

MEDIA DEVELOPMENT

# Evaluation Report

## Executive summary South Sudan

Media support in a crisis region: Protection of freedom of expression and conflict-sensitive information in South Sudan

## Background

Following a decadelong civil war and due to the violent conflicts that reignited in December 2013, the human rights situation in South Sudan is bleak. In recent years, thousands of people were killed; according to UNHCR more than 1.5 million South Sudanese have fled to nearby countries, an additional 2.1 million people have been internally displaced. Due to the conflict restrictions on freedom of expression have been increasingly tightened. Government troops and opposition groups act recklessly against media professionals and human rights activists: they are often threatened and intimidated, and, at times also murdered. The weakest groups of society that had already been marginalized by the conflict are particularly affected by the restrictions on freedom of expression, particularly people living in rural areas and women. The shutdown of radio stations and the lack of current news in many areas have cut most people off from almost all access to relevant information in their respective language. The poor economic situation poses a key challenge for the media in South Sudan; low qualification levels of media professionals further worsen the situation. Most journalists are poorly or not at all trained in their profession and, thus, do not have the capacity to fulfill their role as intermediaries in their society. In particular, they are not prepared to deal with conflicts, trauma or ethnically charged propaganda.

In light of the current security situation it is all the more important to underline that despite this difficult context, the international community will not give up its efforts to promote human rights and, particularly, access to publicly relevant information and a free media. The focus is on practice-oriented trainings and advisory services regarding human rights, conflict-sensitive journalism and trauma management for South Sudanese journalists. These measures contribute effectively to deescalating reporting and are also of great symbolic value. The project contributes to the communication between various population groups and contributes to promoting peace. The two action areas of the project are aligned to the strategic fields Professionalism and economic viability of the media sector as well as Political and judicial framework.

At the outcome level, the project pursues two objectives:

1. Civil society affected by the conflict - women and young adults in particular - have access to relevant and conflict-sensitively edited information.
2. Civil society organizations and media professionals are able to stand up for the protection and realization of freedom of expression and access to information.

Executing agencies include Citizen TV, Bakhita FM, South Sudan Radio & Television (SSRTV), Union of Journalists of South Sudan (UJOSS), Association for Media Development in South Sudan (AMDISS), Media Development Institute (MDI), Speak FM (Uganda) and Ata Nayeche FM (Kenia).

This external evaluation aims to constructively assess the impact achieved by DW Akademie projects after three years of the first

funding phase (funding period: 2015 – 2018) and to make recommendations that may be integrated into the design of future projects. The evaluation is based on the OECD/DAC criteria and uses a mix of quantitative and qualitative methodologies including the analysis of internal data and project documents as well as interviews with target groups, executing agencies and cooperation partners in Uganda. For the evaluation of the South Sudan project, additional telephone calls and Skype discussions were conducted and written questionnaires were prepared and evaluated, as a trip to South Sudan was not possible. For the DAC criteria a rating system with a 5-point scale is used: 1) comprehensively fulfilled, 2) generally fulfilled, 3) partially fulfilled, 4) minimally fulfilled and 5) not fulfilled at all.

In addition, for the first time in the Africa evaluations key questions were asked, which explicitly focus on digital aspects of the projects. In the combined evaluation South Sudan and Uganda all digital questions were considered: D1) Digital collaboration, D2) Digital relevance, D3) Digital security, D4) Human Centered Design, D5) Digital scaling, D6) Digital range and D7) Digital openness. For these digital questions, no assessment was required, but only a section in the report with an inventory and, if appropriate, recommendations.

## Conclusions of the project evaluation

The project has identified refugees, young adults, particularly women, and journalists as relevant target groups. The project's measures contribute to the provision of relevant information to the target groups and in the long-run promote peace, for example, through improved communication between the various population groups. Given the present situation it is highly relevant to increase the scope for a free press, strengthen the capacities of individual media professionals, facilitate the exchange of information and solidarity through cross-border networks, and to promote the peace process in the long-run. Since an implementation in South Sudan is no longer possible, the measures with exiled South Sudanese media professionals in Uganda and Kenya were expanded. The support for and the strengthening of cross-border networks, the ongoing efforts in the field of human rights and freedom of expression in secure neighbouring countries, and the continuous capacity development of individual actors are highly relevant. Overall, the criterion **relevance** is rated "comprehensively fulfilled".

In order to assess the DAC criterion effectiveness the results logic of the project was analyzed according to the present strategy and the results model including objective indicators. The conflict in South Sudan and the escalation of violence in 2016 forced the project to shift the majority of its activities to Uganda and Kenya. Due to the exceptional circumstances, the project's results logic and the results model are only of limited use for the assessment of the effectiveness and the achieved impact. Therefore, services provided as a result of the adaptations were also taken into account. This includes training of media professionals in South Sudan in the fields of trauma, conflict management and conflict-sensitive reporting. Exiled South Sudanese journalists in Uganda and Kenya were trained as mobile reporters and connected with local media companies in the host country. The information they provided is relevant for civil society affected by the conflict and refugees,

who form part of the audience in Kenya and/or Uganda. The setup and support of cross-border networks in South Sudan and Uganda bears a significant potential to fuel the information flow and exchange between media professionals from both countries. In summary, the criterion **effectiveness** is rated “generally fulfilled”.

The project makes efficient use of the funds provided. Measures are being effectively calculated; means of funding are being cost-efficiently utilized and transparently accounted for. Through the cooperation with other actors the project creates synergies. Overall, the criterion **efficiency** is rated “comprehensively fulfilled”.

In order to achieve any impact through media projects at all, given the specific implementation conditions, the project focuses on cooperating with citizen radio stations in Uganda and Kenya, establishing cross-border networks as well as developing the capacities of individual media professionals. Hence, the project contributes to the long-term creation of structures and the potential strengthening of organizations by providing support for partners promoting peace and human rights. Particularly the support for networks (Radio for Peace Network and Cross-Border Network) achieves positive short and medium-term impact by providing the target groups with relevant and conflict-sensitive information. The project contributes to developing a cross-border understanding and tolerance, facilitates the communication between various population groups, refugees, people remaining in their home countries and

hosting communities and, in the long-run, promotes peace. Informed people who know their rights may hold state authorities accountable and play their part as citizens in the long-term development process of their nation. In consideration of a long-term perspective, potential for the future is being created. In summary, the criterion **impact** is rated “generally fulfilled”.

An overall assessment of sustainability is difficult after only three years of operation and given the significant implementation and partner contact limitations that the project has been facing. Depending on the development of the political and security situation, there will be no comprehensive institutionalization of measures and financing concepts within relevant institutions. The continuity of activities through the relocation to safe neighbouring countries, the strengthening of organizations, structures and networks, and the creation of potential for future development currently has to be valued higher than sustainability. After the first three years of the project phase, ownership of various executing agencies and cooperation partners can be viewed very positively. Overall, the criterion **sustainability** is rated “partially fulfilled”.

The project actively pursues the process of donor harmonization and tries to create synergies. Diverse cooperation potentials and additional funding opportunities do exist and are being utilized by the project. Overall, the criterion **coherence, complementarity** and coordination is rated “comprehensively fulfilled”.





## DW Akademie

is Germany's leading organization for media development and Deutsche Welle's center of excellence for education and knowledge transfer.

As a strategic partner of Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development we strengthen the universal human rights of free expression, education, and access to information.

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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.*