

EVALUATION REPORT

Executive summary

Ukraine and Moldova

Improving journalism education and advancing
Media and Information Literacy in Ukraine and Moldova

Background

In both Ukraine and Moldova, the most important source of information is television, a medium dominated by oligarchs, who influence the available content as means of protecting their own economic and political interests. As a result, citizens have great difficulty accessing balanced and reliable information. The region also suffers from a lack of qualified journalists. In Moldova, local offshoots of Russian online media outlets and social networks increasingly transmit exclusively Russian propaganda; only about 16% of Moldovans have access to independent news outlets. For children and young people, social media has become the most important source of information. However, as fake news and manipulated reporting are on the rise, children and young people lack the literacy to deal responsibly with online media.

The project builds on previous achievements supported by DW Akademie and

aims to further improve the quality of (youth) journalism development programs and the promotion of Media and Information Literacy (MIL) in the educational systems of Ukraine and Moldova, supported by a wide range of civil society organizations, media outlets and educational institutions. Funded by the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) from January 2020 to December 2022, the project follows two specific objectives: one, to provide journalists in Ukraine with access to structurally reformed and practice-oriented journalistic qualification programs; and two, to support regionally networked MIL change agents in enabling children and young people in Ukraine and Moldova to use media responsibly and critically.

This evaluation aims to review the progress made in terms of the project's impact on the region, the fulfillment of its expected outcomes and outputs through

the planned activities, as well as develop tailored recommendations to guide and inform future programming around media development and MIL in Ukraine, Moldova and the Eastern Partnership region. The evaluation is guided by the OECD/DAC criteria and uses a mixed method design. It includes primary and secondary data collected through a desk review, remote semi-structured individual interviews and focus group discussions tailored to the background and role of the respondents. The sampling included 75 individuals representing DW Akademie's project teams, including program directors in both countries, implementing partners, beneficiaries and target groups (students, youth, teachers, multipliers) as well as other stakeholders. The evaluation did not encounter any significant methodological limitations.

Project evaluation results

Relevance: The evaluation concluded that the project is highly relevant to the national contexts of Ukraine and Moldova. It is in line with the aims of the project partners in both countries and addresses the key developmental problems of the target groups and was designed in close consultation with the key stakeholders. An analysis of the intervention logic and the links between the expected results, activities and inputs shows that the project design was appropriate and set up realistic targets and approaches in line with the operational environment. The human rights-based approach is central to the design as the project targets "right holders" (journalists, children, youth, media outlets, project partners), who were trained on media literacy and supported in media production, but also the "duty bearers" (universities and schoolteachers) who were supported and equipped with MIL materials. The pandemic restrictions generated certain justified project design adjustments and influenced the daily operations of the project, but without changing the logic of the intervention and the initial targets and chain of results. In summary, the project

has "comprehensively fulfilled" the criteria for relevance.

Coherence: The project activities complement and support the existing efforts of the partner organizations, for the most part coordinating with their other activities in the media development and MIL arena. The internal coherence of the project is thus strong. In terms of the external coherence, cross-sectoral cooperation and networking between the media development and MIL actors in both countries, improvements were made, and mostly positive perspectives were expressed, as confirmed by the respondents consulted during the project evaluation. Overall, the project has a robust monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system based on quick and thematic surveys, reflection sessions, and self-monitoring, as well as written and verbal post-training assessments undertaken by the project partners. The M&E system contributes to the identification of the strengths and weaknesses of the approaches and stimulates learning, improvement and accountability. However, there is a need for more in-depth M&E of

the post-training changes. The project can thus be rated as having "overall fulfilled" the criterion of coherence.

Effectiveness: The project was effective and performed well for the most part. It fulfilled or is likely to fulfill the main targets, namely improving the quality of journalism development programs and increasing media literacy. It promoted practice-oriented journalistic education and MIL training at different levels. *Ukrainskaia Pravda* continued to successfully operate the School for Business Journalism and the DW Akademie supported the trainers through thematic workshops, which covered a wide range of issues, including consumer journalism. The Ukrainian Media and Communication Institute made a positive contribution to the current offerings in the targeted journalism departments and increased the competencies of the university professors, who are now teaching more practically oriented journalism. The Media Center Nakhiv, jointly with the Kharkiv-based public broadcaster, increased the professional competences of the targeted editors as a result of the highly appreciated journalistic

traineeship program—a new way of engaging in practical journalistic training beyond academic settings.

During the previous phase of the DW Akademie project, the Ministry of Education and Research of Moldova launched MIL as an elective discipline. During the current phase of the project, this work was continued through the Independent Journalism Center (IJC), which promotes MIL and trains schoolteachers. A cooperation with the Faculty for Lifelong Learning, the training unit of the State Pedagogical University, was successful in implementing an online training course for teachers and school headmasters. In the third year of the project (2022), the University is committed to integrating face-to-face components in order to adapt to the post-pandemic period.

Four other Moldovan partners (YMC, BAS TV, TUK, the NGO Diversitate) were quite effective in supporting MIL influencers and developing and implementing the MIL campaigns and thematic extracurricular media activities. However, pandemic restrictions widely affected the MIL-related projects in the schools. In Ukraine, Insha Osvita joined the project and expanded the MIL activities previously initiated by the Academy of Ukrainian Press. It added new features to the practical training of MIL multipliers for the creation of media content by and for target groups.

The project stimulated and enhanced multi-dimensional cross-border MIL initiatives launched by MIL change agents from Moldova (YMC, Diversitate and TUK), Ukraine (Insha Osvita) and Georgia (Media Development Foundation). The respective actions generated inter-generational conversations between young people and their parents about their media use, developed thematic expertise, stimulated the exchange of experiences between the project partners, and consolidated the MIL networks. In summary, the project “overall fulfilled” the criteria for effectiveness.

Efficiency: The implementation modality and dynamic of the project were affected by the pandemic restrictions, but adjustments allowed for the avoidance of bottlenecks and diminished any negative effects. The project was managed according to DW

Akademie procedures without any micro-management. The communication with the implementation partners was comprehensive and prompt. The forms of cooperation, communication and project management (direct in case of experienced project partners from Moldova and Ukraine and indirect in case of less experienced partners from Moldova) illustrates the flexibility and adaptability of the project. As can be seen in the evaluation report, it proved to be clear, smooth and efficient in the first case and less efficient or even inefficient and problematic in the second case.

The partners contributed in-kind technical, material and human resources. The evaluation did not establish the existence of any extra-project financial contributions. The expertise and financial resources invested in the interventions were adequate and mostly sufficient for achieving the planned results. The resources were used cost-effectively, and the evaluation could not pinpoint any alternative, more cost-effective services or resources. The project thus “partially fulfilled” the criteria for efficiency.

Impact: The findings show some early signs of impact. The project generated some potential long-term changes and contributed to improving the quality of journalism and university journalism education, as well as media literacy development programs. It enabled children and young people from Ukraine and Moldova to use media offerings more responsibly and critically and increased youth involvement in media production. The interventions (especially the multi-phase ones) positively impacted the main target groups and beneficiaries, namely young people and children from Ukraine and Moldova, allowing them to make use of their rights to freedom of expression and access to information and improve their media literacy. The project thus “overall fulfilled” the criteria for impact.

Sustainability: The sustainability of the project is somewhat uneven: the project is relatively sustainable in Moldova, but impossible to assess in Ukraine because of the still on-going war, which—among other issues—has generated significant instability and forced a large number of people to flee. In terms of *policy sustainability*, the IJC’s activities were geared


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 60 developing countries and emerging economies.

CONTACT

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

 DWAkademie

 @dw_akademie

 DWAkademie

 dw.com/newsletter-registration

 dw.com/mediadev

toward strengthening the sustainability of the project and influencing existing educational policy in Moldova by mainstreaming MIL across the curriculum. While there have been no notable achievements as of yet, the stakeholders are committed to continuing the work. The MIL subjects mainstreamed into the educational curricula of the Pedagogical University, which is in the process of accreditation, are likely to be sustainable.

In terms of *institutional and financial sustainability*, the training of trainers, MIL trainings and media development programs strengthened the thematic capacity of the targeted participants and partners, who learned interactive methods for teaching MIL, improved their media production and increased their journalistic competencies. These achievements hold the promise of sustainability and, as stated by one of the stakeholders, “those learnings and skills cannot be accidentally lost or forgotten.”

The methodological support provided to the project partners in making the switch to an online format (in response to the pandemic) also represents a promising avenue in terms of institutional sustainability, as it empowered the project partners to use online activities to effectively engage their target groups—an online-toolbox they can continue to use in the future. It is however too premature to discuss the project’s financial sustainability, as its prospects are weak overall and the partners are dependent on external development support, despite their commitment to continuing the promotion of MIL and other media development initiatives. An overall assessment of the sustainability of the project is thus impossible.

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.