional support for a wide acceptance of media literacy, but the conclusion is that the institutions responsible failed to succeed.

This segment is also compensated by the civil society organizations, which have media and journalism as their basic activity. The media activism in this area is dynamic and with a wide range of training for different target groups.

⁵⁷ Journalistic Education in South East Europe - Country Reports, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Media Program South East Europe, 2014. Available at: http://mediaobservatory.net/sites/default/files/kas_39583-1522-2-30.pdf Accessed on 09 June 2016.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

In the area of education:

1. The faculties with departments in journalism, media and communications shall initiate a debate on the need for effective reform of curricula for journalism, media and communications, which would be adapted to the specifics of the profession, and at the same time updated according to the global trends in high education.
2. Curricula in journalism, media and communications should integrate a high quality balance between theoretical and practical training of students, which besides practical classes will involve practical work in the media.
3. There is a need of sufficient number of highly professional teaching staff at the departments of Journalism, Media and Communications and particularly at the state universities. This shall also involve engagement of experienced practitioners in these areas.
4. The competent institutions shall provide sufficient financial and technical resources as well as facilities for studies in Journalism, Communications and Media (such as computer equipment, journalistic laboratories, etc.) for the implementation of high-quality studies in Journalism, Media and Communications.
5. To initiate an expert debate about the need of establishing a new Faculty in Journalism, Media and Communications within the state universities, instead of the current interdisciplinary studies.
6. The departments in Journalism, Media and Communications shall establish effective communication and cooperation with the media industry and with the media that produce high quality and ethical journalism, in order to provide practical training for all students in these departments.
7. Public Broadcasting Service – The Macedonian Radio and Television shall provide conditions for implementation of a practical work for the students of Journalism, Media and Communications.

In the area of media literacy:

1. The further promotion and implementation of media literacy in society requires a comprehensive and systematic approach that would include all stakeholders: Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Information Society and Administration, the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services, education officials of all levels, media and journalistic organizations and the self-regulatory body, civil society organizations working on the issue of media literacy, the public broadcaster - MRT and media/journalists, as well as citizens themselves.
2. The Ministry of Education and Science, in cooperation with the Bureau for Development of Education, shall consider the possibility of including the concept of media literacy in primary and secondary education when revising the curriculum.

3. If the initiative for including media literacy in the educational process is accepted, it is necessary to start an expert debate where the most appropriate model for integrating this concept in primary and secondary education will be analyzed, considering all available resources (whether within an existing course as a separate subject or as an integrated approach in the entire teaching process).
4. The Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services shall accelerate and enhance the processes aimed at organized and structured implementation of the activities related to the promotion of media literacy in Macedonia provided by the Law on Audio and Audiovisual Media Services and the Program for Promotion of Media Literacy in Macedonia.
5. The Macedonian Radio Television, as a public service serving the citizens, shall be involved in the promotion and advancement of media literacy through a production of special thematic programs for different age groups, as well as through campaigns of public interest.
6. Media organizations, self-regulatory bodies and other civil society organizations whose focus is media literacy shall be committed at developing projects and direct their activities towards a comprehensive promotion and affirmation of media literacy among experts, citizens of all age groups, marginalized groups, journalists and other segments of society.
7. Media, journalists and other media professionals shall advance their knowledge about the concept of media literacy through training and joint cooperation with other stakeholders in the area. The awareness of this target group shall be raised about the influence of media literacy on trust building among the public. Media and journalists shall perceive media literacy as a tool for communication with their audiences.
8. Strengthen the cooperation between civil society organizations and the media industry to organize specialized/tailored training based on previously identified needs of journalists, editors and media related to specific topics that civil society organizations work on.
9. The donor community shall be informed about the relevance and necessity of media literacy implementation and asked for support for the process of faster and intensive implementation of the institutional and non-institutional activities in the area.

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List of interviewees:

- Interview with Stefan Aleksic, Head of Programs in the Youth Educational Forum, 12 May 2016.
- Interview with Tamara Kjupeva, Professor of Macedonian language in the Gymnasium „Orce Nikolov“, 13 May 2016.
- Interview with Sefer Tahiri, Professor at the University of South East Europe – Tetovo, 16 May 2016.
- Interview with Selam Isejni, Head of the Studies in Journalism and Media at the Faculty of Law, State University in Tetovo, 18 May 2016.
- Interview with Violeta Gligorovska, Media expert, former Head of programs in the Foundation Open Society Macedonia, 18 May 2016.
- Interview with Tamara Resavska, Project Coordinator of the Programme for open educational resources in the Foundation “Metamorphosis”, 18 May 2016.
- Interview with Branko Geroski, Journalist, Editor in Chief of the *Sloboden pecat* daily, 19 May 2016.
- Interview with Marina Dimitrieva Gjorgievska, Advisor of Macedonian language in the Bureau for Development of Education, 19 May 2016.
- Interview with Kristina Ozimec, Journalist in the web portal *Nova TV*, 19 May 2016.
- Interview with Muhamed Zekiri, Editor in *TV Senja*, 20 May 2016.
- Interview with Zaneta Trajkoska, Executive Director at the School of Journalism and Public Relations, 23 May 2016.
- Interview with Karil Barbareev, Vice-principal at the University “Goce Delcev” in Stip, 23 May 2016.
- Interview with Emilija Petreska Kamenjarova, Head of the Department for Human Rights and Media Literacy in the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services, 26 May 2016.
- Interview with Jasna Bacovska, Head of the Studies in Journalism, Media and Communications at the Faculty of Law, “Justinijan I” at the University „Ss. Cyril and Methodius” in Skopje, 25 May 2016.

7. APPENDIXES:

Table 2

CURRICULA OF THE FACULTIES IN JOURNALISM IN THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA		
University “Ss. Cyril and Methodius” – Skopje	University „Goce Delcev“ Stip	University of South East Europe – Tetovo
Faculty of Law „Justinijan I“	Faculty of Law	Faculty of Languages, Cultures and Communication
Studies in Journalism, Media and Communications	Studies in Journalism and Public Relations	Studies in international communications
I SEMESTER Foreign language Introduction to low Macedonian language and journalistic styles Science of Communications Elective course	I SEMESTER Introduction to Journalism History of journalism Computer science II SEMESTER Basics of communication Journalistic ethics	I SEMESTER Introduction to communication sciences Introduction to international and intercultural communication Introduction to international relations Free elective course 1
II SEMESTER	Culture of communication	Elective course in English language

<p>Modern European and Macedonian History Economics Journalistic genres Elective course 1 Elective course 2</p> <p>III SEMESTER English language 3 Introduction to political science Theories of Journalism Basic institutes of public and private law Macedonian language 3</p> <p>IV SEMESTER Ethics in journalism Applied economy Rights and freedom of people in Macedonia Public opinion Intercultural communication and the media Political system</p> <p>V SEMESTER Reporting in journalism Journalistic informative genres Public relations Institutions and EU law Journalism in print and electronic media Editing in journalism – practicum</p> <p>VI SEMESTER Journalistic analytical genres Print and electronic media Technology and organization in media - practicum Freedom of expression Public administration</p> <p>ELECTIVE COURSES</p> <p>Connected elective course:</p> <p>Ethics in journalism</p> <p>Other elective courses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Investigative journalism - E-journalism - agency journalism 	<p>Sports and recreation</p> <p>III SEMESTER Public relations Macedonian language with culture of writing and expressing Information genres in journalism</p> <p>IV SEMESTER Public relations techniques Basics of protocol Journalism in print media</p> <p>V SEMESTER Journalism in electronic media Media and society Public and public opinion</p> <p>VI SEMESTER Investigative journalism Analytical genres in journalism</p> <p>VII SEMESTER Human resources International relations European institutions</p> <p>VIII SEMESTER Work on a thesis EU policies International organizations</p> <p>ELECTIVE COURSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project with EU funds - Public services - Media law - Right of safety - Human rights - Public administration - Philosophy of law - Labor law - Penology - Administrative disputes - Applied economy - Law on compensation of damages - Regulation of financial markets - Local self government - Rights to real estate - Diplomatic and consular law - Family law - Inheritance law - Basics of economy 	<p>Elective course in Albanian language /Macedonian language</p> <p>II SEMESTER Media studies Theory of communications Introduction to political sciences Free elective course 2 Elective course in Albanian/Macedonian</p> <p>Elective course in English</p> <p>III SEMESTER Communication methods of research Diplomacy Free elective course 3 Elective course 1 Elective course in English</p> <p>IV SEMESTER International communication systems Public relations: Principles and practices International organizations Elective course 2 Elective course I (English language for special purposes)</p> <p>V SEMESTER Political communication Media writing and reporting Globalization Elective course 3 Elective course 4</p> <p>VI SEMESTER Main project and professional practice Negotiations Communication and leadership Elective course 5 Elective course 6</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Media and rights of children - radio journalism - TV journalism - Print media -Peace and war journalism - Protection of personal data - editing in journalism – practicum - reporting in journalism – practicum - Graphics and design in journalism - Digital democracy - Intercultural communication - Political marketing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Civil society - The bar system of the Republic of Macedonia - Alternative resolution of conflicts - Nomotechnique - Communication of public administration 	
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