

Digital Rights





? Digital Rights: Introduction

i Digital Rights are human rights applied in the digital sphere. They allow us to use the internet and digital technologies in a safe and self-determined way.

- Human rights apply online just as in the offline world. However, **digital technologies pose specific challenges** to the fulfilment of human rights.
- **Technological innovations**, such as artificial intelligence, are reshaping the digital space and change the way the public behaves.
- **Actors**, such as social media companies, create new challenges regarding transparency and accountability for content, data and users.
- In media development in particular, advocating for Digital Rights means defending and promoting the **right to information**, the **right to privacy**, and the **right to freedom of expression**.



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Our challenges



? What are our challenges?

- i** • **The restriction of Digital Rights** is a serious challenge for freedom of expression and the working conditions of journalists.
 - Many governments employ methods of **digital authoritarianism**. In some countries, people regularly experience internet shutdowns, extreme online surveillance, censorship and repressive internet laws.
 - **Social networks run by private corporations** dominate our online communications. Their decisions about algorithms, data policies, and content moderation are **not transparent** and might not adhere to human rights standards.
 - Media organizations, journalists and citizens often **lack awareness** about Digital Rights. **Journalists are most affected** by an absence of Digital Rights, as their work in the digital sphere is directly undermined.
 - The media sector and civil society, especially in the Global South, are **underrepresented** in the forums relevant for discussion and decision-making on matters of Digital Rights.



Examples



Access to information

In **Cameroon**, for example, internet shutdowns during an election left journalists without safe communication channels, as secure messaging apps were blocked. During those crucial times, journalists had to rely on analogue methods to deliver their reports — resulting in delays and a lack of information for the public.

Access to information is a Digital Right. Fighting for access to information means working with independent media organizations to challenge or circumvent internet shutdowns and government censorship.

Freedom of expression

In **Pakistan**, for example, restrictive internet laws have led to frequent censorship of social media content. National censorship laws have been adopted for the digital sphere, sparking self-censorship among journalists and citizens, especially women.

Freedom of expression is a Digital Right. Fighting for freedom of expression means empowering journalists and citizens to understand their rights, enabling them to challenge the status quo.

Right to privacy

In **Honduras**, for example, journalists have been banned from Facebook for using pseudonyms. Where data protection is lacking, however, pseudonyms are sometimes needed to research and communicate safely.

The right to privacy is a Digital Right. Fighting for the right to privacy means coaching journalists on how to work safely in the digital sphere.



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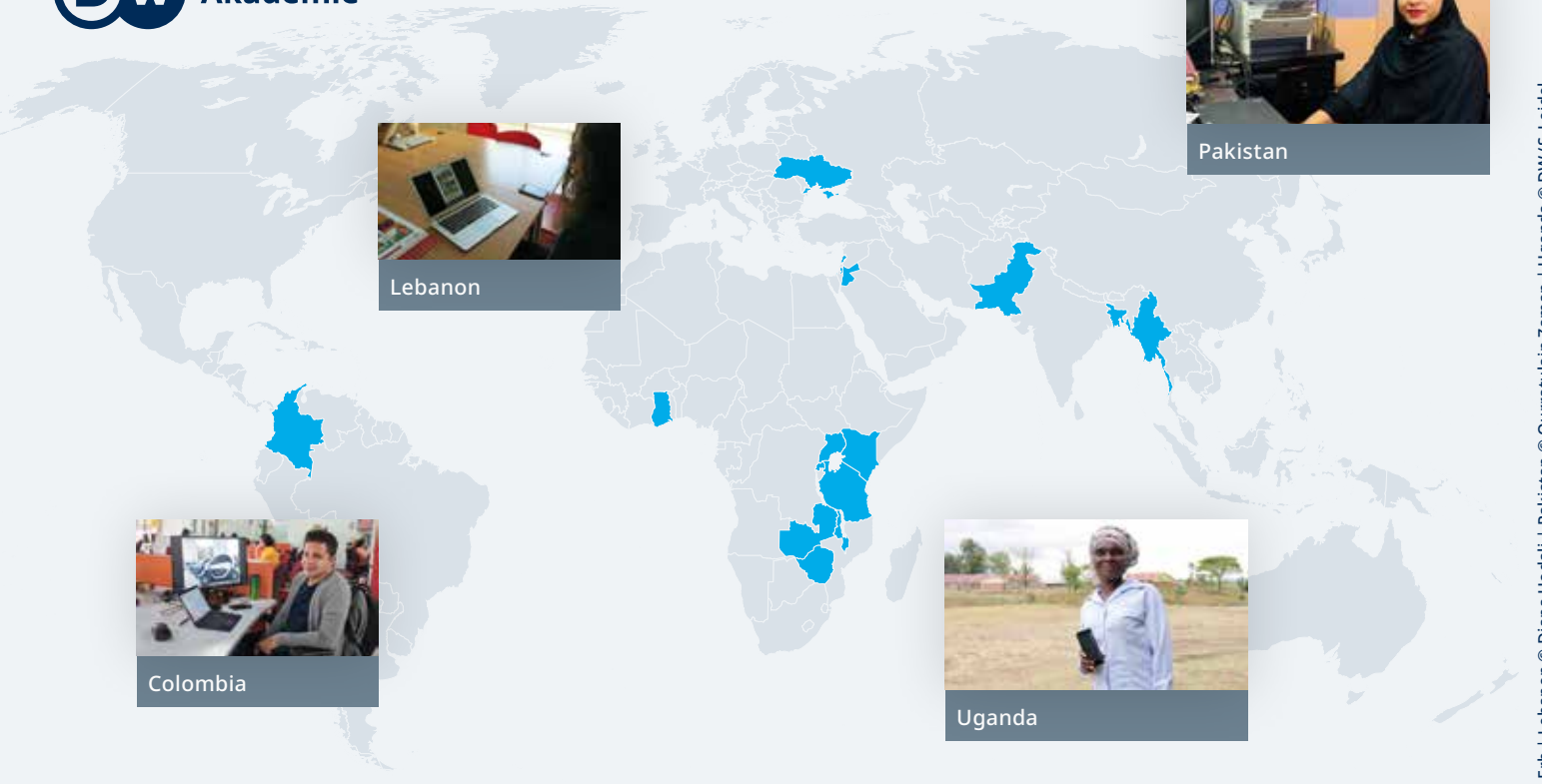


Our approach



? What is our approach?

- We work towards **building communities** of human rights defenders, journalists and media organizations that can shape the global conversation on Digital Rights.
- DW Akademie is the **connecting link** between the media development field and Digital Rights communities. We act as a **facilitator**, consultant, moderator and trainer.
- DW Akademie **raises awareness** about Digital Rights for media organizations, journalists and human rights defenders and enables them to **report** on and **advocate** for Digital Rights on a national and international level.
- Our **research** on the intersection of Digital Rights and media development serves as the basis for developing **new tools** that increase the visibility of media development actors.



Our projects



? What are our projects?

- i** • We are currently running Digital Rights projects in **more than a dozen countries** (Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Bangladesh, Jordan, Lebanon, Myanmar, Pakistan, Palestinian Territories, Ukraine, Colombia).
- In Southern Africa, we work together with MISA (Media Institute of Southern Africa) by supporting them to **defend internet freedom** and develop solutions for a free and pluralistic digital sphere.
- In East Africa, we support the Women@Web network by equipping women with the necessary **digital expertise and tools** to use the internet safely.
- In the MENA region, we **strengthen young people's awareness** about threats to their digital safety with peer-to-peer-training, campaigns and storytelling.
- We engage in research on Digital Rights through the #speakup barometer project. We regularly **report on Digital Rights issues** on our platform dw.com/mediadev



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Stories with an impact



? What's our impact?

i To demonstrate the impact we've had, let me tell you the story of **Nerima Wako-Ojiwa**.

Nerima is the executive director of Siasa Place, a Kenyan NGO supporting youth participation in politics. Together with DW Akademie's Women@Web project, Nerima wants to improve women's online experience in East Africa, which is heavily affected by cyber-harassment and safety threats that often end in impunity.

At first, Nerima was a participant herself in a Women@Web workshop. Meeting the other women there inspired her to complete a train-the-trainer coaching with DW Akademie and become a Women@Web trainer too. Together with other trainers, she has now reached out to more than 200 journalists, activists, and students in East Africa.

Among other issues, Women@Web focuses on techniques to help fight harassment online and improve digital safety. Nerima says: "Through the workshop with DW Akademie, we learned what strategies and tactics we can use to create good content, be confident, collaborate and form partnerships, and make more impact. But we also learned to understand the safety measures we should take in the process."

Now, Nerima and the other Women@Web multipliers want to grow their regional network of NGOs from Tanzania, Rwanda, Kenya, and Uganda. Together, they want to form a coalition that speaks up against cyber harassment at public events. They're aiming to be a strong voice that shapes the conversation in their countries and engages with policy makers to establish the right conditions to limit cyber harassment.



What's next?



? What comes next?

- DW Akademie aims to **integrate Digital Rights components** into existing internal strategies, concepts and projects.
- By actively **researching and reporting** on Digital Rights, we are sharing our own knowledge and capacities in order to put media development issues on the internet governance agenda.
- We amplify voices from the Global South by promoting **dialogue and community building** between individual experts and networks active in the field of Digital Rights.
- We want to continue enhancing the capacity of media actors and civil society to advocate for Digital Rights by providing them with the tools and skills to **run campaigns** on a national and international level.
- We aim to strengthen the **capacity of our partners** to be strong voices in national and international internet governance forums and to report on Digital Rights violations in their countries.



Get involved



? Find out more

- Have a look at our **#speakup barometer** project on digital participation
[dw.com/barometer](https://www.dw.com/barometer)
- Read our **Internet Governance guidebook**:
[dw.com/downloads/30373593/dwaguidebook-internet-governancefinal.pdf](https://www.dw.com/downloads/30373593/dwaguidebook-internet-governancefinal.pdf)
- Read articles on our platform **#mediadev**:
[dw.com/mediadev](https://www.dw.com/mediadev)
- Our **Digital Rights contacts**: Department of Policy and Concepts,
Team Digital Innovation and Knowledge Management:
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DW Akademie focuses on these topics and issues, which contribute to the current challenges for media development.

Access

- Global digital divide
- Access to devices
- Internet access
- Gender equality
- Net neutrality

Safety

- Encryption
- Data protection
- Surveillance
- Cyber crime



Governance

- Governing internet platforms
- Governing the internet
- Cyber security laws
- Open data

Internet platforms

- Misinformation
- Censorship
- Algorithms
- Hate speech

Digital Rights: Overview

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DW Akademie is Deutsche Welle's center for international media development. As a strategic partner of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), DW Akademie carries out media development projects that strengthen the human right to freedom of opinion and promote free access to information. DW Akademie also works on projects funded by the German Foreign Office and the European Union — in approximately 50 developing and emerging countries.



Made for minds.