

Blue Peace Middle East: Media Lab



Country / Region
Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon

Main Partners
MICT, cewas, Media Academy Iraq

Background information
Conflicts and poor governance have negatively affected water supply, sanitation and water management in the Middle East over the past decades.

Project objective
Better media coverage of water issues in the Middle East generates more audience interest, which in turn influences policy dialogue. In the long term, this contributes to sustainable water cooperation and management in the region.

Beneficiaries
Direct: trained journalists and communication professionals reporting on water topics in the Middle East
Indirect: decision makers, stakeholders in the water sector and the general public who consume the journalistic reports on water.

Costs&Duration
CHF 330,000
03.2019-12.2021

Contact
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Water and effective water management are both hard to find in the Middle East. Inaccurate and incomplete data, a lack of capacity in water monitoring and low awareness of water-related issues perpetuate the water crisis and drive conflicts in the region. To tackle these challenges, the Blue Peace Media Lab uses innovative approaches to sensitize media professionals to water-related challenges and foster constructive water reporting. The activities are bolstered by ongoing online communication, intended to encourage cross-border exchange. The project will increase awareness both among policy makers and water users, encouraging sustainability and result-oriented approaches to the crisis.

The Blue Peace Media Lab has been developed under the umbrella of the Blue Peace Initiative and aims to promote sustainability in water management and cooperation in the Middle East, with a particular focus on activities in Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Iran and, to a more limited degree, Syria. The assumption is that successful joint management of scarce water resources will promote dialogue and lasting peace in the region. Only an informed public can constructively influence policy dialogue on water-related issues. This is why the role of media professionals and journalists is crucial to foster grounded knowledge and information-sharing in the region.

As it enters its second two-year phase, the project aims to continue to be a driver of the aforementioned knowledge-sharing by promoting exchange between journalists and water experts such as members of the Blue Peace Community, providing in-depth training to journalists on water-related reporting, creating incentives for opinion-leaders to immerse themselves in the topic and nurturing water experts' skills in liaising with media. The goal is to promote constructive coverage of water issues in the Middle East, thus exercising a positive, solution-oriented influence on water governance in the region and beyond.



Planned outcomes:

Recognizing that water-related knowledge is still scarce and underdeveloped among both media professionals and the general public, a targeted capacity-building and exposure strategy has been developed. During six co-creation workshops, media professionals will be supported in identifying and implementing innovative reporting strategies, while consolidating their knowledge by introducing them to constructive solutions to a range of water-related issues. The workshops are designed to include not only sector-related training, but also a series of other opportunities for exposure, including field visits, access to high-level gatherings, and other sector events.

The second outcome focuses on supervising and encouraging production and successful dissemination of water-related journalistic pieces, thus ensuring that comprehensive, well-rounded final products reach and inform the public.

Lastly, to produce compelling stories in a short time-frame, media professionals need a large and reliable network of colleagues, experts, sources and protagonists. In this way, journalists (or a group of journalists) can shed light on complex topics and possible solutions. The project fosters such a network in the water space in the form of the Blue Peace Media Community, which hosts a series of national events as well as a regional gathering. Besides media professionals, key stakeholders and decision makers will be brought into these events, creating ample opportunity for exchange and learning.

Additional information:
mict-international.org
cewas.org
mediaacademy-iraq.org