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Country: Morocco

“As a journalist, having to report objectively, isn’t it like being deprived of freedom?” asked one of the participants of the Inclusive Journalism radio training course organised by the Media Diversity Institute, in Marrakech, Morocco, at the end of March 2010.

That central question set the tone for a week of lively discussions on diversity issues, inclusive journalism, prejudices in the media, how to give a say to those who are usually ignored, what is the role of journalists in society and more importantly what are their responsibilities. Journalism ethics is of course a perfect academic topic, but it has only a limited value if it is not put into practice.

The course participants were asked to confront their own prejudices – an enriching but sometimes unpleasant process – by meeting representatives of civil society organisations and by producing topical radio features of their choice which had to include “real people” and cover as many angles as possible.

12 private and public media radio journalists from as far afield as Dakhla, Agadir, Marrakech, Casablanca and Rabat gathered for a week-long training course and rose to the challenges. Two international trainers, Milica Pesic, the Executive Director of the Media Diversity Institute, and Jean-Michel Duffrene from the BBC, together with Safi Naciri, editor at SNRT, the Moroccan state media organisation shared their experience with the course participants, to promote an exchange of ideas and to answer sometimes difficult or sensitive questions.

We are all different, we are all unique; the journalists' duty is to reflect this diversity but they have to know why.



“Isn't it dangerous to encourage and promote diversity, isn't there a risk of dividing people more and exacerbating conflict?” asked one of the journalists on the course, voicing his concern and launching a useful and vivid debate.

“Is it possible to be 100% objective?”

“How do journalists deal with and handle national causes?”

“What about morals and the image of women?”

The course participants experimented with the limits of objectivity, tested the moral code and found out about those people in society who are either forgotten or who are portrayed unfavourably. They did this by reporting on handicapped people in the workplace, on the Greens as a political force, the rich Westerners who spend their retirement years in Morocco, the situation of domestic helpers – the new slaves of our time – or the daily lives of Saharawi students away from home in Marrakech. These are just a few examples of the features produced by the course participants.

Undoubtedly, the most testing part of this one week long course was to come to terms and recognise one’s own prejudices, and actually to admit that we are also sometimes guilty of discriminating against others, all those who happen to be different, socially, racially, ethnically, religiously, politically, physically or otherwise. This realisation is crucial in order to practice inclusive journalism, to keep one’s distance and to be aware of commonly accepted unchallenged truths.



The radio journalists on the course, after five days of practical exercises, came to realise that subjectivity is not a synonym for freedom; it is a form of imprisonment; they also came to the

conclusion that covering sensitive social issues, like prostitution, doesn't mean advocating prostitution. These were some of the many achievements of the course.

The course was part of the Media Diversity Institute's two year training programme, designed to promote inclusive journalism in Morocco, which is supported by the UK Embassy in Rabat. For more information contact: mona.elhamdani@media-diversity.org