

# Web radios become voices of Tunisia slums

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Two web radio stations were launched in Tunisia earlier this month to deliver the voice of the region's population to officials and to send reassuring messages to neighbourhood youth.

The stations were launched 1 April 2013 in the framework of the "Agora Dialogue" project, which is supervised by the Tunisian National Youth Observatory at the Ministry of Youth and Sports and the Arab Partnership Fund.

"The purpose is to transmit our voices and send new messages to residents of the neighbourhood," radio host Amal Toukebri told Magharebia. "There are sports, socio-political and cultural programmes directed mainly to the local population."

Toukebri added, "We visited the residents and asked them questions about their expectations from the radio and many other issues. We were trusted by the residents as we became known to them. The most important thing is to transmit their voices to officials. As for the topics, the top items are unemployment, high cost of living and hygiene. These were the most important topics they wanted to address."

The creation of an independent space where young people can express their vision about the next steps is one of the most important points that underlie the project.

"These are local radio stations that fall under the strengthening of youth and supporting freedom of expression, starting locally," explained Mohamed Jouili, a sociologist and director of the National Youth Observatory. "Youth express their opinions within the neighbourhood and disclose their concerns and aspirations. This project creates a dynamic dialogue among local actors in several areas such as transport, health and education."

In the same context Jouili added, "We chose a popular neighbourhood to empower youth to express their sense of identity. The neighbourhood has many major social problems such as drugs, crime and unemployment. So the voice of the neighbourhood must reach all officials through media proximity."

News of the web radio launch quickly spread among the residents of the neighbourhood. Some thought it aired on FM waves.

Monia Nefzi, a teacher and resident of the Ibn Khaldun neighbourhood, said that she followed the radio programmes and demanded that only neighbourhood concerns be monitored instead of political issues, unlike the rest of the media.

"The neighbourhood has many problems: uncleanliness, poor roads and poverty," said Badri Ayari, a construction worker. "We ask journalists from the radio to direct questions to the local officials until they find us urgently needed solutions."

On the other side of the outskirts of Tunis, Sidi Hassine Séjoui is one of the poorest neighbourhoods in Tunisia. It is known for high rates of crime and unemployment. After the revolution it saw the appearance of a large number of hard-line Islamists, like many poorer districts. It is here that the second radio was launched.

Mounir ben Mostfa, a religious youth in his twenties, did not look favourably on the station. For him it is a radio that broadcasts music and lewd culture. Yet he sees it as important in expressing the voices of the residents of the neighbourhood, which are absent in the traditional media.

Raoda ben Mlouka, an unemployed person who graduated ten years ago with a degree in philosophy, expects the radio to reveal the tragedy of the population of the Séjoui neighbourhood, especially the unemployed.

"Before the launch we conducted an advertising campaign in the neighbourhood, so as to make the radio known," Salma Rhimi, a journalist at the radio station said. "After the launch we started receiving suggestions. Residents are asking us to host local officials so they can ask them about their problems, guests such as mayors and local managers."

As for the message of the radio to the population she said, "We want to change misconceptions and stereotypes about this neighbourhood as a place of criminality and drugs. This neighbourhood is absent in the media and we must transmit its voice."

Source: [allAfrica](#)

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