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Country: Morocco



Once upon a time, there was a king. On a hot, sunny day he was walking on the streets of Ouarzazate, a southern Moroccan city nicknamed ‘the door of the desert’. The king spotted Hussein who was on his crutches. For Hussein, being disabled all his life meant a difficult life and an invisible one. So the king decided to give him a present: A car. He couldn’t drive, but at least he could rent it out as a taxi. Hussein was tricked into murky business with some taxi drivers, yet his story remained unheard, as disabled people in Morocco are mostly ignored by national mainstream media.

The story about Hussein and his royal car is not a tale, but a true story told by one of the civil society activists and citizen journalist in Ouarzazate, trained by the Media Diversity Institute (MDI). During the last visit to Morocco at the end of April 2015, the MDI team provided on-site consultancy and training for 15 activists and inspiring journalists. The focus was on a better usage of online platforms and social media in order to make people like Hussein heard in public.



In the southern city of Morocco, Ouarzazate, there are numerous web portals, blogs and online magazines covering local and regional issues. MDI was told by many local CSOs representatives that they feel abandoned by the national media with headquarters in Casablanca and Rabat. Activists in an association gathering disabled people of Ouarzazate, as well as young people and women with whom we talked too, expressed their need to have their issues debated more widely in Moroccan media.

Some 500 km up north from Ouarzazate, in a remote village of Azrou, a group of young local enthusiasts are setting up a web TV. They will name it “Reality as we see it” and soon it would be available to watch on www.sadatv.ma .



“This web TV will be an opportunity for us to raise awareness and debate all important issues and local initiatives, and to hold local MPs accountable. We also plan to have several one-hour

debates on marginalised groups' presence in the media and Moroccan society," says Sofiane from local CSO "Youth without Borders".

His organisation has been successful in organising public debates already. Some of their guests include regional MPs, the president of the National Employment Agency, City Council's president etc. By using online platforms and tools, especially web TV, Sofiane's organisation could be spreading their message about youth engagement and participation in the media and public life of Morocco.

MDI team's visits to the local CSO's and on-site consultancy was organised within the MDI's project ["Promoting Freedom of Expression, Diversity and Inclusion in Morocco"](#) supported by the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC).