

MEDIA DEVELOPMENT

# Evaluation Report

## Executive summary Côte d'Ivoire

Counteracting the polarization of society: Advocating for conflict resolution and giving a voice to the youth

## Background

As one of the Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) reform cooperation partners in Africa, Côte d'Ivoire is increasingly a focal point of German international cooperation. Although the violent conflict that characterized the 2000s was officially resolved in 2011, Côte d'Ivoire remains highly polarized along ethno-political lines. This was most recently visible during the presidential and parliamentary elections of October 2020 and March 2021. Fear of violence remains high among the population, while trust in the political elites is low. Socio-economic inequality is immense, as a large part of the Ivorian population has not benefited from the country's strong economic growth of the last decade.

Political polarization is becoming especially apparent in the media landscape. Despite slight improvements over the past five years, media remain under the influence of political parties and independent media outlets are rare. Although more than half of the population is under 20 years of age, there are hardly any relevant or high-quality media targeted at young people. Journalism training is largely inadequate and viable business models for independent media are lacking. While freedom of the press and of information are enshrined in the Ivorian constitution, the media landscape as a whole is unable to effectively exercise its role as the fourth estate.

The key challenges in the media sector of Côte d'Ivoire are:

- lack of professionalization of journalists;
- limited journalistic independence due to precarious working conditions and political influence;
- widespread dissemination of disinformation, fake news and hate speech, especially in social media, which are mainly used by young people;

- rapidly changing media use, to which media institutions have, so far, reacted inadequately, due to lagging digitization;
- strong concentration of media in the urban centers (especially Abidjan) and the resulting disadvantage of rural populations;
- lack of viable business models for independent media professionals;
- over-regulation of the media by government, making it difficult for new media services to join the scene;
- threats to the safety of journalists.

The three-year country project in Côte d'Ivoire (2019–2021) addresses several of these challenges. It forms part of the regional program Freedom of Expression and Media Development in Africa, with the goal to “advocate for conflict resolution and give a voice to the youth”. The project is commissioned by the BMZ. To achieve its project goal, the country project works across four project lines:

- 1) **Qualification of young journalists** through multimedia-based, practical training, with special attention to digital development and conflict awareness (partner: Studio Mozaik).
- 2) **Promoting media literacy** through the training of MIL multipliers who conduct training sessions with young people on the topic of disinformation (partner: Centre d'Education pour une Société Durable, Centre ESD).
- 3) **Creating spaces for social dialogue** by holding radio debates in cooperation with local broadcasters (partner: Réseau

des Femmes Journalistes et des Professionnelles de la Communication de Côte d'Ivoire, ReFJPCI).

- 4) **Media monitoring and measures against hate speech** in the context of the presidential and parliamentary elections (partners: Plate-forme de la presse numérique de Côte d'Ivoire, PNCI, and Union Nationale des Journalistes de Côte d'Ivoire, UNJCI) and through two online discussion groups for alumni from all four project lines.

Since 2021, the measures to combat hate speech have been integrated into project line 1 and the online discussion groups into project line 3. In the area of qualification, the project has been using part of the BMZ funding as its own contribution to the EU-funded project “Esprit Jeunes, Esprit de Paix” since March 2020.

The aim of the evaluation was to promote learning within the project and help to further develop the project strategy as well as to provide the BMZ with an account of the goals that were achieved and the broad outcomes of the country project. The evaluation took place between December 2020 and March 2021. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, data was collected only virtually (interviews and focus groups via video conference, online survey). In accordance with DW Akademie specifications, the OECD-DAC criteria—relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability—served as the basis for evaluation, each of which was broken down into specific evaluation questions.

## Conclusions of the project evaluation

**Relevance:** With its four project lines and activities, the young country project addresses essential challenges of the media sector in Côte d'Ivoire. Project staff, partners and other international media development organizations active in Côte d'Ivoire, independent media professionals, and the BMZ assess the project as highly relevant in terms of its approaches,

the expertise it offers and the challenges it addresses. However, the visibility of DW Akademie's activities in Côte d'Ivoire has been, so far, rather limited. The Relevance criterion is rated as “comprehensively fulfilled”.

**Coherence:** With regard to coherence, the findings are more ambivalent. On the one

hand, external coherence is weak, partly because DW Akademie has only started to work in Côte d'Ivoire fairly recently and also as travel to and within the Côte d'Ivoire has been restricted throughout the pandemic. To address these issues, the project team has used the evaluation period to initiate steps to strengthen coordination with international media development

organizations in the country. The aim is to identify and better exploit potential synergies in the future. On the other hand, the compatibility of the country project with the goals and existing efforts of the partner organizations can be rated as very good, for the most part. The criterion Coherence is rated as “partially fulfilled”.

**Effectiveness:** All intended results of the project at the output level have either already been achieved or, according to the stakeholders interviewed, will most likely be achieved by the end of the project. Effectiveness at the outcome level is high, especially in project lines 1 and 2 and with regard to the online discussion groups. Across the other project lines, results at the outcome level cannot yet be ascertained, partly due to delays or conceptual changes in project activities brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the country project responded appropriately and swiftly to the unexpected challenges of the pandemic, so that the overall impact on the project results was limited. The criterion of Effectiveness is rated as “overall fulfilled”.

**Efficiency:** The efficiency of the country project is negatively affected by what the partner organizations perceive as very high demands, lengthy processes, as well as language barriers in dealing with contracts and financial administration. Those

involved are aware of these difficulties and are developing solutions. In contrast, the cost efficiency of the country project and the distribution of roles between the project team and partner organizations are rated well. The criterion Efficiency is rated as “partially fulfilled”.

**Impact:** Project activities that focus on young Ivorians, in particular, achieve impact that corresponds with the goals of DW Akademie’s regional program in Africa. Tangible impacts for young people can be identified in all four project lines. Impact for residents of disadvantaged and rural regions as well as for women prove more elusive so far and should be further strengthened. The criterion Impact is rated as “overall fulfilled”.

**Sustainability:** With regard to sustainability, the partners and the target groups in all project lines demonstrate a high degree of willingness to continue to carry out the work beyond the funding period. Participants in the MIL workshops and graduates of Studio Mozaik show particular interest in continuing their work, which further underlines the potential of alumni. However, the majority of the partner organizations state that they are not (yet) in a position to continue the project activities without financial support from DW Akademie. The criterion Sustainability is rated as “partially fulfilled”.

## 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.

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*The objective of the external evaluation is to provide a constructive assessment of the project results. It does not necessarily align with the perspective and planning of DW Akademie. Nevertheless, all findings were discussed in order to allow lessons learned to be incorporated into the development of future strategies.*