

MEDIA DEVELOPMENT

Evaluation Report

Executive summary Myanmar

Management and Leadership: Analyzing project partners' capacities and collaboration with DW Akademie

Background

After nearly 60 years of military dictatorship in Myanmar, many new opportunities of articulation have developed for the media and actors in civil society following the political reforms starting in 2011. It follows decades of political repression and strictest media censorship. As part of the democratization process, numerous laws were enacted (though not always implemented and not always consistent to one another), providing support to media development. Yet how fragile this positive development is was demonstrated, among other matters, by the conflicts regarding the displacement of the Rohingya, in the course of which even Aung San Suu Kyi, former idol of the democratization movement and current head of the government, lost her glory. Aside from political pressure, the Myanmar media are also subject to economic pressure as well as the challenges of digitalization (more citizens have access to the Internet than to clean drinking water). New concepts to efficiently operate media organizations (media viability) are just as necessary as promoting responsible use of digital media by media makers (media accountability) and users (media and information literacy). These challenges are flanked by a severe urban-rural divide and discrimination of ethnic minorities, also regarding access to information.

The DW Akademie project examined as part of this evaluation focuses on the chal-

lenges described above. At the outcome level, the project objective is: organizations of civil society with reference to civil rights and/or the media as well as media organizations and media producers in state-run, public-service and private media interact and create public information according to the principles of media accountability.

In accordance with the project application and two amendments (in 2018 and 2019), the project objective is implemented via seven project strands (A-G) at the output level:

- A: Creation of training opportunities to implement digital standards and reinforce digital rights
- B: Reinforcement of civil society organizations' media literacy
- C: Organizations are supported in boosting the discourse on media accountability
- D: Actors in the media and civil society develop and utilize opportunities to enhance economic performance (media viability)
- E: Extension of training for journalists in the digital field
- F: Innovative tools to facilitate Media and Information Literacy (MIL) and corresponding training for the trainers
- G: Media and civil society organizations are qualified to reveal disinformation in the social media during the 2020 election campaign

The project works with a relatively large number of implementing partners and an even larger number of cooperation partners. Therefore, in selecting the implementing partners to be actively included in the evaluation, the focus was placed on those with whom collaboration could be continued or even intensified in the following contract period. Primarily, these organizations are:

- MJI (Myanmar Journalism Institute)—project lines A, B, C, D, E, F
- VDCF (Village Development Committee Federation)—project line B
- MIDO (Myanmar ICT for Development Organization)—project lines B, F, G
- BNI (Burma News International)—project lines D, G
- DVB (Democratic Voice of Burma)—project lines B, F

Conclusions of the project evaluation

Below are overall conclusions regarding the evaluation criteria, averaging all three partner scores:

DAC Criterion (average of all assessments)	Numeric value, average	Assessment	Explanation
Relevance	4.0	Overall fulfilled	Most findings of the evaluation show that the criterion has been met.
Effectiveness	4.0	Overall fulfilled	Most findings of the evaluation show that the criterion has been met.
Efficiency	2.8	Partially fulfilled	Regarding performance, the findings of the evaluation are ambivalent.
Impact	3.4	Partially fulfilled	Regarding performance, the findings of the evaluation are ambivalent.
Sustainability	3.4	Partially fulfilled	Regarding performance, the findings of the evaluation are ambivalent.

Overall Assessment:

The goals of this evaluation are clarification regarding 1. management and leadership performance of the project partners and 2. promotion of institutional learning among the organizations involved. Hence, the evaluation focuses on the analysis of the implementing partners' management and leadership performance and its contribution to the success of the project implementation.

Considering its highly difficult initial conditions (political and economic situation in the country, precarious situation of the media, complex project architecture), the project, i.e. the implementing partners and DW Akademie's Myanmar office, has had amazing achievements. In view of management and leadership performance, this is reflected by the values for "relevance" and "effectiveness". On the whole, what is being done is strategically important, and it is also the right thing to do.

Even if due to the high level of heterogeneity of the implementing partners, any generalizations beyond this need to be worded carefully: the dimension of "efficiency"

reaches the lowest value. To improve efficiency in their processes is a challenge for all implementing partners. Some of them have already initiated restructuring and organizational development processes or are at the beginning of such processes. This is a positive perspective and should also be supported by DW Akademie in diverse ways in the follow-up project.





Regarding the dimensions of "impact" and "sustainability", it has become clear that besides strategies, structures and processes, the aspects of organizational culture should also be developed further in the organizations. After all, matters such as flat hierarchies and motivating delegation, participation and transparency, as well as innovation and conflict culture—frequently called "soft factors"—are of relevance to the latter dimensions. What became clear in the interviews with the Myanmar office team is that there is a high level of sensitivity for these factors, and in this sense the work is value oriented. This orientation should be supported further by providing selective practical support to the implementing partners regarding organizational change processes.

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 50 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.