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MEDIA DEVELOPMENT

Evaluation Report
Executive summary Ghana

Quality of journalism and access to information:
Supporting higher education, community radios and
civil society initiatives in Ghana

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Background

The Ghanaian media landscape is characterized by a high level of media freedom and an intensive growth of private media (and a few community media) after the liberalization of the airwaves in 1992. Nevertheless, there are major challenges in media development according to our literature review and insights from interviews with stakeholders: As Ghana has large cross-media networks, only a few big media houses dominate the public sphere, and persons with political interests own a large portion of media. Additionally, the quality of reporting is perceived as low, which is due to factors like low capacity of working journalists in professionalism, and a very challenging economic environment for media, which hinders many to invest in journalistic quality. Financial sustainability and low level of professionalism were quoted by most stakeholders in our interviews when asked about the top priorities in media needs, jointly with lack of equipment, especially by smaller media houses.

DW Akademie's project works on three project lines. Despite these lines being conceptually interconnected by the overall objective, they only minimally overlap in operational terms.

Within its first project line, DW Akademie supports a network of community radio stations in building competencies in financial and managerial sustainability and in increasing the journalistic capacity of reporters in those radio stations, especially for moderating dialogue programs between citizens and authorities and in reporting local topics. Furthermore, the capacity of Accra-based radio stations with a nationwide coverage in reporting local stories is strengthened. Within the second project line, DW Akademie strengthens an alliance of civil society activists in advocating a Freedom of Information Law. Operationally, it mainly supports the practical implementation of better access to information within four pilot districts, even before a Right to Information Bill (which has been at various levels of legislative ascent since 2002) is passed into law. This second project line therefore works with local radio stations, civil society organizations and the local administration, i.e., the "District Assembly" (DA) which is the local arm of the central government. In its third project line, the project works on improving the level of higher education in journalism. It supports efforts at the Ghana Institute of Journalism (GIJ) and the National Film and Television Institute (NAFTI) to improve the quality of practical training within those institutions and to incorporate more elements that are practical (at GIJ) or incorporate them earlier within the curriculum (at NAFTI), and to introduce multimedia elements in order to adapt to new challenges in the digital age.

Methodologically, this evaluation followed the six standard evaluation criteria of DW Akademie, which were derived from the OECD/DAC criteria. 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: D1) Digital collaboration, D2) Digital relevance and D3) Digital security. For these digital questions, no assessment was required, but only a section in the report with an inventory and, if appropriate, recommendations.

The evaluation worked with desk research and semi-structured interviews with a large diversity of stakeholders, complemented by focus groups with listeners of radio stations.

Conclusions of the project evaluation

The main result of the evaluation is that the project consists of three very different project lines with different levels of achievements in the main evaluation criteria, i.e. relevance, effectiveness and impact. Therefore, the "overall" achievement is often "mixed", but it is worth exploring the project lines separately, as the learning in terms of "What works and why?" should start from there in our opinion.

In addition, the efficiency level of the project is low due to many operational difficulties with project partners that are not Ghanaspecific, but mainly due to requirements set by the central DW Akademie administration in Bonn. Those need to be overcome in order for DW Akademie to continue to work in Ghana with good partners.

Due to low relevance to supporting higher education and limited relevance to support mostly community radio stations, the criteria **relevance** has overall been rated "partially fulfilled".

Due to good achievements in project lines 1 and 2, but limited achievements in supporting higher education (project line 3) the criteria **effectiveness** has overall been rated "generally fulfilled".

Due to operational difficulties in handling all three project lines and in handling financial issues with project partners, the criteria **efficiency** has been rated "minimally fulfilled".

In project lines 1 and 2 impact was generally achieved, at least the potential for impact looks good. However, some project activities are not yet assessable with regard to impact (due to delays in activities, or measuring, not related to the project), the criteria **impact** was overall rated as "partially fulfilled".

Similar diversity in achievements was observed under sustainability. The criteria **sustainability** was overall rated as "generally fulfilled".

Coherence of activities with those of the Ghanaian government and other development partners was generally or even comprehensively achieved in project lines 1 and 2. For project line 3, it did not make sense to rate this criterion, so overall **coherence, complementarity and coordination** was assessed as "generally fulfilled".

Digital Questions: The project has already integrated digital tools in project management, works with digital devices in parts of the project (Penplusbytes) and the team has already compiled a first report on digital questions. Digital safety is known by few stakeholders as a challenge for media development. The project partner Penplusbytes has installed internally a system to ensure its safety.

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.