

Ratiu Forum Journalism Workshop

Written Project

Ratiu Forum 2020, a partnership between Ratiu Family Charitable Foundation, Ratiu Democracy Centre and LSE International Relations Department, Ideas Think Tank (ranked nr.1 university Think Tank globally)

Project Summary

The Ratiu Journalism Workshop is a two year program of quarterly workshops to be held between 2020 and 2022 in Turda, Transylvania at the Ratiu Democracy Centre. The workshops are based on a strategy devised by the LSE Ideas (International relations) department at the London School of Economics based on the analysis of a pilot workshop held in Turda in November 2019 and the requests of the 23 young journalists who attended. The workshop was led by John Lloyd, co-founder of The Reuters Institute for Journalism and contributing editor to the Financial Times. The Workshop program seeks to address especially regional concerns facing journalists in Romania. The role of the Ratiu Centre for Democracy is to oversee the implementation of the workshops and the necessary administration. In addition to the workshops the project will establish an Online Journalism / Media Hub to connect young Romanian Journalists together and with journalists abroad.

Justification for the Necessity of the Project

Civil Society in the Balkan region is in grave danger of being crushed. The populist rhetoric of Fake News blackens journalism and Freedom of Speech. Holding authorities accountable is becoming more and more difficult. The legitimacy of Journalism, in general, is being threatened on a global level. Young journalists in Romania are becoming fearful of approaching corruption stories with very little knowledge of how to protect themselves or outside sources to draw on for support.

From a Democratic Context

Some of the specific issues and challenges from a democratic context which affect the freedom of Romanian Journalists in reporting today are: a very much fledgling free press; a communist background in which press freedom was impossible; ongoing corruption in Romania; the lack of supportive unions or associations; the lack of practical skills at universities, the closed mindset of older generation teachers in journalism plus a lack of understanding of journalism in Western as opposed to Eastern European cultures - the latter often being based on personal opinions and on political bias.

Addressing the Issues

The Ratiu Forum is well placed to address the above issues.

The Ratiu family also has a deep and historical interest in the field of journalism. Both Ion and Indrei Ratiu worked and broadcast for the BBC. In 1956 Ion Ratiu founded the **Free Romanian Press** bi-monthly bulletin, published in London, followed by the monthly tabloid the **Free Romanian** or **Romanul Liber** from 1982 to 1996, distributed throughout the Romanian diaspora during his exile from 1940 to 1990. Upon his return to Romania, despite having his imported printing press smashed and home set alight in Bucharest, Ion Ratiu fought to defend his right to freedom of speech and launched the staunchly independent daily national newspaper **Cotidianul** in 1991 which is still available online but under different ownership.

In November 2019 together with LSE International Relations, Ideas Think Tank, we held a pilot workshop for 23 young journalists from around Romania. Working with journalists from the Balkan states and LSE professors we gathered information as to the needs and concerns of young journalists in Romania. The objective is to create a best practice program that can be replicated in other countries.

The Pilot Workshop

The overall purpose of the pilot workshop was to explore the current situation of Romanian journalism as compared to other central European states in 2019, by gathering data on the concerns and issues facing Romanian journalists today. It was from this workshop that LSE IDEAS were able to create a 2 year strategy in order to address the issues facing journalism in Romania and support Romanian journalists in achieving practical skills and realizing their potential. Specifically we learned: journalists would like to see their skills improved; have a better understanding of journalism in the West and spend more time with seasoned and respected journalists such as John Lloyd and to share their experiences. Investigative Journalism was a main point of interest. We received 31 applications from journalists around Romania and selected 27 out of the 31 based on their CV's. John Lloyd wanted a broad selection of special focus journalists, gender balanced (only 1/3 of the applications were submitted by women). The journalists were aged between 25 – 40 yrs., covering every aspect of journalism; we were open to minorities of which only Hungarian journalists applied and were accepted.

Topics covered:

The Power and the Story: how journalism treats the world
The Nature of Romanian Journalism
Journalism in Central Europe
Reporting the State of the World
Corruption in the Public Sector and the Trust in the Public Institutions
The Coverage of Corruption
Dark Spaces in Journalism

The Journalism Master Class took place in Turda, Transylvania at the Ratiu Democracy Centre on November 16 and 17, 2019, under the direction of Professor Christopher Coker, Vlad Zigarov and John Lloyd (who also acted as moderator).

Panelists included:

Alison Mutler, British journalist based in Bucharest formerly representing AP, now Universul.net

Kit Gillet, Bucharest based contributing journalist representing the Guardian and the NY Times

Ovidiu Vanghele, leading investigative journalist Bucharest

Jano Karpati, a leading journalist in Hungary

Wojciech Przybylski, a prominent journalist in Poland

Judge Cristi Danilet, activist confronting corruption and inefficiency in the judiciary

Requests from Journalists who attended November Master class for Future Workshops

- The use of interactive tools such as Apps and Projectors
- Practical Sessions
- Investigative Journalism
- More participants from Central and Eastern Europe and Experts
- Subjects on: Freedom of Circulation, EU Affairs, Migration, Romanian / Moldovan Relations
- As a young journalist interested to hear how seasoned experienced journalist deal with issues

Follow Up Workshop focused on Investigative Journalism

On April 24 - 26 a follow up workshop with a focus on Investigative Journalism will be held at CRD conference center. The workshop is under the direction of Investigative Journalist and Ratiu Journalism Award winner, Ovidiu Vanghele who will be assisted by Vlad Stoicescu who runs a hand on investigations office.

Sessions on Investigative journalism - "hands on", Ovidiu Vanghele workshop :

- Presentation of the investigative journalism framework diagram
- Discussion on the steps of the investigative journalism process
- Study cases of investigations and how they overlap on the steps in the diagram
- Practical exercises on different topics of investigative journalism

Strategy / Medium to Long Term

The Overall Strategy designed by Professor Christopher Coker and Journalist John Lloyd is to address the concerns of the journalists who attended the November 2019 Pilot Workshop through a series of quarterly workshops designed specifically to tackle the issues discussed over a period of two years. By creating the Journalism Hub we are connecting the young journalists to one another as well as to other seasoned journalists from surrounding countries in order to form a network which will strengthen ties and offer support.

Vision

Based on our history in the field of journalism and the expertise brought through the partnership with LSE our vision is to guide, stimulate, encourage and support the current and next generation of journalists in Romania, CEE and the Baltic region through the sharing of valuable information and by connecting them with the experience of seasoned journalists.

Objective

The Objective is to encourage and support this and the next generation of young Romanian Journalists in advancing their skills, opening their mindsets in order to professionally cover stories inside and outside Romania, and to work ethically in the field of journalism. They will benefit from the sharing of expertise from established and legitimate journalists from around Europe. The objective is also to create a Best Practice program that can also be replicated in other countries.

Expected Results and Key Deliverables

The project Deliverables for year one (2020) will be the delivery of the Online Journalism Hub whereby journalists can connect with one another to discuss cases or pending issues. Through having accessibility to seasoned journalists of Western Europe we expect to inspire more confidence and improvement in reporting skills. Through the workshops which are to be held in 2020 on **Investigative Journalism, Freedom of Expression and Romanian / Moldovan Relations** we anticipate a broader audience of journalists from across Romania and the nearby Balkan States, namely Moldova, Bulgaria, Serbia, Hungary, sharing for the first time their view points from working in other transitional countries. We expect to see an overall improvement in investigative journalism with journalists feeling connected (not isolated), supported and empowered.

Online Journalism Hub

The Ratiu Forum Hub for Journalists is an international information exchange offered to European journalists -in particular journalists from Romania and CEE countries. Journalists can find here a platform where local and international support may be sought and found as well as articles and topics of interest initiated by other journalists. The Forum Hub's aim is to connect, enabling journalists to draw from one another when in need of support or have issues to air and debate, and to provide an internet-based forum for the exchange of experiences, ideas, good practice and solutions.

We are targeting an audience of 75 journalists joining the Online Hub the first year with an expected steady growth of 5 journalists per month including the Balkan States in 2021. The connection to the region is important as it will give the journalists a view of the larger picture and opportunity for a wider perspective.

Key Activities 2020

Three workshops for a maximum of 35 young journalists (per workshop) in 2020 totaling an outreach of approximately 105 young journalists

Produce On-Line Journalists Hub reaching approximately 75 journalists

Access to international and regional reports and texts from workshops available on-line

Best Practice Program set in place 2021 in view of exporting to other Central and South Eastern Countries

KPIS

Feedback from the journalists attending the workshops and an increase in interest

Monitoring the online Platform /increased participants and showing of interest

Number of openings and growth shown interest of the website and online Platform

Number of views on face book

Number of views on twitter and instagram

Clear improvement in writing skills of journalists who have attended the workshops through monitoring their work

The Team

LSE IDEAS

Professor Christopher Coker
Dr. Emilia Knight
Vlad Zigarov Director of Ratiu Forum
Megan Palmer
Journalist John Lloyd

Ratiu Family Charitable Foundation

Nicolae Ratiu, Chairman
Pamela Ratiu, Director Ratiu Forum Romania
Dana Stoica, Communications
Nicoleta Bucur, IT

Ratiu Democracy Centre

Oana Marchis, Executive Director
Ramona Cosma, Accounting
Doinita Seruna, Accommodations/Transportation/Catering

Contacts

LSE IDEAS

Website: <http://www.lse.ac.uk/ideas>

Ratiu Family Charitable Foundation

Website: <https://ratiu.org/>

Nicolae Ratiu, Chairman

Mail: nicolae@ratiufamilyfoundation.com
Mobile: +447860823237

Pamela Ratiu, Director to Romania

Mail: pamela.ratiu@ratiudemocracycenter.org
Mobile: +40728989086

Financials

	Budget/ event	Budget 2020/ 3 events	Budget 2021/ 4 events
Publicity (brochures, stickers, facebook adds, gift bags)	820	2460	3280
Transportation (speakers and participants)	3000	9000	12000
Accommodation and food	3830	11490	15320
Photo & video	650	1950	2600
Administrative expenses	750	2250	3000
Total EURO	9050	27150	36200