DW Akademie

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MEDIA DEVELOPMENT

Evaluation Report
Executive summary Burkina Faso

Empowering rural populations: Community radios
and conflict-sensitive reporting in Burkina Faso

Background

The landlocked country Burkina Faso is part of the Sahel region and one of the poorest countries in the world. According to the United Nations Human Development Index 2016, the country ranks 185 out of 188 countries. By contrast, Reporters without Borders considers Burkina Faso one of the top places in Sub-Saharan Africa in terms of media pluralism (ranked 42 out of 180 in 2017). However, insufficient equipment in the media sector and training and education deficits are major limiting factors, with the result that large parts of the rural population, in particular, have only limited access to their right to information on public affairs. In accordance with the socio-economic structure, radio is the most important information medium, even though the use of the Internet is steadily increasing.

Against this background, DW Akademie's media project in Burkina Faso (2015-2018) focuses on improving the quality of journalism and increasing the media offer in rural areas. Citizen journalists are supported in four community radios to develop participatory and gender-sensitive program formats (objective 3). Together with the journalistic network Réseau d'Initiatives de Journalistes (RIJ), the topic of 'conflict-sensitive journalism (CSJ)' is expanded. A regional component involves networking with colleagues in the neighbouring states Niger and Mali on cross-border issues (objective 2). At the macro level, the National Press Center (CNP-NZ) is assisted in conducting studies on the freedom of the press (objective 4). Finally, the Journalism Faculty of the University of Ouagadougou is advised on a more practice-oriented curriculum (objective 1). The evaluation focuses on objectives 2 and 3.

The objective of the present external evaluation is to constructively assess the project results after the first funding phase in order to incorporate learning experiences into the development of the next project proposal. The report is based on the OECD/DAC criteria and a mixed-methods approach is applied, including document and literature analysis as well as interviews with project managers, partners and local target groups. 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, D3) Digital security and D5) Digital scaling. 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

In Ouagadougou, three terrorist attacks against 'Western' targets have taken place over the last two years, shattering the self-understanding of the population as a tolerant and peace-loving country. As a result, the framework conditions have become aggravated in what was an already fragile situation during the project phase. Since the fight against migration causes has become increasingly important in German development cooperation over the same period, the relevance of the media project has increased even further. In order to avoid slipping into the league of fragile states, the stabilization of the situation in Burkina Faso therefore has a special urgency. The media project in Burkina Faso is also highly relevant for the DW Akademie. At present it is the only francophone long-term project in Sub-Saharan Africa, from where the regional approach could be expanded in the future. Hence the **relevance** criteria has been rated as "comprehensively fulfilled" for the BMZ, the DW Akademie, the state of Burkina Faso and the project partners.

An evaluation of the internal monitoring system of DW Akademie WebMo shows that at the beginning of 2018 a number of the activities planned have already been realized and most of the others can be reached by the end of the year according to the country manager. Due to the high degree of achievement of project objectives 2, 3 and 4, the **effectiveness** of the project has been rated as "comprehensively fulfilled".

The activities were cost-effective and proportionate, as the objectives could be achieved with a relatively small budget per partner and a lean project team. Working with a dedicated local project coordinator is considered by the Burkina team to be the optimal solution after three years of project experience. The same applies to the decision to engage in training measures in rural areas. The progress achieved in the partner community radios is remarkable, and train the trainer-courses on CSJ and Mobile Reporting are investments in local capacity building. Communication processes and project documentation within the Burkina team in Bonn are considered exemplary as well. For problems occurring with the financial administration a

solution-oriented approach is followed. As a result, the **efficiency** of the project has been rated as "comprehensively fulfilled".

The evaluation has shown that impacts can be achieved for the target groups via community radios, if the project succeeds to professionally set up the stations' management. On the program side, participative access to the listener clubs leads to increased participation in the public discourse at the village level. For a needs-oriented adaptation of the program formats, the conducted audience studies have proven to be very effective.

The topics CSJ and Mobile Reporting have only been implemented with the RIJ since 2016, supplemented by train the trainer-courses for the best participants. Trainings and material production form the basis for further dissemination of both topics in the next project phase to increase the quality of reporting. For the regional component, the greatest potential for transnational networking is seen in the completely revised internet-based exchange platform "Pax-Sahel".

Overall, first positive impacts of the measures were visible for all project partners and their target groups, and potential for strengthening and broadening the effects

was identified. Therefore, the criterion im-pact is rated as "generally fulfilled".

The selected community radios are sustainably strengthened by combining a professionalization of the management side with training measures on the operational side, outside the studio and involving the listeners. The link to the village communities and, thus, the sustainable anchoring of the community radios are the listener clubs. These are facilitated by the editorial team and local correspondents or, for interested villages who do not have listener clubs yet, supported in their founding. Sustainable structures are also strengthened with the focus on project partners who share DW Akademie's understanding of sustainable cooperation. Since the project concept is consistently designed to build sustainable structures, the **sustainability** of the project has been rated as "comprehensively fulfilled".

Possibilities of complementarity with the two major German development programs of GIZ and EIRENE were sought from the beginning and included in the project concept. In the project implementation phase, synergy effects could unfold. Therefore, the **coordination and cooperation** with other stakeholders has been rated as "comprehensively fulfilled".

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

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Contact
Dr. Jan Lublinski
Head Research and Evaluation
jan.lublinski@dw.com
53113 Bonn
Germany

 facebook.com/DWAkademie

 twitter@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.