



“Big changes start small”

Stories of people making a difference

An impact report

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Supported by the



Imprint

PUBLISHER
Deutsche Welle
53110 Bonn
Germany

RESPONSIBLE
Carsten von Nahmen

EDITORS
Petra Aldenrath
Jan Lublinski
Laura Moore
John Kluempers

LAYOUT
Jorge Loureiro

COVER PHOTO
Khalil Samrawi

TRANSLATORS
Ole Tangen Jr

PUBLISHED
March 2020

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Editorial



“Big changes start small”

In Pakistan, fear is a constant companion of many journalists. They are traumatized by terror, violence, and attempts at intimidation. Most usually receive little support from their employers, are poorly paid and often treated with contempt. Gulmina Bilal Ahmad, director of the Pakistani Non-Governmental organisation (NGO) Individualland, recognized that something had to change and opened a trauma center to help media workers suffering from psychological problems. She explicitly approached the executive floors of media houses to persuade those in charge to not only equip their employees with protective vests, but also protect them from psychological dangers and emotional suffering. Gulmina Bilal Ahmad knows that there is still a lot of work to be done but she remains optimistic.

“Big changes start small!” is her motto.

DW Akademie supports NGOs like Individualland because that is our task. We work with people, organizations, and communities who want a constructive dialogue and who contribute to an active and informed civil society. In doing so, we strengthen freedom of expression and enable people around the world to make free decisions based on independent information and reliable facts. This is particularly important in an age when quality media is increasingly being questioned.

Our mission to develop media has become increasingly complex but is now more important than ever. The digital revolution has permanently altered the media landscape. It has led to elections being manipulated via social media and populists attacking digital spaces and the people who use them. But it has also meant that people who previously had no media voice can now raise it and be heard. This has opened new opportuni-

ties for media development. Article 19 of the UN Civil Covenant, which enshrines the human right to freedom of expression and access to information, remains at the heart of our work. This right is—especially in a digital world—the prerequisite for people to be able to use reliable information and exchange that information with others.

With projects in about 50 developing and emerging countries, DW Akademie is working to strengthen the right to freedom of expression. Successful media development can only succeed if we, together with our local partner organizations, can react to changing situations and find individual, innovative, forward-looking, and long-term solutions. These vary from country to country, from region to region and from project to project. This work includes improving political and legal framework conditions, advising government agencies and NGOs, promoting the development of sustainable business models and technical innovations, and supporting press and media organizations. We work to develop digital media formats in Serbia and Montenegro and promote dual-journalism training in Bolivia. We support media services for refugees in Lebanon and strengthen media professionals in Burkina Faso.

But are these projects having an impact? Who are the people promoting them? What do the people in the individual countries gain from them? This publication takes a hard look at these questions. It presents journalistic reports on some of our worldwide projects and describes the effects of our engagement. These articles feature the varied experiences of people who are trying to tackle major challenges through small steps. Join them on their quests to achieve great change.



Carsten von Nahmen, Head of DW Akademie

Introduction



People making a difference

Around the world today, people have access to information in unprecedented abundance through social media, the Internet, newspapers, magazines, television, and radio with the exception of those living in less remote areas. Whether an earthquake is rumbling in Azerbaijan, violence is spreading in India based on false reports, or Ethiopia and Eritrea are making peace, breaking news from any part of the planet can be followed from almost anywhere as it happens. The fact that people today have a wealth of information at their disposal is good news but there is also a flip side.

Even as the amount of information available expands at a rapid pace, efforts to reduce that flow are also growing. The right to freedom of expression and information is often systematically violated. In Hungary, independent media outlets are simply being bought up by those affiliated with the government. In countries like Iraq, Venezuela, Zimbabwe, Cameroon, and India, the Internet is repeatedly switched off and the use of social media is restricted. In Bangladesh or Kyrgyzstan, women have almost no voice in the media. All over the world journalists are threatened, imprisoned, and even murdered because of their reporting.

Strengthening the human right to freedom of expression and access to reliable information is the task of DW Akademie. To achieve this, DW Akademie specifically targets people and organizations that make a difference, sometimes in small steps, sometimes in large ones. In Guatemala, Radio Sónica uses a mobile radio studio to reach young people in poor neighborhoods and give them and their concerns a voice. In Tunisia, an environmental whistleblower platform has gone live. In Pakistan, trauma centers have been set up to help media workers traumatized by terror, violence, and stress get their lives back under control.

To ensure that people get exactly the support they need, DW Akademie's worldwide media projects are designed in cooperation with local partners. While more practical training for young journalists is needed in Bolivia, in Mongolia the focus is on media self-regulation. Projects are developed to benefit disadvantaged young people, refugees, indigenous minorities, journalists, and the management of large media companies.

Petra Aldenrath, DW Akademie

DW Akademie collects and documents the impacts of its projects through a range of methods. There are three approaches that are currently standard in development cooperation: Applied studies, which enable new insights on impacts, impact-oriented monitoring performed with local partners in the course of project work, and evaluations prepared by external experts.

The present volume focuses on additional methods for presenting impacts: reports from 13 different countries and quantitative data, so-called aggregated impact data, which are regularly collected and bundled. Aggregated impact data sets provide a numerical overview of the people who have been reached through the work of DW Akademie. In 2018, for example, 9.6 million people in rural areas were provided with relevant information with the support of DW Akademie. 26.6 million people have benefited from the restructuring of their state broadcasters and now receive more diverse and attractive reporting.

In this publication you will get to know some of the people behind these figures. Their stories are not representative of the totality of the supported target groups but they show which approaches and solutions have worked for individual people and why.

In the following chapters, you will get to know Thu Thu from Myanmar who turns on her microphone in the afternoon and supplies the surrounding communities with reliable regional news and information from the country's first community radio station. You will learn how media workers in Burkina Faso are trying to halt the increasing violence in their region through their reporting. You will also meet César who once didn't believe he had what it takes to be accepted into a journalism training course and is now a respected reporter and a sought-after online journalism trainer.

I hope you enjoy these stories of people who are making a big difference in their communities and their countries.

Aggregated impacts



Explaining what it means

How many citizen journalists does DW Akademie train within the framework of its projects which support community media? How many media organizations worldwide are supported in their efforts to report on the situation in their country in a more conflict-sensitive and differentiated manner? How many people can be reached with these programs?

In order to answer these or similar questions, DW Akademie collects aggregated impact data.

- Aggregated impacts use quantitative surveys to measure what projects have achieved in a given year and in selected subject areas (training of medical professionals, digital rights, services for young people, etc.).
- Aggregated effects are calculated annually. The basis for the aggregated data 2018 were 42 projects of DW Akademie, 28 of which were financed by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the others by the European Union and the Federal Foreign Office (AA).
- Global impact data can be used to formulate key messages that are made available to the public, clients, partners, and staff. For example, when media organizations are supported in their efforts to report on the situation in their country in a more conflict-sensitive and differentiated manner thus making an important contribution to active peacebuilding in the relevant regions.
- Impact data can be used to illustrate the significance and possibilities of media projects. One example are projects in the Global South that educate young people in the responsible use of digital media. The teaching of media competence inside and outside school curriculum is an important prerequisite for young people to take advantage of the opportunities offered by social media, while at the same time being aware of its inherent risks.
- To measure the impact in selected categories such as media for refugees or programs for young people, so-called indicators are defined. These selected indicators must be collected without too much effort or they must be taken from already existing data collections. Each individual indicator is recorded in all projects using the same methods and for the same period of time.
- Since the determination of aggregated effects does not refer to a target value, no before-and-after comparison is possible. Thus no conclusions can be drawn about developments over time.

The stories in this publication build a bridge between cross-project data (which can be found in a separate box in each article) and the people behind the aggregated effects.

Anja Weber, DW Akademie



Moderator and trainer Abdoulaye Quattara teaches how to produce high quality and balanced reports with a mobile phone.

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BURKINA FASO, MALI, NIGER

Stopping the next Rwanda

Conflict-sensitive journalism

Authors **Charlotte Noblet** and **Petra Aldenrath**

AT A GLANCE

In order to allay the mistrust some of his fellow countrymen have in the media, radio journalist Jean-Carem Kabóre prefers to do his initial research without a microphone in hand. Burkina Faso was long considered the most stable country in the Sahel. But attacks by militant groups and local ethnic conflicts have increased in recent years. To counteract this, Kabóre has committed to balanced and conflict-sensitive reporting. He is a part of Réseau d'Initiatives de Journalistes (RIJ), a network of journalists committed to high-quality reporting that courageously opposes the increasing violence in the country.

Burkina Faso has long been known as a country where different religions and ethnic groups coexisted peacefully. Unfortunately, this is no longer the case as violent conflicts are on the rise. A group of committed journalists is working against this trend by establishing the PaxSahel reporting platform with colleagues from neighboring countries.

“When I’m doing research, I prefer to go out without a microphone into markets or sidewalk cafes,” said 35-year-old radio journalist Jean-Carem Kaboré, acknowledging the distrust his fellow countrymen have of the press. Listening and building trust are important aspects of his work. Nevertheless, Kaboré always carries a microphone, pen and paper but keeps them in his backpack. Reporting is what he does best.

“As a journalist, you have to be on location. That way you get different information first-hand,” he said. However, the journalist does not conduct interviews on the street but at his workplace in the offices of “Radio rurale du Burkina,” (Rural Radio Burkina) a radio station in Burkina Faso, West Africa. To make his guests feel welcome and to show that he appreciates their presence, Kaboré always hands them a small plastic bottle of water.

Radio rurale du Burkina is part of the national radio and television company of Burkina Faso, Radiodiffusion-Télévision de Burkina (RTB). It is headquartered in the center of Ouagadougou, the country’s capital and home to two million people. The building is a typical 70s design, square and functional. Inside, the walls are painted a sandy yellow color that has not seen a new coat for some time.

Several hundred people work at RTB, 55 of them at Radio rurale du Burkina. On this afternoon, the studios are mostly empty

with little trace of the hectic atmosphere typical of most newsrooms. Some journalists are doing research on their computers while others are enjoying the cool wind flowing from strategically placed fans. Most are drinking instant coffee and discussing the new legislation passed in June 2019 which prohibits them from reporting on terrorist acts before the government has issued an official press release. The legislation has made their work as journalists much harder as such attacks need to be covered by them and their colleagues around the country.

Reports from a conflict area

Burkina Faso is one of the poorest countries in the world, with 40 percent of the population living below the poverty line. The country is also suffering from the negative effects of climate change as once productive farmland is being devoured by withered, dead fields. More and more people are losing their main source of income and are leaving their villages for the city. But even there, good jobs are scarce.

For a long time Burkina Faso was considered the most stable country in the Sahel. But the number of attacks by militant groups has increased, as have local conflicts between ethnic groups. These developments have made the job of a journalist much more dangerous. The West African country has a diverse





In Burkina Faso, shepherds and farmers often quarrel over the shrinking acreage of arable land.

AGGREGATED IMPACT DATA

Conflict-sensitive reporting: In 2018, DW Akademie has supported 163 media organizations in reporting on the situation in their country in a more conflict-sensitive and differentiated manner. Approximately 3.5 million people in 11 countries receive more balanced information about conflicts and crises. The media make an important contribution to active peace-building.

Countries: Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Libya, Myanmar, Tunisia

and pluralistic media landscape and in terms of press freedom, Reporters Without Borders rates the country as one of the success stories on the African continent. But the increasingly tense security situation—especially in the north of the country—has made it difficult or even impossible for reporters to do their job. In order to avoid becoming targets themselves, some journalists do not file any stories about conflicts or they censor themselves. Others have chosen to report one-sidedly, resorting to clichés and thus contributing to the escalation.

To counter this trend, the Réseau d’Initiatives de Journalistes (RIJ), an association of media professionals, has committed itself to balanced, conflict-sensitive reporting. Their journalists produce high-quality reporting that courageously opposes

the increasing violence in the country. Kaboré is one of these reporters. He has hosted a radio program since 2017 on which he regularly reports on the growing conflicts, most frequently those between shepherds and farmers.

“There is less and less arable land here,” he said while taking a short break. “Conflicts between individuals always lead to disputes between entire communities.”

It was clear in his voice how much the tense situation in his homeland troubles him. In the past, Burkina Faso was known for its tolerant coexistence of different ethnic groups and religions. Today, conflicts seem to be escalating more easily.

In Yirgou in the north of the country, for example, there was a massacre in early January 2019 in which 49 people died. That number comes from official figures but local sources put the number of dead at 200. The cause was six unsolved murders, including that of a village chief. The inhabitants of the village, most of whom are Mossi, the largest ethnic group in Burkina Faso, suspected cattle ranchers of the Peulh ethnic group. Alleging threats to their security, the self-defense militia Koglweogo retaliated, causing 6,000 people to flee in panic. The massacre at Yirgou has been traumatic for Burkina Faso. After the killings, members of the Mossi and Peulh and some 60 other ethnic groups demonstrated together for tolerance and against hate. It is a complex issue that Kaboré approaches with systematic research and careful choice of words.

Learning from Rwanda

In 1994, 75 percent of the Tutsi ethnic minority were murdered in Rwanda by the Hutu majority. According to reports, the killings were incited by a local radio station and an estimated 800,000 to one million people were killed. The genocide of Rwanda also left deep scars in Burkina Faso. In 2000, the DED, the German Development Service, started an initiative in Burkina Faso to train journalists in order to prevent such a genocide in the future. Media professionals were taught that their reporting has the power to influence public opinion and fuel sentiment but can also be used to de-escalate crises. Seven years later, this group formed its own organization, the RIJ, that is now a project partner of DW Akademie. The goal of the partnership is to improve the quality of reporting and media services in Burkina Faso.

RIJ now has 300 volunteer members from radio, television, print, and online media. One of them is Romaine Raissa Zidouemba, a long-time radio journalist for RTB who has been RIJ's coordinator since January 2019.

"With the support of DW Akademie we have built up a pool of trainers. We offer advanced training on conflict-sensitive journalism and on how to produce content using a mobile phone, so-called 'mobile reporting,'" she said. The best participants are then trained to become part of the country's network of trainers.

Radio reporter Kaboré is now responsible for RIJ communications and knows the aims of the association very well. In 2017, he submitted one of his reports for the "PaxSahel Prize," a competition for conflict-sensitive journalism in the region, which was launched by the RIJ with the support of DW Akademie.

"I won the prize even though I didn't know what conflict-sensitive journalism actually meant!" he recalled. It has always been important for Kaboré to interview various people involved in his research, check sources and then report independently. "But I used to report more on instinct," he said.

Since the award ceremony, Kaboré has taken part in two training courses on conflict-sensitive journalism with lasting

PROFILE

Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger

Who implements the projects?

- Réseau d'Initiatives de Journalistes (RIJ) (Burkina Faso), Réseau des journalistes sensibles aux conflits (Niger), Réseau SKBo (Mali, Ivory Coast, and Burkina Faso)— Three journalist networks in the Sahel region specializing in conflict-sensitive journalism.

How does the project work?

- Since 2014, the project has been training journalists working for leading media and selected community radio stations to use their mobile phones to create news pieces and how to report in a conflict-sensitive manner. These skills are intended to counter the increasing violence in their home countries of Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger.
- The best participants in the courses are then trained to be trainers.
- The organization overseeing the Project, Réseau d'Initiatives de Journalistes (RIJ), is developing the website paxsahel.com, which features thoroughly researched, balanced, and conflict-sensitive articles.

What are the difficulties?

- Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger are increasingly threatened by Islamist terrorism. In the northern provinces of Burkina Faso, there are almost daily attacks, especially against schools and other state institutions.

- In the past three years, three major attacks in the capital Ouagadougou have caused lasting damage to the peaceful coexistence of Burkina Faso's many ethnic groups.
- In all three countries, increasingly larger regions are being declared restricted areas, thereby limiting the scope of DW Akademie's efforts.

What has the media project achieved?

- RIJ is the only association in Burkina Faso that supports conflict-sensitive contributions by journalists and makes them available online. Thanks to such professional reporting, the public receives more and more independent and balanced information. This makes an important contribution to constructive conflict resolution.

What are the highlights?

- Since 2016, RIJ has been awarding the "Pax Sahel" prize for conflict-sensitive journalism. The award ceremony in November 2019 was reported on by all major Burkinabe media outlets. Minister of State Siméon Sawadogo hosted the evening and praised the work of the journalists as an important contribution to the de-escalation of conflict.
- A trainer pool for conflict-sensitive reporting has been created. These trainers are now being utilized by local and international organizations.

➔ rij-burkina.org

success. Today he writes his reports even more consciously and pays special attention to every word he says in his radio presentations.

“Media professionals were taught that their reporting has the power to influence public opinion and fuel sentiment but can also be used to deescalate crises.

“The focus of my reporting is no longer just on the problems but on possible solutions and I avoid offensive language and prejudices,” he said.

Conflict-sensitive journalism is an enormous task

Kaboré’s colleague Abdoulaye Quattara works in Bobo Dioulasso, Burkina Faso’s second largest city located in the west of the country. He is a correspondent there for the radio

station “Ouaga FM” and is now also an experienced trainer with DW Akademie. After a five-hour drive over bumpy roads, Quattara arrived in the capital for the advanced training course “Mobile Journalism for Advanced Students.”

When he stopped on the way to stretch his legs, the journalist was recognized by people at the roadside who pulled out their phones to take selfies with him. People want a photo with Quattara not just because he is on the radio but also because he is the co-organizer of a fairytale festival popular in the country. He is also regularly invited to appear on TV talk shows. Quattara witnessed the October 2014 uprising, when a series of protest and riots broke out over the longtime rule of then President Blaise Compaoré and forced him to flee the country.

“If you had talked about neutral reporting and peace after the 2014 uprising, you would have been suspected of supporting the government,” he explained. Nowadays, he said, the population understands that the press has an independent role and is not supposed to be either for or against the government.





Romaine Raissa Zidouemba coordinates the RIJ network of journalists.

RIJ is so far the only association in Burkina Faso that supports conflict-sensitive contributions by journalists and makes them available online. Article after article is discussed, analyzed, and corrected. Only then is it published. Each year, around 36 journalists receive continuous training.

“When you look at the first reports and compare them with those written a year later, you notice a big difference,” said RIJ coordinator Zidouemba. “After a while, the journalists take it upon themselves not to use insulting or discriminatory words and interview not only government officials or village leaders, but also people on the street,” she continued.

“RIJ is so far the only association in Burkina Faso that supports conflict-sensitive contributions by journalists and makes them available online.”

Training courses for conflict-sensitive reporting are also popular in the neighboring countries of Mali and Niger. Zidouemba explained that all three countries have similar problems: terrorism, migration, and social tension. To help journalists network, RIJ launched paxsahel.com, a cross-border project to promote peaceful conflict resolution, in 2015. Journalists from the Sahel are now able to share information, exchange experiences, write articles together, and post them online. The website is currently being expanded and updated. In the future, current information from the Sahel zone and on the situation of the press will be available alongside analyses by experts, tutorials, and documentation—all in conflict-sensitive language, of course.

“Reporting on conflicts is a tedious task,” said Zidouemba. So far, RIJ’s work has focused on supporting several community radio stations in the north of the country by training and professionalizing its permanent and freelance staff. However, with the immense upswing in the use of social media, the RIJ now faces a new task.

“The people of Burkina Faso want to understand situations. They are looking for information, not only from the major national media outlets, but also on social media,” said Boureima Salouka, the local coordinator for DW Akademie. In the run-up to the presidential elections in 2020, Salouka has a big task ahead of him as he is coordinating a training series on fact-checking.

“Our community is made up of journalists and well-known bloggers. We want to systematically check information for its truthfulness and are developing a digital platform where we will publish verified articles and statements from public figures. Through this verification, we hope to improve the quality of election reporting,” he said.

This is an enormous challenge that the journalists are taking upon themselves but it is a challenge that they are committed to. Hopefully Burkina Faso will be a more peaceful country because of their hard work.



Vanecia Cooper and Susarah Fleermuys hope that the MiLLi* training courses will improve their job prospects.

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NAMIBIA

The MiLLi* movement

A new media literacy project excites and inspires young Namibians

Author **Dagmar Wittek**

AT A GLANCE

When he was a student, Tangi lost a lot of money after he fell for a fake Internet beauty. These days he knows better. Tangi is now a trainer with MiLLi*, a network of committed young people who promote a reflective approach to media. Young MiLLi* members are trained to recognize fraud, fake news, and hate speech. They also learn to produce their own reports with which they can confidently pass on their knowledge to other young Namibians.

MiLLi* brings media literacy to life. Like a snowball, this project is expanding and gaining speed. In just three years, almost 1,000 young people in all regions of Namibia have learned to use media critically and reflectively. Now the project is expanding across Africa.

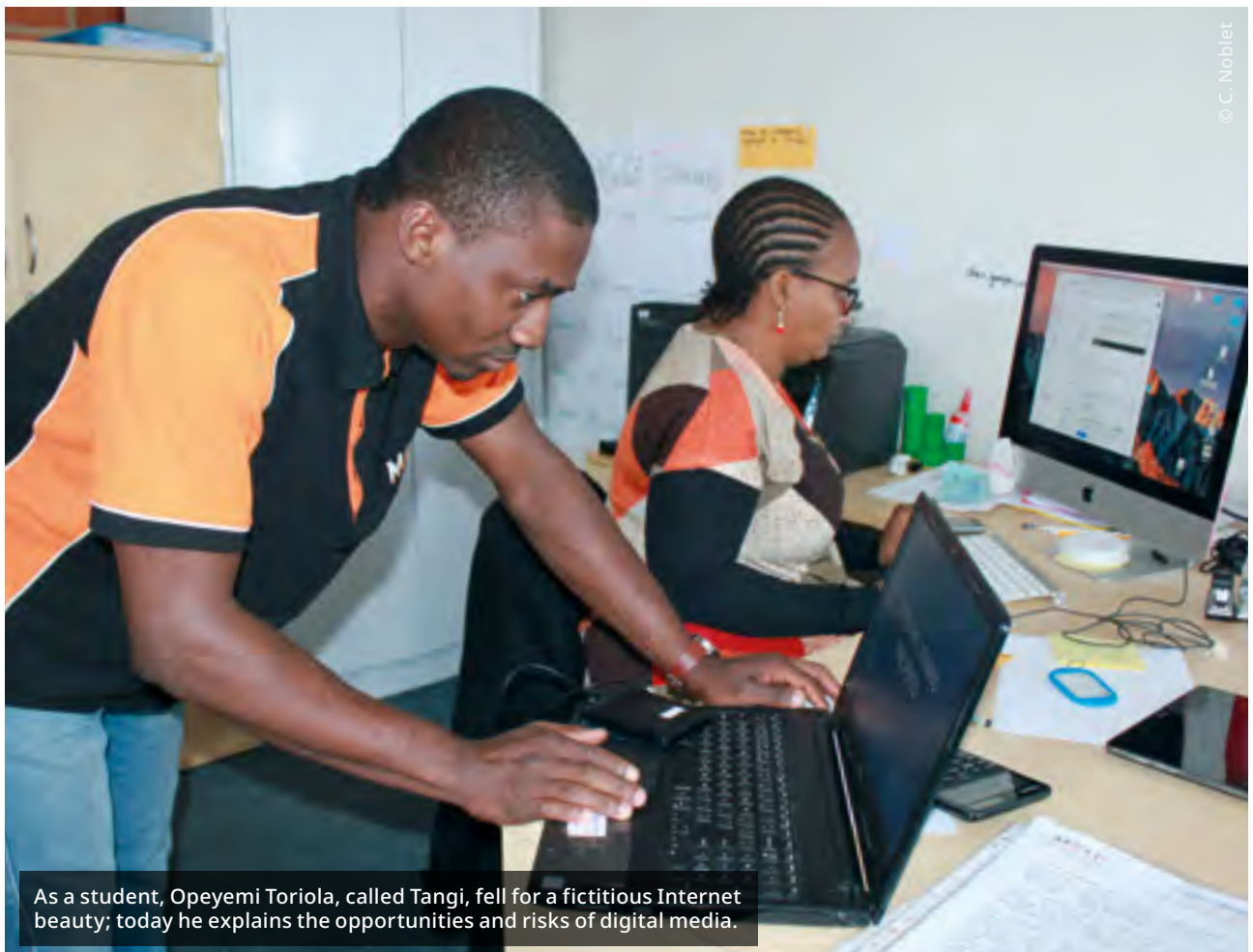
Tangi has paid dearly for his naive use of social media. The Nigerian, whose full name is Opeyemi Toriola, came to study in Namibia in 2015. His open-minded, happy-go-lucky manner made it easy to make friends who he connected with on various social media platforms. Through WhatsApp, Tangi connected with a girl from the north of the country and flirted with her for months. She even sent him seductive photos. Eventually he sent her money so that she could recharge her phone and could come and visit him in Windhoek.

“Gullible as I was, I did that,” said 25-year-old Tangi, obviously embarrassed. “I simply took everything I saw on social media at face value.” But the girl never existed and Tangi’s money was gone. He had become another victim of so-called “catfishing.”

Learning to navigate online media

Laughing, Tangi proclaimed that he will no longer be fooled by such scams as he flips through his manual for MiLLi* media trainers. MiLLi* stands for the Media and Information Literacy Learning Initiative, a cooperation of the College of the Arts (Cota) in Windhoek and DW Akademie. The MiLLi* initiative teaches young people how to handle media responsibly and critically, a central goal of Media and Information Literacy (MIL). Tangi has been an active participant since the program’s founding in 2016 and does not want others to have the same bad experiences he did.

“I was fed up with the digital world—but then along came MiLLi*,” he said.



As a student, Opeyemi Toriola, called Tangi, fell for a fictitious Internet beauty; today he explains the opportunities and risks of digital media.



MiLLi* founder Joost van de Port is pleased that a true MIL community has emerged in Namibia.

Tangi first saw a flyer for the MiLLi* Summer School at a local youth organization in Okahandja and soon found himself as one of the first to be sent to the ten-day intensive MiLLi* course via the National Youth Network. There he trained as a media coach for youth groups. Today he is one of the program's most experienced coaches. Tangi leads teenagers through three-day workshops that are both fun and practical. Young people learn how they can distinguish fake news from real news and which rules they should follow when posting, chatting, and joining discussions in forums. They also learn how to produce their own content. The courses are conducted with the help of specially developed MiLLi* training guides. Modules are available for photography, radio, video, and music as well as for social media topics.

Tangi is now studying film at Cota and is known among his fellow students as someone who always scrutinizes everything critically and has enormous media literacy. Tangi is proud that many of them now want to join and learn from MiLLi*.

"If we want to make Namibia, Africa, and ultimately, the world more livable, then we need to work from the ground up, we have to contribute in small steps to create a better functioning, more responsible society," he said.

After one of Tangi's workshops, young people are frequently so enthusiastic that they immediately apply for a MiLLi* coaching course. They yearn to also teach other young people how to use the media in a more competent way. However, only the best are selected for the Summer School, which now gets three applications for each available spot. An important selection criterion is whether the applicant is already involved in youth work in his

or her community or in local media or in church congregations. In just three years, about 90 trainers have already completed the course and about 1,000 young people throughout Namibia have improved their media skills.

MiLLi* had come at the right time, said Pecka Semba, Regional Officer at the Namibian Ministry of Education. "We are living in the midst of a media, information, and technology explosion. Every day we see and share topics on social media that we should be ashamed of like hate speech, cyberbullying, and so on."

“ The MiLLi* initiative teaches young people how to handle media responsibly and critically.

Through MiLLi*, a wide network of young people has emerged, which is also expanding into small villages. MiLLi* trainings are not considered merely lesson but is now a movement. They are fun, true-to-life, and practical. Unlike the usual lectures in crowded classrooms, groups are manageable with up to 12 participants and rely on dialogue between the young people. The coaches wear their orange and black MiLLi* polo shirts with pride. There is even a MiLLi* anthem which everyone knows and enjoys swinging to its rhythm.

The enthusiasm of young people from all corners of the country has enabled them to master one of Namibia's biggest challenges: bridging the gap between cities and rural areas. This was the goal from the outset for MiLLi* founder Joost van de Port, a shirt-sleeved and sun-tanned Dutchman who is the former head of the Institute for Media Studies at Cota.

“Young people—even away from the cities—are recognizing the opportunities and risks of media, such as radio, TV, and the Internet, and are learning to use them for themselves,” he said.

Rural social media freaks

270 miles south of Windhoek lies the town of Mariental, population 12,000. Wind from the Kalahari sweeps through the streets lined with a supermarket, a clothes shop, several beverage markets, and many shops for car accessories and agricultural machinery. The place offers young people few recreational activities. Under-35s make up more than 70 percent of the population. Near the train station, where locomotives rarely stop and blades of grass grow wildly between the tracks, is the public library, housed in a single-story, square building. The inconspicuous building is popular with young Marientalers. Dozens of children and teenagers in school uniforms congregate there. Most are eagerly typing on their cell phones while the near dozen public computer stations are all occupied.

Susarah Fleermuys, a self-described “social media freak,” is a regular at the library. She spends most of her time on her smartphone scrolling through Google, YouTube, Facebook, and WhatsApp. The library is the only place in Mariental with free Internet access. She has been looking for a job for years and lives—like almost all of her family members—hand to mouth. Most of their relatives are unemployed or engage in odd jobs on surrounding sheep and cattle farms. With an unemployment rate of more than 33 percent, it’s all about taking any job that comes along.

An acquaintance told Susarah that she could increase her chances of getting a job through MiLLi* so Susarah signed up for a workshop. Not only does she want to learn how to properly engage on social media, she also wants to be more self-confident and to be able to present her own strengths. For her, MiLLi* is an opportunity for a better life.

PROFILE

Namibia

Who implements the projects?

- MiLLi* is a Media and Information Literacy (MIL) learning initiative that promotes media literacy among young people.

How does the project work?

- Since 2016, young people have been learning to use media consciously, critically, and analytically in practical workshops, as well as to pass on their knowledge of MIL to other young people.
- Workshops are organized by MiLLi*, a Namibian association run by partner organizations and former participants.

What are the difficulties?

- Media literacy currently receives little attention and has hardly any priority in the Namibian education system.

What has the media project achieved?

- In just three years, MiLLi* has already reached around 1,000 young people throughout Namibia and trained around 90 young trainers. The young people address media in a reflective manner and learn to recognize fake news and hate speech. They produce their own contributions and learn to confidently pass on their knowledge.

- Working with MiLLi* is seen as an opportunity for personal and professional development and is viewed as a plus point when looking for a job.
- Interest groups and NGOs are increasingly involved in MIL issues at the political level and advocate for it to be included in the education system.

What are the highlights?

- MiLLi* is doing real pioneering work with its model. The teaching of media competence through practical peer-to-peer learning outside of school, the emergence of a MIL community and the high degree of self-organization are unique in Africa.
- Young people are proud to wear MiLLi* t-shirts and to belong to the MiLLi* family—the FaMiLLi*. The concept has been so successful that a nationwide MIL community has been created, which is now even expanding beyond national borders.
- MiLLi* serves as a model and pilot for other African countries. In 2019, MiLLi* implemented cooperation projects in Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Uganda, Ghana, and Lesotho.

➔ facebook.com/millnamibia



MiLLi* trainer Simon Paulus

AGGREGATED IMPACT DATA

Media and Information Literacy: In 2018, 520 multipliers or change agents have given young people in 12 countries greater media competence, or Media and Information Literacy (MIL). As a result of the training programs, 7,400 young people can now use the media at their disposal responsibly. They can analyze content more efficiently, make informed decisions and differentiate between objective news content and rumors or propaganda. They have the chance to better exercise their right to freedom of expression and access to information. Furthermore, 172,000 pupils have taken part in MIL-classes as part of their curriculum.

Countries: Burundi, Cambodia, Guatemala, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Moldova, Namibia, Palestinian Territories, Serbia, Tunisia, Ukraine

Today, the 29-year-old and a friend are attending a MiLLi* workshop led by coach Simon Paulus. The new participant is learning how to compose photos using different perspectives, which message the picture should send out, and how it all works. The focus is on the questions and techniques that the critical handling of images entails, including reflection and analysis. Simon, a social worker at a telephone hotline, runs the workshops on a part-time basis.

“MiLLi* has completely changed me,” explained the 33-year-old. Before he posts anything, he always thinks about what he wants to do with it, what the post offers others, and whether it is relevant and appropriate regarding the context in which he publishes it.

“I used to present myself as a partier on Facebook with a beer bottle in hand,” he said. Now he no longer posts such photos knowing that a potential employer could find them on the Internet.

Olivia Ebas (30), a member of the board of MiLLi* and a passionate trainer, is well versed in the vast abuses on social media in Namibia. Her phone is full of tweets and WhatsApp messages spewing hate speech, racism, and fake news.

“It divides a democratic society and is a breeding ground for conflict,” said Olivia. For many Namibians, MiLLi* is the only organization in the country that is doing something about it by educating young people and laying the foundations for informed action.

MiLLi* takes Africa

Young people in cities and in the countryside have shown great interest in strengthening media literacy and passing their knowledge on to others as multipliers. Juliet Amoah also desires this domino effect for her home country of Ghana. She has participated in several MiLLi* training sessions and workshops at the Windhoek College of the Arts and is now a believer.

“Ghana needs MiLLi*,” she said. “We have to act now.”

Amoah heads the Ghanaian non-governmental organization Penplusbytes. She is an eloquent and resolute woman committed to good governance and a constructive approach to new technologies. Her experiences back home illustrate that young Ghanaians are uncritical with the media and easily fall for false reports and manipulated information.

“Integrating MIL into the program of Cota is exemplary and clever,” said Amoah. Her long-term goal for Ghana is to integrate MIL into its national school curriculum. Experts from Uganda, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, and Lesotho—countries where DW Akademie is also active—have also looked at the Namibian project and have started to implement similar programs based on the MiLLi* model.

In order to demonstrate just how easy it is to manipulate images, trainer Tangi likes to show a photo of an child allegedly kidnapped for ritual purposes. The photo, which was in fact widely circulated via WhatsApp, would cause quite a stir not only in Namibia, but also in many other African countries. His point is to show that such photos cannot be understood without context revealing that it was actually a cropped section of another, larger photo.

Tangi was able to halt the spread of this photo in his WhatsApp groups by presenting his contacts with the actual story behind the photo. His friends subsequently shared the true story. His small contribution in the battle against fake news is one that he is proud of even today.





The way into the spotlight was not easy for orphan Paul Kayonga.

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UGANDA

Out of the classroom, into the newsroom

Author **Ole Tangen Jr**

AT A GLANCE

After studying mass communication, Paul Kayonga applied for the Media Challenge, a journalism competition modeled after a TV talent show. He won and was immediately offered a job by a noted media company where he is now a popular TV presenter. The competition is organized by the Media Challenge Initiative (MCI). The organization stands out from the traditional training programs in Uganda's media sector because of its combination of practice-oriented training courses and fun competitions.

After gaining skills from a hands-on media training program, journalist Paul Kayonga transitioned quickly from university student to full-time TV reporter. He now is an influential journalist for one of Uganda's top TV stations, seeking the truth while navigating the country's difficult political situation.

Soon after reporter Paul Kayonga arrived at the newsroom on the fourth floor of a high-rise in the Ugandan capital of Kampala, a dusty metropolis on the shores of Lake Victoria with around one million inhabitants, he received a WhatsApp message. According to the source, a small row house had caught fire and neighbors had to break through a concrete wall to get the occupants out. Firefighters were able to extinguish the blaze before it spread to neighboring houses but three people, including a toddler, were severely burned and taken to a local hospital.

For Kayonga, a young TV reporter for Nile Broadcasting Services (NBS), a popular locally-owned TV news channel, this was news worth covering. "For our Luganda audience, this is an important story," he said before hopping on the back of a boda-boda (motorcycle taxi) and heading across town. While English is the country's official language, around 16 million people, mostly in Uganda's central region including Kampala, speak Luganda.

Kayonga has been an on-air reporter at NBS for less than two years, delivering packages in both English and Luganda. In that short time, the 25-year-old has cemented himself as a rising star in the national media scene. He has covered corruption, political scandals, protests, and breaking news for NBS. To reach the largest-and youngest-audience possible, reports are posted on Facebook and YouTube and often adapted into online articles.

For most Ugandans, success comes to those who work hard and "chase" after jobs and income. Making ends meet by working one nine to five job is not a reality for most Ugandans and

steady employment is almost non-existent so extra effort and hours are required for Ugandans to find work and earn a living. They call it "hustling."

This is the daily reality for the country's youth. People under 30 make up 77 percent of the country's population of over 44 million. This is also the reality for young journalists who have to not only chase jobs, but also chase stories that hold those in power to account all while maintaining journalistic standards. It's a delicate balancing act that Kayonga strives to achieve.

"As young journalists in Uganda, we have to hustle to get the story right," said Kayonga. "When we get it right, we compel young people to confront their prejudices and bring them into the political conversation."

Journalism's role as a check to corruption and to political and economic exploitation in Uganda is a reason Kayonga believes that the country needs more well-trained, professional young reporters with both the courage and the know-how needed to investigate government malfeasance.

The long road to journalism

The road to the television spotlight was not an easy one for Kayonga. After both of his parents died before he was seven years old, he moved in with a network of extended family members in and around Mpigi, a trading center surrounded by small-scale farms around 30 kilometers west of Kampala. Like most rural areas of Uganda, Mpigi is a poor district where access to a quality education is limited and most adults work in agriculture or do casual labor.

Before long, this curious young boy caught the eye of Jane Nabatanzi, the headmistress of St. Catherine Secondary School, a nearby institution that offers education opportunities to children who cannot afford school fees. "He was this little boy with these big eyes like a Chihuahua, small but also smart and tough," said Nabatanzi. "He was not the best student but I decided to give him a chance." She gave him a scholarship and he was soon attending her boarding school and calling her mum. Before long, he was the top student in the school and had been accepted into a prestigious university.

Kayonga was motivated to pursue a career in journalism after watching his stepbrother host a radio show at a local station. Upon completing his A-levels, Kayonga went on to complete

AGGREGATED IMPACT DATA

Training as media professionals: In 2018, DW Akademie has supported 67 practice-oriented, contemporary training programs for young journalists in 14 countries. 1,150 students at partner institutions have received degrees. This is an important basis for professional and diverse reporting.

Countries: Bangladesh, Bolivia, Georgia, Ghana, Guatemala, Lebanon, Libya, Mongolia, Myanmar, Namibia, Palestinian Territories, Serbia, Uganda, Ukraine

a B.A. in Mass Communication at St. Lawrence University in Kampala. Like many of his fellow university students, he found himself on the verge of graduation with little prospects of landing a good job in journalism.

Much theory, little practice

Uganda produces far more university graduates than it does good job opportunities so competition for open positions can be fierce. The main hurdle facing journalism graduates in Uganda is the lack of professional training opportunities like traineeships or internships. Aspiring scribes leave university with a wealth of theoretical knowledge but few of the proven technical skills required in a fast-paced and ever-changing media environment. This makes media executives reluctant to hire fresh graduates.

It's a no-win situation as graduates lack access to the proper training only available through employment and employers reluctant to hire them without it. Abaas Mpindi, a media trainer and the CEO of the Media Challenge Initiative (MCI), a youth-driven nonprofit supported by DW Akademie, noticed this gap and set out to fill it.

The mission of the Media Challenge Initiative is to “build the next generation of journalists in Africa, through training, mentorship, and experiential peer-to-peer learning. The initiative is rooted in the desire to create opportunities and platforms for other young journalists to have access to opportunities like jobs and internships,” said Mpindi. Media Challenge Initiative begins its program by offering hands-on trainings focused on video production, writing, and on-air presentation at most of the universities and professional journalism schools in Uganda. The goal is to build upon the theoretical approach to journalism taught at the college level (ethics, writing basics, research methods, etc). The Media Challenge Initiative has also created networking platforms that link the participants to employers through the challenge competition, professional mentorships, and other related events.

“Graduates may have the passion and the drive, but they don't have the strategic connections that are needed to find that first job,” adds Mpindi.



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Exposing the ills of society: Uganda needs well-trained and courageous journalists.

From the stage to the screen

During his final year at university, Kayonga saw a flyer for a training program organized by the Media Challenge Initiative and signed up. By bringing together training and a high-level competition, the Media Challenge Initiative has set itself apart from more traditional journalism programs in Uganda. It is this combination that Dr. Fred Kakooza, journalism professor at Makerere University in Kampala, thinks can foster more interaction between educators, students and employers. Makerere is one of the Media Challenge Initiative's partner universities. "Universities like Makerere work hard to properly train our graduates but we are limited by resources and personnel," said Kakooza. "Many of our students have taken part in the Media Challenge Initiative and have had success in both the program and in finding gainful employment."

Seeing an opportunity for professional growth, Kayonga later took part in the program's Inter-University Media Challenge, a journalism competition bringing together students from nine Ugandan universities. Each year over 1.000 students learn new, marketable skills at campuses around Uganda. After the trainings, the best 360 participants are invited to display their newly acquired techniques through the Media Challenge competition. After specialized training and production sessions, select participants are invited to submit their final reports at a competi-

tion modeled after "Britain's Got Talent," complete with judges, a large stage, television cameras, and a cheering audience.

Kayonga's report on the challenges faced by women in the media industry, the topic for that year's competition, wowed his colleagues, the organizers, and members of the media in attendance. After the judges deliberated, Kayonga, wearing his finest suit and tie, was asked to step onto the stage and accept the award for best political reporter, beating out 11 other young journalists. "The Media Challenge Initiative was a great program because it shaped my destination. It got me out of the classroom and into the newsroom," he said.

Watching Kayonga accept his award were representatives of NBS, who became interested in this energetic student who could not only deliver a professional news report but also appeared cool under the pressure of the competition. They immediately offered him a three-month internship, which later led to an offer of a full-time position.

Kayonga's performance since joining the station has impressed Joseph Kigozi, the chief strategy officer of Next Media Services, the parent company of NBS. "I've seen him do stories that would normally have been done by journalists ten years his senior and he's not scared to do it, to face the heat," said Kigozi.

PROFILE

Uganda

Who implements the projects?

- Media Challenge Initiative (MCI) is an NGO that offers further education and practical training for budding journalists.

How does the project work?

- Since 2016, students and graduates in journalism and communication have been taking part in journalism training courses. The best are invited to the annual "Media Challenge" competition and can present their work live to the media and an interested audience. A jury decides the winner.
- Participants in the journalism training courses learn practical skills that are important for everyday work, such as writing their own articles and operating technical equipment.
- Participants also join a network that enables them to make contact with potential employers.

What are the difficulties?

- Although local media companies use MCI's training programs for finding suitable employees, MCI receives little support from the media industry and is dependent on funding from donors.

What has the media project achieved?

- Participation in MCI training courses has meant that participants have been able to start their careers with the necessary skills. In the training sessions they have built upon their theoretical knowledge from university with practical experience.
- Several candidates in the "Media Challenge" competition have already been hired by media companies.

What are the highlights?

- The closing gala of the annual "Media Challenge" has become a highlight of the project. Based on the model of a TV casting show, the gala allows contestants to present journalistic contributions on a stage and in front of running cameras and an audience of the stars and starlets of the Ugandan media scene.

[➔ mciug.org](http://mciug.org)

Well-trained journalists as a check to corruption

Politics has always been a passion for Kayonga who regularly listened to radio reports and read newspapers and books on history. But reporting on politics in Uganda can be a dangerous business, especially as President Yoweri Museveni and his political party have ruled for 33 years. With democratic checks almost non-existent, the role of holding the government to account has fallen mostly to journalists and civil society.

In early 2019, Kayonga's colleague Solomon Serwanja and three BBC journalists were targeted by security officials for their investigation into the theft of prescription drugs by government officials. They were later released and allowed to continue their investigation. The resulting report, a collaboration between NBS and BBC's Africa Eye investigative unit, was a groundbreaking look into government corruption and greed called "Stealing from the sick." Their findings caused a public uproar that spurred the police and associated government agencies to take action. Arrests were made and some officials lost their jobs. Serwanja's colleagues at NBS and the journalism community at large were shocked by the actions taken by the security forces and many spoke out against the persecution of journalists doing their jobs.

"We have to cover stories objectively so that all sides can have a say on an issue, but I think that truth is more important. No one in government can complain about a story where all we are doing is reporting the facts," Kayonga said adding that while

he was not involved in the stolen medicines story, he too has been confronted by plain-clothed security officers because of his reporting.

“The mission of the Media Challenge Initiative is to “build the next generation of journalists in Africa, through training, mentorship, and experiential peer-to-peer learning”.

Working in an industry that is always changing, Kayonga is hoping to further develop his journalism skills and his knowledge of politics and history. His ultimate goal is to get a master's degree, a rare feat for working journalists in Uganda, and to travel outside of the country so that he can gain a more complete view of the world.

"Uganda is just a small country in a big world," he said.

While Paul Kayonga is ambitious to continuously learn and advance, he attacks each day and the journalistic grind with youthful rigor: After interviewing witnesses to the house fire, he jumped back on a boda to head to a press conference at Interpol headquarters followed by an interview with a noted political analyst. Then it was back to the newsroom to write his script and edit his pieces for broadcast before heading out again to chase the next story.

Hustle. Report. Repeat.



Abaas Mpindi's mission: to promote professional journalism.



Gunjidmaa Gongor, called Gunjee, receives complaints against media reports.

MONGOLIA

Bridging the gap between the media and the people

Author **Petra Aldenrath**

AT A GLANCE

Since 2015, if a member of the media makes unethical, discriminatory or even false statements, the Mongolian population can register a complaint with the Mongolian Media Council. Executive director Gunjidmaa Gongor accepts these complaints and then asks the media for comment. Initially she received calls from angry media moguls who were fighting against any interference. Today the media council is a recognized institution that has adopted a press code with ethical journalistic principles. It is strengthening access to reliable information and serving as a bridge between Mongolia's media and its population.

As director of the Mongolian Media Council, Gunjidmaa Gongor is committed to objective, independent, and responsible reporting. The young institution deals with complaints against media reports and sets journalistic standards. Through its work, it helps ensure that the population can access balanced and reliable information. This is no easy task in Mongolia where the media is often shaped by third-party interests.

First she opens the window and pulls back the curtains. Gunjidmaa Gongor loves fresh air and natural light. She then opens her briefcase, takes out her notebook, switches the mobile phone to silent, and puts paper and pencil on the table. Gunjidmaa Gongor, called Gunjee for short, is the executive director of the Mongolian Media Council. She shares a one-room office with three other staff members, so for meetings, she likes to move into an adjoining room at a tea house five minutes away.

1.5 million people live in the Mongolian capital Ulaanbaatar but the actual city center is comparatively small. On the way to the tea house, Gunjee walks through streets lined with stalls selling everything from plastic toys, pots and nuts, to grilled mutton. She then crosses Sukbataar Square, passes the parliament building and turns one more corner. The waitress greets her and puts black tea and instant coffee on the table.

Gunjee takes a sip of tea and starts to talk. In 2015, the Media Council of Mongolia (MCM) was founded. She was there from the beginning and has been the executive director of the media council since 2018. The council's main task is to receive complaints against media reports that are accused of being false,

unethical, or discriminatory. Through her work Gunjee is setting journalistic standards in Mongolia. This is not an easy task in a country where journalism is dominated by the interests of third parties, where politicians continue to exert pressure on the media and many journalists let themselves be bought—either to keep quiet or to target media campaigns against political opponents. As a result, journalism in Mongolia continues to lack independence, objectivity, and ethical responsibility.

“Before we existed, the media worked in their own bubble. Journalists chased rumors and conspiracy theories and did not check facts. The media published everything they wanted to publish,” said Gunjee. “Since the Media Council was established, they now know that what they publish is being watched and that unethical reporting can be noticed by the public and reported to us.”

A well-versed media council

With a quick look at her mobile phone, Gunjee sees that it's four in the afternoon. With only two meetings left, Gunjee is look-



The modern skyline of Ulaanbaatar, the capital of Mongolia.

© DW/P. Aldenrath



Gunjidmaa Gongor is not only experienced in the press council.



ing forward to the end of the day and to going home to see her three “boys”: her husband, a journalist, and her two sons. The older one is twelve and the small one is two years old.

“In the past few years I have had two babies: The Media Council and my youngest,” she said with a laugh and tucks a stubborn strand of hair behind her ear. Her pageboy hairstyle is in place again.

Gunjee is a real child of the Mongolian steppe. Born in a yurt, the traditional round tent of the Mongols, she grew up in the nomadic regions of the country. Her parents own cows, lambs, goats, sheep, camels, and horses so herding and milking the cattle was part of her childhood. By the age of three, Gunjee was already well versed in the saddle. When the winter temperatures dropped below minus 30 degrees Celsius and the school bus was not running, Gunjee would grab a camel and ride it to school.

“It is warmer to sit on a camel than on a horse. They are slower, but they have a cozy, thick fur and radiate warmth,” she said.

After her high school final exams, however, she wanted to get off of the steppe for a while. So she moved to Ulaanbaatar in 1997 and studied sociology and administrative science, a combination that enabled her to find employment at the Press Institute of Mongolia (PIM) after her studies. After a few years, she rose to head of the research department and finally managing director. Her work at the PIM was the ideal foundation for her current position at the Mongolian Media Council.

AGGREGATED IMPACT DATA

Media and press councils: In 2018, the work of media or press councils in three countries has been reinforced with the support of DW Akademie. Press councils investigate complaints about journalists and the media. They also examine complaints against media reports and check whether media professionals adhere to the press code. Some 12,300 journalists recognize these councils, which have investigated 635 complaints over the last year. Approximately 65 million citizens can now file a formal complaint about the media coverage in their country. The media and press councils processed 635 complaints in 2018.

Countries: Mongolia, Myanmar, Serbia

Media legislation: In 2018, with the support of DW Akademie, legal and administrative changes in favor of freedom of information and media were achieved in three countries. In Mongolia the reform of the ‘conflict law’ (law on administrative offenses) was implemented and in Ecuador the communication law (Ley Orgánica de Comunicación) was reformed. In Ghana, access to public information has been improved for approximately 650,000 people through closer collaboration with district administrations.

Countries: Ecuador, Ghana, Mongolia

“All of that was so valuable to me. I learned a lot there about press freedom and independent journalism and how important it is to support both,” said Gunjee.

Resistance to the media council

It’s time to go. She places her laptop back in the briefcase and smooths her skirt. She has to return to the office before her next appointment. Establishing the Mongolian Media Council was not an easy task. Since the collapse of communism at the end of the 1990s, the Mongolian media market developed very quickly. With almost three million inhabitants in an area more than four times the size of Germany, Mongolia has the lowest population density in the world. Nevertheless, there is an abundance of media outlets. In 2016, there were 485—including more than 130 television stations and around 100 newspapers and magazines. Previous attempts to set up an organization to monitor the Mongolian media market failed.

“Even journalists were initially firmly against a media council,” reported Gunjee. “They said: ‘We can regulate ourselves. We do not need a watchdog.’”

With the support of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung and DW Akademie, a group of committed media representatives, including Gunjee, pushed for the creation of the media council until it was finally established on January 28, 2015.

“It was an historic event for the Mongolian media landscape,” said Batbaatar Sodnomdarjaa. Back then he worked for the Mongolian daily newspaper Zasgiin Gazriin Medee and today he heads the communications department in the Mongolian parliament. Since its founding, 45 people have worked with the media council. It consists of a 15-member board and two ethics committees, one for television and radio and the other for print and online media. Gunjee and her three staff members are the only paid employees of the Mongolian Media Council.

PROFILE

Mongolia

Who implements the projects?

- Media Council of Mongolia (MCM).

How does the project work?

- The Media Council of Mongolia (MCM) was founded in 2015 by media representatives. Its independent panel of experts receives complaints about media reports that may violate the code of ethics that the MCM itself has developed.
- In the case of ethical violations, the MCM demands corrections—including apologies if necessary—from the concerned media outlet and publicly explains its decision. However, it cannot take legal action.

What are the difficulties?

- The Media Council of Mongolia (MCM) was founded in 2015 by media representatives with the support of DW Akademie. Its independent panel of experts receives complaints about media reports that may violate the code of ethics that the MCM itself has developed.
- When complaints are received against media reports, the press apparatuses hear the complainants and respondents before MCM’s ethics committee decides the case.
- In the case of ethical violations, the MCM demands corrections—including apologies if necessary—from the concerned media outlet and publicly explains its decision. However, it cannot take legal action.

- The aim of this work is for the state to refrain from censorship and its own control of the media market and instead allow for self-regulation that protects ethical journalistic standards. This makes reporting more reliable and balanced.

What has the media project achieved?

- The Mongolian Media Council has received and decided on more than 200 complaints against media reports and that number is increasing. It has thus become a national authority regarding questions of media ethics.
- 45 Mongolian journalists, publishers, and media experts work voluntarily for the MCM and have thus been able to prevent state control of journalism in Mongolia.

What are the highlights?

- When the Media Council of Mongolia was established in 2015, Mongolia moved up from 88th to 54th place on Reporters Without Borders’ press freedom ranking.
- The Media Council of Mongolia’s press code and the principles that underpin it are now accepted guidelines for the professional ethics of news editors and journalists in Mongolia.

➔ mediacouncil.mn



In Mongolia there are more than 400 media for just 3 million people.

© DW/P. Aldenrath

A lot of work has been invested in preparing the young organization for the future. From the outset, staff were advised not only on financial, organizational, and personnel matters, but above all on procedural issues such as the drafting of a code of ethics and its application, the implementation of complaints procedures and public relations work.

“Not only did we have to learn everything anew, but the population had to as well. They should know who we are and what we do,” said Gunjee. “Before we existed, this form of self-regulation, where citizens can report violations in the reporting, did not exist at all.”

It’s different story today. The media council has evolved into a bridge between the media and the population. Since 2015, it has received over 200 complaints and the number is rising. Most of these complaints are about the misrepresentation of facts or incorrect quotes. Here too the main problem lies in the poor professionalism of many journalists, who simply copy reports without checking them or researching whether they are true or false. But discriminatory or insulting statements have also been reported. The media council receives the complaints, then writes to the media houses, asking for a written response and if this does not happen, for an interview.

“In the beginning, the media bosses called us and asked: ‘Who are you? There is freedom of the press. We write what we want,’” said Gunjee. The role of the media council is to make misconduct public and condemn it, but it does not use coercive measures or impose penalties. Therefore, good arguments are the best input to help Gunjee decide how to act.

“We explain and explain. We say it’s about democracy, about quality journalism,” she added.

These are new demands in a country surrounded by Russia and China, two authoritarian states. Mongolia has taken on a special role in central Asia since the revolution of 1989 and the collapse of communism, as it has chosen to embark on a democratic path.

Heading in the right direction

The light is red. Gunjee waits and then walks with quick steps towards the office. The MMC no longer receives calls from angry media moguls. But many media outlets still ignore its requests for statements and shirk requests for a statement. Therefore, informing the public is still at the top of the priority list.

“Before we existed, the media worked in their own bubble. Journalists chased rumors and conspiracy theories and did not check facts.”

“Many people in Mongolia think ‘media is media,’” said Gunjee. “They don’t know that they are owned by different people with different interests and they can’t always distinguish between rumors and news.”

This is especially true in rural areas where such basic knowledge is not available, added Gunjee. Nevertheless, she is satisfied with the work of the Media Council, including the recog-

dition that the organization has received regarding its press codex, which lays down ethical journalistic principles.

“This press codex is not only a written commitment, but it has improved the professional ethics of news editors and journalists,” said Narantuya Dangsaasuren, vice director of the Mongolian news portal news.mn.

“The media council has evolved into a bridge between the media and the population.

Gunjee’s office is located in a high-rise building, just opposite the Blue Sky Tower, a dark-glazed, semi-circular building that is considered the modern landmark of the capital. Gunjee takes the elevator to the eleventh floor. At her desk, she quickly boots up her computer and reads up on a current topic: online media outlets without contact information.

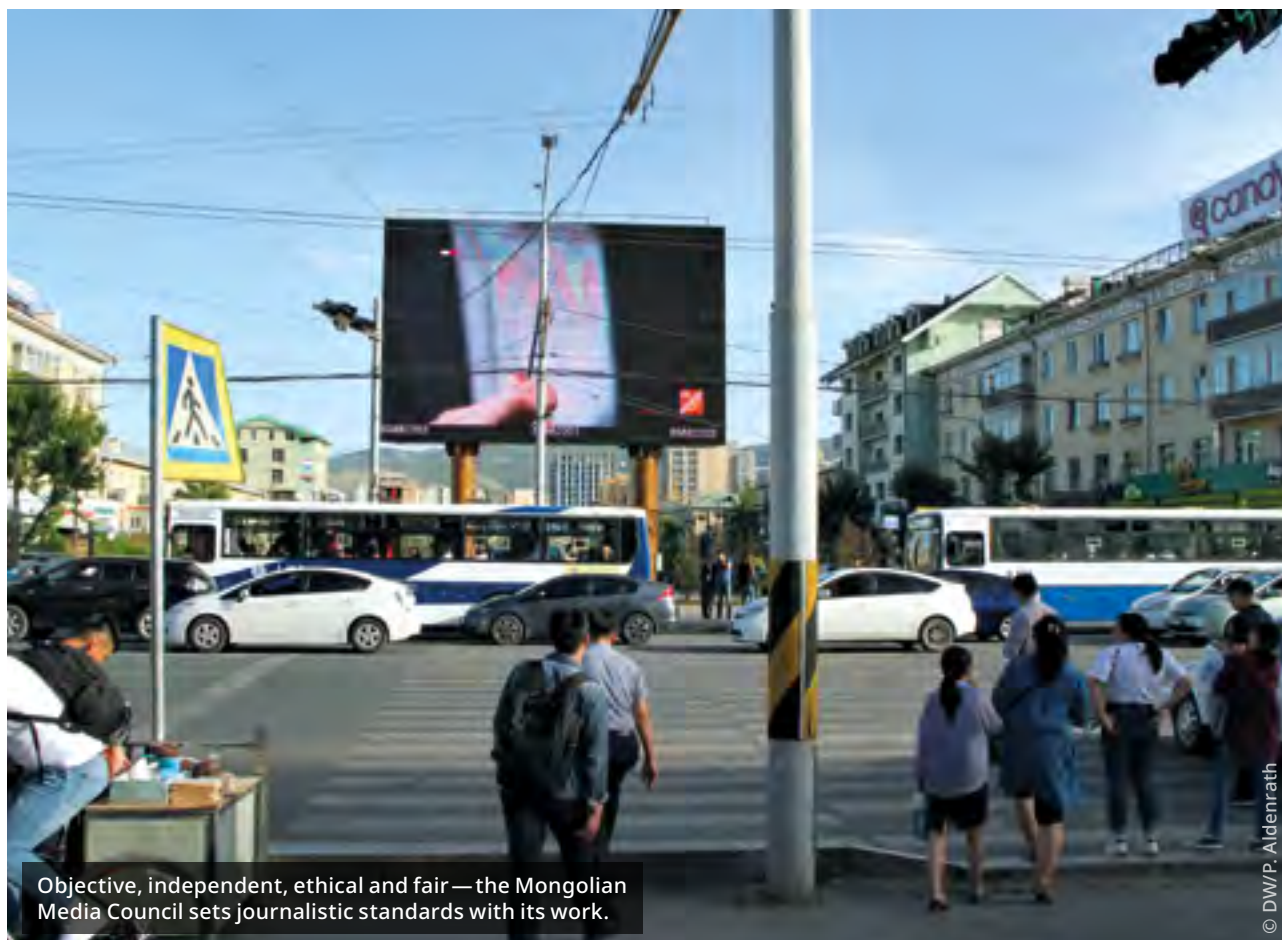
“This is a big problem,” she said. “Today, anyone can open a site and post news. But many don’t register at all. We can’t contact the owners of anonymous websites if they violate ethics.”

In 2015, Mongolia climbed 34 places in the Reporters Without Borders press freedom ranking—from 88th to 54th—and Gunjee is sure that the reason for the better ranking was the establishment of the media council. But she is still far from being able to sit back and relax. By 2018, Mongolia already slipped back to 71st place, and in 2019 it landed in 70th place.

“I assume that the main reason for the poor classification is the frequent fines imposed on journalists by the police,” she reported. In 2018, 46 journalists were fined around 20 million Mongolian tugrik (€6,500). “These procedures intimidate media professionals and lead to self-censorship.”

Gunjee looks at her watch again. She has to go. Traffic in Ulaanbaatar gets much worse in the late afternoon. The next time Gunjee visits her parents, she will help them feed their cattle, and of course take in the peace and quiet.

“Even though I live in the big city, my heart still beats for the steppe,” she said. Back in the capital, her inbox overflows and new work is waiting. “We’re a small team with a big mission, but we’re moving step by step in the right direction.”



Objective, independent, ethical and fair — the Mongolian Media Council sets journalistic standards with its work.

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The team of the Mongolian Center for Investigative Reporters (MCIR): two men, two women — one vision.

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MONGOLIA

When data says what politicians conceal

The Mongolian Center for Investigative Reporters

Author **Petra Aldenrath**

AT A GLANCE

Suvda, Amra, Tamir, and Chimedee seek to change the way Mongolian reporting is done. They no longer want it to be a mouthpiece for political parties or advertising space for companies. They want the media to provide critical and investigative reporting on relevant topics. The team at the Mongolian Center for Investigative Reporters (MCIR) does such reporting and advises media professionals on how to check facts and figures and report independently in order to expose corruption, abuse of authority or waste of public funds.

A group of young journalists has joined forces to work for change in Mongolia, a country built upon a system where political, economic, and media interests are closely intertwined. They are committed to investigative reporting that is independent of third party interests. In doing so, these courageous reporters are advancing Mongolia's democracy which is still in its infancy.

A parking spot! This is Suvda's lucky day. She maneuvers her small car into the narrow space, grabs her bag from the back seat and walks with quick steps towards the office. It took her half an hour to travel a few kilometers. Traffic is part of everyday life in the Mongolian capital Ulaanbaatar as the city's population has grown threefold in the last three decades. Many people are leaving traditionally nomadic, rural areas because they no longer see a future for themselves there. Almost half of the approximately three million Mongolians now live in this metropolis lining the Tuul River valley.

Suvda walks along the congested road, past street vendors offering roasted nuts, sugary drinks, and plastic toys. The sun radiates from a deep blue sky causing the glass facades of the city's skyscrapers to sparkle and bathing the barren mountains surrounding the city in a rich, velvety orange-yellow light. From her desk on the eleventh floor of a high-rise building, Suvda can look out over the mountains. The 33-year-old has been working for the NGO Mongolian Center for Investigative Reporters (MCIR) for a year. Suvda shares the one-room office with Amraa, Tamir, and Chimedee: two women, two men and one vision. All together they want to move Mongolian journalism towards a practice that is critical, investigative, and informative and that is no longer simply a mouthpiece for interested parties or just advertising space for companies.

Media outlets: Only two percent are independent

"The lack of independence is the main problem of the Mongolian media. When you open a newspaper, turn on the radio or television, or read articles online, you often don't know what advertising is, what propaganda is, and what an independent report is," said Chimedee. At 48, he is the senior member of the team.

"The media houses are often owned by members of the government who then exert direct or indirect influence," he continued, rolling up his sleeves.

Chimedee was a young man when communism ended in 1990 after a peaceful revolution and Mongolia became a democracy with a multi-party system, free elections, and an exploding media landscape.

"All told we have over 400 media outlets for a population of just three million people," he said. In 2016, the Press Institute of Mongolia listed 131 television and 98 radio stations, 101 newspapers, 86 magazines, and 98 news websites. Particularly frustrating for Chimedee is the fact that of these only about ten Mongolian media outlets operate independently. The others are paid for and controlled by those who can afford their own stake.



Heating with coal in winter. Ulaanbaatar's air is one of the world's dirtiest.

© DW/P. Aidenrath

Chimedee started out working as a radio reporter, then he worked for a newspaper and finally published four of his own monthly and weekly papers. Having to deliver several articles a day while not earning enough to make a living is something he can relate to. That is why he is not surprised that journalists are tempted to write biased articles for a little extra money. For Chimedee himself, this was never an option. Instead, he began teaching investigative journalism as a trainer for the Press Institute of Mongolia (PIM). There he met Tamir and together they developed the idea of founding an organization that would do investigative and, above all, high-quality reporting.

“ The lack of independence is the main problem of the Mongolian media.

The Mongolian Center for Investigative Journalism was founded in 2017. Two years later, they renamed it the Mongolian Center for Investigative Reporters (MCIR), the first entrepreneurially founded investigative center in the country. The young non-governmental organization aims to strengthen the country's democracy by promoting investigative and quality journalism. Suvda, Amraa, and Chimedee are trained journalists and Tamir is a communications expert and a fact-checker. With

its range of expertise, the team aims to stand up to both nepotism and the influence of third parties on reporting in the country. To achieve this, MCIR advises Mongolian media on how to increase ratings, clicks, and sales figures with well-researched, independent reports. In addition, the MCIR team publishes investigative stories, offers training to teach journalists investigative skills and data research and is fact-checking information in the run-up to the 2020/2021 elections.

Data creates facts

From the office window, the MCIR team can not only view the mountains, but also have a look over Sukhbaatar Square. It is the heart of Ulaanbaatar's traditional and modern culture (and a popular meeting place for city dwellers). Soft ice cream is sold from a pink bus parked on the square. Children on battery-powered miniature scooters whirr past the statue of Genghis Khan, the once mighty Mongolian emperor. An office worker wearing the latest in business fashion relaxes on a bench next to a nomad woman wearing braided leather boots, a green calf-length gown, and a triangular hat. From Sukhbaatar Square, an avenue leads straight north to the outskirts of the city.



Suvda Tsagaanbaatar's camera clicks.

PROFILE

Mongolia

Who implements the projects?

- The Mongolian Center for Investigative Reporters (MCIR) is the first entrepreneurial association of investigative journalists in Mongolia.

How does the project work?

- The Mongolian Center for Investigative Reporters develops sustainable business opportunities for independent journalism in Mongolia.
- Journalist teams and newsrooms are advised and supported in the development of innovative formats and methods (investigative, data, and mobile reporting).
- Professionalism and cooperation helps journalists in Mongolia fulfil their role as the “Fourth Estate” and uncover grievances in society, including corruption, abuse of authority, and waste of public money.

What are the difficulties?

- In Mongolia there is a close interdependence between politics, business, and the media. The roots for this lie in the former socialist system where it was common for media workers and party officials to collaborate.
- Journalists are not independently organized and are often bribed or experience direct influence by their superiors.
- Mongolia has an oversupply of media. In 2016 alone there were 131 television stations for a population of about three million people.

- Politicians and oligarchs pay media workers for uncritical reports in order to set their own agenda. The widespread image of corruption undermines the reputation of the entire media industry.

What has the media project achieved?

- The population is provided with high quality and well-researched information. For example, the Mongolian Center for Investigative Reporters caused a stir in the winter of 2018/2019 with investigative research on air pollution in Ulaanbaatar. The city then replaced measuring instruments that provided incorrect data.
- The public broadcasting company, Mongolian National Broadcaster (MNB), is setting up its own investigative unit. The initiative for this came from an editor at MNB who had attended MCIR training courses.

What are the highlights?

- In 2019, MCIR and DW Akademie organized the first data hackathon in the history of Mongolia (#HackInequality) with the theme of fighting inequality.
- The MCIR team does investigations itself and as stringers for international reporters. Mongolian topics, such as air pollution in the capital Ulaanbaatar, are thus also made public outside the country.

➔ twitter.com/mcir_info

Suvda is heading there today to take pictures. She turns off the paved road onto a cobbled side street. Concrete houses are the exception here as the area is populated mostly by nomads who have imported their traditional dwelling from the dry, grassy Mongolian Steppe: round, felt covered Mongolian yurts. There is no running water so if the residents want to cook, clean, or wash up, they have to fill up canisters at the public water shed.

Over the expanse of yurts, Suvda can see the city’s modern skyline including the semicircular Blue Sky Tower with its glazed façade, bulky office buildings and Parliament with its large stone columns. Suvda’s camera clicks. The view is clear today. In summer, wind coming in from the steppe that surrounds the city blows the heat away. In winter the mountains and cold traps all of the city’s pollution making it difficult to breathe.

“Then your eyes burn and your throat itches,” said Suvda. About 60 percent of the inhabitants of Ulaanbaatar live in the yurt districts in the suburbs and burn coal for heating. Ulaanbaatar is

not only the coldest capital in the world; it is also one of the most polluted. During the winter months, a rancid mixture of automobile exhaust fumes and coal smoke wafts through the valley basin that surrounds Ulaanbaatar.

It is a topic very familiar to Suvda. With its own data research on air pollution, MCIR landed an investigative coup in winter 2018/2019. The team noticed that the authorities published relatively good air readings even on days when dense smog lay over the city. MCIR teamed up with an environmental protection organization and carried out its own measurements for two months. Their data showed significantly worse values and found that the official measuring stations did not report all dirt particles. After MCIR put their data online, the population in the city became angry and protested. The city responded by checking their measuring stations and changing out faulty devices. Whether or not they work this time will be clear soon enough as MCIR plans to continue their own measurements.

The long road to good journalism

Robert Ritz is ecstatic over the success of MCIR's research. The data scientist moved with his Mongolian wife from the United States to Ulaanbaatar six years ago and is the director of LETU University near Sukhbaatar Square. He advised the MCIR team on the evaluation of the air measurements.

"MCIR did a really good story without pre-judging the facts. They published the measurement data in a visual way so everyone could understand them and draw their own conclusions," said Ritz.

His job at the university is to teach students how to find data, evaluate it correctly, and present it in an understandable way. For two years he has also been imparting this knowledge on Mongolian journalists. He has worked as a mentor and teacher for MCIR when the team has organized advanced training in research and investigative journalism and even a data hackathon.

"Data journalism is a challenge in Mongolia. In the USA or in Europe, visual diagrams are often developed. But in Mongolia data journalism is a new discipline. Most people here, for example, cannot read diagrams at all. In journalism training, data research is not taught," said Ritz.

Chimedee also believes that there is generally a lot of catching up to do. Again and again, he and his team advise the media in their search for suitable sources, help them build a story, and explain why it is important to interview not only officials but also the rest of the population.

"In Mongolia, too, reporters who uncover corruption and denounce social grievances are threatened," said Chimedee adding that for him, the main problem for him lies elsewhere. "We generally lack well-trained journalists."

Communists ruled Mongolia for almost 70 years and freedom of the press was a foreign concept. This has changed but there

is a lack of implementation. "Our goal is to create an awareness that the population has a right to the truth and does not want to be lied to and that independent journalism and investigative stories are important for our democracy," he said.

“Our goal is to create an awareness that the population has a right to the truth and does not want to be lied.”

The whole of society in view

It's early afternoon and two blocks away from the broadcasting center of the Mongolian National Broadcaster (MNB), Batzaya Ganbat is sitting in a café ordering a cappuccino. The journalist has worked for seven years at the former state broadcaster, which is now a public service institution based on the German model. Batzaya started out as a local radio reporter but later switched to television.

"I always had the feeling that these quick reports were leading nowhere. I wanted to change something with my stories," he said.

After an advanced training course at PIM, Batzaya discovered his passion for investigative research. He learned how to cover socially relevant topics using personal stories. He now understands that the plot of a story about a homeless woman is not about her losing her home but about how unscrupulous entrepreneurs take far too much money out of her pocket to rent their market stall.

Data journalism is also on his training agenda and Batzaya has signed up for a course offered by PIM that delves into the topic.

"Data often says what politicians prefer to keep quiet. This is an important part of investigative reporting," he said.

In the meantime, Batzaya has become a renowned investigative journalist in Mongolia. When MCIR organized #HackInequality,





View from the yurt district to the city skyline—
60 percent of capital city dwellers live in the suburbs.

a data hackathon, together with DW Akademie, he and his colleagues won the competition. Their winning video was about discrimination faced by disabled children in Mongolia.

Batzaya puts down his cup of coffee. He speaks about his success quietly and casually. After the data hackathon, his head full of new ideas, he went to his boss and explained to him that the MNB needed its own investigative unit. The boss gave him the green light and he has been working as a reporter on the new three-man team since summer 2019. Batzaya—just like the reporters and trainers at MCIR—is now working to advance democracy in Mongolia through well-researched and independent journalism.

AGGREGATED IMPACT DATA

Training as media professionals: DW Akademie advised approximately 6,200 employees in 134 media houses on the development of sustainable and innovative business models. The aim is to enable journalists who provide people with relevant reporting to make a living from their profession. The aim is to enable journalists, supplying their fellow citizens with relevant and professional content, to make a living in their chosen profession.

Countries: Belarus, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Colombia, Ecuador, Georgia, Ghana, Lebanon, Libya, Mongolia, Morocco, Namibia, Serbia, Tunisia, Ukraine



Thu Thu Hlaing is presenting the radio show for the community radio Khayae FM.

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MYANMAR

Local voices bring diversity to Myanmar's airwaves

Author **Kyle James**

AT A GLANCE

With a cheerful “Mingalabar!” Thu Thu Hlaing welcomes listeners to her broadcast on Khayae FM, Myanmar’s first community radio station. It went on air for the first time in 2018 and provides the people in its broadcast area with relevant news and information from and for their community. Topics range from cooking recipes to educational issues to agricultural innovations. Khayae FM is regarded as a model for communities in other regions of Myanmar that are looking to get similar projects off the ground.

A new kind of media is getting a foothold in Myanmar: community radio. Khayae FM, the first station of this kind in the country, has been on air since 2018. With its local focus, the station gives people a chance to participate more actively in their communities. Building on this experience, a whole network of community media in different regions of Myanmar is preparing to broadcast.

Every day at 8 a.m. and 2 p.m., residents in Htan Tabin township, about 22 km northwest of central Yangon, can turn on their radios and hear the voices of their friends and neighbors bringing them stories and interviews on subjects like vaccination programs, fertilizers, cooking, or village histories. In between the useful information, they can enjoy popular Myanmar music.

With a cheerful “Mingalabar,” Khayae FM announcer Thu Thu Hlaing welcomes listeners to the station’s daily afternoon live show. The station broadcasts live every afternoon for two hours—plus a repeat the next morning. Seated behind the main microphone in the radio’s one-room studio, the 28-year-old Thu Thu exudes confidence as she handles the faders on the mixing board and clicks on the first story—an interview with a local monk. She and several volunteers have been at the station, for several hours already. They’ve been choosing the music and lining up the stories planned for that day.

For the next two hours residents in this mostly rural township, crisscrossed by waterways and dotted with villages bordering pale green rice fields, will hear stories that are directly relevant to them and their families. These are stories not often heard on national or regional broadcasters, such as information about new rice seed varieties on the market, how to cook Biryani rice for a big group, an updated curriculum for area schools, and an

in-depth profile of a local village. “I like that what is on the station is produced by and for the local community, so people can hear things that can improve their daily lives,” says Thu Thu, who besides a regular host of the live shows is also one of the two Khayae FM station managers.

Under the military dictatorship, which ended only in 2011, this form of free media was unthinkable. But even with the recent developments toward democracy, the establishment of Myanmar’s first community radio station didn’t come easy. It was a process that stretched over several years and included many discussions with parliamentarians, government officials, the local administration, development experts and, last but certainly not least, the community itself. The long, winding road was understandable since this type of media was entirely new to Myanmar.

Community radio stations are non-profit, non-partisan broadcasters, managed by the community where they are located. They rely on volunteers to produce programs that speak to local needs and interests. The goal is to share information that can help people in their daily lives and discuss concerns in a language that residents understand—especially important in a country, which is home to 135 ethnic groups, most of which have their own language.



On the way to Khayae FM, Myanmar’s first community radio.

© Jonas Mayer

Community radio in Myanmar fill a role that national or regional media often do not—covering hyper-local issues and allowing the voices and perspectives of people from rural areas and with different educational and socio-economic backgrounds a place on the media landscape that they didn't have before.

In addition, receiving news and information on the radio does not require the ability to read. While the literacy rate for young people in Myanmar is high, around 85 percent according to a study by UNESCO, for those over 65 years of age the number drops to under 60 percent. Newspapers are not effective information sources for them, not to mention the fact that radio waves have an easier time than printed material does reaching remote villages whose roads might wash out in the monsoon season.

Khayae FM station manager Thu Thu has to leave home early, just after seven o'clock, to get to the station during the two weeks per month when she's in charge. She lives with her parents in a thatch house just beside the river in Kyein Pite, a low-lying village that becomes inaccessible by road during Myanmar's rainy season. So during about half of the year she travels to the station by boat, an hour-and-fifteen-minute

commute. Thu Thu was introduced to Khayae FM while volunteering for Su Paung Arr Mann, the village development NGO which is DW Akademie's partner for the Khayae FM project. She began attending training workshops in the run-up to the station's launch and taking on a bigger volunteer role. Her flair for both organizing and speaking on air soon became apparent, and it wasn't long before she stepped into the station manager shoes. Either she or co-station manager Mee Mee, are at Khayae FM every day.

“Community radio in Myanmar fills a role that national or regional media often do not.

The radio station is located in Su Paung Arr Mann's two-story headquarters, a concrete building on thick metal stilts. Among the palms that dot the sleepy village, an antenna mast on the building's roof reaches 20 meters into the sky. The studio features a mixing board, an equipment rack, three microphone stands, and three desktop computers. It's all surrounded by black foam panels on the walls that keep out most of the sound of the tractors that occasionally rumble past. It's here where the station managers assign stories, listen to interviews, and check daily rundowns, and where at 2 p.m. the mic faders are pushed up and the radio show goes live on air. The radio staff consists of three people who receive monthly compensation: two co-station managers and an assistant. The rest of the people who work with the station are volunteers. The numbers vary a lot, depending on the time of year or farming season. Sometimes 12 volunteers are working, sometimes only three and sometimes in between—always fewer than the numbers needed. So they are all usually very busy.

Community radio Khayae FM is playing a pioneering role in Myanmar's evolving media environment and is something of a starting point. Other communities have taken inspiration for



Myanmar's ethnic and cultural diversity on Air.

AGGREGATED IMPACT DATA

Community media: Worldwide, 167 community media outlets, supported by DW Akademie in 2018, give disadvantaged populations a voice and support their basic freedom of expression. DW Akademie has helped train 1,150 citizen journalists working for local stations. This means that 9,6 million people in rural areas have access to relevant local information.

Countries: Bangladesh, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Colombia, Ecuador, Georgia, Ghana, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Libya, Myanmar, Namibia, South Sudan, Tunisia, Uganda, Ukraine

PROFILE

Myanmar

Who implements the projects?

- Khayae FM is the first community radio station in Myanmar. It was set up with the help of the local NGO Su Paung Arr Mann.

How does the project work?

- Khayae FM went on air in February 2018. The community radio station is operated by the Htan Tabin community. Program decisions are made by the three permanent staff members. Otherwise, the radio depends on the help of volunteers from the surrounding villages.
- Khayae FM provides the people living in the broadcast area with news that is relevant to them from cooking recipes to educational issues to innovations in agriculture.
- All volunteer reporters are trained as journalists. They learn how to conduct interviews, write articles, and how to present reports on the radio. They also learn about journalistic ethics and how to report neutrally.

What are the difficulties?

- It is difficult to find enough volunteers to work at the radio station as most adults in the rural area usually work full-time in the fields.
- Khayae FM is the first community radio station in Myanmar. Therefore, it is a big challenge to make the media format known, to alleviate the fear of being interviewed,

and to convince local companies that the radio station and their businesses can benefit when they place ads.

What has the media project achieved?

- Citizens in Htan Tabin know more about what is happening in their communities and receive information that helps them improve their lives.
- Through their involvement in radio, people in the surrounding communities get the opportunity to get involved and make their concerns heard. This strengthens cohesion in the community.
- Myanmar's media landscape has become more diverse as community radio gives people a voice who otherwise have no presence in national media.

What are the highlights?

- Khayae FM spends several days in a village every month and reports on local issues from there.
- The station also hosts "Khayae FM Road Shows," events with comedy, music, mini theatre performances, and other entertainment to make community radio more popular.
- Khayae FM is considered a role model for other regions where community media is now also being launched.

➔ facebook.com/htantabincr

what Khayae FM has achieved, and a number of community initiatives in other regions are now off the ground. It's a promising start to the development of a vibrant community media scene, which gives a voice to rural people across Myanmar's diverse patchwork of ethnicities and cultures.

Khayae FM made media history

As the country began its transition to democracy in 2011 and media restrictions began to ease, space opened up for new media outlets. In 2015, parliament adopted a broadcasting law that made community radio possible for the first time. However, the by-laws regulating licensing hadn't been written, and are still under review.

DW Akademie scouted a possible place for a community radio station. In Atwin They Phyu village, which lies in Htan Tabin township, it found a solid partner in the local VDCF and invaluable help from the German development aid organization Welthungerhilfe (WHH).

DW Akademie, based on an intense discussion process with the community, presented the government the idea of establishing a community radio pilot project in the interim by getting special permission from the authorities to broadcast on an FM frequency administered by the state broadcaster MRTV. The project would provide a real-world example to government officials as they develop regulations for the new sector. It was a complicated process. It involved discussions with the country's information minister, the Press Council, MRTV, and other actors on the media landscape. But all the effort paid off, and the government signed on to the idea, planting the seeds that grew into Khayae FM, or "Starflower" in Burmese.

Media history was made on February 18, 2018, when Khayae FM went on air. The normally quiet village of Atwin They Phyu was thrust into the spotlight as both national and international guests came to the new station to celebrate the event. State broadcaster MRTV was on hand to film speeches by the country's information minister and Germany's ambassador to Myanmar. The ground floor of the VDCF headquarters was decorated with colorful balloons and glittering streamers.



Cooking recipes, education policy, news from agriculture — Khayae FM reports about what interests the surrounding communities.

Station’s staff and volunteers at Khayae FM were thrilled that the radio was really getting off the ground after the many months preparation. More than a few wondered if the “On Air” light would every really turn on.

“When we first started planning, people said it wouldn’t be possible to run a radio station in Htan Tabin,” says station manager Mee Mee. “They thought it would be too difficult.”

“Community radio Khayae FM is playing a pioneering role in Myanmar’s evolving media environment and is something of a starting point.”

But on that day, they saw that all the planning and hard work had paid off as Khayae FM’s signal went out to some 15,000 households in the area. Upstairs in the studio, volunteers conducted their first studio interviews with the VIPs, their nervousness showing. The community radio launch was on the national news that evening, a remarkable turnaround from an era not so long ago.

Connecting with the community

Community radio stations are only successful if they have the full support of the community they serve. A station needs a healthy number of local volunteers to staff it and create the programming. Local business interest is crucial since business owners can buy advertising or sponsor programs to help keep a station financially afloat.

To strengthen this community connection, Khayae FM decided to go to the people where they live. It started holding production weekends in villages where volunteer reporters could talk to a wide variety of residents—from village elders to young children—and put their stories and concerns on the airwaves. Topics included the dangers of rainy season landslides for people living close to rivers or the best ways to eliminate golden apple snails, which can devastate local rice crops.

“Going to the villages allows us to take a more in-depth look at their lives,” says Htet Mon Thaw, the radio mentor who works closely with Khayae FM. “People really get involved with our programs and they learn how a radio station works. Now, villages around the township are even inviting us to come.”

One of those is Kyaut Pone Lay, whose residents had heard other villages being profiled on the station.

“I want Khayae FM to come to my village and tell our stories,” says U Jaw Ni, a village elder and chairman of the local rice farmers group. “Others can hear stories about our lives and we’ll even hear our own voices on the radio. It also lets us play a part in helping the station.”

Bumps on the new road

None of the staff and volunteers at community radio stations had previous media experience. No one in the community had ever heard of a radio station run by locals. That means individuals and officials can be wary about talking to reporters since

they might not fully understand what the station is or what its goals are. Others are reluctant to volunteer, thinking they don't have the needed skills and knowledge to contribute to a radio station, even though Khayae FM offers training in radio production, journalism and announcing to anyone who wants to get involved. No previous experience required.

In a nation like Myanmar, which is no stranger to ethnic conflict, there were worries about putting voices on the air that might end up increasing tensions instead of mutual understanding, even inadvertently. That is why journalism ethics and the importance of neutrality are key ideas treated in volunteer training workshops. Stories are carefully checked by the station managers and the radio mentor. The content on the station these days steers clear of hot-button topics.

That is because tackling highly controversial issues could put the young project at risk as well as the overall development of the community media sector, especially if a broadcast led to violence or some other negative outcome. Other difficulties involve personnel. Htan Tabin is a rural, largely agricultural

community where most people work long hours to support and care for their families. Time can be scarce. Khayae FM still struggles to recruit and keep enough volunteers to produce enough stories to fill its airtime. Right now there are enough motivated people helping out to keep the lights on, but not enough to expand the length of the broadcasting day. But for those residents who do get involved, the benefits can be significant.

Before coming to Khayae FM, twenty-one-year-old Nan Yu Hlaing was a recent high-school graduate who wasn't sure about her next step in life. She spent her days helping her mother around the house and her father in his rice fields. She came to her first volunteer meeting at Khayae FM because she thought the idea of a local radio station was interesting. But she wasn't sure if it would be a good fit and mostly stayed in the background, speaking only rarely. "At the time, I mostly was just staying at home and wasn't really confident enough to talk to people I didn't know," she said.

But that began to change once she was trained and had a chance to observe how the experienced ones conducted interviews, put



All volunteer reporters receive professional media training.

© Htet Mon Thaw

programs, together and hosted live shows. She started taking on a bigger role. Once she found the confidence to get behind the microphone, she discovered she had a gift for announcing. Equipped with a digital audio recorder, she was soon heading out to the offices of local officials for interviews. Later, she stepped forward when the station needed someone to take on a part-time position to assist the station managers. “Now I can talk at meetings or even at conferences,” she said. “My involvement here gave me the ability to do that.” More recently, she was part of a group of people involved in the Myanmar community media scene who went on a ten-day tour of Indonesia to see and learn from community radio stations there.

Other volunteers have also seen their life trajectories change significantly since volunteering at Khayae FM. Twenty-six-year-old Thin Thin Po saw volunteering at the station as a potentially fun activity, but not much beyond that. It soon became apparent she had a knack for doing interviews and putting together feature stories. “The training that we’ve gotten has really widened my knowledge and put me in contact with people I would have never met,” she said. In fact, she took to her volunteer work with such enthusiasm that now she’s decided to pursue a career in journalism. She was recently accepted a candidate for the degree program at the Myanmar Institute of Journalism (MJI) and her goal is to become a full-time radio reporter.

Developing sector

The community radio landscape in Myanmar is proving a fertile one, and interest in communities around the country is high. DW Akademie has started to explore a second initiative, this

time in Mon State in southern Myanmar. It is an ethnic region where both the Mon language and Burmese are spoken. This new community radio station in the planning will broadcast in both languages, and can serve as a model for future stations in more ethnically diverse areas of the country.

The Scandinavian media development organization IMS-Fojo is supporting four other community radio initiatives, three of them in Chin State in the remote northwest part of the country. None of them have received permission to broadcast yet as they are still waiting for the completion of by-laws which will put an FM licensing procedure in place. Right now, their audio content goes out on social media.

The hope is that soon a community radio network can be formed which will enable these new stations and other actors to share their knowledge with each other while helping new initiatives get off the ground. “Khayae FM has been a kind of prototype for Myanmar’s community radio sector,” said Letyar Tun, an IMS-Fojo project manager who oversees that organization’s community radio projects. “Now is the time to form a network that brings community radio projects together with international and local NGOs, civil society groups, community organizations, and even academia to share our experience, hold workshops, and make connections with community media networks beyond our borders.”

DW Akademie is working with UNESCO and IMS-Fojo on moving forward on the establishment of just such a network. DW Akademie and IMS-Fojo have also teamed up with a local tech company to develop a new community radio app. The app will allow people to easily listen to the country’s growing number of



Khayae FM— a station from the communities for the communities.

community radio stations on their smartphones. In addition, it will allow people in those communities to contribute content to their local station by recording interviews and stories on their phones and uploading the audio to editors at the station. That way, more people can become active members of their community radio family.

By working together with other stations and bringing in more voices and viewpoints of local residents, Myanmar's community radio stations will make this new sector stronger, contributing to the country's media diversity while making a concrete impact on the daily lives of citizens.



Opening of the trauma center in Quetta.

© Nusrat Sheikh

PAKISTAN

Fear as a constant companion

A trauma center in Quetta

Author **Petra Aldenrath**

AT A GLANCE

Fozia Mughal works as a psychologist for a trauma center in Quetta, a major Pakistani city in the Balochistan region. In 2016 alone, 40 media workers lost their lives there. Offering free psychological counseling services, the trauma center helps journalists who have been traumatized not only by terror and violence, but also by intimidation attempts and precarious working conditions. The trauma center has successfully helped reporters get their lives back under control and triggered a discussion about trauma and burnout in the professional public.

Journalists in conflict regions often struggle with psychological stress. They have traumatic experiences and suffer from extreme anxiety and depression as a result. A trauma center has been established in the troubled Pakistani province of Balochistan. The center is a place where media workers are offered the chance to get their lives back under control.

It is evening in the Pakistani capital Islamabad. It just rained so hard that many sidewalks and streets are no longer passable. As fast as the downpour came, it disappeared again. Fozia Mughal is walking through the fresh air to the Faisal Mosque. When she arrives, the setting sun bathes the sky above the minaret in a pinkish red light. Fozia takes her sandals in her hand and climbs over some puddles and up the steps to the inner courtyard of the mosque. As the muezzin's call begins, she pulls her scarf tightly around her hair.

Fozia is in Islamabad for a visit. She is a psychologist by profession and works in Quetta, over 900 kilometers southwest of the city. With one million inhabitants, Quetta is the largest city in Balochistan province. It is located in the border area with Afghanistan where the Taliban and other Islamist groups are active.

"So many bombs are going off in Balochistan that it is often no longer newsworthy in other parts of the country," said Fozia.

For journalists working there, everyday life in this environment is tough. Many are left by their editors to cope with traumatic experiences alone. They often become so ill that they can no longer work. As the attacks in Balochistan increase, more and more organizations are withdrawing from the troubled province.

One of the few actors still on the ground is Individualland. The non-governmental organization (NGO) continues to work in conflict regions in order to advance peace-building projects there. Together with DW Akademie, Individualland made the opening of the trauma center in Quetta possible. Since 2018, media professionals who suffer from severe trauma and are often barely able to do their work are offered free psychological counseling. Fozia is employed in the trauma center as a psychologist and provides urgently needed consultations.

Fozia is planning to meet the director of Individualland in Islamabad tomorrow to talk about the project. As the muezzin's call fades away. She walks back towards the street, slips on her sandals again and smiles for a quick selfie.

Sleepless, depressed, angry

"Most of the reporters who come to me can no longer concentrate. They suffer from insomnia, they are often depressed, often full of anger," Fozia explained, adding that some men get upset very quickly and can even beat their wives or children.

"I once had a client who told me that he freaked out when a cup wasn't exactly where he put it," she said.



Psychologist Fozia Mughal advises traumatized media workers in Quetta.

AGGREGATED IMPACT DATA

Security: In 2018, 2,400 media professionals in 44 organizations benefitted from trainings and consultancy on security topics on and offline.

Countries: Georgia, Guatemala, Jordan, Mongolia, Pakistan, Palestinian Territories

In the trauma center, those affected learn to recognize their psychological stress and to take it just as seriously as a physical illness and to address their situation.

In Reporters Without Borders' 2019 press freedom ranking, Pakistan ranked 142 out of 180. 40 media workers were killed in Balochistan province in 2016 alone. They are not only exposed to terror—the consequences of a long-running guerrilla war and accompanying violence—but also to threats, intimidation, contempt from their employers, fierce competition, and insecure employment conditions.

In the strictly traditional Balochistan, it is difficult to understand how power structures work, even for locals like Fozia. Journalists must be very careful what they write in order not to become the target of various interest groups, such as the military, local government, police, or individual tribal leaders. For reporters, this means that stress and fear are their constant companions.

The counseling office at the trauma center is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Two psychologists work here: 48-year-old Fozia and her younger colleague, Sadia Ishfaq. During the first consultation they try to first find out whether the client is already suffering from depression.

The clients at the center are mostly men as there are more male journalists in the province than female journalists. But they all enter carrying a heavy weight filled with insecurities and fears.

"They are afraid of dying in a bomb attack. They are afraid of the power of the local government, the military and individual tribal leaders. They are afraid of stepping on someone's toes with their reporting and being threatened afterwards. They are afraid of losing their jobs and not being able to feed their families," said Fozia.

Fozia understands this kind of existential stress. In Pakistan she is a so-called "settler," the name given to people whose families immigrated, often many hundreds of years ago, mostly

PROFILE

Pakistan

Who implements the projects?

- The NGO Individualland runs a trauma center for journalists in Quetta, Pakistan. The Center for Excellence in Journalism at the Institute for Business Administration (IBA) advises traumatized media workers in Karachi.

How does the project work?

- The trauma centers offer free psychological counseling for media workers who are often severely traumatized by terror, violence, intimidation, and extremely precarious working conditions.
- The trauma centers also contact the media outlets directly to raise awareness that mental stability is as important as physical health and that psychologically stable journalists deliver better quality work in the long term.

What are the difficulties?

- Balochistan province, where the city of Quetta is located, is affected by targeted attacks by Islamist terrorist organizations and separatist groups. In addition, the military and the security services, as well as tribal chiefs with different interests, make Balochistan an extraordinarily difficult and dangerous environment for journalists.
- Media houses do not properly protect their journalists or not at all. Instead, they are often regarded as easily replaceable workers.

- In addition to the psychological burden of reporting on terror and violence, journalists are also afraid of competition, job loss, and insufficient earnings.

What has the media project achieved?

- The project has succeeded in making psychological stability a topic for media professionals and in bringing depression, trauma, and burn-out out of the shadows. With their work, the trauma centers have triggered a discussion in the professional public.
- Psychological consultations have helped clients to change and regain control of their private and working lives. In total, about 200 people seeking help have since been counselled, about 70 of them in Quetta.

What are the highlights?

- Both trauma centers have received very positive feedback. In Quetta, a newspaper published an article about the work of the trauma center.
- In order to reach media professionals who work far from Quetta, Individualland has published two booklets: a handbook with tips and explanations of trauma, stress, and mental health and a directory with addresses of counseling centers.

➤ individualland.com | ➤ cej.iba.edu.pk



In Quetta, the largest city in Pakistan's Balochistan province, bombs explode every day.

from India. Even today this minority is not really accepted. Her father, a simple day laborer, wanted his daughters to succeed and saved every cent he could for their education. Fozia studied as did her sisters. This led to some whispers among their neighbors when the sisters were looking for work after their studies. In male-dominated Pakistan, where even women with doctorate degrees often stay at home if their husbands so wish, this was not the normal course of action.

“Journalists must be very careful what they write in order not to become the target of various interest groups.

“My father just ignored that. He used to say, ‘Do exactly what you want to do, but do it with a sense of awe and respect,’” said Fozia. “When I started to look for work in 1996, I would never have gotten a job in the public sector as a ‘settler’ so I applied to international organizations.”

Help when they can't take it anymore

Islamabad is divided into a grid of squares. Instead of names, streets have numbers. In F6 district there is a central market and many restaurants. Sitting in a Turkish restaurant that is considered an insider tip, Fozia orders flat bread and kebab. She is looking for photos of the trauma center in Quetta on her mobile phone. It is located on the ground floor of a two-story apartment building painted light yellow. Fozia shows a picture of the waiting room where two heavy brown leather armchairs invite visitors to sink in and relax. On the table in front of them

is a carafe of water and next to it lie some handkerchiefs. Fozia's treatment room is located in an adjacent room. From her desk, she looks out over an alley. Those who want to remain unseen can also enter Fozia's office directly via a side entrance.

“Here you are still quickly labeled as ‘crazy’ when you go to a psychologist,” she explained. That's why the office's sign, flyers and brochures say “media center” and not “trauma center.”

Discretion is an important aspect of Fozia's work. For her and her colleague, it goes without saying that the identities of the affected persons must remain under lock and key. The two of them arrange their consultation appointments in such a way that media workers seeking help do not meet each other. In the beginning, the center had to do a lot of work to educate their target group. Fozia often heard: “I am already taking pills for my insomnia. Why should I seek counseling?” Many journalists in Balochistan often didn't even know that psychologists approach things differently, that talking, analyzing, and changing behavior can lead to healing.

“Most of them only come when they just can't handle it anymore, for example when they had to report on a bomb attack and could no longer bear the sight of torn-up bodies,” said Fozia. “Bombings are often the straw that breaks the camel's back.”

Two strong women, one mission

The next morning in Islamabad is humid and hot. The capital city lies in a basin and in the morning, when the traffic is still calm, the screeching of wild monkeys, the chirping of birds, and



Fozia Mughal and Gulmina Bilal Ahmad: two women who make a difference.

the bleating of goats can be heard. Islamabad is a very green city and by Pakistani standards, very safe. Almost every street in the city center is lined with trees and on main roads there are surveillance cameras every 100 meters.

Fozia calls a taxi. She is wearing black pants, a richly embroidered dress and a matching scarf on her head, typical attire for women in Balochistan. The taxi takes her past modern shopping centers, tea rooms full of men in long robes, and street vendors selling Pakistani flags, colorful flowers, and spicy chips. Fozia gets out in front of a big gate on a dead-end street. She is there for a meeting with Gulmina Bilal Ahmad, the director of Individualland.

In the meeting room, the air conditioning hums. A parakeet squawks outside the window. Just like Fozia, Gulmina is a trained psychologist and just like Fozia, she is a woman who is not afraid of asserting herself.

“My parents wanted me to study medicine just like my brothers. They sent me to university for an entrance test. I just handed in a blank sheet and failed,” she said.

For a month her family did not talk to Gulmina, then they accepted her decision to study psychology. Later they supported their daughter when she spent a few semesters in Australia working with drug addicts and imprisoned women before returning home to start a career in development aid.

“As working women, Fozia and I belong to a still small minority, which is growing steadily. If you look at history, you can see big

changes often begin with small steps,” she said. Their commitment to a peaceful Balochistan also unites the two women. Like Fozia, Gulmina’s family—at least on her father’s side—comes from the province.

“In Pakistan people talk a lot about Balochistan. But they only talk about the province, instead of talking with the Baloch themselves. Their voices are not sufficiently represented in the media,” Gulmina recounted. While Fozia is reserved and quiet, Gulmina’s voice fills the room as she talks about Pakistan’s large media houses, which are based in Karachi.

“The editors there have no idea about geography, and they don’t do their own research. They call a stringer in Quetta and tell him to go to a location immediately and deliver an article in 30 minutes,” she said. Such demands are often impossible as attacks take place a long way from Quetta. Even with a helicopter, reporters could not make it to the site on time.

But even if the stringers manage to get to the site in time, she explained, they often try to do the impossible so that they can keep their jobs. Ultimately in these situations, they are left to fend for themselves by their editors.

Gulmina sits down again, takes a deep breath, and leans back. She could go on for hours about the ignorance of Pakistani media houses, about the traditional understanding of respect that forbids reporters to contradict their superiors and about the importance of strengthening and protecting media professionals.

Disputes are not always regulated by law

Fozia scrolls through pictures of her hometown of Quetta. In the background, barren mountains can be seen. Where the shadow falls, they are dark grey but where the sun hits them, they glow in an earthy, ochre yellow. On the clayey roads, fully veiled women in dark burkas walk alongside others colorfully dressed with a scarf loosely wrapped over their hair. The men wear long white, beige, or grey robes. Some wear a round, crocheted prayer cap. Others have elaborately wrapped turbans. Soldiers with their military fatigues and shouldered weapons can often be seen walking amongst the residents.

Balochistan is not only a troubled region; it is also a strictly traditional one. Whoever conducts interviews there must know which district he is reporting from and which ethnic group lives there plus the rank and political affiliations of the interviewee. It is also important to know whether the interviewees belong to an outlawed minority or whether they have contacts with the police, the military, or associates of a feared tribal lord.

“You can’t just walk in somewhere as a journalist and start working,” explained Gulmina. “You have to know the context.

three media outlets, often international ones. The third category is the largest and the weakest: reporters working from home on a freelance basis.

“They have to deliver between 15 and 30 reports a day to survive financially,” explained Gulmina. “You can’t research up to 30 topics a day. Both the audience and journalistic quality fall by the wayside.”

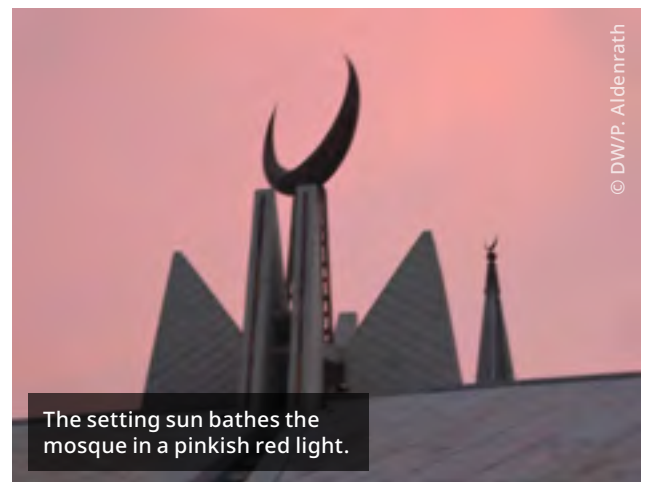
Learning new ways to deal with stress

In order to reach the many freelance journalists who are not officially registered, Individualland and the trauma center are launching a large-scale campaign. Using newspaper, radio, television, and online reports, they try to find the names of reporters and send them a letter with a flyer of the trauma center. 110 letters have been sent out so far. The groups hope that the journalists will be open to psychological services as media houses do not offer any level of counseling.

“Some editors say [stringers] are a dime a dozen. They are considered dispensable,” said Fozia, adjusting her reading glasses.



The Faisal Mosque in Islamabad



The setting sun bathes the mosque in a pinkish red light.

You have to know how to ask questions. You have to know who to kneel before respectfully instead of just shaking hands. If there is a dispute, it is not always settled according to the law. They settle it in tribal fashion.”

All these questions of proper handling and preparation are additional stress factors for reporters. Gulmina and Fozia divide Balochistan’s media professionals into three groups. The first category is the permanently employed. They are members of the local press club, have genuine press credentials, and often work in the local bureau of a large media company with headquarters in Karachi. The second category consists of reporters who regularly work as stringers for two or

An older editor-in-chief once told her that if a reporter cannot cope with the situation here, if he has a problem putting on a protective vest and strapping a gun to his leg, then he’d be better off opening a shop.

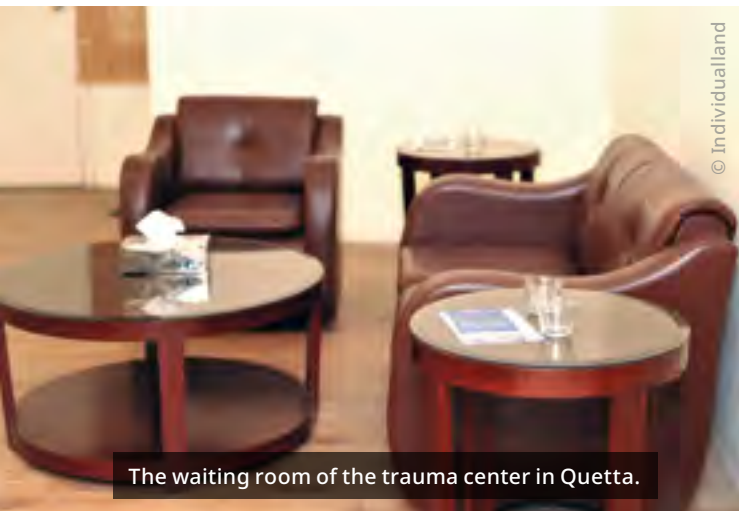
Andeel has experienced exactly the same reaction (Andeel’s real name remains anonymous). After working on a story, he was followed by members of one of the groups he was researching. In the middle of the night, the phone would ring several times. When he picked it up, he would hear heavy breathing then the caller would hang up. When he told his boss about it, he was told that he was free to look for another job. Andeel reacted with panic attacks and manic fears that he was being followed.

He chewed his fingernails down to the skin and thought every person he passed on the street was out for him. He was often too scared to even answer the phone.

“With the psychologist I analyzed my situation and learned to deal with stress in a new way. I now know that I alone cannot change society, I can only change myself and my behavior,” said Andeel.

Many of those who seek advice at the trauma center are in the same situation. Often the sessions can change not only the perspective of the journalists, but also that of their families.

“One of my clients came alone first. His wife wanted a divorce. She found him unbearable because he was constantly irritable,” said Fozia. “At some point she came too. I first had one-on-one conversations with both of them and then started couple’s therapy. Now they want to try to stay together.”



The waiting room of the trauma center in Quetta.

A sense of achievement

Fozia does not need expensive advertising to draw attention to the trauma center. So far, word of mouth has worked so well that not all those seeking help can be accepted.

“There are always requests from people who do not work in the media. We try to pass them on to other counseling centers because we concentrate specifically on journalists,” she said.

In order to reach those who live far from Quetta, Individualland has published two booklets that are available on its website. The first is a handbook on psychological counseling for reporters with tips on recognizing psychological stress. It includes a glossary of terms explaining, for example, the difference between psychiatrists and psychologists or between a depressive episode and depression. The second is a listing of addresses of counseling centers.

So far, two non-governmental organizations in Pakistan have been working on behalf of the mental health of media workers. In Karachi, the Center for Excellence in Journalism, which is attached to a university, offers journalists free professional advice. In Quetta, this task is carried out by Individualland. Both are partner organizations of DW Akademie and started to offer trauma counseling in February 2018. They work directly with those seeking help and also approach media outlets to provide them with information about work pressure, conflict experiences, and trauma.

“Balanced, reliable reporting and psychologically stable employees often go hand in hand.”

In order to protect media workers in the long term, Fozia and Gulmina want to better involve responsible editors and administrators at media outlets. Only when they understand their reporters’ need for more support will their work conditions improve. Both believe that balanced, reliable reporting and psychologically stable employees often go hand in hand.

This is also the experience of Rasheed Baloch, head of the regional office of the GNN television station in Quetta. He appreciates the work of the trauma center.

“Many of our editors and media managers don’t understand the term ‘mental health,’” he said. “One hundred percent of journalists are under stress when they are reporting. Once they have gone through a counseling session themselves and notice that they feel better afterwards, they will also actively support such consultations.”

Fozia and Gulmina will expand their persuasion into the executive offices. That way, Andeel and his colleagues in Balochistan will have better access to counseling so they can learn how to not only accept their problems but also how to deal with them.

Only when the muezzin finishes his call to evening prayer do they finally turn off the light in the meeting room.



He implements ideas — Gela Mtvlishvili.

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GEORGIA

Moving mountains

Authors **Tinatin Dvalishvili** and **Petra Aldenrath**

AT A GLANCE

During a hike in eastern Georgia, Gela Mtvlishvili discovered a remote, economically underdeveloped mountain region. The journalist, lawyer, and human rights activist now works to give the people there a voice. He founded MtisAmbebi.ge, an online news site with stories from these mountain communities. He is also working to connect the region to the country's telecommunications infrastructure.

In a remote mountain area in Eastern Georgia, a journalist and human rights activist started a campaign that has catapulted the region into the digital age. People living here are suddenly connected to the wider world—accessing information and making their voices heard throughout the country.

The remote settlement of Sakhile lies 1,460 meters above sea level, deep in the Khevsureti mountain region in eastern Georgia. From here the inhabitants of the one and only house in Sakhile have a breathtaking view over forests, deep gorges, and wild rivers. There is no other settlement around. Dusheti R-on, the nearest small town is a two-hour drive away. Thanks to its beauty, the region is a secret getaway for nature lovers, who share pictures of its fortified castles, ancient shrines, and tombs under the hashtag #khevsureti on YouTube and social media. But Khevsureti's inhabitants are oblivious to the craze—without access to the Internet or even telephone lines.

Gela Mtvlishvili loves to hike here. He could simply spend his holidays enjoying the tranquility of the mountains. Instead the trained lawyer, human rights activist, and journalist chose a path nobody else did. Mtvlishvili committed himself to developing the economically deprived region by building a new communication infrastructure and by establishing a new form of citizen journalism focusing on mountain stories, which give the people living there a voice.

Yet giving them a voice is as difficult as the roads to Sakhile are muddy and bumpy. Manana Arabuli, who lives here with

her family, takes care of a small vegetable garden where potatoes, beans, and strawberries grow. She also tends to cows, ducks, and chickens. Her husband Gurami is a tractor driver. Their two sons, Gigi and Giorgi, only come home on weekends. Gigi, who is 18, is studying engineering at the technical university in Tbilisi, 120 km away from home. His brother, who is 15, is enrolled at a boarding school, as there is no school close by. During the winter, when the settlement is occasionally isolated due to the snow, they often have to wait months before they can return home and see their parents. And as there is no phone or Internet connection, communicating with their parents is impossible when away from home. In emergencies, Manana and Gurami climb to the top of the mountain, in the hope that they get just enough phone signal for their mobile.

Information for the mountain dwellers

When Gela Mtvlishvili heard Gigi and Giorgi Arabuli's experiences of life in Sakhile, their testimonials helped him envision a better future for the mountains. The brothers had told him that they did not wish to swap the region for the cities like so many others already had done. The two would rather work on improv-



Gigi Arabuli and Giorgi Arabuli are waiting for the Internet to come.

PROFILE

Georgia

Who implements the projects?

- The online news site MtisAmbebi.ge reports stories and news from remote mountain regions of Georgia. It was founded by the Network of Information Centers (NIC).

How does the project work?

- With training that combines theory and practice, NIC qualifies citizen journalists for reporting in mountain regions.
- In addition, NIC organizes an annual media camp where young people learn how to produce media content and report using their mobile phones. They also learn about the ethical principles of the press code and acquire further specialist knowledge.
- NIC further qualifies journalists as trainers.
- Since 2017, NIC has been specifically training citizen journalists for MtisAmbebi.ge, which specializes in stories and news from the remote mountain regions.

What are the difficulties?

- Lack of interest among the national media and the governments of remote mountain regions and the people who live there.

What has the media project achieved?

- People from remote mountain regions in Georgia receive daily local news and have access to information relevant to them via the MtisAmbebi.ge website.
- The high-quality reports by citizen journalists have aroused the interest of national and international media in the underdeveloped region and have attracted the attention of the local governments.
- In 2018, a campaign was launched to digitalize the mountain regions. By the end of 2019, more than 60 villages were equipped with high-speed internet and more than 30 villages with telephone connections.

What are the highlights?

- The number of reports published on the website Mtisambebi.ge and its Facebook page has increased considerably. Meanwhile, about 1.2 million people watch the reports on YouTube every month. The Facebook page has 106,000 followers.
- Within three years, Mtisambebi.ge has become so successful that the news page can continue to exist without further financial support from DW Akademie.
- The BBC is funding the translation of stories posted on MtisAmbebi.ge to make them available to an English-speaking audience.

➔ mtisambebi.ge

ing the situation for the people living there and they had concrete plans: Gigi wants to build road and bridges; Giorgi wants to build wooden houses for tourists. But they are aware that this would be impossible without the region being connected to the Internet.

Gela Mtvlishvili bursts with energy and not just when he hikes on the narrow mountain paths of Khevsureti. Once he gets an idea into his head, he doesn't waste a moment to make it a reality. It became clear for Mtvlishvili that in general, people were leaving their homes not only because of the poor infrastructure, lacking job opportunities, or medical care, but also due to the lack of Internet and mobile connection. The deprivation was not just economic but informational.

70 villages in Khevsureti have not been digitalized and more than 30 villages had no access to the telephone network. This was not only hindering the development of the area, but also had other disadvantages for the remaining villagers: many of the official forms, applications, and documents of the country can in the meantime only be accessed online. And last but not least, the people in Khevsureti wanted to be informed.

Existing news sites focused heavily on political stories from the capital rather than regional issues. And because the economi-

cally underdeveloped hinterlands were not covered in the news at all, Mtvlishvili was determined to launch a media outlet with a focus on the people who live there.

Making a difference

In 2016, Mtvishvili set up the multimedia online news website MtisAmbebi.ge, which translated means "story of the mountains." Reports on the site focus on regional news and on the people who live there, their work and leisure, their dreams and struggles. It is run by the Network of Information Centers (NIC) a community media and news organization, which Mtvlishvili had founded earlier to qualify citizen reporters, the first of its kind in the country.

Around ten young people volunteer as citizen journalists for MtisAmbebi.ge. Eight of them still live in the mountain area, the other two visit frequently. For Mtvlishvili it was important that they have the capacity to conduct a journalistic interview, shoot well, make a touching film, and produce a balanced story. They have all completed several training courses run by NIC. Nevertheless, there is an editorial process and "all stories are fact checked before they go online," says Mtvlishvili.

Maintaining high journalistic standards is so important to him, he usually performs final edits himself—even if that means spending nights verifying articles before they go online.

“With this new infrastructure and the media outlet [Mtisambebi.ge](https://www.mtisambebi.ge), Mtvlishvili has managed to shine the spotlight on the nearly forgotten mountain areas.

But reporting was not enough for Mtvlishvili. Additionally, he started fundraising for what he called the "Digitalization of Khevsureti" project. "We fought a lot," he says. "We not only visited various international organizations, but also the ministry of economy and explained the importance of the project to them. Finally, we collected altogether around 130,000 EUR from various international organizations and mainly from the Georgian government."

This money made all the difference. In the winter of 2018, Mtvlishvili said, "We are waiting for the snow to melt, because the transmission masts for the Internet have to be installed on the summit of the mountains. It's a difficult process (...) and I promise that 70 villages and 1300 inhabitants, including 200 children, will have access to the Internet, and in autumn over

20 villages near the Russian border will also have access to a mobile phone connection."

Three months later, the masts were installed. Currently, more than 60 mountain villages have access to highspeed Internet and in an additional 30 villages people for the first time are able to make telephone calls or use social media.

The stories of the mountains are going viral

With this new infrastructure and the media outlet [Mtisambebi.ge](https://www.mtisambebi.ge), Mtvlishvili has managed to shine the spotlight on the nearly forgotten mountain areas. National media often pick up their articles and Georgians from across the country regularly follow the stories on their website.

One article even went viral: The story of an old man who lived alone in the middle of the mountains in a rundown house with no heating. The video of volunteers shouldering heavy cement sacks and working to build a new house for the old man was clicked more than 250,000 times, a huge number for a small online news-website and a country with only around 3.7 million inhabitants. "By showing exciting stories and by raising awareness about the problems of the rural communities



Gela Mtvlishvili and his team on the way to an interview partner.



Stories from the mountains — MtisAmbebi.ge gives the people living in the mountains a voice.

© mtisambebi.ge

MtisAmbebi.ge did manage to give the people a voice (...),” praises Zviad Koridze, a Georgian journalist and media expert. “The main function of media in a modern world is that nobody should be left without a voice in the media, especially not those living alone in a remote village,” he says.

“By showing exciting stories and by raising awareness about the problems of the rural communities MtisAmbebi.ge did manage to give the people a voice.

The stories of the mountain regions not only attracted Georgian experts and the audience, but also the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), which regularly feature stories from the MtisAmbebi.ge citizen journalists. After negotiations Mtivlishvili and the BBC agreed to regularly translate the contents of MtisAmbebi.ge into English.

After three years of operation, NIC will be able to continue the Mtisambebi.ge project without the continued support of DW Akademie. Mtivlishvili is going to finance the website through advertisement and he is developing a strategy for crowd funding. It is not unlikely that Giorgi will one day be making his living by hosting tourists in the remote settlement of Sakhile. Next spring, after the snow melts again, more masts will be installed and then Giorgi will be connected. All he needs to then do is set up his own tourist website showing pictures of the stunning Georgian mountains.

AGGREGATED IMPACT DATA

Strengthening civil society: DW Akademie has provided consultation services for 160 non-governmental organizations working in 17 countries for the improvement of human rights and freedom of expression in 2018. This has opened up a platform for dialogue between state institutions, civil society, and media stakeholders and improved the access to information and social participation for 2,2 million people.

Countries: Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Colombia, Georgia, Guatemala, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Libya, Myanmar, Namibia, Pakistan, Palestinian Territories, Serbia, South Sudan, Tunisia, Uganda



With hip-hop against hate speech on the net: the song "Klickbejt" went viral.

© K. Dahmann

WESTERN BALKANS

Just like the professionals

How young people in the Western Balkans are shaping the future

Author **Klaus Dahmann**

AT A GLANCE

Eight YouTubers mobilized against hate speech with their release of the hip hop video "Klickbejt." With more than 2.7 million views, their call to action is now a viral hit. These young, creative YouTubers are part of a new scene in the Western Balkans that develops innovative media formats and sets their own agenda — beyond the old narrative of friend versus foe.

How can traditional media reach young people and how can young people raise their voices so their issues are heard? Children and young people are at the center of DW Akademie's project in the Western Balkans.

With mobile phones and microphones in hand and tripods over their shoulders, six teenagers are mixing in with journalists at the press entrance to the BalkanTubeFest in Sarajevo. Anika, Filip, Milena, Balša, Sara, and Irena are bursting with excitement. This is their first experience as young reporters for the Montenegrin public radio station RTCG.

And they're off! They pass through the screaming fans, shake some hands, and take a selfie with "Baka Prase," currently the most popular YouTuber in the Balkans. Then it's time for a stand-up in front of the event logo before heading off to check the video footage and make sure the audio is up to review the video footage and check the audio levels—just like the pros.

But there is time for a quick question for the trainer: "Is my message coming through clearly?" This is the most important aspect of the exercise for 18-year-old Balša.

"Teenagers are tired of YouTube channels where the only thing that they do is curse," he said. "Our videos are interesting. We are new and innovative. It's just great!"

Six months ago, these teenagers started the YouTube channel "Hexatorm" as a youth portal for RTCG, Montenegro's public broadcaster, under the guidance of the broadcaster's network and trainers from DW Akademie. The name Hexatorm was coined by the young people themselves, combining the Greek prefix hexa—because they are a team of six—and the English word "storm" which underlies the project's dynamics.

For the young journalists, the YouTuber Festival in Sarajevo was one of several workshops that make up the project. The event offers them a venue where they can implement what they have learned over the past few months. The goal was to produce a YouTube video from an idea to the storyboard to the finished product.

"Hexatorm is a platform where we can express ourselves," said 17-year-old Milena. "It's great that RTCG provides us the necessary equipment for our ideas and ensures that we have experienced colleagues by our side to assist us."

Youth connecting to youth

So what does the Montenegrin public service broadcaster gain by supporting young YouTubers?

"Young people are increasingly turning away from the traditional media," said Vanja Šćekić, RTCG's deputy director-general. "We have to reach a young audience and this works best by involving young people themselves. This ensures that public broadcasting remains relevant."

This new youth-driven media project offers public broadcasters the chance to not only rejuvenate their offerings for young people but also allows for the production of creative digital formats that can be posted on YouTube, Instagram, and other social media platforms.



With the YouTube channel "Hexatorm," these teenagers are rejuvenating Montenegro's public broadcaster, RTCG.

PROFILE

Serbia/Western Balkans

Who implements the projects?

- Hexatorm is a youth portal of RTCG, the public broadcaster of Montenegro. In addition to RTCG, 14 other media projects for children and young people in the Western Balkans participate.

How does the project work?

- Under the motto “Young Media—Media for and with young people,” DW Akademie supports 15 media projects tailored to young people up to the age of 30 by providing consulting and training since 2017.
- Children and young people design and shape digital formats themselves—beyond the classical media.

What are the difficulties?

- Freedom of the press is restricted in all countries of the Western Balkans. State influence on the media is constantly increasing.
- Children and young people have hardly any opportunities to raise their voices through existing media.

What has the media project achieved?

- A dozen media houses have improved the design of their information services for children and young people. They provide more creative, age-appropriate information and use new digital offerings.
- In 2018, DW Akademie supported the Serbian Press Council. Afterwards, in just five months, it identified and reprimanded 350 blatant violations of the press code in which tabloid media victimized minors.

What are the highlights?

- Eight YouTubers campaigned for a responsible approach to social media with the music video “Klikbejt—Drama.” The video was viewed more than one million times in the first months alone.
- Since 2017, DW Akademie has been organizing the internationally oriented Brave New Media Forum in Belgrade. Every year, more than 300 participants exchange their views there on the latest trends in children and youth media.

➔ [youtube.com/hexatorm](https://www.youtube.com/hexatorm)

➔ [facebook.com/youthvibes.rs](https://www.facebook.com/youthvibes.rs)

“Hexatorm” is only one of 15 media projects for children and young people that DW Akademie supports in the western Balkans through consultations and trainings. More than 300 young people have participated in journalistic trainings of the various youth media ventures. In addition to Serbia, where most projects are located, others are ongoing in Bosnia-Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Kosovo, and Montenegro. These include animated educational videos for new schoolchildren, a seven-language youth magazine for ethnic minorities, and a news portal for millennials.

“We have to reach a young audience and this works best by involving young people themselves.”

In order to build a long-term local knowledge base, DW Akademie, together with the Serbian media associations Asocijacija medija and Lokal Pres, is building a network of local child and youth media advisors and a 30-member pool of trainers. Young people who are particularly talented are identified and offered further media trainings.

Among them are Jovana Jović and Vanja Joksimović, two high school students from the town of Niš in southern Serbia. The duo won over their peers from schools all around the city with the idea of a website for teenagers. They quickly assembled a 25-member team, organized workshops, designed an online survey, and programmed their site. Only a few months later, the for-teens, by-teens portal “Youth Vibes” was launched. What sets the project apart is that not only will teenagers write and edit the content themselves but that every article would allow teenagers to have their say. After winning a Serbian sponsorship competition, “Youth Vibes” is now expanding beyond Niš and is setting up editorial teams in neighboring cities.

Youth media for the future

When young people can talk about “their” issues, it quickly becomes clear that the first post-war generation—the Kosovo war ended 20 years ago—is different than their parents’. They are no longer captive to the traditional friend-foe mindset. What counts for them is a good education and a job that will provide for them, two ambitions that are presently difficult to achieve in their home countries. This leads many young people to leave for western Europe after they complete their education, going where they see better prospects for the future. Four out of five young Serbs see their future abroad. About 30,000 people per year emigrate from Bosnia-Herzegovina. For young people in rural areas, educational opportunities and job prospects are significantly fewer than in the main cities.

“We noticed that there are no media for us teenagers, that’s why we started ‘Youth Vibes,’” said 18-year-old Jovana.



Jovana Jović and Vanja Joksimović founded the teenager for teenager portal “Youth Vibes” in Serbia.

© DW/M. Erdeji

When she launched the youth portal, she was just 16. For her it was a major achievement. At the time, she did not have a career in mind but wanted to study biology. Now 18, Jovana wants to study politics and, like many of her generation, does not necessarily want to pursue a career in journalism. But participants understand that the skills they are learning through producing media content that clearly and objectively presents facts will help them in other professions.

“It is very important to involve young people in the discussion of values and how to communicate in society, because they are the ones shaping the immediate future of this region,” said Gordana Jankovic, head of the OSCE Media Program.

In order to address the importance of ethical-moral rules on social networks, eight well-known producers created a hip-hop video as part of an anti-hate speech campaign. “Klikbejt” was viewed 50,000 times within just two hours of its release and after three weeks it already reached one million views. The topic of the hip hop song is the addiction to gaining as many clicks and likes on the social media—often at any price. The group also produced a number of accompanying clips explaining the campaign. The YouTubers performed the song live at the BalkanTubeFest 2018 in Sarajevo.

The chance to see the performance and meet these eight YouTubers was a highlight for the young “Hexatorm” reporters.

“Although we’ve only been on YouTube for a short time, people are already recognizing me on the street, asking for autographs and wanting to take a selfie with me,” said 17-year-old Irana. “This shows that ‘Hexatorm’ is having an impact on our generation!”

AGGREGATED IMPACT DATA

Innovation and dialogue online: In 2018, DW Akademie has helped 116 media organizations prepare for the challenges of digitization. 91 media partners have increased their reach - through new digital media formats such as social media platforms, blogs, and Internet radio stations. Approximately 4.2 million people in 18 countries receive a greater variety of information and participate in public discussions.

Countries: Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Colombia, Ecuador, Georgia, Ghana, Guatemala, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, Pakistan, Serbia, Tunisia, Ukraine

Public service media: 26,6 million people in five countries have been able to profit from changes to their state media in 2018. Support and consultation, structural reforms and training programs have helped to make reporting more varied and programs more attractive for their audiences. With the support of DW Akademie, state media have been transformed into media with a public mandate.

Countries: Georgia, Myanmar, Namibia, Serbia, Ukraine



César Sánchez made a steep career after his journalism training.

BOLIVIA

Two tracks are better than one

A new course for journalism training

Author **Vera Freitag**

AT A GLANCE

When César Sánchez completed his communication science degree in La Paz, he had no professional journalism experience whatsoever. So he applied for the dual training program offered by Fundación para el Periodismo, the first and still the only training opportunity in Bolivia that combines theory and practice. Today, César is an expert in digital journalism and a sought-after trainer who mentors young aspiring journalists.

It used to be that anyone wishing to become a journalist in Bolivia could only enroll in a theory-based educational communication program devoid of practical know-how. The introduction of a dual journalism training program has spawned a new generation of self-confident multimedia experts now working across the country.

Yellow gondolas rattle above the rooftops of La Paz. Cable cars are a common means of transport for the inhabitants of the Bolivian metropolis. Tourists get on board so they can take in a bird's-eye view of the city. Bolivia's administrative capital inhabits a deep valley high in the Andes, 3,600 meters above sea level. It is a conglomeration of modern homes, colonial buildings, and simple wooden huts perched up and down the steep valley walls. At night, the city is transformed into a sea of lights.

One of those lights is the Fundación para el Periodismo (FPP – Foundation for Journalism) which is based in a big yellow building in the popular arts district of Sopocachi. The foundation's 15-member team always keeps the front door open, welcoming a potpourri of journalists from all over the country who want to exchange ideas on how to become a better reporter.

It's been five years since César Sánchez first walked through that front door. At that time he was finishing his studies in communication science. One of his lecturers told him about a new training opportunity for journalists focusing on multimedia news production utilizing both theory and practice.

"When I read the description, I thought that I could not possibly apply, that they were looking for much more experienced applicants than myself," recalled the 28-year-old journalist from La Paz.

The syllabus for the one-year dual education program covered a lot of topics the young graduate student had little contact with, including digital and data journalism, video, and more. In addition, the program offered the opportunity to get practical work experience at renowned Bolivian media houses. Sánchez initially hesitated. Apart from a few internships, he had gained hardly any practical experience during his studies.

"But I had nothing to lose and such specialization for journalists was something completely new in Bolivia," he said.

So Sánchez sent in his application and was accepted. He became a member of the first generation of "edualeños," as the participants of this "dual journalism education" have since been dubbed. Edualeños translates loosely into something like "the duals."



Journalism training that clicks

Since the project's launch five years ago, the Fundación para el Periodismo has been a steadfast partner of DW Akademie. Three rounds of trainees, around 45 junior journalists, have already deliberated, discussed, researched, and brooded over journalistic topics in the foundation's seminar room.

"Right in the first lesson, it just clicked for me," recalled Sánchez.

In a seminar on multimedia journalism, a lecturer from Germany showed him a number of digital tools and programs. As a journalist, he had mostly just focused on writing texts. Now he was learning what the Internet can offer him and his journalistic work.

"I learned to shoot videos with my mobile phone, edit them, and upload them to a website," he said. He also learned how to use Facebook and Twitter and how he can target social media users to attract more hits for his articles.

This dual journalism training was not only the first of its kind in Bolivia, it remains the only one offering a journalism-specific curriculum. Of the 44 communication programs offered nationwide, only four offer journalism-related courses. A dedicated degree in journalism does not exist.

In their year of training at the Fundación para el Periodismo, journalists go through a total of ten seminars on topics such as investigative journalism, reporting using mobile phones—so-called "mobile reporting"—and economic reporting. Multimedia storytelling is always in the foreground. Trainees are taught to deliberate which medium to use when telling a story, how to post videos or audios to a website and which stories can be shared via social media. Each month, after the week-long seminar is complete, the trainees return to their respective media houses for the rest of the month to implement their new skills in a real-world environment. There they are supervised by an experienced editor who acts as a mentor.

“ This dual journalism training was not only the first of its kind in Bolivia, it remains the only one offering a journalism-specific curriculum.

Sánchez took full advantage of the opportunities the program offered him and began to post stories online. He wrote about economics, adding specially created infographics to his articles. When he wrote about sports, he edited short videos and linked them to his texts. If he wanted to know more about a particular application, he just googled it and watched tutorials.

PROFILE

Bolivia

Who implements the projects?

- The journalism foundation "Fundación para el Periodismo" (FPP) in La Paz promotes dual training for aspiring journalists.

How does the project work?

- Since 2014, young journalists from all media and all parts of the country have spent a year attending seminars on a wide range of journalistic topics. They then have the opportunity to apply these skills in a practical phase in participating media houses.
- "Little theory, a lot of practice" is the recipe for success of dual training. Participants have to step up to the mic, stand behind and in front of the camera, and hit the street for interviews.
- Through the combination of theory and practice, they are specifically trained as multimedia experts.

What are the difficulties?

- Bolivian media outlets do not have sufficient resources to invest in the training of media professionals.

- Of the 44 communication courses offered nationwide, only four touch on the topic of journalism. There is no regular journalism course of study so graduates lack basic journalistic knowledge when they start their careers.

What has the media project achieved?

- Graduates of the dual training program have risen to leading positions in their media companies and have introduced new, innovative editorial content thanks to their extensive knowledge of digital media.
- 80 percent of participants are either taken on by media companies, continue their work, or rise to higher editorial positions.

What are the highlights?

- Former graduates of the program now educate future generations. In the beginning, the program relied on trainers from Germany. This was followed by international and Bolivian experts. Soon, the training will be taken over completely by Bolivian trainers.
- The dual journalism training in Bolivia is not only the first, but is still the only one of its kind.

➔ fundacionperiodismo.org



The gondola to the journalism foundation
Fundación para el Periodismo in La Paz.

“I’ve learned that as a journalist you should always try new things,” said César.

“Edualeños” know how journalism work

Every participant in the dual journalism training program has a permanent position in a Bolivian media house, including national daily newspapers and radio and TV stations from all over the country. The media industry also benefits from the “edualeños.”

“Journalism has become more diverse and new genres are constantly being added,” said Thania Sandoval, director of ATB television in La Paz. Her station and two other media houses, including one of the country’s most influential newspapers, have supported the program since its outset. Sandoval recalled the frustration faced by many young journalists who had to dive right into the job without any practical experience.

“Young people would often come to us and did not even know how to attribute correctly, let alone conduct an interview,” said Sandoval. Her team was forced to first introduce basic journalistic how-to while at the same time dealing with the stress of day-to-day editorial work.

“I know that the edualeños have been taught by various experts on how journalism works and how to be at home in the digital world. They bring with them everything a journalist needs,” said Sandoval.

AGGREGATED IMPACT DATA

Training as media professionals: In 2018, DW Akademie has supported 67 practice-oriented, contemporary training programs for young journalists in 13 countries. 1,150 students at partner institutions have received degrees. This is an important basis for professional and diverse reporting.

Countries: Bangladesh, Bolivia, Georgia, Ghana, Guatemala, Lebanon, Libya, Mongolia, Myanmar, Namibia, Palestinian Territories, Serbia, Ukraine

After finishing his training, Sánchez worked for two years as a reporter for the Bolivian magazine Oxígeno where he completed the practical requirement for the program. During his time there, he developed a predilection for time-consuming research and complex topics. After reporting the story of a young woman who became a victim of human trafficking, his career as an investigative reporter was launched. Two years later, he switched to the online department.

“That’s where I found my place,” he said.

Only three people work for the portal, Sánchez, another author, and their boss. It’s a small team in which the young journalist has established himself as a digital all-rounder. He tweets, does sports coverage, edits videos, and covers political events.

"I always work, even on weekends," he said with a laugh. The market for digital journalism has grown significantly in Bolivia over the past three years.

“I know that the edualeños have been taught by various experts on how journalism works and how to be at home in the digital world. They bring with them everything a journalist needs.

"Previously, articles from the newspapers were simply copied and pasted," said Sánchez. "In the meantime, every medium to large newspaper has an online presence and many even have their own data journalism department." The editors are desperately looking for reporters who have learned how to prepare stories for the web. Sánchez, for one, does not need to think twice about the benefits of dual journalism training.

"It's not like at university or at school where you are punished and have to repeat yourself if you've done something wrong," he explained. "I've learned to keep coming up with new challenges."

For example, when Sánchez managed to land an interview with a well-known Mexican singer. "At the beginning of my journalistic career, I would not even have dared to dream of that," he said. "I have learned to have confidence in myself." Today, Sánchez can only smile about being afraid to submit his application for the program.

"César has an impressive career," said Renán Estenssoro, director of the Fundación para el Periodismo. "He is one of the best in the digital world." Estenssoro closely follows the careers of his graduates.

Sánchez was already on the jury for "Online Journalism" for the "Premio Nacional de Periodismo," the country's most important journalism award. It was a highlight in the career of the young journalist. He laughed when he was asked if he has already received offers from other media companies, "Oh yes, some!" he answered. But a change is not an option for him at the moment. "For now, I just want to ensure that online journalism in Bolivia is taken even more seriously."



Hotly sought after on the job market: the graduates of the dual journalism training.

© Steffen Leidel



In the dual training of journalists it “clicks.”

Sánchez still maintains close contact with his former colleagues. Many now work as journalists for private as well as state-run media companies in the country. They have organized a WhatsApp group where they discuss a wide variety of topics and share their scoops about the political happenings in the city.

“We have become a family,” he explained. Not infrequently, junior journalists have called him ask for specific tips on how to use this or that program for their website or blog.

For the past year year, Sánchez has also been working as a trainer for the dual journalism program. “This decision was actually an obvious one for me as I come from a family of teachers myself,” he said with a wink. Through social media, Sánchez watches intently as his protégés develop as journalists.

“Whenever I watch a successful live event on Facebook or see an interactive graphic, I know immediately that this coverage could only have come from an ‘edualeño,’” he explained proudly.



On Air — Radio Sónica has given Alejandra back her future.

© J. Metzler

GUATEMALA

Radio Sónica

A radio station broadcasts hope

Author **Johannes Metzler**

AT A GLANCE

After Alejandra stopped going to school at 13, criminal gangs became her second family. Radio Sónica has given Alejandra a new outlook on life. She now works there as a radio presenter in the afternoon and in the morning she attends school again: the station is the only one in Guatemala City that gives a voice to young people from poor districts so they can gain the confidence to stay away from drugs and gangs.

Radio Sónica is broadcasting programs for young people living in disadvantaged areas of Guatemala City. With the help of a mobile studio, the station broadcasts directly from the districts where their listeners live.

Still wearing her school uniform, Alejandra steps out of one of the dirty red city buses at a roundabout in the middle of a quiet residential area. The bus drives away leaving a thick, black cloud of diesel fumes in its wake as she walks up to a multi-story building at the end of the street. Her destination is the Guatemalan Institute for Radio Education (IGER) and the studios of one of its most popular projects, Radio Sónica.

“I still cannot believe it,” said the smiling 21-year-old. “In the morning I’m going to school and in the afternoon I’m a radio presenter.”

Alejandra had stopped going to school at the age of 13 after her parents told her they could not afford it. They said that she was just going to get pregnant so they forced her to stay home and help her mother around the house. The broadcaster has given her a future she thought she had lost.

“I was always curious and I enjoyed learning,” she said.

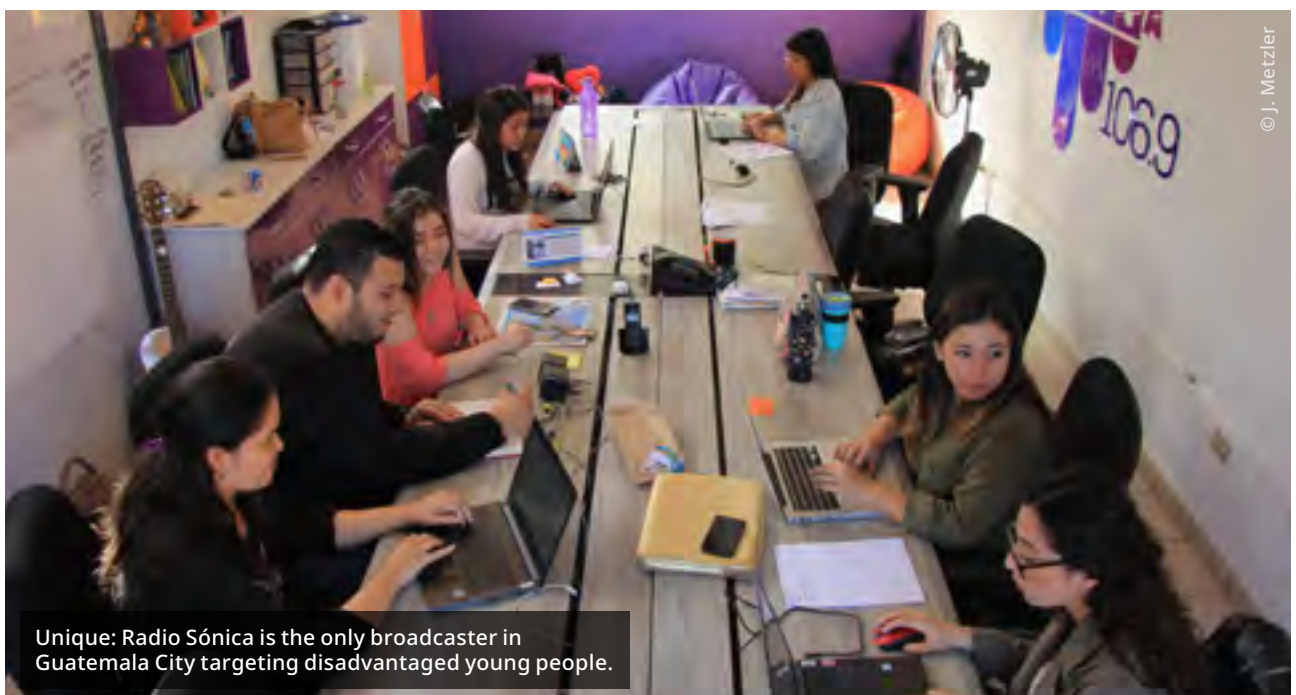
Alejandra sits with a laptop in the editorial room. It has a long table with colorful bean bags in the corner. Beside her sits Mike, looking relaxed as he just finished his show. He is in his early 20s and is wearing a black sweater and a winning smile. He is also the only male host for Radio Sónica.

Such a female majority is not common for the media sector in Central America where men traditionally call the shots. Sitting opposite them is Sara, the community manager. She is editing a video that will be posted later on Facebook. Radio Sónica is more than just a radio station as their content is conceived and produced for both radio and social media.

Beside them on the wall, colorful index cards have been posted. Written on them are the main topics that the team has decided to cover: domestic violence, drugs, teenage pregnancy. These issues reflect the pressing problems many young people in Guatemala face, problems that have been documented in studies including the Save the Children’s End-of-Childhood Survey.

According to Sara, the situation for young people is worse in Guatemala than in any other country in Latin America. Many young Guatemalans never experience a real childhood as they are forced to work at a young age or suffer abuse and hunger.

Alejandra spent much of her life in one of the city’s many slums, as have many of her listeners. They consist of densely packed houses built with unpainted gray concrete blocks. Such settlements are largely constructed illegally under bridges or on hill-sides. During heavy rainfalls, whole neighborhoods have been destroyed by mud slides. In these areas, hope is almost as hard to come by as a job.



Unique: Radio Sónica is the only broadcaster in Guatemala City targeting disadvantaged young people.

© J. Metzler



Radio Sónica also goes to dangerous parts of the city.

AGGREGATED IMPACT DATA

Youth programs: Young people need to be able to understand events in their country in order to contribute to the shaping of their futures. In 2018, DW Akademie has helped promote 59 youth-oriented media and program formats and youth projects. Around 935,000 young people in none countries received relevant information. They have the opportunity to articulate their opinion and raise their voice against ills and wrongdoings.

Countries: Burundi, Colombia, Guatemala, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Namibia, Serbia, Tunisia

These slums are run by the Pandillas, youth gangs who earn their money through racketeering, drugs, and contract killings. Alejandra was only 13 when she joined a gang.

“I was angry because my parents did not want me to go to school anymore,” she said. “They were like my second family.”

Broadcasting from dangerous quarters

Alejandra’s story is a familiar one. But what makes it unusual is the fact that it can be heard on the radio in a language and manner other young people can understand and identify with. Radio Sónica is the only broadcaster in Guatemala City targeting disadvantaged young people while inviting them to be involved in the program. This is a tremendous achievement as these young people have no other medium to turn to.

Young people also have no place where they can go and feel safe. Their neighborhoods are ruled by gangs and they are regularly chased from local shopping malls by heavily armed security guards. As a result, the media paints them mostly as criminals. Commercial broadcasters target more affluent audiences who appeal to their advertising base.

“Radio Sónica is the only broadcaster in Guatemala City targeting disadvantaged young people while inviting them to be involved in the program.”

Alejandra’s story—and the stories of her contemporaries in the slum—is not one that is of interest to the national media. It is the story of a girl who left home at 16 and got a job as a saleswoman in the market.

“It was hard. I had to work from morning to night and got paid almost nothing for it,” she said.

Even for a radio station geared for the youth, these challenging realities makes it difficult for Radio Sónica to reach its target audience. For example, if Sónica gives away movie tickets, many of the winners will not show up. Many simply do not have enough money to pay for the bus ride there or cannot leave their houses at night because of the threat of gang violence. Guatemala is not a country where children can even go to piano lessons in the afternoon or take a quick trip to the station.

“That’s why we decided that if our listeners cannot come to us, then we’ll just go to them,” said Radio Director Cristian Galicia.

PROFILE

Guatemala

Who implements the projects?

- Radio Sónica is a youth radio station in Guatemala City operated by the Guatemalan Institute for Radio Education (IGER).

How does the project work?

- As a participatory radio station in operation since 2015, Radio Sónica has been giving a voice to those young people who are excluded from other media. Young people design the radio program, set the topics, and report on them.
- Young people learn how to deal with the media and to raise their voice with self-confidence. It is also a forum where difficult topics that affect their everyday lives can be confronted with the hope that participants won't resort to drugs or gang life.

What are the difficulties?

- It is not easy to work with disadvantaged young people in Guatemala. Many have to earn money and survive in neighborhoods rife with gang crime, drugs, and violence.

What has the media project achieved?

- Young people now have a source of information that they can understand, even on taboo topics such as sexuality and domestic violence.
- Young people are taken seriously and can freely express their opinions.

What are the highlights?

- The editorial team developed a mobile “space studio” to get even more young people on the radio.
- The Guatemalan Institute for Radio Education (IGER) has become a pioneer for Media and Information Literacy (MIL) throughout Central America, experimenting with new formats.

➔ sonica.gt

Their solution was to design a mobile studio that could broadcast live from anywhere in the city. The result was a “space studio,” a colorful box painted with snakes and aliens that could “land” in the middle of schoolyards. The project was developed in cooperation with the Catholic school “Fe y Alegría” which works in these disadvantaged areas, making access to these areas possible. Parks or other public locations are unfortunately not safe enough in the city.

“Who can confidently raise their voices, make their issues heard, and stand up to drugs and violence.”

The studio is an instrument for bringing young people and the issues they face onto radio. It is also designed to introduce them to digital media tools while teaching them how to competently navigate the media landscape. Its deployment has made Radio Sónica, IGER, and its umbrella organization, Asociación de Servicios Educativos y Culturales (ASEC), pioneers in the area of youth media in Central America. DW Akademie experts assisted in the development and deployment of the space studio.

The team has also designed games to help young people learn what dangers can lurk on the Internet and how, for example, they can distinguish real facts from hoaxes on social media. Sónica also distributes comics on these topic and trains teachers. Through school visits alone, Sónica reached over 2,500 young people in 2017 and 2018. The project takes on the escalating violence in Guatemala City by educating young people



On the road with the “space studio”.

who can confidently raise their voices, make their issues heard, and stand up to drugs and violence.

In the coming years, Radio Sónica intends to expand its activities and reach more young people across the country through the IGER school program. The IGER school project allows Alejandra to study in the mornings and work at Radio Sónica in the afternoons. Her parents are proud of the work she is doing on the radio and realized that it was a mistake to take her out of school. She hopes her story will encourage others.

“At Radio Sónica, I’ve learned things that I never even knew existed,” she said. “It’s where I have been allowed to blossom into the person I am today.”



Samih, Omar and Rayyan from Campji, one of the first independent media outlets for and with refugees.

© Samih Mahmoud

LEBANON

Knowing what really is going on

How media projects are changing the daily life of refugee camps

Author **Mona Naggar**

AT A GLANCE

Samih Mahmoud fled Syria with his family when he was young and has been living in the Shatila refugee camp ever since. He now works as a reporter for Campji and knows his way around. Campji is one of the first independent digital media outlets in Lebanon where refugees report on and for other refugees. The people in the camps now have an outlet where their everyday topics, worries, dreams, and also successes can be read and shared.

Vibrant media scenes are developing in Palestinian refugee camps as young citizen journalists produce video reports to be published on social media, covering issues that are important not only to them but also the people they live with.

Down a narrow alley in the Shatila refugee camp south of the Lebanese capital Beirut, women are walking with fully loaded shopping bags as moped drivers ride past them. A poster of Yasser Arafat hangs above a power box beside other Arab leaders. Fruits, vegetables, and household goods are spread out in front of shops. Samih Mahmoud lives with his family in this alleyway. The 22-year-old had to flee Syria six years ago and now calls the camp home.

Samih is on his way to an interview. He works as a citizen journalist for Campji, a media initiative founded in 2016 by DW Akademie and the then partner organization Basmeh & Zeitzoonah. Reports by Campji journalists are published on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. Campji is one of the first independent, digital media outlets in which refugees report for refugees. It's on Campji that they have a say on their everyday issues as well as their fears, successes, desires, and dreams.

Like all citizen journalists working for Campji, Samih learned how to do research, conduct interviews, produce reports with a mobile phone, and take professional photos. His reports are now almost like those done by a professional. Samih has a photo session with Um Bakr scheduled today. The 46-year-old runs a bakery and produces manaqish, popular round flat cakes with a cheese or thyme mixture. Shortly after Campji was founded, the outlet did a portrait of the energetic woman. She was one of the first interviewees from Shatila to speak frankly about her life in front of a camera.

"These young reporters ask uncomfortable questions. They look at where it hurts and what people cannot normally talk about here such as corruption or drugs," said Bakr. "To know what's really going on in our camp, I follow Campji."

Samih walks down a few streets to meet Mohammad Hassan who operates a supermarket. The 36-year-old barely watches television anymore.

"I just cannot stand the news anymore. Everything is so negative. It gives me a headache," said Hassan who now gets most of his news through social media. "I can choose what I want to see whether its entertainment, social, or religious topics. Social media in our camp have made people more open in their opinions."

Media by, about, and for refugees

The Shatila refugee camp is one of the poorest districts in Beirut. Its inhabitants live in a very small area with no functioning sewage system, water, or electricity supply. Unemployment in the camp remains very high. Palestinians who were forced leave their homeland when Israel was founded in 1948 live here along with their descendants. The remainder of the population is made up of impoverished people from Lebanon, refugees from Syria, and low-income earners from other countries. The exact population of the camp is unknown but estimates put the number at 30,000.



Everyday life in the refugee camp Shatila.

© Samih Mahmoud

PROFILE

Lebanon

Who implements the projects?

- Campji is a media platform by and for refugees in Lebanon.

How does the project work?

- Since 2016, refugees in Lebanese refugee camps have been trained to become citizen journalists and accompanied in setting up their own media platform called Campji.
- Participants are trained in the basics of journalism, mobile reporting, storytelling, and photography.

What are the difficulties?

- Propaganda by Lebanese politicians and government officials against Syrian refugees has created a climate of fear. Refugees are therefore less open to tell their stories in front of the camera.

What has the media project achieved?

- Campji is one of the first independent, digital media platforms where refugees work as journalists and let other refugees have their say on everyday topics.
- Refugees set their own topics and design their own media formats. They make themselves heard in the media and provide their fellow refugees with relevant information.
- Since Campji was founded in 2016, the media landscape has become more diverse. More digital media offerings have been created in the camps.

What are the highlights?

- The Campji Facebook page has been online since November 2016 and now has over 57,000 followers.
- Young people have become citizen journalists and role models for other young people inside and outside the camps. Four of the citizen journalists have received an employment contract from the Al Jana organisation.

➔ facebook.com/campji



Baker Um Bakr feels well informed by Campji.

An independent media organization like Campji was unthinkable in Shatila and the 12 other refugee camps in Lebanon until a few years ago. In the past, almost all of the media was in the hands of the various Palestinian political groups that controlled who was allowed to speak publicly. The camps are managed by committees representing the various Palestinian political groups, such as the PLO and Hamas.

“Campji is one of the first independent, digital media outlets in which refugees report for refugees.”

Over the past decade, the media landscape in the Palestinian camps has changed dramatically. The political developments in Lebanon, which pushed back against the influence of the political groups, has played a decisive role. According to Ahmad Laila, the Internet is also leading the change. The Palestinian journalist lives and works in Beirut but grew up in a camp in northern Lebanon. He has observed how people are now discussing and exchanging messages in online forums. Mobile messenger apps and social media are now very popular in the camps for quickly getting news on current developments. But what was lacking was professionally-told stories about the people in the camps.

“I think the know-how was not there like how to deal with technology, storytelling, and topic selection,” said Laila. “That came with Campji. This media initiative has brought something new to the scene.”



Supermarket operator Mohammad Hassan prefers to inform himself through social media.

Campji has been a pioneer for media in the camps because its content is produced by and for refugees and this format is now helping to revitalize local media scenes. Since Campji was founded, at least eight other similar media projects have since sprung up, all reporting on everyday topics in the camps and providing people with relevant news and information.

No fear in front of the camera

Just down the road from Shatila lies the Burj al-Barajneh refugee camp. An estimated 20,000 people live in the camp including Lilyan Samrawi (22), Raafat Falah (24), and Nassar Tanji (23). Just like Samih, these three are budding citizen journalists. They report for a project called Nastopia, a combination of the words “Nas,” which means “people” in Arabic, and “utopia.” Nastopia has been publishing content on Facebook since 2018. Like Campji, they report about everyday issues in the camp and deliver pertinent information to its inhabitants.

“Campji has been a pioneer for media in the camps because its content is produced by and for refugees and this format is now helping to revitalize local media scenes.”

The young journalists are sitting in their regular café. Colorful cans of fruit juices and soft drinks are scattered across the table. Raafat smokes from a hookah as noise from the busy street filters in through the large windows. The trio often comes here to discuss their work.

AGGREGATED IMPACT DATA

Media for refugees: DW Akademie has helped refugees in border regions and refugee camps, among them 69 displaced citizen journalists whose programs reached 3,8 million people in 2018. With the help of 23 media organizations, 1,8 million people have been reached, in a vital contribution towards mutual understanding and communication between diverse ethnic groups, refugees, local populations, and those left behind at home.

Countries: Bangladesh, Lebanon, Pakistan, South Sudan

“This is like our second home,” said Lilyan.

The café is located on a busy two-lane road a few steps from Burj al-Barajneh. Nearby is Nastopia’s office which is sparsely furnished with black desks and a black imitation leather sofa.

When they’re not in the office or the cafe, the reporters can be found walking the streets of the camp. The owner of a barber shop interrupts his work and steps out onto the street. He recognizes the young citizen journalists. The barber spends a lot of time on social media and loves the funny videos that Nastopia publishes, such as a satirical video about how power cables dangle loosely over streets and sidewalks like tangled balls of wool. A few shops down, the owner of a sporting

goods store said that while he mostly follows international, regional Arab and Palestinian broadcasters, for local coverage from Burj al-Barajneh, he uses Nastopia on his mobile phone.

"I think the Facebook page is good because the young people are part of us," he said. "They speak our language. We trust them."

For Nassar, being recognized for their work has meant that people have gradually lost their distrust of the camera.

"For a long time, the residents here only knew Palestinian and Lebanese TV channels that either film poverty or report on violence in the camps," he said.

The young Nastopia journalists have set themselves apart by conducting street surveys, reporting on problems such as the supply of electricity and water and covering positive topics such as the career of a young musician from the camp or an initiative that wants to "green" the roofs of houses. That people should be taken seriously and can talk not just about the dark side of

life in the camp, but also about their successes, their happiness, their dreams is new to them.

"Everyone knows us because we always walk around with a microphone and a camera," said Lilyan. The residents have since become accustomed to seeing a woman interviewing people and filming in public.

"Many call us simply 'Nastopia,'" she added.

Raafat and Nassar love working with the camera and the close contact with people it allows. For Lilyan, who is also studying journalism, Nastopia offers her the chance to do real reporting while learning about the lives of her neighbors in the camps.

Human rights through social media

Since people started getting their news information on the Internet or through social media and having dialogues in forums, it is no longer so easy for Palestinian factions to control





The Nastopia team is well known in the refugee camp.

© Nastopia team

cameras or microphones. Instead of viewing them as competitors, Campji is looking to develop into a consultative body that can help newcomers in the market find their niche. The goal is to provide news and information to as many refugees in the Lebanese camps as possible. This would ensure that everyone knows what is happening in the camps so that people can be engaged to work for change.

Meanwhile, reporters Samih, Rayyan, and Omar are working on new, innovative formats. They are planning interviews with famous Lebanese-based artists, talks with the first generation of Palestinian refugees who fled there in 1948, and an investigation into why some Palestinians in Lebanon do not have ID cards. In Lebanese refugee camps there is definitely no shortage of topics to report on.

public opinion. But that does not stop them from trying. Arguing that security in the camps must be ensured, citizen journalists who report in the camp are encouraged to speak to the political groups and ask for permission.

“All journalists need a permit in the beginning but after we know them, we let them do their jobs,” said Colonel Ahmad Audeh, one of Shatila security officers. “The Campji reporters abide by the rules. They communicate regularly with the political groups and try to maintain a relaxed relationship, without being talked into which topics they cover.”

In the Campji editorial office, Samih and two other journalists, Rayyan and Omar, also in their early 20s, are meeting to discuss how the platform has changed their lives. They have worked to open up new freedoms in their camp and these efforts have allowed them to discover their place in society. They now have a profession that they love and from which they can live. They are proud of the reports they produce.

Even with all the achievements, citizen media in Lebanese refugee camps is still in its infancy. Despite that, the Campji team has to compete with other initiatives as it continues its plan for further growth. The organization Al-Jana has been overseeing Campji since November 2018.

The head of Al-Jana, Hicham Kayed, has brought in a number of new employees from different parts of the country so that Campji can report from all 12 refugee camps in Lebanon. He also wants to support other media initiatives in the future through workshops or through renting out technical equipment such as



Reporting environmental sins online: Fraj Louhichi and Sami Fetini combine media and technology.

TUNISIA

An environmental platform for a cleaner future

Author **Sarah Mersch**

AT A GLANCE

The town of Sfax, the home of Fraj Louhichi and Sami Fetini, often stinks of industrial fumes and sewage. More and more people are falling ill with respiratory diseases and cancer. To change this, the duo founded the Rakib mobile platform, where people and organizations can report issues of pollution. They submitted their idea to MEDIA LOVES TECH, a competition for Tunisian start-ups and professionals in journalism, development, and design. Fraj and Sami's platform won and received start-up financing and expert advice. Rakib is now online and local pollution has nowhere to hide.

Tunisian Fraj Louhichi is developing an app to bring the topic of environmental pollution into the media and at the same time protect whistleblowers. At the MEDIA LOVES TECH start-up competition, the computer scientist presented his business idea, won a start-up financing prize, and launched Tunisia's first environmental platform for whistleblowers.

"Ugh, this smells great!"

Fraj Louhichi swings his arms up theatrically and takes a deep breath before breaking out into a bitter, sarcastic laugh. Standing on the beach in his hometown of Sfax, it does smell but certainly not good. The stench that wafts across the beaches of Sfax comes from industrial fumes, untreated sewage, and—today—a decaying sea turtle. The ocean the now 37-year-old jumped into as a child is no longer safe for swimming.

"You come here to relax, to clear your head but in the end you're in an even worse mood than before," said the computer scientist, looking bitterly at the sea. A cloudy broth of brown-green algae lines the water's edge.

The industrial and port city of Sfax is located about a three-hour drive south of the capital Tunis. With approximately 270,000 inhabitants, it is Tunisia's second largest city and an important commercial center. The city is inhabited by industrious businessmen that like to call themselves "the Germans of Tunisia." But the factories that once contributed so much to the city's wealth are now responsible for one of its biggest problems: environmental pollution.

The wind blows dust from yellow phosphate, which is loaded onto ships in the harbor, over the whole city center, covering it

like a veil of freshly washed laundry. Inhabitants breathe it in as it collects on windowpanes as well as the fresh fruit and vegetables sitting in merchant stalls. To the south of Sfax, meters-high piles of the low-level radioactive waste product phosphogypsum lie uncovered within sight of a nature reserve. Right beside it, effluent flows untreated into the sea. All this results in not only a biting smell that burns eyes and lungs, but also, as doctors claim, a disproportionate amount of respiratory disease and cancer. However, related data is not collected so there are no official statistics.

Louhichi grew tired of all this and wanted to do something to change it. In 2013 he founded a small radio station with some like-minded friends. Diwan FM is now a partner station of DW Akademie and the most important private station in the entire region. Louhichi, like many young media professionals in Tunisia, is a self-taught journalist. At Diwan FM, the trained computer scientist with a passion for history and traditions leads the station's web development. For Louhichi, who also likes to sit behind the microphone as a presenter, journalistic work was no longer enough to counter the legal and environmental transgressions. The idea of doing something for whistleblowers kept buzzing around in his head. Tunisia has recently passed a law that protects whistleblowers but after decades of dictatorship and oppression, many citizens are still afraid of reporting crimes and corruption.



Often the wind blows the yellow phosphate dust across the whole city.

© S. Mersch



Once they contributed to the wealth of the city, today the factories are responsible for many problems.

Louhichi thinks back with nostalgia to the atmosphere that spread through Tunisia after the departure of long-time dictator Ben Ali in January 2011. It was during this time that he met a number of activists, including Sami Fetini, who now works as a journalist for Diwan FM. The two men heard about MEDIA LOVES TECH, a competition for Tunisian start-ups working in journalism, development, and design organized by DW Akademie and the Tunisian media NGO Al Khatt. On a whim, they decided to apply. The competition is open to innovative founders from the media scene. The winner receives start-up funding and advice to help them survive in the marketplace. Louhichi and Sami submitted their concept in 2018 for an "environmental reporting platform" called Rakib, which in English means "observer" or "watchdog."

The platform allows users or whistleblowers to anonymously report environmental violations from uncollected rubbish on the street corner to fish deaths and oil leaks. The environmental wrongdoings reported on Rakib are first researched and when verified, passed on to participating media and the responsible city administrations.

“Many local media outlets and journalists do not have the resources to verify the claims.

“This gives the media quick access to verified information and the authorities can also react quickly,” explains Louhichi. Although such problems have been increasingly reported on social media since the political upheaval in 2011, many local media outlets and journalists do not have the resources to verify the claims.

AGGREGATED IMPACT DATA

Sustainable business models: In 2018, DW Akademie advised approximately 6,200 employees in 134 media houses on the development of sustainable and innovative business models. The aim is to enable journalists who provide people with relevant reporting to make a living from their profession. The aim is to enable journalists, supplying their fellow citizens with relevant and professional content, to make a living in their chosen profession.

Countries: Belarus, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Colombia, Ecuador, Georgia, Ghana, Lebanon, Libya, Mongolia, Morocco, Namibia, Serbia, Tunisia, Ukraine

“With Rakib we are assisting local correspondents on the one hand and fighting fake news on the other,” he added. At the same time, according to Louhichi, the data generated by the app is also a means of exerting pressure on the state.

“This would allow us to create transparency. If we don’t have access to official figures, then we at least have the statistics from the app and can clearly determine where which problems are reported and how often,” he said. But will the state react to this information? Louhichi firmly believes it will.

“If we no longer believe in a better future, we should just stay at home,” he said.

Tunisia has a creative evolving start-up scene with a wide range of business ideas. MEDIA LOVES TECH has succeeded in focus-

ing on start-ups that combine media and technology. The jury chose Rakib's team "because they provide an answer to the urgent needs of citizens and local journalists. We see in it the value the technology can deliver for high quality citizen journalism in Tunisia," said Noomane Fehri, jury member and former Minister of Information Technology and Communications.

"In the beginning, the idea behind Rakib wasn't ripened at all," said Louhichi in retrospect. Nevertheless, he and his team made it to the final round, were professionally coached and were able to sharpen their concept. Before the competition, Louhichi's three-man team just wanted to get started and didn't think of putting together a sophisticated business plan. Only after exchanging experiences with other participants and several expert consultations did it become clear how the project could continue in terms of content and economic viability.

Towards the end of the MEDIA LOVES TECH competition, one of the jury members asked Louhichi what he would do in the event that he did not win.

"We'll do it anyway, with or without money," he answered.

His team won and received around 2,800 euros as start-up funding. But more importantly, Louhichi was able to develop a clearer strategy for the project. Like all prize winners at MEDIA LOVES TECH, the Rakib team was supported until it was able to bring their idea to market.

“MEDIA LOVES TECH has succeeded in focusing on start-ups that combine media and technology.

In December 2019 that time had come and the environmental reporting platform Rakib went online. So far it is available in Sfax and Gabes, two Tunisian industrial cities. In the future, the founders want to expand it to all of Tunisia. In addition to working on the further development of Rakib, Louhichi is now covering the environment on Diwan FM. Since November 2019, he has been hosting a one-hour radio program on the subject of pollution and protecting the environment. The environmental activist is convinced that by sensitizing the population and the media, this will force politicians to become active and to put a stop to environmental pollution. For him, there is no turning back. He will continue on his mission until he can breathe the fresh sea air again in his hometown of Sfax.

PROFILE

Tunisia

Who implements the projects?

- MEDIA LOVES TECH, an initiative to promote digital approaches to innovative and high-quality journalism.

How does the project work?

- Since 2018, selected media start-ups have taken part in a coaching and mentoring program that is based around a competition. Here they can implement and improve their projects with professional support and develop a viable business model. This helps to strengthen sustainable online journalism in Tunisia.
- The winners of the start-up competition receive start-up financing.

What are the difficulties?

- It is a challenge to convince media start-ups to think not only creatively but also economically and to develop business models that work sustainably in the Tunisian media market.

What has the media project achieved?

- A niche was created for media start-ups that develop innovative digital concepts and thus improve journalistic work and the population's access to information in a sustainable way.
- Journalism and technology are now understood as innovative parts of the Tunisian start-up scene.

What are the highlights?

- The start-up platform Rakib, one of the winners of MEDIA LOVES TECH 2018, launched in December 2019. It provides a platform where pollution and environmental crimes can be reported.
- MEDIA LOVES TECH has been so well-received that the competition will also be held in Morocco and Algeria in the near future.

➤ akademie.dw.com/tunisiamedia | ➤ rakib.tn



Thanks to Dunia's newspaper article, the teachers no longer park their cars in the schoolyard.

GAZA STRIP, WEST BANK, EAST JERUSALEM

Spreading beyond the classroom

Media literacy goes viral

Authors **Viktorija Kleber** and **Markus Haake**

AT A GLANCE

In Dunia's school in the West Bank, teachers used to park their cars in the schoolyard leaving no room for her and her peers to play. So Dunia wrote an article for a newspaper. News of the situation reached the Ministry of Education and the teachers now have to park their cars elsewhere. After taking some courses offered by the Pyalara, a local NGO, Dunia can conduct interviews, do research, check facts, and secure her data, skills that enable her to express herself more confidently. And thanks to the efforts of Pyalara, media competence has now been included in the Palestinian school curriculum.

Whether they are calling for healthier food in the cafeteria or for car-free schoolyards, at the Palestinian schools where the NGO Pyalara teaches Media and Information Literacy (MIL), students are exercising their freedom of expression and calling for change. In addition, they now know about data security and privacy protection and speak with government representatives about how to sensibly address social media.

It is a morning like any other at Kuofor Neima, an all-girls school in a village in the West Bank. Loud voices can be heard as the students play basketball or play catch on the playground. A heavy iron gate gives access to the school grounds framed by walls that have been painted by the students. But the playground was not always for playing. Until recently, teachers parked their cars there and for the approximately 550 girls, there was barely room to play.

“That annoyed me,” said Dunia, a 16-year-old student at Kuofor Neima. “Wherever there was shade, there were cars parked meaning we could only stand in a small patch of sun. I thought that was unjust and unnecessary because it was always so terribly hot for us.”

Dunia documented her anger and urged her teachers to change their behavior in an article published in “Fosool,” an MIL newspaper that serves many schools across the territories. She quoted the then headmistress of the school who questioned Dunia’s choice to criticize her teachers. This surprised Dunia since she had learned to question things in her Media and Information Literacy (MIL) class.

MIL encourages people to stand up for their rights

“MIL has given me tremendous self-confidence,” said Dunia. “Most of all, I’ve learned not to accept things as they are.”

For three years, Dunia and her fellow students had MIL lessons once a week where they learned to fact check the news, write journalistic articles, interview subjects, and produce news reports using their phones. Trainers from Pyalara educated the students in all aspects of media literacy while also assisting the students in writing articles on topics important to them. One of those was about the teachers parking their cars on the playground.

The article caused an uproar. Pyalara recognized this and tried to address the situation with the headmistress. After a copy of the article was passed on to the Palestinian Ministry of Education, the authorities wrote a letter to the school reminding the teachers that parking in the schoolyard is prohibited because it is a designated space for the students. The schoolyard is now car-free and the students are grateful that Dunia wrote her article.



Learning to write down what moves: many Palestinian students have experienced violence.

© V. Kleber

“Examples like this show that MIL influences the mindsets of teenagers,” said Hania Bitar, director of Pyalara. “It encourages students to stand up for their rights and articulate their concerns. It’s a project that changes the lives of students over the long term.”

Over five years, Pyalara has taught MIL to more than 600 students in 25 schools in the West Bank and Gaza. But the conditions in the region are challenging. Both the teachers and the students are confronted with the Israeli occupation on a daily basis as they navigate through checkpoints manned by the Israeli army. Others have experienced attacks by radical settlers in the West Bank or bombings in Gaza. This can leave a deep mark. MIL courses offers students the opportunity to write down and reflect upon what they have experienced.

Sandwiches instead of candy

The boys’ school in Nillin, west of Ramallah, is one of the schools supported by Pyalara’s MIL project. To get here, one has to drive over the hilly mountains outside Ramallah, along orchards crawling with gnarled olive trees.

“I can tell immediately who took part in the MIL course,” said Headmaster Hassan Mousa. “Those students can articulate themselves better and dare to do more.”

Three such students are Loyal Sroor, Mohammad Zaidon, and Ahmad Riad, who host a radio show every morning that is broadcast on loudspeakers in many Palestinian schools before the school day starts. In the past, only speeches were read on the air. The trio has developed a new format that includes spontaneous interviews with teachers and the headmaster.

“MIL encourages students to stand up for their rights and articulate their concerns. It’s a project that changes the lives of students over the long term.”

The headmaster was once asked why the prices in the cafeteria were so high that some students cannot even afford a sandwich and why there are so many unhealthy snacks for sale.

Mousa felt compelled to respond to the students’ concerns. Now the cafeteria also sells cheaper sandwiches and only a few sweets. The pink, gummy strips layered with lots of sugar have since disappeared.

PROFILE

Gaza Strip, West Bank, East Jerusalem

Who implements the projects?

- Pyalara is the leading Palestinian center for media literacy.
- 7amleh, Tam, and Al-Saraja are civil society organisations that promote the use of social media and awareness of digital rights.

How does the project work?

- Since 2014, Palestinian schoolchildren have been learning how to handle media confidently through youth-oriented formats such as wall newspapers and “morning radio shows.” They focus on what moves them and learn critical thinking. To this end, teachers are trained as multipliers to be able to impart media competence on a broad scale.
- Civil society organisations such as 7amleh, Tam, and Al-Saraja are developing information campaigns and learning packages on digital rights to sensitise young people on privacy and security on the internet.

What are the difficulties?

- Pupils in Gaza Strip, the West Bank and East Jerusalem are often traumatised by the violence they experience in everyday life. Psychological preparation is needed to reach them.

What has the media project achieved?

- Over 5,000 girls and boys have so far taken part in media literacy courses as part of the project and more than 80 teachers have been trained to teach such skills.
- Pyalara has developed into a center for media competence that is active throughout the region. Pupils who are taught media literacy navigate the net more responsively, make their concerns heard and go through life with more confidence.

What are the highlights?

- The Ministry of Education has added media literacy (MIL) to the school curriculum.
- Pyalara received the GAPMIL Award from UNESCO in 2019, a prize for outstanding achievements in the field of regional media literacy promotion.

➔ pyalara.org | ➔ 7amleh.org
➔ tam.ps/en | ➔ alsaraya-center.org



Headmaster Hassan Mousa removes sugary jelly snakes.



Loyal, Mohammad and Ahmad called for healthier cafeteria food.

Respect in the digital and real world

There is more at stake than school projects in Gaza, West Bank and East Jerusalem. Digital change is a major challenge in the region. Never before has it been so easy for young people—across territorial borders—to publicly express their opinions and exchange ideas. However, this freedom made possible through social media can also be dangerous. Digital spaces are mostly controlled by the Israeli secret service as well as by Hamas and the Palestinian Authority. Time and again, young people from Gaza, West Bank and East Jerusalem are arrested or sentenced to heavy fines for acting carelessly on the Internet.

Civil society organizations such as 7amleh, Tam, and Al-Saraja, with the support of DW Akademie, are developing informational campaigns and educational packages on digital rights to make young people aware of privacy and security on the net. As part of the program, young people meet with government representatives in workshops and seminars to discuss the sensible use of social media. Because in such a politically heated environment, there is no room for hate speech and discrimination. A respectful approach—in the digital and real world—is something that headmaster Mousa takes very seriously.

“In our culture, authorities enjoy a lot of respect,” said Headmaster Mousa. “MIL teaches students to differentiate respect from criticism so that they can stand up for their rights.”

According to Mousa, the students who participate in the MIL courses are not the only ones to benefit. “Critical thinking and creativity can rub off. If you listen to our radio program in the morning, you will notice that other students are coming up with new ideas,” he said. The questions being asked were more critical and the students dared to do more. Mousa would like to offer a full MIL program to all his 450 or so students. However, media literacy is not a separate subject. In the current school curriculum, MIL is taught only as part of other individual subjects.

From the classroom to the community

Even outside of the classroom, the thinking behind MIL is being advanced. Five girls from a public school in Ramallah have joined forces to teach their classmates about critical thinking in their free time.

“When your father or your teacher tells you something, it’s not always true,” said the girls. One of the examples of this is when they learned in class that rap music is forbidden in Islam.

“We researched at home and found out that there are many rappers with a muslim background who even rap about Islam and that rap is not prohibited,” added one of the students.



For Palestinians, the wall means a massive restriction of their freedom of movement.

Pyalara was one of several MIL organizations active in the region in 2013. In the course of its cooperation with DW Akademie, it has grown in recent years into a regional knowledge center. Pyalara is now networked throughout the Middle East and its knowledge and experience with MIL are in high demand in other countries. The organization is often approached by other NGOs for advice.

“Through intense lobbying, Pyalara was able to persuade the Ministry of Education to integrate MIL into the school curriculum.”

“We provide Pyalara with technical and content support and we expose them to new trends in the field of MIL,” said Verena Wendisch, former DW Akademie country manager for the region. “Pyalara itself, however, managed to pave the way to a cooperation with the Palestinian Ministry of Education.”

Through intense lobbying, Pyalara was able to persuade the Ministry of Education to integrate MIL into the school curriculum. Even though MIL is not yet recognized as a separate subject, it is viewed as an integral part of other individual subjects. The ministry still has some homework to do. As MIL entered the school curriculum in 2018, many teachers across the country still have to be trained.

“We know it’s worth the effort,” said Thaer Thabet, the ministry’s point person on MIL. “I call MIL the positive virus because it spreads not only from student to student, but also within families and in the community. It’s going to change our whole society for the better.”

AGGREGATED IMPACT DATA

Media and Information Literacy: 520 multipliers or change agents have given young people in 12 countries greater media competence, or Media Information Literacy (MIL) in 2018. As a result of the training programs, 7,400 young people can now use the media at their disposal responsibly. They can analyze content more efficiently, make informed decisions and differentiate between objective news content and rumors or propaganda. They have the chance to better exercise their right to freedom of expression and access to information. Furthermore, 172,000 pupils have taken part in MIL-classes as part of their curriculum.

Countries: Burundi, Cambodia, Guatemala, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Moldova, Namibia, Palestinian Territories, Serbia, Tunisia, Ukraine

Our Authors





Petra Aldenrath

loves to write portraits and long-form articles. She is an experienced journalist who has worked for newspapers, magazines, and radio. Her work has been published in several books. For five years she was the ARD correspondent for Mongolia and China. She has also worked as a freelance reporter in Australia, Indonesia, Vietnam, Canada and Israel. She has been working at DW Akademie since 2018. She is particularly interested in telling the stories behind the organization's diverse media development projects.



Klaus Dahmann

studied Slavic Studies and has been working as a journalist and media trainer at Deutsche Welle for 20 years. He has been coordinating the work of DW Akademie in Serbia and the Western Balkans since 2016.



Tinatin Dvalishvili

Tinatin Dvalishvili started her career in journalism 20 years ago. Since 2017 she has been working for DW Akademie in Georgia. She holds a master's degree in journalism and media management.



Vera Freitag

is a big fan of dual journalism training. She went through it herself as a trainee (Volontariat) at Deutsche Welle. She recognizes that journalism training must be open to creativity and have the freedom to test out new technologies. As DW Akademie project manager for Bolivia, Vera Freitag understands that part of her role is to constantly rethink journalism training so advances in technology and society can be addressed.



Markus Haake

has been working as country manager for DW Akademie since May 2019. Prior to this, he worked for several years as a peace expert and team leader in Afghanistan. Over the last twenty years, he acquired consulting expertise at the International Campaign to Ban Landmines and doing humanitarian work in countries in the Middle East, South East Europe and the South Caucasus.



Kyle James

is a project manager and trainer at DW Akademie where he works for the Asia team and oversees the organization's community radio projects in Myanmar. Before working in media development, Kyle was a reporter and editor working in radio, print, and online media. He has filed for outlets in Europe, Asia, and the United States.



Viktoria Kleber

Her heart beats for the Arab world. She studied Middle Eastern politics and history and Arabic in Berlin, Tel Aviv and Cairo followed by a traineeship at Deutsche Welle. She works for the ARD in Berlin and in the Middle East team of the DW Akademie. She has currently taken a few months off in order to further her education in London on the topic of media development in conflict and crisis regions.



Sarah Mersch

is a freelance correspondent and trainer. She has been reporting from Tunisia since 2011, covering the political upheaval and the country's first democratic steps and related setbacks. She is the vice-chairwoman of Weltreporter.net



Johannes Metzler

worked for the DW Akademie in Guatemala for several years and contributed many ideas to Radio Sónica. He knows the region well. As a journalist he reported on poverty and violence in Latin America. Responsible for Central America, Mexico, and the Caribbean, he is now developing new projects for freedom of expression in the region.



Mona Naggar

knows the Middle East through her many years working there as a journalist. As a project manager and trainer for DW Akademie in Beirut, she has a front row seat to media development in Lebanon.



Charlotte Noblet

works as a journalist and trainer. Whenever she can, she tries to combine these two skillsets. She researches and writes articles herself but also passes on her knowledge to students at various universities and colleges, as well as in training courses. At DW Akademie she works mainly as a freelance media trainer in West Africa and the Maghreb.



Ole Tangen Jr

is an American journalist who has reported stories from the US, Europe, and Africa for over 20 years. He spent five years in Uganda where he worked as a reporter and taught journalism giving him first-hand knowledge on the challenges Ugandan journalists face when reporting the news. He now lives in Bonn, Germany and works as an editor for Deutsche Welle.

**Anja Weber**

has many years of experience as a freelance consultant and evaluator in development cooperation with a focus on Sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia. Since mid-2018, she has worked with the "Studies and Evaluation" team at DW Akademie. There she coordinated the quantitative data collection and evaluation for the "aggregated impacts" featured in this issue.

**Dagmar Wittek**

is a journalist with decades of experience reporting from Africa. She was a long-serving Southern Africa radio correspondent for ARD based in Johannesburg. As a freelancer, she has reported from many corners of Africa. She has also worked across the continent as a media trainer for DW Akademie and is now a producer for Deutsche Welle's new DW News Africa program.

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