Giving young people a voice:
Youth media in the Palestinian Territories

Evaluation Report | Executive Summary
Palestinian Territories

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Background

Young people in the Palestinian Territories are rarely involved in the social and political dialogues. There is a lack of relevant and attractive communication platforms, especially for young women, where they can openly discuss age-specific problems. The established Palestinian media landscape does not provide any opportunities here. It is restricted by the ongoing conflict with Israel, but also polarized and systematically excludes taboo topics such as corruption, drug abuse, unemployment, or forced marriages, which are particularly relevant for young people. In addition there is the unstable security situation for (citizen) journalists.

The objective of the DW Akademie project in the Palestinian Territories (2014 – 2016) was therefore to enable young people between the age of 13 and 29 to actively participate and influence political, economic, social, and cultural processes through the media.

The project focused on three levels: In Jerusalem, the DW Akademie supported the youth organization PalVision

in the development of the **interactive community online platform Qudscom** by young people for young people and trained amongst others students as citizen journalists. To enable young people to better deal with the media and reflect on them critically the youth organization Pyalara was strengthened with the introduction of the **Media and Information Literacy (MIL)** concept at 10 pilot schools. In addition, the local radio station Nisaa was supported with the creation and production of **programs especially for (young) women**.

The objective of this external evaluation is to provide a constructive assessment of the project results after the completion of the first funding phase in order to allow lessons learned to be incorporated into the development of future strategies. The evaluation is based on OECD/DAC criteria and consists of a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods, including the analysis of internally collected data and interviews with project partners and management in the field.

Conclusions

The community online platform Qudscom together with the established media classes at 10 pilot schools within the framework of the project 'Speak Up' have opened a space for young people where their opinions can be expressed freely. Both offers are regularly used by the target groups. The success of the project is also due to the many years of experience of the local partners in the field of media and/or youth, and their strong interest in the elimination of core problems of young people. The cooperation with a well-known youth organization is also advantageous in the area of safety of the participants. Thus, the DAC criterion **relevance** has been met both in terms of solution competency of the partners, as well as concerning the needs of the target groups.

The project managers of DW Akademie attest all three project partners an efficient use of the funds made available, therefore the DAC criterion **efficiency** is judged as fulfilled.

The evaluation shows that project objectives have been achieved to a high degree or can be achieved by the end of the project. However, since the high number of indicators has in some phases hampered the data collection and project steering and individual indicators stay behind the target values, the DAC criterion **effectiveness** is considered 'partially achieved' in the overall assessment.

All stakeholders confirmed the positive effects of the measures for the target groups. The introduction of MIL as a top-down approach has been anchored as a bottom-up approach. The concept is currently developed further by the project partners in order to create sustainable local and regional structures. Extending the MIL activities from West Bank to Gaza increased the range beyond the core region. The participants attest the measures positive effects beyond the professional learner's success for their personality development and conflict resolution abilities.

Perhaps the most important impact is the fact that many small success stories have emerged within the framework of the project, which create hope in an environment that is characterized by negative news and in which the youth mostly feels abandoned and powerless. The solution-oriented approach supports young people with conflict management strategies and thus contributes to their empowerment. The basic democratic decision-making processes in the Qudscom editorial team are perceived by the participants as practiced democracy. The criterion **impact**, particularly with regard to strengthening the target groups, was therefore fully met.

An overall assessment of the DAC criterion **sustainability** is not possible due to the short duration of the project. However, the assessment of ownership of all three project partners is positive.

The project partners attest the DW Akademie team a high degree of professionalism and appreciate the partnership approach. In a politically heated environment, it is particularly acknowledged that the DW Akademie has no political agenda and is committed to sustainable structures. The degree of innovation in the project was high, as all three partners have introduced measures that were new to them. However, the establishment of efficient management structures was a difficult process, but ultimately successful. Against this background the **quality of management** has been assessed as successful.

Lessons learned

The learning experiences of the DW Akademie team with **PalVision** relate in particular to the initial phase of the project. In crises and conflict regions, clear criteria for interventions in the field of citizen journalism should be defined already at the beginning of the project because of the unpredictable political situation. Sufficient time should also be allowed to clarify roles and expectations. In order to give young citizen journalists a voice in the media, the willingness must be there to transfer editorial control to the team of citizen journalists within the framework of clearly defined ethical standards.

In the cooperation with **Pyalara** an important lesson learned can be drawn that the understanding and implementation of the MIL-concept took more time than expected and required a high willingness to change on the multipliers' side. Furthermore, existing loads on the teachers as mediators between school management and target groups should be considered more seriously.

For **Radio Nisaa** the positive conclusion could be drawn from the pupils' radio program that young people can be trusted a lot in editorial environments when responsibility is transferred to them.

Recommendations

General

1. The DW-internal web-based monitoring system WebMo is a useful tool for collecting and controlling indicators. It should, however, be re-examined for access rights for evaluations.

2. At the beginning of the cooperation with a new project partner, an on-site introduction on financial management should be considered by a DW-internal expert from the administration department.

3. When handing over a joint project to the project partner, it should be considered whether the DW Akademie can continue to provide support, in the form of a back-up function for crisis situations or through regular exchange.

4. Project partners should try to establish contacts with journalists in the country who are willing to engage in volunteer media projects with young people.

5. To increase the scope of the measures, the existing formats should be checked for their complementary potential by means of an e-learning component.

6. In order to contribute to the interregional dissemination and networking of the MIL concept, the establishment of a 'MIL Learning Community' should be considered.

7. An international exchange between DW Akademie's MIL projects around the world should be expanded and promoted (English/Arabic).

PalVision

8. In order to expand the users of Qudscom, contacts with informal youth initiatives in Jerusalem should be established.

9. Qudscom should increasingly be mentioned in other media to become better known. The social media could also be used for this, the potential of which has not yet been exhausted.

10. The editorial team should define more clearly which target groups they would like to address with which topic portfolio for a next funding phase.

Pyalara

11. If a pilot project is expanded, the framework conditions that have proven to be beneficial during the pilot phase should be discussed in detail, such as the intensive supervision of the Pyalara trainers, the use of the psychosocial intervention team, but also the support provided by DW Akademie.

12. In the institutionalization process of the MIL concept, Pyalara should insist that the responsibilities for implementation in the Ministry of Education are clearly stated.

13. Pyalara should develop a concept of how, in a next project phase, teachers can be better integrated into the implementation of the MIL strategy.

14. Since common summer camps for boys and girls cannot be implemented for cultural reasons, they could take place in parallel and allow a subtle approach by common (media) tasks of boys and girls.

15. The Pyalara team should acquire new teaching and learning methods in the digital field. This opens up the possibility for young people to use their media knowledge beyond the traditional school media formats. This also extends Pyalara's prospects for future project applications.

Radio Nisaa

16. When a comparable project is repeated, better preparation of the pupils with at least three preparatory meetings should take place: the choice of the topic, the discussion of the contributions, and the concrete preparation of the program.

17. The media students, who act as trainers of the students, should be more closely interlinked with professional reporters so that they can act as multipliers in a local network after the end of the project.

18. In the context of a follow-up project it should be considered to extend it to male teenagers, so that they also can collect radio experience and exchange their very specific school problems.

DW Akademie

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