

PRESS RELEASE

Free, secure, open: DW Akademie releases new software Colmena for local media

So that local media can reliably inform their communities in times of crisis, DW Akademie and its Mexican partner organization REDES A.C. have developed an open source software. Colmena works like a digital editorial room and was developed in close cooperation with 23 community radio stations and media organizations in 13 countries throughout Africa and Latin America.

The Colmena software will be available to interested local and community media outlets as of Thursday, April 28, 2022. DW Akademie and REDES A.C. will introduce the tool during a panel discussion in Berlin. The software was developed as part of the joint global initiative of DW Akademie and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, “Transparency and media freedom – Crisis resilience in the pandemic.”

Natascha Schwanke, Head of Media Development, DW Akademie: “In times of crisis, reliable information can save lives. Local media contribute greatly, overcoming distances and language barriers. They know what their communities need, because they are part of them. Colmena enables them to continue their work under challenging circumstances. It strengthens local media so that they can strengthen their communities, whether in crisis or beyond.”

Erick Huerta Velázquez, Head Coordinator, REDES A.C.: “Before now, it was impossible for community media and networks to have their own digital infrastructure like Colmena. The software is not an external offer but rather a joint solution with local media, suited to their needs. We see the enthusiasm for the project and an eagerness to use this new technology.”

The Mexican NGO REDES A.C. supports civil society projects such as indigenous community media, which will also benefit from Colmena.

Colmena is a digital toolbox which allows local and community media to record, edit and broadcast their stories for instance via cell phone and the mobile Internet. Every feature enables cooperation, just like in an editorial room. The free software was developed for various end devices, it works offline, is secure and free. Colmena currently is available in six languages: English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Arabic and Kiswahili.

Press contact:

Vera Tellmann, Head of Corporate Communications / vera.tellmann@dw.com / T +49.228.429.2531

EVENT NOTE

On the occasion of Colmena's release, DW Akademie presents a panel discussion:

“Celebrating Colmena – Crisis-proof reporting for local media with new open source software”

International experts, journalists and community reporters will discuss the role of local media in times of crisis, access to information and digital rights, above all for rural populations. How can Colmena as a digital solution make a difference in informing communities?

When: Thursday, April 28, 2022, 6.00 p.m. CEST

Where: Participation is possible via Zoom

Please register [here](#) by April 25, 2022. The Zoom link to participate will be sent out on April 27.

The panel discussion will be held in English with simultaneous translation in Spanish, French and German and will be moderated by DW journalist Mirjam Gehrke.

The panelists

- **Michelle Nogales**, Bolivia – CEO and cofounder of Muy Waso, the first digital feminist magazine for culture and entertainment
- **Gladys Kinyua**, Kenya – Journalist and moderator at public radio station Radio Amani, Nakuru County
- **Natascha Schwanke**, Germany – Head of Media Development, DW Akademie
- **Geraldine de Bastion**, Germany – Founder of Global Innovation Gathering (GIG) and digital rights activist

We're pleased to arrange **interviews** with the panelists on the sidelines of the event in the premises of community broadcaster Alex Berlin, Rudolfstraße 1-8 (Entrance: Ehrenbergstraße), 10245 Berlin. For more information, visit [DW Akademie](#).

Sneak-Peek-Sessions: Discover Colmena!

On Friday, April 29, 2022, you can have an early glimpse of the new open source software together with the designers.

Register for the Sneak-Peek-Sessions on Zoom here:

[11:00 a.m.](#) CEST (French), [1:00 p.m.](#) CEST (English), [3:00 p.m.](#) CEST (Spanish)

DW Akademie is Deutsche Welle'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 are active in approximately 60 developing countries and emerging economies.