

Evaluation Report 2025 • Executive Summary

South America

Bolivia and Colombia with regional
components Peru and Ecuador

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Background

DW Akademie, in partnership with local organizations, is implementing BMZ-funded projects in South America, specifically in Bolivia and Colombia, along with regional components in Peru and Ecuador over a three-year period from 2023–2025.

Bolivia

Context

Polarization and disinformation are restricting access to information. This issue is exacerbated by populist politics, a lack of independent reporting, and media that profit from division and spread misinformation. Indigenous people, women, and LGBTQI+ individuals are often targets of hate campaigns. Furthermore, there is a growing lack of trust in the political system. This situation has a significant impact on rural areas, where community media often serves as the only source of information, and there are inadequate opportunities to develop media literacy skills.

Objective

Local journalists, students, and young people who have an understanding of hate speech and misinformation are empowered to participate in constructive public discourse.

Outputs

Output 1.A: Multipliers and community and local media are empowered to implement projects to promote media literacy for students up to the age of 15; **Output 1.B:** Community and local media are able to implement innovative projects with youth groups (aged 15–29) to promote media

literacy and participation;

Output 1.C: Journalists in community and local media are empowered to take action against the spread of disinformation and hate speech.

Implementing partners

Centro de Producción Radiofónica (CEPRA); Muy Waso.

Colombia

Context

The Amazon region of Colombia, Peru, and Ecuador is severely impacted by extensive agriculture, oil and mineral extraction, and the destruction of ecosystems. Additionally, these challenges are compounded by violence and displacement within the local population. Many affected individuals lack access to reliable communication channels, and human rights and environmental defenders face significant threats. Notably, Colombia ranks as one of the most dangerous countries for media workers.

Objective

Environmental and human rights organizations are strengthened in their advocacy work for the Amazon region through high-quality journalistic investigations by local and community media.

Outputs

Output 1.A: Communication channels between environmental and human rights organizations, community media and (local) journalists have been established; **Output 1.B:** Reporting on human rights and environmental issues from the

Amazon region is professionalized; **Output 1.C:** Human rights and environmental organizations have new tools at their disposal for advocacy work.

Implementing partners

Agenda Propia (Colombia); CORAPE (Ecuador); Servindi (Peru).

The objective of the evaluation is to examine the extent to which the project’s objectives have been achieved and what opportunities for improvements there are for the next project phase. The assessment utilized the standard OECD/DAC evaluation criteria, including relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability. Additionally, it considered cross-cutting aspects such as gender, intersectionality, human rights, and digital aspects. Based on the analysis of the project’s results and achievements, the evaluation provides action-oriented recommendations focused on the project’s design, implementation, outcomes, and long-term sustainability.

In terms of methodology, being a summative evaluation, one of the main approaches adopted was the outcome/results evaluation with a focus on contribution analysis. Primary data collection involved a field visit to Cochabamba, Bolivia, in January 2025. Moreover, in-person interviews were conducted in Bogotá, including with implementing partners. The remainder of the primary data collection was carried out through online interviews. The evaluation team engaged a total of 49 stakeholders.

Evaluation results

Relevance

The work of DW Akademie in the region is both relevant and important. The evaluation highlights the added value that the organization brings to its partners. The phase analyzed in this evaluation is aligned with DW Akademie's mandate and strategic plan. The strategy was developed through a participatory approach. The planning documents, particularly the results framework, are sufficiently clear in terms of their overall objectives and continue to be recognized as valid by stakeholders after two years of implementation. However, the evaluation highlighted some challenges related to Results-Based Management (RBM).

Projects were generally flexible in adapting to contextual changes. In the context of gender inclusion, as well as diversity and intersectionality, the evaluation recognized notable strides in organizational progress since the Colombia project evaluated in 2018–2019 by the same evaluation team. Nonetheless, there is still room for improvement to achieve effective gender incorporation and mainstreaming, both at the project and corporate levels. In the Colombia project, stakeholders openly acknowledged some significant differences and engaged in discussions regarding key concepts and the expected impact of the project related to *incidencia* (Spanish term used surrounding the concept of advocacy). The assessment of the relevance criterion is for both projects “overall fulfilled.”

Coherence

DW Akademie has effectively facilitated dialogue and collaboration among implementing partners. That said, there is an opportunity for even greater synergy moving forward. DW Akademie brings a wealth of expertise, and a respected reputation associated with the DW “brand” to various countries. It plays a pivotal role in fostering dialogue and collaboration among stakeholders while ensuring substantial capacity development. In both countries, DW Akademie has effectively facilitated partnerships and joint initiatives with a diverse range of allies. However, there remains untapped potential in leveraging these efforts. DW Akademie and its projects enhance and support the efforts of implementing partners. The assessment of the coherence criterion is for both projects “overall fulfilled.”

Effectiveness

Both projects have significantly contributed to the achievement of the objectives, and overall, the performance regarding progress toward the intended outputs is favorable. However, the analysis concerning outcomes is not yet conclusive. DW Akademie has made commendable strides in Results-Based Management (RBM) compared to the previously evaluated Colombia project. Nevertheless, certain challenges persist.

With regard to gender equality during implementation, there has been some progress at the organizational level. However, overall gender integration has remained too informal and

inconsistent across different projects and implementing partners. The assessment of the effectiveness criterion is for both projects “overall fulfilled.”

Efficiency

The evaluation highlights the importance of being close to partners, which represents a significant added value for DW Akademie. Leadership at the country level is crucial, as it can play a more pivotal role in representative functions, promoting partnerships, facilitating collaborations, and leveraging funds or interest from other stakeholders. An opportunity exists to enhance the organization and distribution of staff functions to promote greater efficiency and effectiveness.

The project staff and implementing partners have demonstrated a valuable preventive and proactive approach when adhering to DW Akademie's procedures, particularly regarding financial, administrative, and approval processes. Implementing partners and DW Akademie staff are generally well-versed in navigating the rules and regulations, as are the staff at DW Akademie's Latin America department, who have made considerable effort in this area. However, the evaluation identifies persistent challenges such as stringent and convoluted financial regulations, a high degree of centralization in processes, and protracted approval timelines.

In Colombia, the turnover of staff has posed some challenges to the implementation process; the transition to a fully operational office in Bogotá is still ongoing, and considerable potential remains untapped. The assessment of the efficiency criterion is “overall fulfilled” for Bolivia and “partially fulfilled” for the Colombia project.

Impact

As highlighted in previous DW Akademie evaluations, evaluating the impact of a project within the initial two years of a three-year timeline poses certain challenges. Therefore, collecting and analyzing data presented some difficulties (starting with the limited data and evidence available) in adequately addressing questions related to impact. In this regard, it would have been advantageous to plan activities, along with expected outputs and outcomes, in a manner that aimed for “early wins” within the first two years of the phase.

Although at this point impact is based more on plausibility rather than evidence, a potential for future impact lies in the organization’s ability to create bridges that leverage its expertise and to scale up and replicate local pilot experiences, part of the groundwork of these two years. The assessment of the impact criterion is for both projects “partially fulfilled.”

Sustainability

DW Akademie fully recognizes the importance of sustainability and has integrated a sustainability approach into its work with implementing partners. DW Akademie has effectively collaborated with its partners to improve their ability to mobilize resources and market their services and products. The funding landscape for donors in both countries is challenging. In this context, the presence and support of an organization like DW Akademie will continue to be critical and greatly needed. The assessment of the sustainability criterion is for both projects “overall fulfilled.”

Selected lessons learned

- 1.** Being physically situated near the implementation of projects and key partners is a significant advantage for DW Akademie. The proximity facilitates enhanced support and monitoring during the implementation process and reinforces the organization’s role in media development, incidencia and collaboration at the country level. It also strengthens DW Akademie’s ability to convene and facilitate key partnerships.
- 2.** Adopting preventive and proactive strategies is crucial for effectively navigating DW Akademie’s procedures related to projects, particularly concerning financial and administrative aspects, as well as the timelines for approvals.
- 3.** In light of the resources and processes of DW Akademie, a clear prioritization of target groups is a success factor, particularly as DW Akademie moves into the next phase.
- 4.** Formally integrating gender considerations during the planning and formulation stages is essential for effective gender mainstreaming in project implementation and achieving positive gender results.
- 5.** It is advisable for projects that involve mandatory external evaluations to be thoughtfully planned from the outset. This approach will enhance the potential to achieve and effectively demonstrate results well in advance of their completion.

Selected recommendations

1. For a new strategy discussion, try to narrow down the focus and prioritize key actions and activities based on DW Akademie added value and results already achieved by projects: keep the focus on pilot local projects, while also strengthening DW Akademie's role at the national/regional levels.
2. Conduct an internal analysis (possibly in a participatory workshop) on final project results of this phase (when available and including endline data information, etc.) and feed the discussion of the new phase with such results.
3. Strengthen the role of the Bogotá office as a venue for activities and meetings together with its symbolic and representative role. Search for more visibility of the office and the presence in the country.
4. In the new phase ensure a more formal and effective gender mainstreaming in projects' formulation and implementation, starting from the inclusion of at least one gender-related objective per project and mandatory disaggregation of relevant indicators (by sex, ethnic group, age, etc.) aligned with the BMZ.

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 around 60 developing countries and emerging economies.

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