

MEDIA DEVELOPMENT

Evaluation Report Executive Summary **IMS**

DW Akademie's Master's Program:
International Media Studies (IMS)



● Bonn

Background

The four-semester Master's program "International Media Studies" (IMS), which is run by DW Akademie, is a bilingual (English/German) full-time program in media and communication studies. The program combines different teaching content, from journalism and communication sciences to media development and media management. The Master's program IMS is conducted in cooperation with two partner universities, the University of Bonn and the Bonn-Rhine-Sieg University of Applied Sciences.

The project aims to produce graduates with a Master's degree in IMS as potential "change agents" in and for developing and emerging countries with specialist and/or management functions in media outlets,

as well as to provide graduates in non-governmental organizations or educational institutions with professional skills for leadership roles in order to strengthen the role of independent media in democratic and reform processes in their countries of origin. In DW Akademie's focus countries, digital change, freedom of expression and information are at the center of attention. IMS graduates from all over the world can contribute to supporting these processes with high-quality IMS training.

The evaluation is based on the BMZ-funded project proposal "International Journalist" (2018-2020). The subject of the evaluation is the degree program IMS, which has been supported by the BMZ since 2009.

The evaluation was carried out between November 2019 and April 2020 and is based on the OECD/DAC criteria. Methodologically, a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches is used. To operationalize the five DAC criteria, 30 key questions were formulated together with the project team. In order to answer these core questions, the evaluator carried out a comprehensive document analysis of all study-relevant materials, teaching and learning content, and workshop results. Subsequently, students, student representatives of the different cohorts, graduates from different world regions, employers of graduates, responsible persons of relevant partner organizations (universities and DAAD), professors and employees of DW Akademie were interviewed.

Conclusions of the project evaluation

The criterion **relevance** is assessed as "**comprehensively fulfilled**". For the Master's program, primarily or exclusively, applicants from DW Akademie's focus countries are considered. The Alumni Surveys 2018 and 2019 have shown that the knowledge, skills and competences acquired in the program meet the requirements of the job market for specialists and management staff in the graduates' home countries and are therefore relevant. The Master's degree often enabled IMS graduates to reach positions at higher hierarchical levels. There is a regular exchange with partner universities and a demand-oriented, selective exchange with partner organizations of DW Akademie in the focus countries in order to assess needs and incorporate innovations into the curriculum. The program imparts the latest state of the art in media theory and media practice as well as knowledge in the fields of media and development, journalism and digitization, communication science, media economics and media management, taking into account the increasing diversification process in developing and emerging countries. The specialist program is supplemented by participation

in extra-curricular qualification measures such as conferences, internships, summer schools and excursions. The regular exchange with the "Innovation Lab" of Deutsche Welle and the department "Innovations" enables current topics to be included in the curriculum. The didactic approach is characterized by the use of very different teaching methods to achieve the teaching goals. The subject area of digitization is explicitly and implicitly taken into account in all courses, according to the course directors and teachers. In addition, the teaching materials are digitally available via the portal of the Bonn-Rhine-Sieg University of Applied Sciences. Various processes are integrated to review and optimize the educational program. Furthermore, the curricular offerings of the IMS are coherent with the BMZ objectives.

The criterion of **effectiveness** is rated as "**overall fulfilled**". An evaluation of the individual indicators shows that the target values have been achieved. The focus of the training is sensibly set, since the Master's program dovetails the segments teaching, practice and research. The surveys yielded

mostly positive values with regard to the integration of teaching and learning content, as well as current research results on questions of digital media production and the management of digital transformation in journalism and the media sector. However, the students would like to see a further expansion of these digital learning opportunities. With regard to support for the international students, they are looked after by the IMS Student Secretariat and the "Study Buddy" program before their arrival in Germany, during the introductory program and during their studies. Informal networking between students as well as with alumni via the IMS network is used and is mostly considered helpful by the students.

The criterion **efficiency** is rated as "**overall fulfilled**". The ratio of three permanent employees for one study program is considered economic and represents the lower limit for re-accreditation. The current situation could mean that if one of the teaching staff were to be absent, teaching could not be carried out adequately in the short term. In contrast, support from the stakeholders involved functions smoothly.

On the one hand, these are the two partner universities, the University of Bonn and the Bonn-Rhine-Sieg University of Applied Sciences, whereas the latter is the legal sponsor of the program. Another important stakeholder is the DAAD, which supports the program by awarding 10 full scholarships for students from developing and transition countries in their second year of training. Synergies in the teaching and research profile with the partner universities are used and supplemented by cooperation with various local scientific institutions.

The criterion **impact** is assessed as “**overall fulfilled**”. A SWOT analysis carried out in the course of the evaluation process revealed a fundamental surplus of strengths over weaknesses and opportunities over risks. After the SWOT criteria have been assessed, an offensive strategy can be derived from this, which provides for an emphasis on strengths and opportunities. On the basis of a competition analysis, it was determined that there is no internationally comparable training offer in the field of media with this specific objective and target group orientation. This also means that the training program is very well positioned for the future. An analysis of the various modules and additional events has shown that the qualification profile of the program is up-to-date. The knowledge acquired provides a good foundation for future work in and management of media outlets. The very close relationship between IMS lecturers and students is unusual, but certainly a decisive factor in the high graduation rate (92% for the IMS degree).

The criterion of **sustainability** is rated as “**overall fulfilled**”. The further development and thus sustainability of the IMS Master’s program is to be further enhanced by intensifying its regional anchoring. While all four semesters have so far been conducted in Bonn, in the future one year of study will be held in Germany, and one year at partner universities in DW Akademie’s focus countries. The planned new orientation involves the establishment of institutional partnerships with local universities. Overall, the aspect of employability is given high priority in the program in the form of counselling interviews, reintegration seminars or international internships. In addition, the exchange and contact with various partner organizations in the media industry, the public sector and development cooperation organizations represent added value for the students.

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.

CONTACT

Dr. Laura Moore
Head Research and Evaluation
laura.moore@dw.com
Berlin, Germany



DWakademie



@dw_akademie



youtube.com/DWakademie



dw-akademie.com

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.