

MEDIA DEVELOPMENT

Evaluation Report

Executive summary **Ukraine**

Strengthening the watchdog role of media:
Professionalization of media management and expansion
of Media and Information Literacy in Ukraine

Background

Ukraine has a vibrant civil society and a relatively free and pluralistic media environment. Despite foreign disinformation operations, an armed conflict, and the partial occupation of its territory, Ukraine is striving to implement important reforms, including in the media sphere. In this context, it is important to improve the professionalization of the media and increase the level of media and information literacy.

The overall objectives of the BMZ-funded project implemented in 2017–2019 in Ukraine are:

1. Professional media outlets and journalists with specialized skills are informing Ukrainian citizens about relevant events in their country.
2. Citizens from Ukraine's southeastern regions are establishing new ways to participate in public discourse.

The project consists of five main strands of activities implemented in collaboration with four local partners:

1. Providing education on media management for managers and editors through the Ukrainian Media E-School (UMES). The UMES is implemented by the Independent Association of Broadcasters (IAB).
2. Increasing reporters' skills in economic journalism through the School of Economic Journalism (SEJ) with Ukrayinska Pravda.
3. Developing citizen journalism and local online media, especially in the southeastern regions of Ukraine, in partnership with the Center of Excellence for Citizen Journalism "Nakipelo."
4. Training MIL multipliers through the Academy of Ukrainian Press (AUP).
5. Building the sustainability of and cooperation between independent media outlets in Eastern Partnership countries. Several media managers from Georgia and Moldova study in the UMES.

Two independent evaluators conducted the evaluation study. The evaluators sought to determine whether the project had assisted in advancing the specialized skills of professional journalists and media outlets through support for the UMES and SEJ, as well as increased the quality of citizen journalism in southeastern Ukraine and the level of media literacy among the population through an educational program for MIL multipliers.

This evaluation study applied all five criteria of the OECD/DAC. Since DW Akademie is pursuing a strategy of digitalization, the evaluators also assessed digital aspects within the project. Additionally, in view of the complexity and sensitivity of the project's local context, the evaluators took into account context-specific considerations. A variety of methods, including a field trip to Ukraine, were employed to conduct the evaluation.

Conclusions of the project evaluation

Relevance: The evaluators established that the project meets the needs and requirements of the media environment in Ukraine. For the country, educational projects remain relevant, especially when they cover complex, specialized topics (like the economy or media management) or are intended for an audience with little or no previous access to media education (such as activists who became citizen journalists and MIL multipliers). The activities of the project comply with the internal organizational objectives of the partners. Therefore the criterion Relevance was rated as "comprehensively fulfilled".

Effectiveness: The project's objectives and activities correspond to the two main focuses of DW Akademie's international work – MIL and journalism training. At the time of the study, all activities and indicators were on track. With one year remaining, it is most likely that the project's outcomes and outputs will be fully achieved by the end of its implementation. The project is digitally advanced and new technologies are an important part of its design and activities. Thus, the criterion Effectiveness was rated as "comprehensively fulfilled".

Efficiency: The evaluators concluded that the program has been implemented efficiently. Local partners are strong, experienced, and committed. Their roles in the complex project are clear. Each partner contributed know-how and skills. Through precise planning and coordination by the project team and partner organizations, all activi-

ties are being implemented according to the work plan and in a timely manner. Therefore the criterion Efficiency was rated as “comprehensively fulfilled”.

Impact: The project had a positive impact on local partners and target groups. It produced an overall multiplier effect and led to the practical application of newly acquired skills. However, the evaluators could not adequately assess the impact of the MIL activities and how it actually influences critical thinking; there is no concrete proof of this to date. All partners stressed the importance of the DW Akademie methodology and its trainings of trainers, which are both making a longer-term impact. The major challenge for the project itself has been the size of Ukraine and the complexity of the problems that the project is addressing. The evaluators also found that the project made a strong, unintended, context-related impact regarding resilience to disinformation and the promotion of critical thinking. So the criterion Impact was rated as “overall fulfilled”.

Sustainability: The project’s four main activities are at different stages of implementation and fundraising. DW Akademie plans to continue supporting three project strands but will exit UMES in 2020. At the time of the evaluation, the local partner had not yet secured funding to continue with the UMES

after the current project ends but is already searching for other donors. All project partners are building networks and attempting to institutionalize knowledge sharing. Nevertheless, it is too early to draw conclusions on whether all the partners will be able to continue their project activities without further support. Therefore the criterion Sustainability was rated as “overall fulfilled”.

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.

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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.