

A Strategic Model for Media Development

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Freedom of expression and access to information inform every aspect of DW Akademie’s work in media development. Following on from this, our strategic model has human rights at its core, with our goal being to enable all people to freely inform and express themselves. The model provides a comprehensive framework for the planning and implementation of sustainable media development.



The strategic model was developed by DW Akademie in consultation with Germany’s Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) with the aim of defining development policy on fostering freedom of expression and access to information. It can also serve as a guide for others looking to establish media development programs and projects.

Human rights-based approach

The underlying principle of the strategic model is a human rights-based approach. Therefore, at the center of our strategies is Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states: “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and

impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.” When people have access to information and are able to express their ideas freely and without fear, they can better realize their other human rights and shape their lives.

Comprehensive: Four key areas of strategic action

Diverse fields of action need to be considered when developing strategies and planning holistic projects to create and support media environments that are free, pluralistic and independent. Activities in each of the key areas can help foster access to information and freedom of expression. Arguably, true progress can only be achieved through the interplay of, and synergies between, the areas of strategic action.

 **Political and legal frameworks**
A political climate conducive to free and open dialogue and a legal framework in accordance with human rights standards are preconditions for freedom of expression and information. *This means consulting state and government institutions on the implementation and practice of laws related to human rights standards; strengthening self-regulatory bodies; or supporting civil society organizations operating in the areas of media freedom, freedom of expression and access to information.*

 **Qualification** Highly qualified, ethical and competent media professionals are vital for the media sector. Sustainable qualification structures that increase human capacity ensure that media workers, the most important intermediaries for the exchange of ideas and information, can fulfill their role. *This includes activities such as the development of sustainable education, training structures and training programs as well as curricula development. The establishment of journalism schools, training departments within media organizations or dual training courses which combine theory with hands-on experience in media outlets is vital for a professional and independent media sector. Building professional networks and upgrading the skills of teaching staff is also essential.*

 **Professionalism and economic viability of the media sector** Viable, independent and diverse media institutions are essential for ensuring freedom of opinion and expression, because economic viability is a precondition for editorial independence and quality.

This includes consultancy on sustainable business models, the transformation of state-owned media into public-service media, or support for professional media organizations in areas such as improving journalistic quality or strengthening editorial independence.

 **Participation in society** In order to engage in meaningful dialogue, individuals must have a chance to make their voices heard. A plural and active civil society is an integral part of open and free media landscapes. *This key area focuses on dialogue and strengthening civil society, with special emphasis on empowering individuals and vulnerable groups by enhancing their communication capacities so that their voices are heard. It also includes advancing media literacy, fostering media monitoring conducted by citizens, and supporting grassroots initiatives to create community media.*

Digital transformation

Information and communication technologies are creating new opportunities for people to access information and express their opinions. At the same time, digital surveillance is becoming pervasive and the digital divide between rich and poor, urban and rural areas, women and men, and old and young is creating new forms of inequality and exclusion. DW Akademie's strategic model integrates digital transformation as an issue that cuts across all four key areas – for example: political and legal frameworks need to be reformed to reflect digital realities; media organizations need to adapt their business models to a digital world; people should have the chance to use digital platforms to participate and have their voices heard; civil society needs to be a watchdog capable of defending privacy and human rights. Digital transformation is a reality that shapes the right of all people to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds.

Links

- » **Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development**
Freedom of opinion and the media in German development policy:
www.bmz.de/en/publications/type_of_publication/information_flyer/flyer/booklet_opinion.pdf
- » **#mediadev** *Sharing and discussing ideas, experiences and research about freedom of expression, media development and digital transformation*
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