

MEDIA DEVELOPMENT

Evaluation Report

Executive summary Bangladesh

Management and Leadership: Analyzing project partners' capacities and collaboration with DW Akademie

Background

Journalists and media organizations in Bangladesh work in extremely difficult circumstances and face significant challenges in reporting freely and maintaining their economic viability. Even partner publications with high standards of journalism, such as the Daily Star and Channel I group, must practice self-censorship on sensitive stories. Survival is a constant struggle. At the same time, university journalism graduates often lack the skills, including digital skills, demanded by the media houses, succinctly characterized as a “huge gap between the classroom and the newsroom”. The sector’s low pay and status, and scarcity of jobs, motivates only a minority to seek employment there: few are likely to find a future in mainstream media houses. Nor are the university departments overtly positioned to become robust defenders of media freedoms. These are the realities confronting the project.

The overall goal of the project is to prepare young media professionals for a career in journalism, with a special emphasis on digitization. The key target groups are journalism students, university graduates, and journalism career starters. The main project partners involved are the media and

journalism departments of Chittagong and Rajshahi Universities, and the NGO Article 19, to build and host an eLearning platform. Cooperating partners are media outlets, the Daily Star, Radio Today and Channel I—a goal being to build links between them and the universities, including intern placements. New university partners are being explored, including Comilla University, which was supported in organizing a networking conference in January 2020.

The project pursues three lines of action:

1. Building on a new curriculum introduced by the first project cycle, to enhance the quality of teaching and content of departments, introducing practical and applied learning in a supported Media Lab, and modules in social media, mobile journalism and data journalism;
2. To strengthen cooperation between departments and media houses, including internships, Career Advice Centres and guest lectures;
3. To strengthen journalism more widely, including leveraging existing partners to spread good project practice to other centres and creating a freely available eLearning platform.

This evaluation covers the project’s second cycle of 2018 to 2020. It aims to gain insights into the management and leadership of the partners and DW Akademie team, and how they influence the project and its outcomes, based on a new DW Akademie methodology that refines the OECD/DAC criteria. The evaluation was carried out between October 2019 and March 2020. The work included a methodology workshop shared with other evaluations; extensive documentary analysis; production of an Inception Report; a kick-off workshop with the DW Akademie team in Bonn, followed by in-depth remote interviews; a six-day field visit between February 29 and March 5 that included key informal structured interviews and interactive group discussions, final remote verification interactions, and report writing.

Conclusions of the project evaluation

Overall Assessment:

The first cycle of this project set down strong foundations, particularly with the new department curriculum, in enhancing teaching quality, and developing career centers. Overall, the current cycle builds successfully on that, enhancing specific digital skills, introducing media labs, launching the internship program, initiating networking activities, and building the eLearning platform.

The DW Akademie’s team and management are highly respected and effective, and show leadership in dealing with challenges, securing new partners and addressing emerging possibilities. Areas of improvement might be in integrating partners more securely into the strategic level of project ownership—though here the onus lies also with partners, some of whom have not fully responded to efforts to bring them in. Partners engaging

in other ways with the media sector, such as NGOs and media houses, existing and potential, are particularly valuable in this regard because of their strategic sector positioning, including in exploring new directions.

The partners have, overall, at least reasonably effective management and leadership processes in place, with cohesive teams; better than the evaluator expected,

Below are overall conclusions regarding the evaluation criteria, averaging all three partner scores:

DAC Criterion (average of all assessments)	Numeric value, average	Assessment	Explanation
Relevance	3.5	Overall fulfilled	Most findings of the evaluation show that the criterion has been met.
Effectiveness	4.0	Overall fulfilled	Most findings of the evaluation show that the criterion has been met.
Efficiency	3.7	Overall fulfilled	Most findings of the evaluation show that the criterion has been met.
Impact	4.3	Comprehensively fulfilled	All findings of the evaluation show that the criterion has been met.
Sustainability	4.0	Overall fulfilled	Most findings of the evaluation show that the criterion has been met.

especially in the universities. There are weaknesses but none that prevent partner teams from implementing activities. Progress with the university Media Labs varies but a key conclusion is that the potential of Media Labs as a catalyst for change is huge, including to gain the most from the new curriculum (introduced in the project's first cycle and working its way through successive years) and in equipping students towards future media sector production activities and employment. Internal constraints at the university level may be hampering the Media Lab, but this is an opportunity for the partner teams to show leadership and to take responsibility in this area.

Media houses show ongoing willingness to engage with the project and its objectives, but believe that bridging the gap between them and departments must be a long-term aspiration. The eLearning platform was de-

veloped and launched rapidly and is already extending the project target groups, with the potential for intensifying this relationship with new media actors in the new cycle.





The transition between departments chairs — one of two special topics examined — was smoother than expected, though it is possible that strategic level ownership is lost in the handover. The second special topic examined whether financial administration is a major challenge for partners: this proved to be the case only for the one partner with a direct contract. Otherwise, no significant problems were noted.

DW Akademie

is Deutsche Welle's center for international media development, journalism training and knowledge transfer. Our projects strengthen the human right to freedom of expression and unhindered access to information. DW Akademie empowers people worldwide to make independent decisions based on reliable facts and constructive dialogue. DW Akademie is a strategic partner of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. We also receive funding from the Federal Foreign Office and the European Union and are active in approximately 50 developing countries and emerging economies.

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The objective of the external evaluation is to provide a constructive assessment of the project results. It does not necessarily align with the perspective and planning of DW Akademie. Nevertheless, all findings were discussed in order to allow lessons learned to be incorporated into the development of future strategies.