

*Media development
for security and
stability in Europe*

Free media. Free expression.
Free societies.

This is DW Akademie's mission. It is now more important than ever. Especially in times of war and crisis, misinformation can cost lives, add fuel to conflicts and jeopardize democratic progress. This applies not only to the countries of the Global South but also to the democracies of Europe.

In many parts of the world, free media are currently fighting a desperate battle against state repression, censorship and threats, a lack of funding, competition from digital platforms and an increasing loss of trust.

The USA, historically the world's most powerful voice for freedom, has abandoned its post. The abrupt halt to US development aid under Donald Trump is tearing a 268-million-dollar hole in international media development. In many regions and countries, this could lead to the end of free media and journalism as we know it.

This is a problem for Europe as well. Autocrats and oligarchs are gaining power worldwide, with **dictatorships such as Russia and China investing heavily in spreading their narratives and asserting influence**. In Western democracies, populists are sowing uncertainty, fear and hatred. With the imminent collapse of past assurances and former alliances, a new world order calls for citizen engagement that is based on reliable facts. This is vital if we don't want to cede to the enemies of freedom.

A strong, pluralistic media landscape and effective, independent journalism are the keys to overcoming the multiple crises of our time.

Cover photo: The war in Ukraine is also an information war.

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Liza Zharkyykh and her team from Vgoru, a local media outlet, reported on life in occupied Kherson.



Free media for rebuilding a democratic Ukraine

In Ukraine, independent and reliable information has been vital for people's survival in wartime. This also applies to the time after Russia's war of aggression ends. After all, citizens can only make responsible decisions if they have access to reliable information. If they can freely express their opinions an open social discourse will emerge. If media professionals can work professionally, they create transparency. These are all basic prerequisites for a strong civil society.

Since 2014, DW Akademie has strengthened its presence in Ukraine supporting local media, public broadcasting (Suspilne) and independent journalism. In addition to the media's economic survival, projects also focus on continuous capacity building and creation of a network of journalists who have learned how to deal with threats and disinformation.

Desinformation: An invisible weapon

Targeted disinformation threatens our democracies, open societies and social cohesion. State and non-state actors are using digital platforms to exert influence, stir up mistrust and increase polarization – and not just in the Global South. Europe has also long been a target in this shadow war.

While free media worldwide are fighting for their economic survival, autocrats, with seemingly unlimited resources, are reaching an ever-larger audience. The best way to counter this is with well-trained journalists and media users who can distinguish fact from fiction. The goal is to develop a constructive public dialogue. Together with local partners, DW Akademie is committed to promoting quality journalism, media literacy and freedom of expression worldwide.



Russian disinformation campaigns are spreading anti-Western narratives around the world. The countries of the Sahel region are particularly affected.



Tech billionaires at Donald Trump's second inauguration.

The power of digital platforms: A threat to democracy

Social media has revolutionized the global exchange of information and opinions. Data is being shared faster than ever and individuals have unprecedented means to make their voices heard. However, the downside of this new reality is also becoming apparent as only a few tech giants from the US and Asia control the global flow of information.

Digital media is deliberately used by state and non-state actors to spread misinformation, increase polarization and undermine social discourse.

In addition, most global advertising money goes to a few dominant tech companies. Journalistic content is also forced to compete with cheaply produced disinformation and the rise of AI has fueled this even further.

Together with partners, DW Akademie trains people to safely navigate digital platforms and critically scrutinize content. Another goal is to strengthen the media's negotiating power vis-à-vis Big Tech and effectively regulate tech companies without curtailing free expression and freedom of the media.

Refugees and migration: Journalism for peaceful coexistence

The number of people forced to leave their homes because of wars, conflicts or environmental devastation has never been greater. Most stay close to their country of origin, yet the topic of migration continues to divide Europe.

In refugee camps in the Global South, people seeking protection live alongside other refugees from diverse, and sometimes rival, ethnic groups as well as members of the host society. Communication is essential for a peaceful coexistence. DW Akademie

and its partners have implemented projects that bring together refugees, aid organizations and neighboring communities to provide vital information and promote mutual understanding.



DW Akademie is training refugees to be community reporters in the Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya.



The Philippines is one of the countries most affected by climate change.

Environmental journalism: Understanding the impact of climate change

The global climate is changing at a rate that even surprises scientists. Europe is the continent experiencing the fastest warming. Environmental damage in other parts of the world also has a direct impact here — not least because natural disasters drive more than three times as many people from their homes as conflicts and violence do.

Environmental journalism therefore has a central role to play in countries of the Global South. Independent information, reliable facts and constructive dialogue are in high demand. In projects run by DW Akademie and its partners, media professionals learn how to explain scientific content in a way that is easy to understand and that highlights possible action. This empowers people to find ways to deal with climate change and work to protect the environment.

Middle East: Constructive dialogue instead of set positions

The war in the Middle East, as well as the conflicts in Syria, Yemen, Sudan, Libya and elsewhere, are worsening a crisis of journalism in the region. In an environment where propaganda often counters facts, it is all too easy for media professionals to become pawns of political actors. Local reporters are often personally affected by events and can become targets of hatred and violence themselves.

The current crisis can also be an opportunity for media if they succeed in redefining their role, responsibility and work in ways that convince their audience. DW Akademie supports constructive actors on the ground as well as independent media covering topics of public interest. Its partner network ranges from community media in Morocco to media start-ups in Tunisia, Libyan fact-checking teams, Jordanian and Palestinian educational organizations and local media in Lebanon.



A Jordan Media Institute and DW Akademie bus brings media literacy skills to students across Jordan.



DW Akademie's projects in Bolivia train indigenous women as radio producers.



Women: *The marginalized minority*

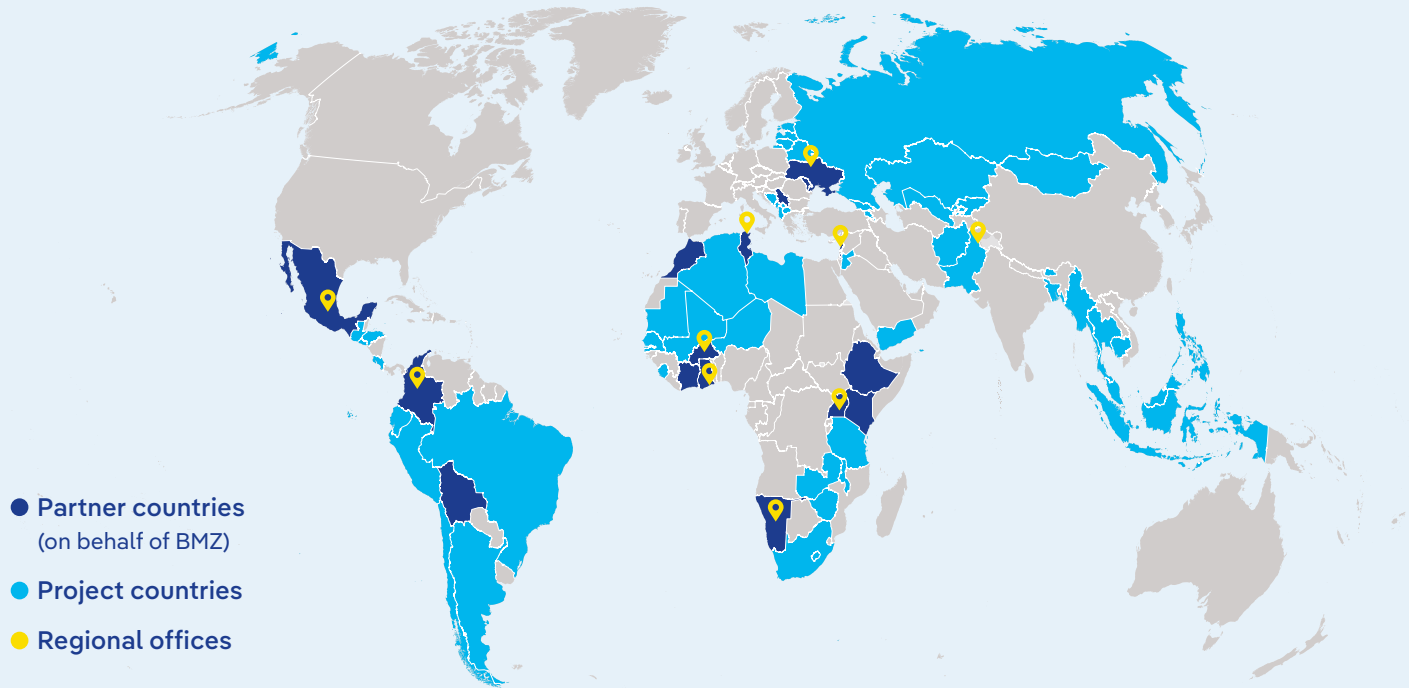
Despite some progress, women's rights remain precarious worldwide. Women and girls are the largest disadvantaged group. They are often exposed to violence, have fewer resources and less access to education and healthcare. In addition, women have less representation in politics and the media.

With projects, DW Akademie and its partners are committed to strengthening the rights of girls and women worldwide. This includes equal access to information, protection in the digital space and support for women as producers of journalistic content.

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DW Akademie is DW's center for international media development, journalism training and knowledge transfer. Our projects strengthen the human right to freedom of expression and unhindered access to information.

DW Akademie empowers people worldwide to make independent decisions based on reliable facts and constructive dialogue. DW Akademie is a strategic partner of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. We also receive funding from the Federal Foreign Office and the European Union and are active in about 70 developing countries and emerging economies.



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