

Report

2025/26

Developing media.
Strengthening human rights.

Imprint

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Editorial

***As states
realign their
international
relations, DW is
making European
perspectives
visible.***



© Jan Röhl/DW

Dear reader,

Amid global information disorder characterized by geopolitical rivalries, competition for resources and increasing authoritarian models, the need for reliable, fact-based information and the importance of a strong media presence of Germany and Europe are growing.

As states realign their international relations, DW is making European perspectives visible. With its diversity of viewpoints, it is a platform for the voice of freedom, democracy and a rules-based order. In times of growing uncertainty, DW remains a reliable source with its balanced content and offers orientation to 337 million people every week where information spaces are polarized, fragmented or deliberately manipulated.

For example, “Kyiv Hub,” with around 30 colleagues, reports from both the frontline and everyday life under fire in Ukraine. Despite censorship, the number of users of Russian-language content grew to ten million per week last year, and despite Internet blocking, DW has also recorded significantly increased access figures in Iran since the beginning of the year.

As DW’s organization for international media development, journalistic education, training and knowledge transfer, DW Akademie promotes media freedom, information literacy and resilience against disinformation and propaganda—key prerequisites for stable democratic systems. With its projects in around 60 developing countries and emerging economies, it strengthens the human right to freedom of expression and unhindered access to information.

Germany is also keeping its promise of freedom and democracy with DW’s independent journalistic offerings. With its reporting and its Akademie, DW supports access to information and media pluralism in strategically important countries, thus contributing to stable partnerships at the political, economic and social levels.

Barbara Massing

Director General, Deutsche Welle

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We set the standards

66 Dedicated to free media around the world

Our vision

Media for a just and peaceful future

Media financing, exile journalism, artificial intelligence, podcasting and media literacy games: As a sponsor of the 20th International Journalism Festival in 2026 in Perugia, DW Akademie offered a wide range of workshops and discussions. Every year in Italy, journalists attend Europe's largest media conference to exchange, network and inspire—for good journalism.





20
YEARS

UNSEEN BURDENS:
THE INVISIBLE BACKPACK OF WOMEN
JOURNALISTS IN EXILE



ABIGAIL
HERNANDEZ



NADINE
JURRAT



HSU
MON PHYO



IRINA
NOVIK



The war in Ukraine is also an information war: On November 17, 2025, studios and offices of the public broadcaster Suspilne Ukraine in Dnipro were severely damaged in a Russian drone attack (Article p. 16).

Free media

A prerequisite for stability and security

Carsten von Nahmen, Managing Director, and Natascha Schwanke, Director of Media Development, on DW Akademie's work across global crises. An interview.

New wars and conflicts, the growing number of autocrats and dictators worldwide, great powers fighting for spheres of influence: we live in a time of multiple crises. How can media help overcome these crises? And what role does media development play?

Carsten von Nahmen: A decisive one. Only informed societies can overcome crises and conflicts, fight poverty and hunger, deal with the consequences of climate change and create equal opportunities for all. Independent media hold the powerful accountable. Media

also make a decisive contribution to countering the ubiquitous disinformation and manipulation of public opinion online.

In this context, our projects have a preventative effect. If citizens have access to reliable information and can distinguish fact from fiction, they can make responsible decisions. If they can express their opinions freely, an open social discourse develops and can include possible solutions.

However, the media are currently under great pressure in many places: state repression, censorship and threats, lack of financing options, competition from digital platforms and an increasing loss of trust. Support is declining.

Carsten von Nahmen: Unfortunately, that's all true. The United States, until now the most powerful voice of freedom in the world, has left its post. The abrupt halt to US development aid under President Donald Trump has had a dramatic impact on international media



© Julia Demaree Nikhinson/AP Pool/dpa

Front row: Tech billionaires at the second inauguration of US President Donald Trump.

DW Freedom—the think tank for media development

From artificial intelligence to social polarization, constructive dialogue to innovative financing models, DW Akademie's think tank, DW Freedom, aims to shape the debates around media, freedom of expression and digital transitions in international development cooperation. DW Freedom researches and collects data, builds networks and works with international partners to promote free and open media systems around the world. Once a year, journalists, media specialists, researchers and experts on human rights and international development publish the State of Media Development Report.

➔ dw.com/freedom

development. In many places, this means the end of free media, and thus also the end of journalism as we know it. And other Western donors have also reduced their support. Dictatorships such as in Russia and China, on the other hand, are investing massively in the global struggle for narratives and interpretive sovereignty.

What is the solution?

Carsten von Nahmen: Western democracies must decide whether they really want to leave the field to the autocrats and despots of this world. In my view, that would be a big mistake, because free media are a prerequisite for stability and security. A strong, pluralistic media landscape and efficient, independent journalism are key to overcoming the multiple crises of our time.

On the other hand, media companies and media professionals are called upon to break new ground. We support them in developing sustainable business models and new forms of

reporting. The current crisis also represents an opportunity—if the media succeed in redefining their role, responsibility and way of working and thus convince their audiences.

What does this look like in concrete terms in your work?

Natascha Schwanke: Together with local partner organizations, we are committed to free media and unhindered access to information worldwide: We train Ukrainian journalists in the embattled east and south of their country, support fact-checking initiatives in the Sahel and the establishment of a pluralistic media system in Syria, we cooperate with community radio stations in rural Latin America—to name just a few examples.

What challenges do you see for the future?

Natascha Schwanke: We see how important it is to forge new, global alliances in media development. We want to further strengthen South-South cooperation. Our regional structure is a big plus: We are where we are needed, we work closely with local partners, we contribute expertise and we listen carefully when it comes to the specific needs on site.

Another important task of the future is to accompany the introduction of new technologies, such as artificial intelligence, critically but constructively. We support media around the world in taking advantage of the opportunities offered by AI. We continue to train media users to navigate digital platforms safely and to critically question content. We are also committed to strengthening the bargaining power of the media vis-à-vis Big Tech companies and to effectively regulating these companies without curtailing freedom of the media and freedom of expression. Our think tank DW Freedom provides important impetus for this. ●

Carsten von Nahmen

Carsten von Nahmen became Managing Director of DW Akademie in September 2018. He previously reported from the US as DW's senior correspondent, and from 2014 to 2017 was head of DW's News and Current Affairs department and deputy editor-in-chief. He has been active with DW Akademie for many years, including as head of its Middle East/North Africa, Europe/Central Asia and Africa departments.



© Philipp Böhl/DW

Natascha Schwanke

Natascha Schwanke became Director of Media Development and Deputy Head of DW Akademie in March 2019 after heading the Africa department for several years. Prior to this, she worked for DW Akademie as a trainer, consultant and project manager. Schwanke is a trained journalist and has worked for leading radio and television stations.



© Philipp Böhl/DW

Free media. Free expression. Free societies.

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. It is a strategic partner of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and is also active with funding from the German Foreign Office and the European Union.

78

DW Akademie projects in 2025

3.74

million euros in funding from the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media, for work we do on behalf of Deutsche Welle

Budget 2025

187

partner organizations around the world with which we work closely in 2025/26 as of April 2026

37.33

million euros in project funding from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, the German Federal Foreign Office, the European Union and other donors

Budget 2025

57

emerging economies and developing countries where we have projects as of April 2026



Maxence Melo (left), Managing Director of JamiiAfrica, was a speaker at “Global perspectives on the future of journalism in the age of AI” conference in January 2026 in Berlin.

DW Akademie in global dialogue on artificial intelligence and journalism

From Chiang Mai, Amman, Mexico City and Chişinău to Berlin: DW Akademie brought the world's leading minds from journalism, technology and media development to the German capital.

Amid powerful technology companies, invisible algorithms and targeted disinformation, journalism is at a crossroads. Between November 2025 and January 2026, DW Akademie organized events around the world to jointly

find solutions that protect journalistic content in the age of AI. This is because artificial intelligence is changing the way people access information. In Berlin, much of the discussion focused on the enormous challenges that AI assistants pose to media companies. They have drastically reduced both traffic to news providers and their revenues. Participants emphasized that journalism should be considered a public good and hence be funded accordingly. ●

Our work

Action with impact

Wars, conflicts and climate crisis: Information saves lives

Afghan refugees have been living in northern Pakistan since the 1970s. There, refugees face restrictions and discrimination and often live in poverty and in fear of deportation. DW Akademie and the news agency Tribal News Network (TNN) are working together to train Afghan community reporters. Together with professional Pakistani journalists, they learn how to use constructive journalism to effectively report on Afghan refugees and their concerns. They have since produced online and video reports about the refugee community, focusing on solidarity and resilience.

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26

Changing perspectives:
A world in transition

40

Informed and competent:
Youth and media

50

Empowering media makers







Life continues despite the severe damage suffered by the city of Kherson.

9 out of 10

Ukrainian media receive international aid. With the end to USAID funding in 2025, the most important donor has vanished.

Source: Reporters Without Borders

Ukrainian media

Giving up is not an option

Even after four years of war, Ukrainian media professionals—supported by DW Akademie—continue to report.

“We didn’t have electricity, heat, internet connection or mobile connection,” recalled Alla Skoryk about the first weeks after Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. “We used boats to get fuel to Chernihiv to continue broadcasting. And we didn’t stop for a second.” Skoryk is head of the regional content department at the public broadcaster Suspilne

Ukraine, a long-standing partner of DW Akademie.

The war poses enormous challenges for the media: power outages, drone attacks, destroyed editorial offices and life-threatening working conditions at the front.

Relevant information out of “news deserts”

The massive proliferation of drones is also changing journalism. Thousands circle the front; reporters can only move with scanners that detect the signals.

“If you’re in the drone’s field of view, you have to run away,” said Skoryk.

She and her colleagues had to learn to understand military data and use it for their own security.

Suspilne Ukraine operates 22 regional offices, many of them in frontline or occupied territories such as Kherson, Kharkiv or the Donbas. These regions can become “news deserts”: the inhabitants there often run the risk of being cut off from information, and little penetrates from these areas to the rest of the country. That is why the broadcaster relies heavily on hyper-local reporting: 50 trained citizens provide information, photos and videos from places that professional journalists can hardly reach.

This work shows just how important the exchange between media and

audience is, especially in times of massive disinformation. Russia is waging an information war; DW Akademie therefore strengthens Media and Information Literacy through projects for all age groups.

Focus on the young generation

Children and young people who grow up in Ukraine with bombing, destruction and insecurity are particularly at risk. DW Akademie therefore has developed comics, games and an escape room that interactively convey media literacy. Suspilne produces entertaining knowledge formats for younger children, and news formats for 9- to 14-year-olds. Therapeutic fairy tales ("Brave Tales") helped younger audiences deal with fear

and war experiences shortly after the invasion.

"There was an urgent need for child-friendly explanations of this new reality," said Viktoriia Murovana, head of Suspilne's digital department. Psychologists supported the editorial team in offering the children a safe space in the middle of the war.

The establishment of a children's program—unique in Ukraine—is part of a future-oriented approach by Suspilne and DW Akademie, which also focuses on when the war is over.

Alla Skoryk summed up the lessons of the past four years as follows: "Giving up means imprisonment, it means losing our freedom. So, for us it's easier to resist."

93

journalists killed worldwide in 2025, 60 of whom were killed in conflict zones

Source: UNESCO



At Café Kyiv, the largest civil society conference on Ukraine in Germany and held in February 2026, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz emphasized the importance of international support. At the DW Akademie booth, he welcomed the Ukrainian journalists from Suspilne, among others.

Viable media

Independent journalism needs sustainable business models and an effective editorial strategy. Yet other aspects also influence the economic success of media, such as legal and political framework conditions, technological innovations and the economies of networks. Media viability is crucial in ensuring that citizens trust independent media and have access to reliable information—especially in times of crisis.



only **29**

percent of media development organizations worldwide are actively committed to the protection of vulnerable media professionals

Source: State of Media Development Report 2026, DW Akademie

Protecting media professionals to ensure independent journalism

DW Akademie is committed to protecting journalists at risk. Security for journalists has several dimensions.

In addition to physical safety, legal and financial aspects play an important role. Furthermore, targeted media professionals often need psychological support. Together with its partners, DW Akademie supports editorial offices and media houses so that they can continue to work under pressure. Through protecting their workers, media houses can continue to provide independent information, even where governments or criminals try to restrict media freedom.

Press representative in front of a destroyed house in Kyiv.

© picture alliance/abaca | Yaghoobzadeh Alfred/ABACA



Freedom of the press is under threat in Central America: A photographer at a protest for media freedom and freedom of expression in Guatemala City.

A safe space for independent journalism

In Costa Rica, DW Akademie and its partner, the Institute for Freedom of the Press and Expression (IPLEX), run the “Casa para el Periodismo Libre”, a center for exiled journalists from Latin America.

Since 2024, under the umbrella of the Casa para el Periodismo Libre, exiled journalists have been able to find a space for exchange, further training, support for their legal, psychosocial, economic and personal security, scholarships for journalistic work and multimedia equipment, among other things.

Support for media professionals for independent journalism in Central America

The support services of the Casa para el Periodismo Libre (in English: House of Independent Journalism) have also been available online since 2025: A digital platform offers Spanish-speaking journalists not only general information on living and working in exile, but also access to resources specifically aimed at protecting themselves from persecution, censorship and violence.

Media workers in Central America are under great pressure from governments, politicians and organized crime. In Nicaragua, many journalists are imprisoned or have had their citizenship revoked. The regime has also closed numerous media outlets. In Guatemala, the judiciary threatens and persecutes critical journalists—sometimes even for private posts on social networks—while authoritarian tendencies in El Salvador have forced even established media into exile.

“

Writing is somehow difficult, but I still try. If I stop writing, I stop existing.

Participant of the Space for Freedom project, a part of the Hannah Arendt Initiative, which supports and trains exiled Afghan media professionals.

Costa Rica has become a haven in the region. The strong institutional framework here enables many people to pursue journalism while in exile, but it also presents them with new challenges that can only be overcome with coordinated strategies for working safely.

The Casa para el Periodismo Libre in Costa Rica is supported by DW Akademie's Space for Freedom project as part of the Hannah Arendt Initiative. Space for Freedom focuses on the professional livelihoods of refugee media professionals from Afghanistan, Belarus, Russia and Central America. The aim is to enable independent reporting from exile. ●

1,286

Space for Freedom consultations and trainings offered
2023-2025

378

stipends from DW Akademie's Space for Freedom project given to exiled media workers from Afghanistan, Belarus, Russia and Central America
2023-2025

Hannah Arendt Initiative: A network to protect media workers

In October 2022, Germany's Foreign Office and the Federal Commissioner for Culture and the Media launched the Hannah Arendt Initiative, a program dedicated to the protection of journalists under threat. Through this network of civil society organizations, DW Akademie works alongside the European Fund for Journalism in Exile (JX Fund), Media in Cooperation and Transition (MiCT) and the European Centre for Press and Media Freedom (ECPMF).

For more information:
➔ hannah-arendt-initiative.de



“

Awareness is growing that a war is not just bombs and tanks; it's also an information and an economic war.

Justin Arenstein

South Africa, founder and CEO of Code for Africa (CfA), Africa's largest investigative technology and data journalism initiative, and one of the experts contributing to the Tackling Disinformation project. DW Akademie and CfA have been working together since 2018.

Disinformation — the invisible weapon

Fact or fake? This is a basic question for journalists around the world. In the age of social media, however, everyone confronts the question.

Both governments and individuals across the globe use digital platforms to exert influence, stir up mistrust and increase social polarization. While free media around the world are struggling to survive economically, autocrats are reaching an ever-larger audience with seemingly unlimited resources.

Targeted disinformation is an attack on democracy, freedom and social peace. The best antidote is well-trained journalists and media users who can distinguish fact from fiction.



Together with its partners, DW Akademie is committed to quality journalism, media literacy and freedom of expression worldwide. The goal is a constructive public dialogue.

With its Tackling Disinformation learning guide, DW Akademie not only contributes to the professional discourse among media development experts, but also provides both a guide for media professionals and a free online course for self learners on the topic of disinformation and fact-checking. A discussion paper presents the three-sphere model developed by DW Akademie and offers strategies to effectively counter disinformation.



Information is power and powerful institutions, governments, autocrats and some companies are trying to manipulate public opinion.

Tamar Kintsurashvili

Georgia, journalist and expert for disinformation and fact-checking, is executive director of the Media Development Foundation in Tbilisi. The organization is DW Akademie's local partner in Georgia, training journalists as well as young people in fact-checking. In 2025, DW honored her with its Freedom of Speech Award.



Community journalist Juliana Albuquerque.

Journalism to save the rainforest

4.3

million hectares of tropical primary forest were lost in 2025—equivalent to more than eleven soccer fields per minute

Source: Global Forest Review 2026

For three days, indigenous media workers were in a boat on the Amazon to participate in the COP30 climate conference in Belém, Brazil. Juliana Albuquerque was one of them.

Community journalist Juliana Albuquerque feels comfortable at the radio microphone. In the small town of São Gabriel da Cachoeira on the Brazilian Rio Negro, her voice is familiar and appreciated.

“We report in our language, without scientific terminology, on complex topics such as CO2 certificates. We are translating the context of COP30 into the lives of indigenous communities so that they can understand what is being negotiated there and how it affects them,” she said. Albuquerque and her colleagues from the Rede Wayuri media network also address environmental crimes. “Illegal gold mining is a problem everywhere in the Amazon. Local politics quickly become an accomplice. We use the radio to make that public,” she added.

Rede Wayuri maintains an internet radio station with various programs—live and as podcasts. “The fact that

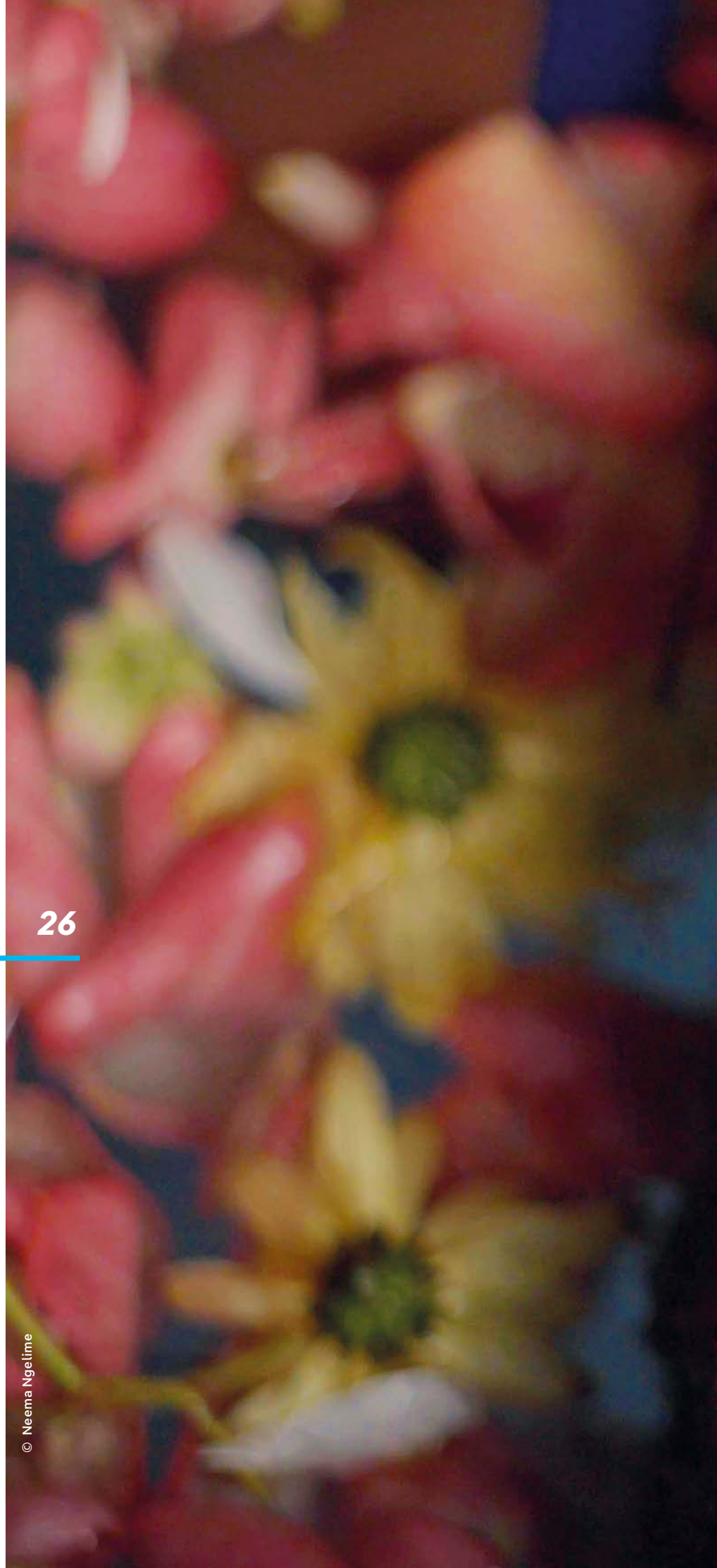
access to the Internet has improved is good for us. Sometimes people just plug their cell phones into a speaker and listen together,” said Albuquerque.

This work is not without danger. There are always threats, but fortunately no attacks so far, as other indigenous media makers reported on the way to COP30. “We will make the demands of those who are most affected by climate collapse audible. They must reverberate and be at the top of the agenda at the next climate conference,” she added.

Changing perspectives: A world in transition

26

Great cinema from East Africa: Four short films from the East African Screen Collective (EASC) were screened in front of an audience of filmmakers and industry experts at the European Film Market, part of the 2025 Berlinale. With the support of DW Akademie, EASC provided the up-and-coming talents with scholarships and advice during the production phase. DW Akademie promotes the practical qualification of filmmakers from the Global South and supports them in producing internationally competitive films and series and making them accessible to a large audience. We see this as an important contribution to freedom of expression and an impetus for social change and dialogue.







approx. **313,250**

people live in and around Kakuma

Source: UNHCR, as of March 2026

A universe full of stories

Journalism in a refugee camp



A street in the Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya.

Sikika is a DW Akademie project in the Kenyan refugee camp Kakuma. Young refugees learn to produce stories for radio. The program has been well-received, but there are many challenges, especially for the participating women.

Sudi Omar Noor gets up at four o'clock in the morning. It is still dark in Kakuma in northwestern Kenya. The 26-year-old makes breakfast and prepares lunch for her aunt's six-person household. In the Somali community where Omar Noor lives, cooking and housework are considered women's responsibilities. This means that she has many tasks. Omar Noor fled Somalia in 2008 with her mother and seven siblings. All four sons and four daughters should be attending school. "My mother went back to Somalia with my younger brothers. I work so that I can support my family," said Omar Noor.

"Being a journalist is my dream, and I can't give it up."

When Omar Noor leaves the house at eight o'clock, she hurries to catch one of the coveted motorcycle taxis. Once she didn't get one and had to run. Boys recognized her on the street and threw stones at her. They called her a disgrace to the Somali community.

Omar Noor is a community reporter for the audio program Sikika, which is produced by the Kenyan organization COME Initiative in cooperation with DW Akademie. The reporters, about half of whom are women, provide



117.3

million people forcibly displaced worldwide

Source: UNHCR, as of June 2025

refugees and locals with information about life in the camp. She's often thought about quitting, she said. But each time, Sikika's editor Taphine Otieno convinced her to continue.

Sikika remains a place for open dialogue

When US President Donald Trump announced in January 2025 that he would dissolve the American development aid organization USAID, it quickly became clear that this decision would hit refugee camps like Kakuma particularly hard: they are dependent on international funds in many areas such as food aid, health care, security and education.

The all-important support failed to materialize, and food became scarcer. "If there are no food rations and you know about them," said Taphine Otieno from Sikika, "it's better than

standing in line for many hours and then suddenly finding out that there is nothing to eat."

Sikika is a reliable transmitter of information between humanitarian organizations and the people in the camp. "In this situation, communication is essential for survival," explained Otieno. "If you don't communicate effectively, people will start with their own interpretations and start spreading rumors."

Breaking down communication hierarchies

A converted shipping container serves as an editorial office. This is where the team produces its articles and prepares interviews with experts from the international organizations. It's a challenge. "In order to receive an interview on site, such a request from Kakuma has to go to Nairobi and,



"He is a friend, teacher and mentor," said Omar Noor about Taphine Otieno (center). He is the content development coordinator for Sikika.

in the worst case, to an international headquarters," said Otieno.

With their work, the reporters from Sikika break down the communication hierarchies in the camp. Every two weeks, they broadcast their one-hour program to 225 groups of listeners throughout Kakuma and the neighboring settlement of Kalobeyei. After each show, they receive audience feedback.

Reporters: Diversity is their strength

In Sikika, which in Swahili means "to be heard," refugees often report on basic human needs such as health, food, water and education, but also on sports, culture and understanding between the different ethnic groups. In and around Kakuma, people from South Sudan, Congo, Ethiopia, Somalia and the local Turkana live

side by side. People who have fled conflicts in their home country now often live next door to members of the opposing group.

But the camp's diversity is also a strength. Among the members of the Sikika team, there are different ethnic groups that take different perspectives. The Sikika team supports and encourages each other, said Omar Noor. "There are so many great, strong people here in Kakuma. We need to tell our communities about them so they can learn."

After work, she has to prepare dinner. The older generation in particular likes to hold on to the old habits, she explained. Younger people are much more understanding. "My cousin sometimes helps me cook. But then we have to close the door so that the other men don't see him," she added giggling as she began to prepare dinner.

Migration and the media

DW Akademie works to ensure that refugees and migrants can exercise their right to access information and freedom of expression while promoting dialogue with host societies. In Bangladesh, for example, we have been supporting Rohingya refugees and locals through our partner organizations since 2018. Working together, they produce a weekly radio show on how to better cope with everyday problems.



Michelle Nogales passes on her knowledge to other women. Together with DW Akademie, the community media outlet “Muy Waso,” which means non-conformist, cheeky, rebellious, works to strengthen constructive journalism, gender justice and critical media literacy in Bolivia and throughout Latin America.



“We are convinced that we can make a difference”

Michelle Nogales, co-founder of the feminist platform “Muy Waso” in Bolivia, talks about her media’s survival strategies and the courage to try something new.

Community media throughout Latin America are facing funding problems. Attacks on media professionals and competition with other digital content are increasing. Muy Waso seems to handle these challenges well, what do they do different from other media?

Michelle Nogales: We started with the aim of closing an information gap

on cultural and social topics. We started with feminism and culture and then moved into the political sphere. With the COVID-19 pandemic, health issues were added. We have constantly evolved.

The tone of our reporting is also different. We want to be as close as possible to our audience, meet them at eye level and use simple, understandable language. We talk to the people on the street, the rural population, we look for alternative faces that often receive less attention.

Another aspect is financing. We have never taken money from the government to protect ourselves from influence and censorship. We therefore use different financing models.

What can community media offer people that conventional media cannot?

The most important thing is the personal relationship. As community media, we can listen to people and offer them practical help. Based on very specific requests, for example, we have developed and published instructions on the topic of digital security.

What drives you to keep going despite challenges?

We are convinced that we can make a difference, offer something to society, even if it takes place at the local level. We want to help people in their everyday lives. ●





7 out of 10

*women human rights defenders, activists and journalists
report experiencing online violence*

Quelle: UN Women 2025

© Lawrence Musoke/DW

A woman wearing a black hijab is seen in profile, looking towards a wall. The wall is covered in graffiti and paint splatters. There are large orange and red splatters on the left, and green and black graffiti on the right. The wall also has some white chalk-like markings, including a grid pattern. The overall scene suggests a context of conflict or social unrest.

Online violence against women is part of everyday life in Syria

In a study, DW Akademie shows how quickly a comment on social media, for example, becomes a threat: Women who raise their voices are insulted, slandered, embarrassed or are victims of sexual harassment. Many withdraw for fear of stigma and thus lose opportunities. Gender-based online violence is a structural problem in Syria: it serves the social control of women. Clear protective mechanisms are missing. This has serious consequences not only for each individual, but also for an inclusive and participatory peace process after the fall of the Assad regime. The study calls on the media, civil society and platforms to take joint countermeasures and finally make digital spaces safer for women and girls so that their voices are heard, both online and offline.

The study was published in English and Arabic in early 2026 and is available for download on the DW Akademie website.



© IMAGO/Pond5 Images



Hate speech on the internet fuels real conflicts. And journalists have a special responsibility for the narratives they spread.

Abeer Saady

Germany, is originally from Egypt and worked as a war reporter for many years. Today, she trains journalists for DW Akademie, including in Syria and elsewhere in the Middle East.

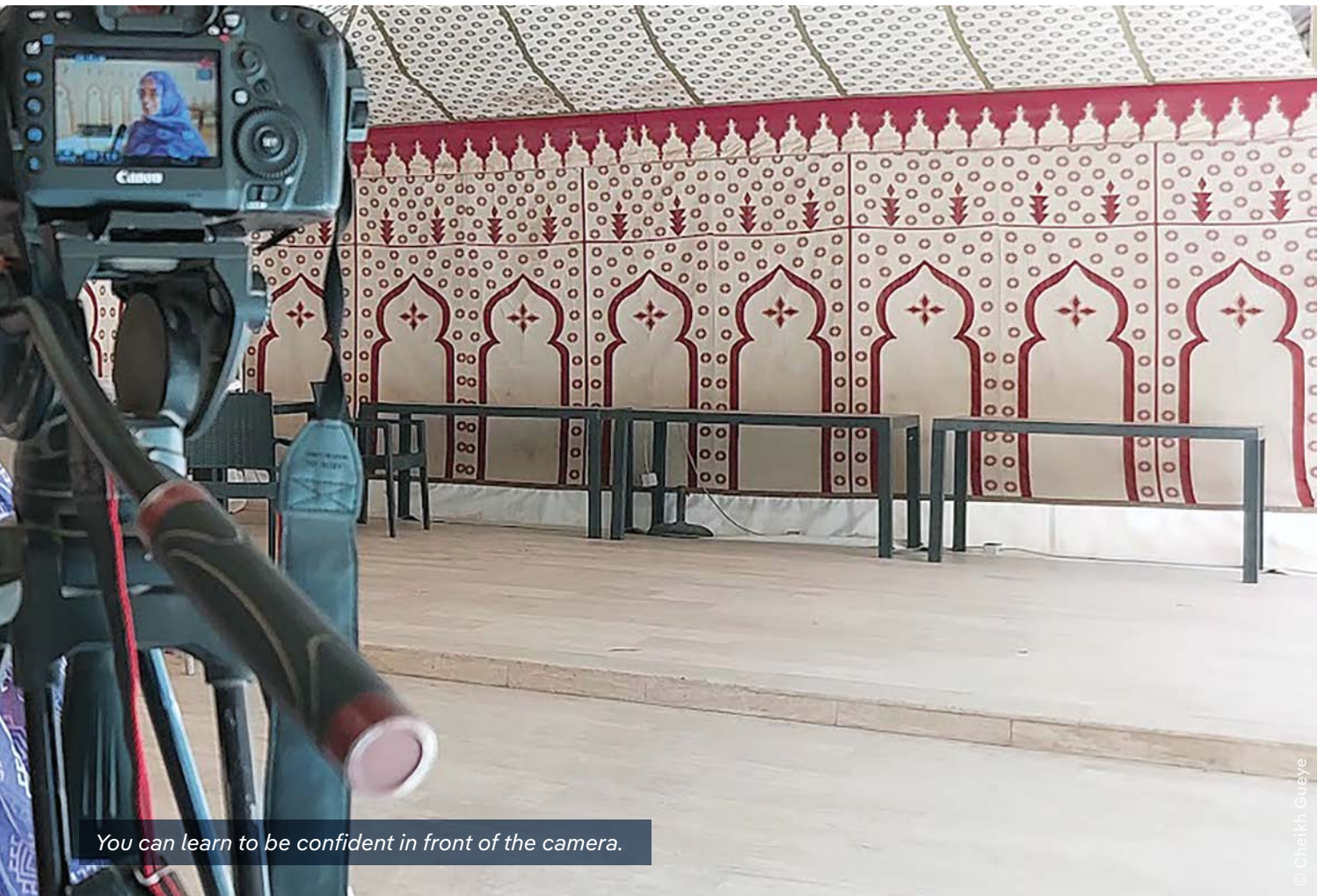


© Sebastian Wirth/DW Akademie



Communication is the key: DW Akademie offers

Do you want to gain confidence in front of the camera? Are you already a communications professional and want to further develop your skills? Do you belong to an organization that wants to bring its message to the public in an understandable way? You can benefit from DW Akademie's expertise!



Tailor-made training courses — your needs count!

For interviews on radio or television, public appearances and speeches, only a few people have a natural talent. For most, they mean stress. In the media, you usually only have a few seconds to get to the heart of your message. Our effective training courses help you to deal with such situations confidently, to radiate competence at all times and to make your message more accessible with convincing storytelling.

If you want to expand your journalistic skills, our practical training courses in TV moderation, podcasting or event moderation are a good choice.

We are happy to prepare you for your communication task! Our training courses can be booked at any time. Contact us at:

➔ dw-akademie.medientraining@dw.com

International Communications Consulting

DW Akademie's international communications consulting services strengthen civil society organizations and institutions in the Global South, complementary to our media development in project countries.

The Communication Consultancy team combines international practical experience, sound methods and the expertise of Deutsche Welle's media professionals and provides participatory and culturally sensitive consulting. We support our clients in building effective communication, combatting disinformation and bringing facts to the fore.

Would you like to learn more about the work of Communication Consultancy and the specific offers?

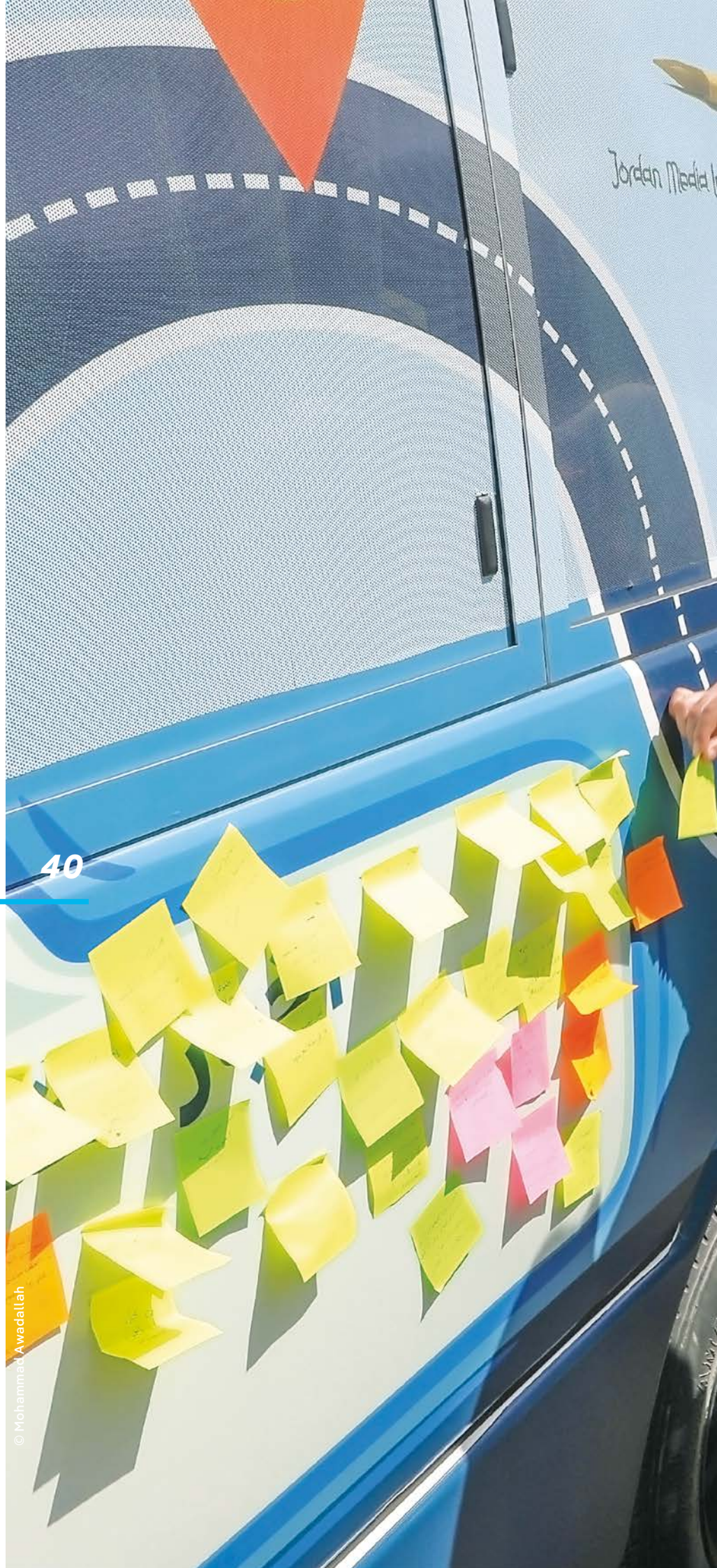
Write to us:

➔ dw-akademie.communication-consultancy@dw.com

Informed and competent: Youth and media

The Jordanian population is young, with more than half no older than 24 years. Digital technologies and social media play a central role in Jordan but also have their downsides. The trend toward discourse polarization and radicalization is exacerbated by the spread of disinformation. However, the institutional teaching of media literacy remains limited in Jordan, especially in regions far away from the capital. On its tours across the country, the Jordan Media Institute and DW Akademie bus reached more than 3,200 interested people and informed them about media literacy and its key role in responsible internet use. The successful concept is now also being implemented in other projects, for example in the Palestinian territories.

40







Together we are not alone: Local students visit a youth exchange forum.



Cambodia Media and Information Literacy for Indigenous youth

In a DW Akademie project, young Indigenous people from the highlands of Cambodia are learning how to protect themselves from online fraud and disinformation.

In a community center in Ta Veng, a simple wooden hut on stilts, an all-too-familiar scene unfolds on stage one Saturday afternoon. A young man discovers a scooter for sale online

at a temptingly low price and happily transfers his savings. He then waits in vain for an answer, while the supposed seller disappears without a trace. The 92 students follow along with curiosity and laugh aloud as the actor stares theatrically at his cell phone, desperately awaiting a message. What is being staged here is a bitter reality many in the audience know all too well. The play is part of a youth exchange forum on online scamming and disinformation.

Ta Veng is one of several Indigenous villages in Ratanakiri Province, reached via a winding road across sweeping hills, rainforests and farmland. According to the last census, in 2019,



Using theater to educate people about online fraud: The scenes reflect the real experiences of young people from the province of Ratanakiri.

© Deborah Urban/DW Akademie



at least 22 Indigenous groups live in Cambodia, a large proportion of which are native to Ratanakiri and Stung Treng provinces.

In both provinces, DW Akademie and its local partner organization Khmer Youth Association (KYA) supported a project to improve media literacy. The aim is to empower youth leaders from Indigenous communities as multipliers, enabling them to pass on their skills to other young people and make them more resilient to disinformation.

Indigenous communities are often socio-economically disadvantaged, with limited access to education and reliable information. For many of Ratanakiri's young people, traveling from their community to school is often a great challenge. Many of

the Indigenous children and young people do not read or write Khmer, the national language, well enough for basic understanding, nor do they attend secondary school. They often must support their parents in agricultural work and therefore drop out after primary school. This makes them particularly vulnerable to disinformation, as digital technologies have reached even Ratanakiri's most remote villages and are very popular among their residents.

"The biggest problems that young people often face are phishing and disinformation," reported Sophen Yeng, project manager from KYA. Media and Information Literacy (MIL) is therefore a relevant topic for young people.

Multipliers teach the safe use of social media

"MIL can fundamentally change their behavior towards media consumption," Yeng explained. "The improved skills and knowledge also have a cascading effect on the entire community."

The project therefore relies on MIL multipliers identified by KYA and trained by DW Akademie. Together, they produce videos in the MIL trainings which are published on KYA's social media accounts or in the communities. The final event is the youth exchange forums, where the videos are discussed in a larger circle. Theatre performances have proved to be an effective means of communicating complex MIL issues with the



In dialogue: Young people discuss the challenges of social media and the internet with a community leader during a youth exchange forum in Ta Veng.

ideas for the scripts developed during the trainings.

“The video productions and the youth exchange forum were the most interesting for me,” said Sreyppich Som, an MIL multiplier from Ratanakiri. “It allows us to showcase our talents in dealing with problems, propose solutions, and learn how to protect ourselves from the dangers of social media.”

A local community leader joined the audience at Ta Veng to discuss the play with young people. This not only allows participants to talk to each other, but also to make their concerns heard in their communities. ●

Navigating the media

Competence is more important than ever in times of social media, where fake news spreads faster than facts and hate speech polarizes and poisons social dialogue. Media and Information Literacy (MIL) is the ability to access, analyze and critically reflect on (social) media, as well as to create media content oneself. It is a prerequisite for citizens to exercise their rights to freedom of expression and access to information. Our innovative projects promote these rights and empower people to understand and use media responsibly.

Moldova: Media in the classroom



© Denis Teaci/Moldau Independent Journalism Center

Learning media literacy is fun.

Together with the Moldovan Ministry of Education, DW Akademie has set out to teach students directly in the classroom on how to use media competently.

Together with the Moldovan Ministry of Education, DW Akademie has set out to teach students directly in the classroom on how to use media competently.

“I notice that the students love it when I give them the tasks. Even when it’s homework,” said Lina Gorceag, a teacher at the Principesa Natalia Dadiani secondary school in the Moldovan capital Chişinău. She is one of 20 Moldovan teachers who have included Media and Information Literacy (MIL) in their Romanian curriculum since 2023.

In Moldova, where one in five children grows up with only one parent or without parents, school is often the only place where children can be encouraged to engage critically and competently with media. With so much propaganda and disinformation from Russia, young media users need to know how to access reliable information and recognize fake news.

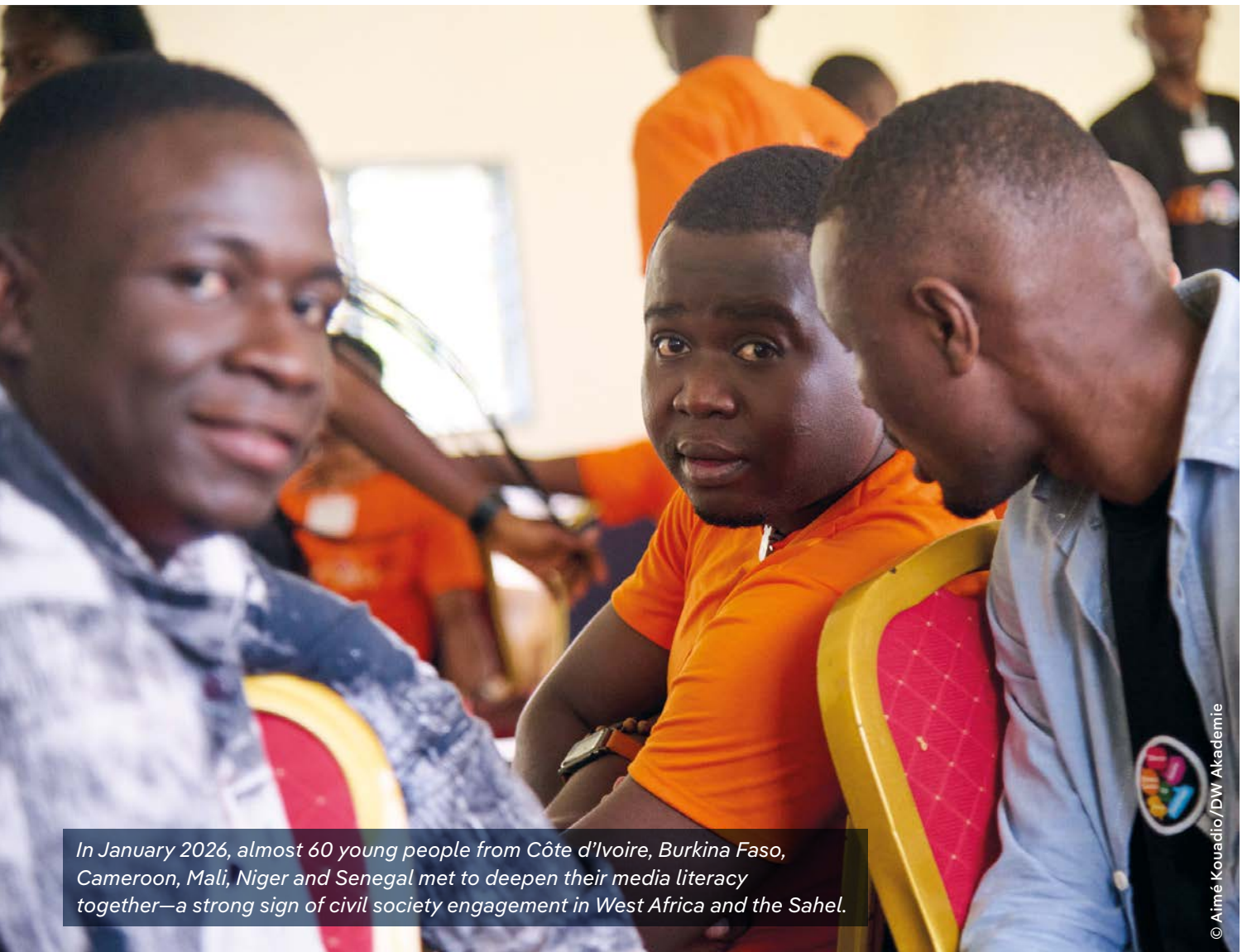
Together with the Independent Journalism Center (IJC), DW Akademie has entered into a strategic partnership with the Moldovan Ministry of Education and Research and educational institutions to integrate MIL into the Romanian and English school curricula. Through the partnership, teachers also learn how to engage their students interactively to enhance their MIL skills. MIL has already been included in the national curriculum as a compulsory subject since 2020.

more than **1,600**

pupils in lower and upper secondary schools had strengthened their media literacy skills and armed themselves against disinformation by the end of 2025



DW Akademie also developed comics for use in classrooms



In January 2026, almost 60 young people from Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Mali, Niger and Senegal met to deepen their media literacy together—a strong sign of civil society engagement in West Africa and the Sahel.

© Aimé Kouadio/DW Akademie

And if you talked about it

Côte d'Ivoire's young, ethnically diverse population faces hatred, violence and disinformation on increasingly popular social media channels and within one of the most politicized and polarized media landscapes in West Africa. DW Akademie and its local partners help to use media competently and to enter into constructive dialogue.

With an estimated 33 million inhabitants, over 60 ethnic groups and an average age of just over 18 years, Côte d'Ivoire is strongly influenced by young people from a wide variety of backgrounds. They often lack opportunities to express themselves freely, to obtain information independently and from various sources, or to check the veracity of information.

DW Akademie trains young multipliers who pass on their knowledge to promote the critical use of media.

About 100 alumni of DW Akademie form the network “Et si on en parlait” (in English: And if you talked about it). They exchange constructive views on controversial social and political issues that concern young people in Côte d'Ivoire. As part of the regional Sahel+ program, DW Akademie works not only in Côte d'Ivoire, but also in Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Senegal to strengthen media professionals, media users and civil society organizations against disinformation and hate speech.

Learn German on the go and free of charge

Whether still at the very beginning or already advanced: The DW Learn German learning platform is aimed at learners of all levels.

If you want to be a skilled worker in Germany, you need a good knowledge of German. With the “Profis gesucht” (in English: Professionals wanted) course, German learners can get a taste of various apprenticeships. Since 2025, they have also been given important tips on training and job searching, applying and communication in professional life in short, animated films.

Daily news for learning German has long been a unique selling point of DW—from video briefs at the beginner level to slow-spoken news for advanced learners.

The telenovela “Nicos Weg” offers German instruction with 228 lessons starting at language level A1. The users accompany the young Spaniard Nico on his arrival in Germany and as he masters everyday life in his new home. The course is available in 17 languages, including Arabic, French, Farsi and Ukrainian.

Content on social media such as Instagram, Facebook and TikTok also enable interaction.

DW Learn German: ➔ [dw.com/learngerman](https://www.dw.com/learngerman)

approx. **1.6**

million registered users of the DW Learn German platform

as of March 2026

approx. **4.2**

million fans and followers of DW Learn German on social networks

as of March 2026

61

percent of DW Learn German users are between the ages of 21 and 35

as of March 2026



Empowering media makers

Telling stories that move people and providing reliable information—these are the core tasks of media professionals worldwide. However, journalists reporting from remote rural areas face particular challenges. Poor or no internet access makes journalistic work on the ground more difficult. But digital technologies can help, such as the apps Colmena and Voice Deck (in Uganda, pictured) supported by DW Akademie.

50







A new beginning? Celebrations in December 2024 over the fall of the Assad regime (pictured). But joy, uncertainty and suffering are all connected for the Syrian population. After almost 14 years of civil war, more than nine million people in Syria are suffering from hunger, around four million have fled to neighboring countries, and more than seven million have been displaced within the country. The economy is devastated.



What *prospects* does free journalism have in Syria?

After the fall of the Assad regime, Syria has an opportunity to build a professional, free and pluralistic media landscape. How do Syrian media professionals see the current situation? In January 2026, eight media representatives took part in a DW Akademie delegation trip to Berlin – an interview with two of them.



© Hisam Hac Omer/Anadolu/picture alliance

After the fall of the Assad regime, Syrians will not only have to rebuild their homes, but also their institutions—an opportunity for democratic structures.

Journalism: Credible quality

DW Akademie supports media professionals in shaping the future of journalism with training and continuing education programs. We support schools for journalists because they play a leading role in the further development of the sector. They are drivers of innovation for journalism whose work benefits both the public and media companies.

During the revolution and the civil war, you both resisted the Assad regime. What did that look like?

Heva Abd Alkader: I grew up during the war as the daughter of a Kurdish family in Aleppo. After studying, I moved to the de-facto autonomous Kurdish city of Amuda. There I experienced for the first time that I was allowed to speak my own language and also work in Kurdish—the language was banned under the Assad regime. It is very important for me to emphasize that I am not nor was not part of the political opposition. I am an independent journalist, not a political activist.

Omar Faroun: I joined the opposition in 2011, when the revolution broke out, in my first year of university. Initially we demonstrated peacefully against the government, but there were street fights because the government claimed that we

were armed. I had to watch as hundreds of demonstrators were shot in front of my eyes—including my friend, whom I had to carry away. When you see something like that, you can't help but join the opposition. When Homs was besieged, I continued my studies in Idlib. Many Syrians who resisted the Assad regime fled either abroad or to the region around Idlib. We began to build our own media that represented public opinion in these areas. I learned journalism through further training courses offered by regional media agencies.

What prospects do you see for your journalistic work in Syria?

Abd Alkader: At ARTA FM, we will continue to report independently of the state's agenda and adhere to journalistic standards. The bloodshed has stopped and we are seeing signs of integration, but that will

not stop us from demanding our full rights so that there is no more oppression of the Kurds in Syria in the future. We also have special training programs and the Radio Zîn project, where women are trained as journalists and can talk about their own issues. We will continue this work as well.

Faroun: As editor-in-chief of SANA, I make sure that all peoples and ethnicities are represented equally in the newsrooms. The previous government set people against each other; the current government wants to integrate all people. In addition, we want to reflect all opinions, including problems. News must be reliable and correspond to the facts. We want to ensure this through reporters on the ground, government contacts and eyewitness reports. We trained former editors who worked under Assad.

You have met with representatives from politics and the media in Berlin. What role could Germany play in rebuilding the Syrian media landscape?

Faroun: This trip was very interesting—especially the idea of the Federal Press Conference is very exciting. I now have to think about what can be implemented in concrete terms.

Abd Alkader: We need sustainable support so that we can survive as independent media. Experience from an independent press landscape, training courses and cooperations are particularly important. There are many young, committed people in Syria whose energy we can use properly if we train them professionally. I am impressed by how Germany—despite war and division—was rebuilt piece by piece. As part of the young generation, this gives me hope. ●

DW Akademie supports Syrian media professionals with training opportunities, for example in the fight against disinformation, and exchange.

Heva Abd Alkader

She grew up as the child of a Kurdish family in Aleppo. War shaped her; the Kurdish language was banned under the Assad regime. Abd Alkader studied economics and then moved to the northeastern region of Rojava, where a de-facto autonomous Kurdish self-administration had emerged at the beginning of the war in 2011. As a journalist, she also broadcast from there during the civil war for the independent Kurdish radio station ARTA FM.



Omar Faroun

In his youth, he was on the run with his family and exposed to reprisals by the Assad regime. His father had given up his position as a government official after discovering cases of corruption. Faroun studied English literature. Today he is editor-in-chief of the state news agency SANA. Under the transitional government, he is part of the new SANA team, which stands for the restructuring of the former propaganda media.



© Lina Eikermann/DW

© Lina Eikermann/DW

The “Survive and Thrive: The Media Viability Podcast” newsletter subscriptions surpassed

24,700

*on LinkedIn.
as of May 2026*

More than survival: Podcast highlights successful business models for media

On DW Akademie’s “Survive and Thrive: The Media Viability Podcast,” media managers from around the world discuss financing models and recipes for success, along with what they learned from missteps and bad decisions. Launched in 2023, the third season is running in 2026.

How do media survive in a difficult media landscape? What motivates media professionals to keep going? Among the guests who have answered these questions so far are Zahra Nader, exiled founder and editor-in-chief of the award-winning Zan Times from Afghanistan; Salam Omer from KirkukNow in Iraq, which reports from conflict regions; and

Zenzele Ndebele, founder of the non-profit news portal CITE Zimbabwe.

“Survive and Thrive” can be found on all major podcast platforms, along with a video of the podcast on YouTube. The transcript, further information and resources are available on the DW Akademie website and on our LinkedIn newsletter. ●

“



***The best way
to predict the future
is to create it.***

Zenzele Ndebele

Zimbabwe, founder of the online news portal CITE and member of DW Akademie’s Global Reference Group. In episode five of the second podcast season, he talked about how to stay afloat while focusing on local communities and embracing generative AI.

50

languages in which the MethodKit for Podcasts is available

© Julia Minner/DW Akademie



Got an idea for a new podcast? Get start-up help from professionals

With MethodKit for Podcasts, DW Akademie supports podcasts worldwide—from development to production.

Together with the Swedish organization MethodKit and 20 global podcast experts, DW Akademie developed a set of 61 cards, each highlighting a crucial aspect of

podcast development. The kit stimulates discussion and helps with concept development as well as considering production details. As a training tool, it helps trainers working with media professionals on new audio formats but it can also be used independently.

DW Akademie has also developed diverse training modules that have

been implemented in various African countries, Cambodia and Ukraine. The podcast kit can be used online and offline and is available in English, Kiswahili, Amharic, Burmese, Oromo, Arabic, Chichewa, French, Mooré, Spanish, Ukrainian, Khmer and German, among others. Digital kits are available for free at

➤ podcasts.methodkit.com



I'm inspired!

Nazira Inoyatova

Uzbekistan, program director of Aytoradio and Media School
Uzbekistan participant, a partnership between the Modern
Journalism Development Center (MJDC) and DW Akademie.



DW Trainees on assignment abroad

DW Trainees hail from different cultures and countries. They have joined the DW Akademie program to become the next generation of journalists.

The budding journalists of the 2025/26 trainee cohort arrived from ten nations to work with DW. Over 18 months of practical seminars and editorial assignments, the trainees have learned the journalistic skills necessary to produce television, online and radio news. Beyond working in both Bonn and Berlin,

a two-month assignment in one of DW's foreign studios is mandatory. In addition, trainees have the choice of a month-long elective assignment, which can be at the ARD studio in Madrid or at the UN in Jamaica. The main goal of the program is for trainees to understand what makes DW correspondents' work so remarkable and to experience how colleagues from other media companies work.

And after the traineeship? Almost all of them stay with DW as editors, reporters or correspondents. ●

12

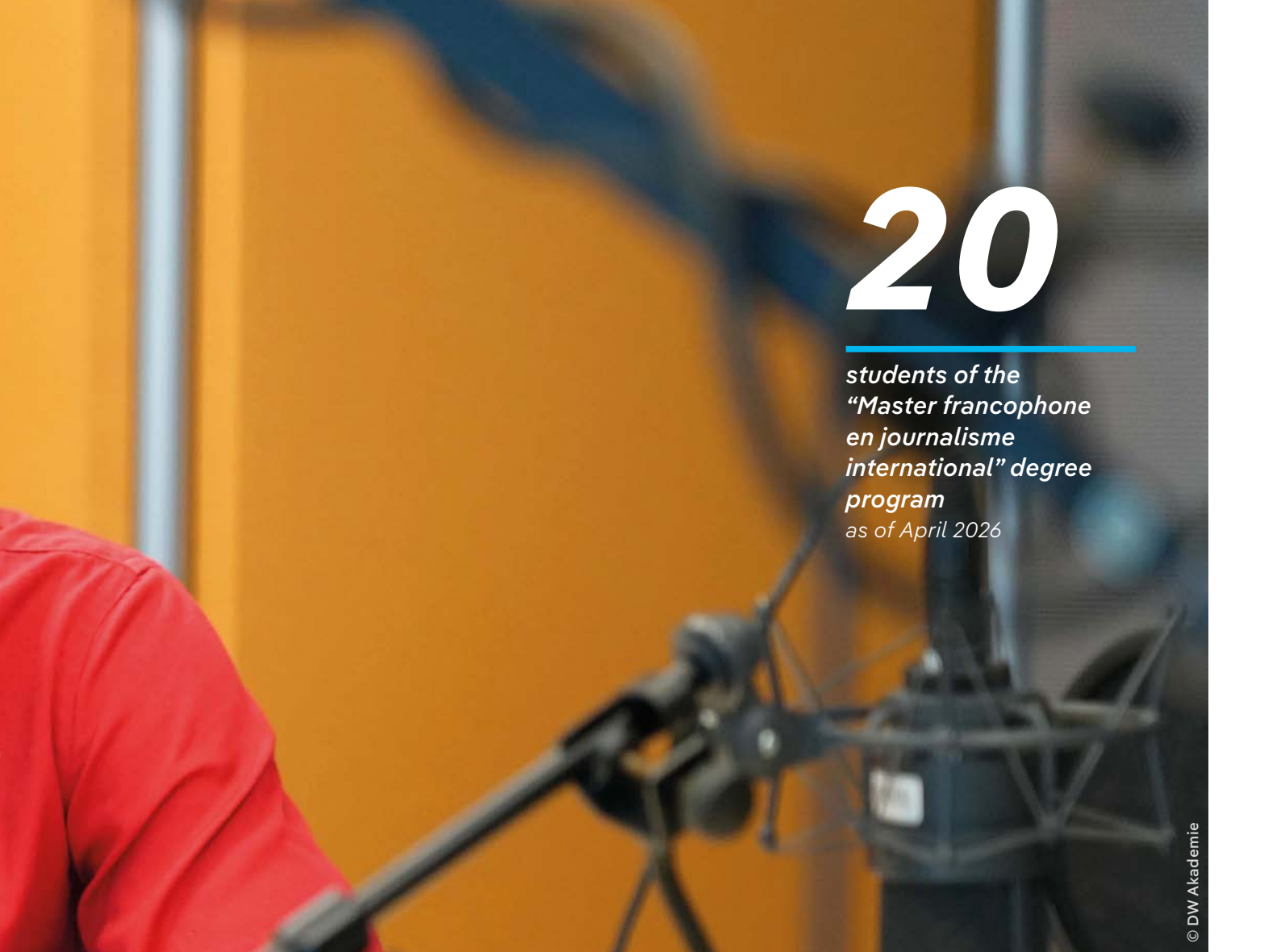
DW trainees per cohort



Weeks spent practicing at DW enable students to gain valuable journalistic experience.

Master's degrees: Qualification ensures quality

DW Akademie's master's programs give students an in-depth look at digital media production, as well as comprehensive journalistic expertise and media management skills.



20

*students of the
“Master francophone
en journalisme
international” degree
program*

as of April 2026

© DW Akademie

The students are young people from all over the world who want to use their knowledge to shape the future of the media sector in their home countries. All of them have already gained some professional experience in the media industry, media development or in editorial offices.

Studying in French in France and Bonn

The new French-language master's degree program in international journalism (MFJI) started in the 2024 academic year. The program, aimed at media professionals from the French-speaking world, is a result of a partnership between DW Akademie and the Université de Tours in France. After the first year in Bonn, MFJI students continue their education in

Tours in the second year. The program concludes with a professional internship in the students' home country and is accompanied by a scholarship.

International Media Studies: International and practice-oriented

The students in the English-language master's program in International Media Studies (IMS) come from all over the world, including Latvia, Lithuania, Zimbabwe and Albania. Over the course of two years, they gain insight into the interrelationships between media, politics and development. After graduating with a Master's degree, graduates work as media experts worldwide and contribute to strengthening the media

and freedom of expression in their home countries.

The International Media Studies program is offered through DW Akademie, Bonn University and the Bonn-Rhein-Sieg University of Applied Sciences.

318

*alumni of the International
Media Studies master's
program since 2011*

as of April 2026

72

start-ups supported
by MEDIA LOVE
TECH (2018-2025)



The winners of the MEDIA LOVES TECH 2025 Grand Prize, Fares Mallouli (left) and Mohamed Amine Macherki (right) from DJO, pose at the award ceremony in Tunisia.



From idea to market: Start-up incubator MEDIA LOVES TECH

A DW Akademie program and its Tunisian partner organization Al Khatt support digital media innovations in Tunisia.

MEDIA LOVES TECH has supported between eight and 12 start-ups annually since 2018—from idea to prototype to market entry. Participating start-ups have tackled challenging topics such as climate change in North Africa and how to help business journalists obtain reliable financial data. A

panel assesses the viability of the projects, the commitment of the teams and the feasibility of the projects in reaching their goals.

The 2025 winner is the start-up DJO, an artificial intelligence-based platform that helps Tunisian journalists transcribe, translate and create content in the local dialect of Derja with a technology-enabled solution.

Based on the program's positive experience in Tunisia, DW Akademie is expanding it to Morocco, Algeria and Libya in 2026. ●

Innovation for public dialogue

The digital transformation of public dialogue comes with opportunities and risks. Modern technology offers us endless opportunities to share information and engage in public discussions. Its limitations lie in unequal access, language barriers, algorithmic bias and government regulation. DW Akademie promotes innovations in the digital world to improve public dialogue without barriers and protected from restrictions and manipulation.

Our numbers

We set the standards

Close cooperation with local partner organizations in 57 developing and emerging countries is our strength. Together we form a global network of experts in media development. Our regional offices ensure that we are where we are needed.

© Network of Information Centers (NIC)





- Regional office
- Project countries

Afghanistan	Malawi
Albania	Mali
Armenia	Mauritania
Bangladesh	Mexico
Belarus	Moldova
Benin	Mongolia
Bhutan	Montenegro
Bolivia	Morocco
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Myanmar
Brazil	Namibia
Burkina Faso	Niger
Cambodia	North Macedonia
Colombia	Pakistan
Costa Rica	Palestinian territories
Côte d'Ivoire	Peru
Ecuador	Russia
El Salvador	Senegal
Ethiopia	Serbia
Georgia	Somalia
Ghana	South Africa
Guatemala	Syria
Honduras	Tanzania
Jordan	Tunisia
Kazakhstan	Uganda
Kenya	Ukraine
Kosovo	Uzbekistan
Kyrgyzstan	Yemen
Lebanon	Zimbabwe
Libya	

Dedicated to free media around the world

9

regional offices

187

partner organizations around
the world with which we work
closely in 2025/26
as of April 2026

78

DW Akademie projects
in 2025

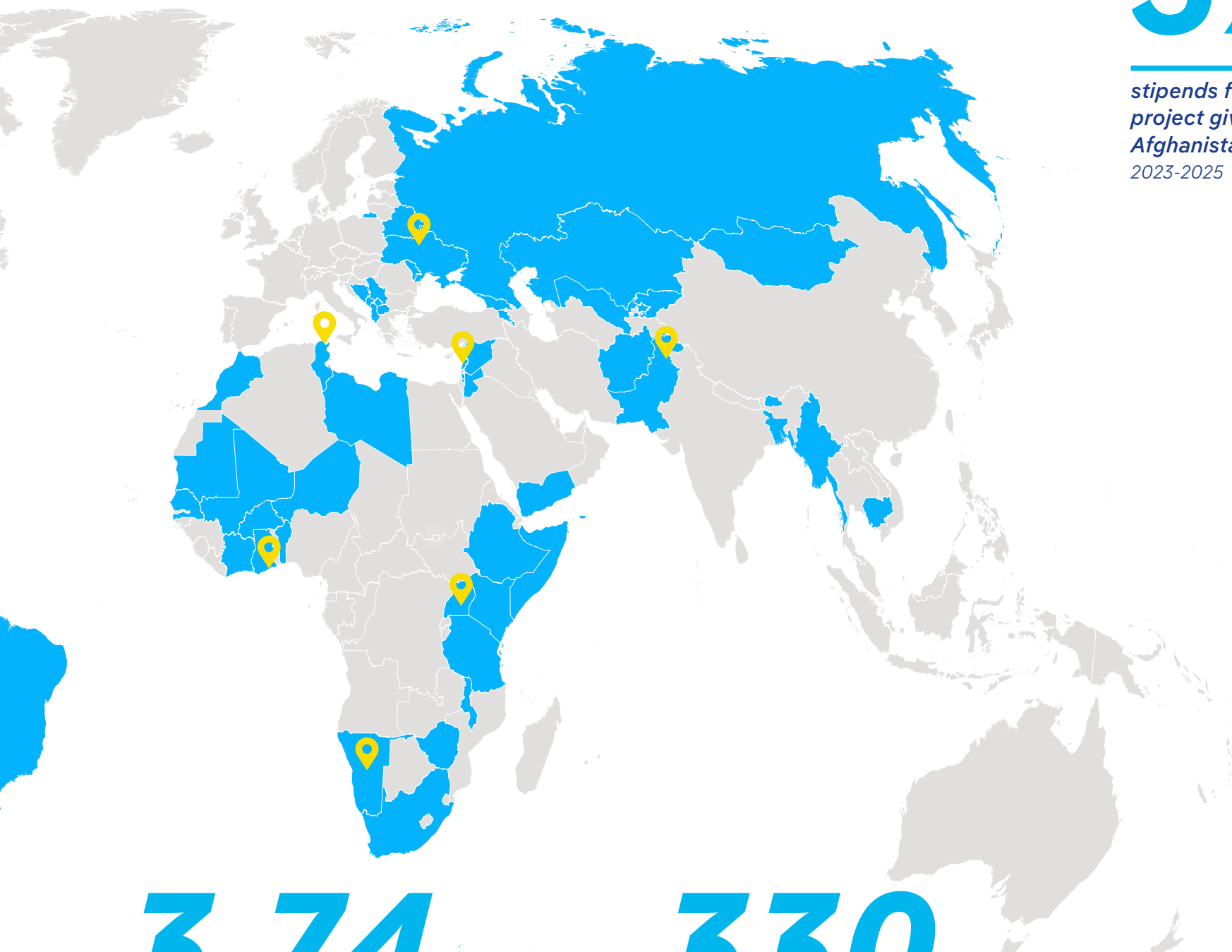
37.33

million euros in project funding from the
German Federal Ministry for Economic
Cooperation and Development, the German
Federal Foreign Office, the European Union
and other donors
Budget 2025

57

emerging economies and developing
countries where we have projects
as of April 2026





378

stipends from DW Akademie's Space for Freedom project given to exiled media workers from Afghanistan, Belarus, Russia and Central America 2023-2025

1,286

Space for Freedom consultations and trainings offered 2023-2025

20

students of the "Master francophone en journalisme international" degree program

318

alumni of the International Media Studies master's program since 2011 as of April 2026

50

languages in which the MethodKit for Podcasts is available

12

DW trainees per cohort

3.74

million euros in funding from the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media, for work we do on behalf of Deutsche Welle Budget 2025

330

people around the world whom we employ on a full or part-time basis as of April 2026

72

start-ups supported by MEDIA LOVES TECH (2018-2025)

23

community radio stations, local media outlets and media organizations from 13 countries in Africa and Latin America involved in the development of the Colmena app, that works like a digital newsroom

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