

Media Viability





? What is Media Viability about?

- i • Media viability is the ability of media outlets and media landscapes **to produce high quality journalism** in a **sustainable** way.
- Media viability is crucial for citizens to have stable access to **reliable** information.
- It's not only about **media organizations**, but also about networks and the **overall environment**.
- It comprises much **more than money** and income sources:
Other aspects are also important, for example the legal framework, potential political restrictions, technological opportunities, network effects, or a suitable editorial strategy.
- The basic question is: how can media development contribute to **ensuring the viability of quality journalism?**



Media Viability challenges



? What are our challenges?

- There are **fundamental changes in media markets**: Digital transformation and new ways of media consumption are changing the conditions.
- Further changes include free-of-charge distribution of news journalism online, the quantity of information available, the shift of classified ads to the web, and the emergence **of powerful tech giants**.
- Also, economic and political **pressures on media outlets** are increasing.
- Media run the risk of becoming **dependent on governments and oligarchs**: through the purchase of media companies, ownership concentration, the strategic use of advertising or legal intimidation.
- However, there is still a **demand for quality journalism**. But advertising (the traditional business model) can finance quality journalism only to a limited extent.
- These developments require **adaptations of resource models**, new sets of **skills**, different strategic approaches, and a functioning media and information system.



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Our approach



? What's our approach?

- i** • We believe the **viability of quality media is central to freedom of expression.** Only under this condition can media report critically on government and economic issues, ensuring citizens' access to independent information.
- Our approach **includes:**
 - 1. Working with the media:** for example, how to access diverse resources, how to develop new strategies, how to design innovative formats and programs, or how to strengthen human resources, gain insights into the audience's needs and improve the reach.
 - 2. Network building and knowledge transfer:** for example, the formation of interest groups and the strengthening of alliances for program exchange or joint distribution of content.
 - 3. Working with civil society and governments:** for example through supporting better community media regulation, the creation of ethical guidelines, or activities that safeguard media pluralism.



Georgia



Lebanon



Namibia



Ecuador

Our projects



? What projects do we do?

- i** • DW Akademie works on Media Viability in more than 15 partner countries, especially Bangladesh, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Ecuador, Georgia, Ghana, Guatemala, Kenya, Lebanon, Myanmar, Namibia, Serbia, Tunisia, Uganda, Ukraine.
- There are, for example, projects aiming at the **qualification** of community media staff, at the **professionalization** of editorial managers, at the **training** of media consultants.
- Other projects provide advice on management, strategies, and/or fundraising.
- At the media sector level, DW Akademie supports **networking** and **information exchange** of media players, for example the community radio network CORAPE in Ecuador.
- We provide **consulting services** and in-depth **analysis** in various formats, like idea labs, discussion papers, dossiers on our website #mediadev, briefings, surveys, expert pools, or business cases.
- The Master's Program International Media Studies conducts **research**, for example on the "Viability of Alternative Online News Media Organizations in Developing and Transition Countries" with **case studies** from Ecuador, Uganda, Cambodia, Tunisia and Ukraine.



Stories that impact



? What's our impact?

i To show what impact we've had, let me tell you the story of **Dmitro Klimanov**.

Dmitro is the Director of Telegazeta, a regional newspaper from Luhansk region in Eastern Ukraine. In recent years, the region has been heavily affected by the violent conflict, leading to a difficult economic environment for media.

Dmitro's newspaper focuses on community needs and pays special attention to displaced persons and veterans of the armed conflict and their families. He also teaches and advises other newspapers. They all face the challenge to find economically viable ways to conduct journalism that serves the communities they care for.

Media Viability activities by the Ukrainian media E-School (UMES) have provided him with new skills for the development of media business strategies. He deepened his knowledge about how to promote and sell content, how to earn money in new ways, and how to establish more effective teams.

The online media school has been launched in 2015 by DW Akademie and Ukraine's Independent Association of Broadcasters. It offers comprehensive, advanced training for professional journalists and media managers.

Dmitro implemented the project he developed during his media management course at UMES.

Today, he says: "I consolidated 12 newspapers in Luhansk region. We expanded to the web and social networks using more multimedia materials. My company became more sustainable."



What's next?



? What comes next?

- There is a great need for **producing and sharing lessons learned** in dealing with the economic challenges of quality media.
- Market and user **analysis** and **audience research** are **essential**. Digital media open up radically new possibilities here. Media need to strengthen research efforts in their marketing departments.
- There is a **wide range of alternative resource** options to be learnt from. We are also interested in hearing about new ideas.
- Media development needs profound knowledge about the topic to identify the relevant approaches. The issue can often not be solved at the level of the media outlet alone. Media development should **look at the big picture**.



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Questions for our partners



? Questions for our partners

- i • Which **recent changes** in media and information systems do you think affect media viability the most?
- In your view, who is the **main driver** of economic pressure on media outlets?
- What **specific skills** are needed to thrive as a media outlet in today's information environment?
- What possibilities do you see for **improving the viability** of media outlets in your country/region?
- How can media development organizations **support** outlets regarding media viability?



Get involved



? Get further involved

- Read the **#mediadev** special page on Media Viability
[dw.com/en/s-32577](https://www.dw.com/en/s-32577)
- Read our research paper on Investigative Journalism and Media Viability
bit.ly/2uJTIdo
- Read our discussion paper on **Media Viability Indicators:**
[dw.com/a-37090035](https://www.dw.com/a-37090035)
- Our **Media Viability Contact:**
Department of Strategy and Consulting Services, Team Concepts and Methods



DW Akademie's Media Viability model centers around the **media users** having access to reliable, independent information. It widens the scope of traditional sustainability approaches and focuses on more than just the business models of individual media outlets.

3 levels: Organizations, networks and the overall environment (including markets, legal systems, politics and technological infrastructure) are the relevant levels for Media Viability.

5 dimensions: Media Viability is about finding a stable balance between the aspects of politics and economics, the community, technology and content.

Media Viability model



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