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**TUNISIA  
MEDIA  
LANDSCAPE  
ASSESSMENT**

This Media Landscape Assessment was conducted by Internews as part of the USAID-funded Political Transitions Project (PTP).

Assessment period: January - June 2021

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Programming and key activities proposed to enhance the Tunisian media landscape and support its journey to self-reliance

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<b>USAID:</b>	United States Agency for International Development
<b>PTP:</b>	Political Transitions Project
<b>MLA:</b>	Media Landscape Assessment
<b>NDI:</b>	National Democratic Institute
<b>IFES:</b>	International Foundation for Electoral Systems
<b>IRI:</b>	International Republican Institute
<b>MIL:</b>	Media and Information Literacy
<b>EPP:</b>	Electoral and Political Processes
<b>HAICA:</b>	The Independent High Authority for Audiovisual Communication
<b>ISIE:</b>	Independent High Authority for Elections
<b>CSO:</b>	Civil Society Organization
<b>FGD:</b>	Focus Group Discussion
<b>NGO:</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>INGO:</b>	International Non-Governmental Organization
<b>ICT:</b>	Information and Communications Technology

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Context and Background

Tunisia has undertaken significant strides towards its democratic transition in recent history, with freedom of expression and a vibrant media landscape being two of the main gains from the Jasmine revolution. However, almost a decade later, the levels of trust Tunisians have towards the electoral and political processes (EPP) in their country are on a downward trend. This lack of trust can be attributed to several factors, most notably that citizens believe elected officials and political parties are doing little to address their needs, paralleled with a media landscape, which despite being vibrant in volume, is in need of significant strengthening in **capacity, credibility, relevance and reach**.

The year 2021 commenced with civil unrest in several regions in Tunisia, which was triggered by a volatile political, social and economic climate. This instability was only made worse by growing divisions amongst political parties and state representatives, in addition to restrictive measures imposed by the government due to the Covid19- pandemic, with significant economic impact. Furthermore, these factors created an increased risk of spreading misinformation and disinformation to influence political and social discourse.

In response to the aforementioned challenges and to support Tunisia's inclusive and effective democratic transition, USAID is implementing the five-year Tunisia Political Transitions Project (PTP). The PTP project is multifaceted and is designed to support key electoral bodies, governing institutions, civic groups and the media lay a foundation for increased public trust and inclusive participation in Tunisia's democratic transition.

A key component of the PTP project, implemented by Internews, focuses on better informing and engaging Tunisian citizens, specifically vulnerable and underserved populations, in elections and political processes through strengthening Tunisia's media landscape and the capacities of its information producers as well as raising the levels of awareness and media and information literacy amongst target groups. Internews will achieve the project's objectives by adopting three main approaches:

-  Provide training and support for selected local, regional and national traditional and nontraditional media outlets and information producers to create credible, timely and engaging content which reflects the needs, concerns and voices of its communities.

-  Raise the levels of media and information literacy to address trust vulnerabilities particularly in rural populations and among women, youth and persons with disabilities and enable them to be critical thinkers and smarter information consumers, thus encourage deeper civic engagement.

-  Convene with a variety of stakeholders including political actors, CSOs, technology providers, journalists and the media to build a collective understanding of the root causes, sources and channels for the spread of misinformation and disinformation in Tunisia and design activities to combat them.

The preliminary phase, critical to the design of the projects programming and activities is conducting a media landscape assessment. The objective of this assessment is to map out and assess the capacities of the various information producers, develop a clear understanding of media consumption habits amongst information consumers and identify the strengths and weaknesses in the framework which governs the flow of information supply and demand. The key findings and recommendations from the media landscape assessment provide the blueprint for targeted, deliberate programming which sets **sustainability and maximum impact as the driving forces for all proposed activities and interventions.**

In addition to project programming, the Media Landscape Assessment is designed to provide a baseline for monitoring and evaluating impact, to understand which media outlets reach which audiences, to make decisions about which media outlets we should partner with, and to understand what their needs are and what we need to do to help them improve their work and sustainability.

## Media Landscape Assessment - summary of key findings

To more accurately understand unique and localized information needs, gaps, sources and patterns of access and use, the media landscape assessment needs to capture all dimensions of the relationship between information consumers and information producers as well as the legal, regulatory and business environments which govern these interactions. Gaining precise high-quality insights into these interactions allows for the design of impactful programming that meet people where they are to deliver information through the channels, platforms, formats or people that they prefer and trust.

### LEGAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Although a new constitutional and institutional framework (namely Decrees 115 and 116, November 2011) has been put in place to recognize the formation of a private media sector, there are still many inconsistencies which need to be addressed. For example, Decree 115 limits the rights granted to journalists to only those with a bachelor's degree in journalism or equivalent and who rely on journalism as their primary source of income. This restriction effectively excludes other information producers such as bloggers, online content creators, citizen journalists and some community radios.

### MEDIA FINANCING

The advertising market in Tunisia is monopolized by the larger private TV and radio channels. Access to financing by existing and potential media owners and operators is uneven, thus posing a challenge to the creation of a diverse media sector to represent the plurality of ideas and voices in Tunisia. With TV and radio accounting for the larger share in the advertising market, digital media outlets need to increase their efforts to capitalize on the burgeoning online advertising space.

A new law on crowdfunding was adopted by Parliament which aims to introduce new means of financing smaller projects and businesses via small sum contributions through online fundraising platforms. However regulatory restrictions imposed by the Government on those platforms has made it very difficult for local media outlets to effectively rely on crowdfunding as a source to raise funds.

## INFORMATION SOURCES FOR LOCAL VS NATIONAL NEWS

Citizens rely on different sources depending on their information needs. Information on national news is more readily available while the majority of research participants expressed dissatisfaction with the coverage of news in their local communities and regions.

**In order to design programming tailored to meet citizens' local information needs in underserved areas, it is important to identify the information sources most followed so support can be provided in creating credible, accurate, timely and community driven content.**

### Information sources followed

Local News	National News
Regional and community radios	National Television
Friends, family and community members	National Radio
Facebook pages of community radios	Private radio
Community, Municipal and City level Facebook pages	Private Television
	Official Facebook Pages of state institutions
	Facebook pages of mainstream media channels

## CREDIBILITY OF INFORMATION SOURCES

There is a clear distinction between information sources most followed and those most trusted. This is an important distinction that resonates not only between the various media channels but also within the various programming content and types of formats within each channel.

**Analysis of citizens' media consumption habits provided context on where the various information sources fall within the credibility spectrum.**

### Information sources credibility

High credibility	Moderate credibility	Low credibility
National Television	Regional and community radios	Private Television
National Radio	Facebook pages of mainstream media channels	Unofficial facebook news pages
Official Facebook pages of state institutions	Facebook pages of political figures and parties	«Experts guests» on TV and radio programs
Friends, family and community members	Civil society	Parliament members
President	Bloggers and influencers	
	Ministers	
	Local government officials	
	Traditionnal newspapers	
	Private radio	

## INFORMATION NEEDS

In general, citizens feel that the media does not care about what they have to say, in particular those in underserved areas such as inhabitants of rural areas and regions outside of Greater Tunis and the coastal cities. Persons with disabilities also expressed great dissatisfaction with the lack of content to meet their needs across all platforms.

Health and the economy ranked first among the topics of interest for citizens during the research period.

When asked about the type of information needed in order to make an informed decision with regards to elections, the majority of research respondents indicated that they are well aware of the mechanisms of voting such as how, when and where to vote etc. The main information gaps are more related to the various candidates/parties and their programs. They cited a great deal of unclarity and lack of communication in this area during the last elections and highlighted that the media only added to this vagueness primarily due to the core reasons of media ownership and lack of credibility of subject matter experts.

## MEDIA CAPACITY

Financial viability is one of the biggest challenges faced by local media outlets. Exploring alternative business models and new revenue streams is of utmost importance.

Alternative and local level media outlets in general demonstrate a high capacity to be inclusive with women highly represented in the media workforce and in the news covered. Although local level media outlets cover news concerning person with disabilities, more effort needs to be done to include them as information producers within these organizations.

Strengthening the organization capacity of local media outlets is key to supporting their sustainability and growth.

Many young online content creators have successfully managed to develop social media platforms with a huge following in their communities. The content caters to the younger population, is region specific and utilizes a variety of platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and Podcasts. The high engagement rates on these platforms have made it attractive for digital advertisers and sponsors. Local level Facebook pages enjoy very high levels of trust and engagement from the audiences in their communities. Supporting the content creators of these pages by training them on utilizing digital tools to improve the production quality and packaging of their information pieces, will add significant value to their efforts.

Women and youth in particular, who live in areas with lower access to mainstream media, feel that community radios and youth web radios represent them and provide the local information they need. However these radio stations are operated by mostly volunteers who require technical training to enhance their journalistic and broadcasting skills.

## ROOT CAUSES FOR THE SPREAD OF MIS/DISINFORMATION IN TUNISIA

MEDIA OWNERSHIP

FINANCIAL  
VIABILITY OF  
JOURNALISTS

VOLATILE  
POLITICAL  
CLIMATE

TECHNICAL  
CAPACITY OF  
JOURNALISTS

LOW REACH AND  
ENGAGEMENT  
OF TRADITIONAL  
MEDIA

LACK OF  
COORDINATION  
AMONGST KEY  
ACTORS

FACEBOOK  
MONITORING  
CHALLENGES

ABSENCE OF  
CONSISTENT,  
CLEAR, TIMELY  
INFORMATION  
FROM OFFICIAL  
SOURCES

MEDIA AND  
INFORMATION  
LITERACY

## CITIZEN BEHAVIOUR AROUND MIS/DISINFORMATION

The majority of the research participants stated that their primary method of verifying online information they doubt is accurate, is by checking other online sources. These other online sources constitute mainly of official pages such as Ministry and Parliament Facebook pages for national news and municipal and city level Facebook pages for local news.

Other audiovisual sources (TV and radio) were reported as the second most used sources to verify online information, followed by “asking people around me”, while less than 1% of respondents reported using fact checking platforms.

**Regarding the reliability of information during digital election campaigns, to what extent do you trust this information ?**

### Internews Media Consumption Habits Survey 2021

	I trust this information
Information shared by my friends on social networks	<b>37%</b>
Information shared by electronic newspapers	<b>25%</b>
Information shared by known experts and analysts through the media	<b>39%</b>
Information shared by bloggers and influencers	<b>24%</b>
Information shared by FB pages of main TV and radio stations	<b>40%</b>
Information shared by well-known but unofficial pages	<b>12%</b>
Information shared by political figures	<b>12%</b>
Information shared by candidates	<b>11%</b>
Information shared by civil society (ATIDE, mourakiboun, etc ...)	<b>39%</b>

With regards to the reliability of information during digital election campaigns, the research participants indicated they have the least levels of trust in information shared by political figures and candidates.

# RESEARCH SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

## Target Groups

This Media Landscape Assessment was conducted with a focus on **youth, women and persons with disabilities in regions with limited access to information in Tunisia**. The assessment's core objective is to design programming which would enhance the target groups' engagement in the country's elections and political processes through creating healthy, dynamic and transparent information environments, thus empowering them to make better informed decisions, participate more fully in their communities and hold power to account.

## A Human-Centred Approach



In today's vast and complex information environments, where individuals can both seek out and disseminate information on many platforms, adopting a human centered approach is key to better understanding how citizens engage and consume information in its various formats.

The media landscape is more than a network of news and media channels; they include informal, personal, civic, community and trust-based information flows. Most importantly, media landscapes are uniquely defined by the "information consumption behaviour" of their citizens. Understanding the ways in which citizens consume, produce, contribute to, interact with and behave around their information supply are what makes media landscapes dynamic and diverse.

It is important to understand which media consumption habits are broadly shared by Tunisians and what are the information needs and behaviours of citizens living in areas that have limited access to information. It is of equal importance to distinguish the different nuances in media consumption behaviour with regard to local news, national news and (as relates to the specific scope of the PTP project), news on elections and political participation. These variations in behaviour are particularly pertinent when it comes to levels of trust and credibility of information sources.



## Roadmap for Conducting the Media Landscape Assessment

To more accurately understand unique and localized information needs, gaps, sources and patterns of access and use, the media landscape assessment needs to capture all dimensions of the relationship between information consumers and information producers as well as the legal, regulatory and business environments which govern these interactions. Gaining precise high-quality insights into these interactions allows for the design of impactful programming that meets people where they are to deliver information through the channels, platforms, formats or people that they prefer and trust.

### Roadmap for the Media Landscape Assessment

#### Research and data collection

#### COUNTRY PROFILE

- Legal and regulatory framework
- Media financing
- Mapping of traditional media outlets
- Mapping of digital media outlets

#### MEDIA CONSUMPTION HABITS

- Citizens' consumption and trust towards traditional, digital and word-of-mouth information sources
- Local vs national news sources
- Information needs

#### MEDIA CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

- Challenges and opportunities for local media outlets
- Training and support needs for information producers

#### COMBATTING MIS/ DISINFORMATION

- Root causes
- Citizen behaviour around false information
- Areas of intervention

#### RESEARCH ANALYSIS AND KEY FINDINGS

#### MOVING FORWARD RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TARGETED PROGRAMMING

## Research Sample and Methodology

Internews utilized various data collection approaches to better understand the different components that make up Tunisia's Media Landscape. Viewing the media landscape as a holistic, dynamic ecosystem requires combining qualitative and quantitative tools to identify, as best as possible, how people and communities produce, find, share, value, trust and share information in their own local contexts.

Data Sources	Specifics	Data Collection Method	Sample	Research Objectives
Citizens	Citizens from across the country including persons with disabilities, segmented by age, gender and region	In-person survey	1052	Media Consumption habits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sources of local and national news</li> <li>- Credibility and influence of information sources</li> <li>- Information gaps and needs</li> <li>- Platforms used to communicate to media</li> <li>- Barriers to access to information</li> <li>- Media and information literacy</li> <li>- Behaviour around mis/disinformation</li> </ul>
	Groups of youth, (men and women aged 18 - 30) and groups of women aged 35+, in Kasserine, Sousse and Medenine	Focus groups	70	
	Persons with disabilities (hard of hearing and hard of seeing)	In-depth interviews	10	
Information producers	Journalists, digital media, radios, tv, newspapers, media NGOs, media experts and trainers	In-depth interviews and site visits	38	Information producer assessment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Training and support needs</li> <li>- Technical capacities</li> <li>- Organizational capacities</li> <li>- Main challenges to perform their jobs</li> <li>- Potential partnerships</li> <li>- Challenges faced in performing their job</li> </ul>
	Journalists	Online survey	34	
Stakeholders	NGOs, INGOs, media governing bodies, media education institutions, government communications dept.	In-depth interviews	26	Assessment of previous interventions and potential partnerships within the media space. * this includes interviews conducted as part of NDI's Listening Tour activity on combatting disinformation
General	Studies, reports, surveys, articles	Desk Research	36 sources	Overview of Tunisian media landscape: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ownership</li> <li>- Laws</li> <li>- Infrastructure</li> <li>- Freedom of speech</li> </ul> Mapping of digital and traditional media outlets

# COUNTRY PROFILE

Tunisia's media landscape, previously criticized for being a propaganda tool during the era of ousted president Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, has undergone profound changes since the Jasmine revolution. The number of radio and television stations have increased significantly and while print media is suffering from a structural crisis which led to a drop in the number of publications, the online media space flourished.

\*1



## Legal and Regulatory framework

Since the Jasmine revolution, a new constitutional and institutional framework have been put in place in Tunisia (namely Decrees 115 and 116, November 2011) to recognize the formation of a private media sector. However, a decade later the regulatory framework of the media sector in Tunisia is still showing signs of instability and inconsistencies which need to be addressed.

Decree 115 on the Freedom of Press, Printing and Publishing was adopted by Tunisia's interim government to supersede the 1975 Press code, which imposed several restrictions on journalists' right to free expression. In particular Article 11 in Decree 115 exists to protect journalistic sources and Article 37 extends to journalists the protection of their professional secrecy.

However, the definition of journalists in Decree 115 is restrictive and limits the rights granted under the Decree to those who have obtained a bachelor's degree or an equivalent diploma and to have journalism as a regular and main activity and main source of income (Article 7). These restrictions therefore exclude other information producers such as bloggers, online content creators, citizen journalists and some community radios.

Decree 116 allows for the licensing of private media. The Independent Supreme Authority for Audio-Visual Communications (HAICA) is the independent body set up to organize and regulate this emerging sector. The creation and operation of private audio-visual enterprises require a license and compliance with certain terms and conditions. Even though HAICA is a highly respected entity which regulates various television channels, with increased focus on monitoring pluralism around elections

\*1 source: Internews desk research

time, it remains under resourced in comparison to the volume of content and programming broadcast.

Decree 115 and 116 have also acknowledged freedom of the press by allowing any private citizen or legal entity to set up a newspaper or periodical and by setting mechanisms to regulate pluralism and transparency. Freedom of the electronic press and the right to publish online, although exercised in full following the revolution, is not expressly provided for in the current law and remains unprotected.

 The Independent Supreme Authority for Audio-Visual Communications (HAICA) is the independent body set up to organize and regulate the media private sector.

## Media Financing

Television accounts for the largest share in Tunisia's advertising market (68.7%)<sup>\*2</sup> followed by radio (14.2%) while print advertising continues to decline rapidly. Digital media occupies only 5.2% of the advertising market share and presents huge areas of opportunity to capitalize on Tunisia's high internet penetration and usage rates.

Access to financing by existing and potential media owners and operators is uneven, thus posing a challenge to the creation of a diverse media sector to represent the plurality of ideas and voices in Tunisia. There is no current legislative or regulatory system in place to favour fair and transparent access to media financing.

Media ownership in Tunisia and in particular for private television channels is concentrated amongst a handful of businessmen with political affiliations. This has contributed greatly to the growing levels of mistrust citizens have towards the media as these owners have used their channels as platforms to further their political messaging and aspirations through biased programming and news coverage particularly during elections.

\*3

Private TV	Ownership
Attessia TV	Launched by host and producer Moez Ben Gharbia in 2015. He later partnered with Tunisian businessmen, Omar Jenayah and Lotfy Charfeddine then resigned in 2018, due to their interference in his editorial line. He joined Carthage + TV Lotfi Charfeddine (49%)-Omar Jenayah (1%)-Olivier Invest Sicaf (49%)
El Hiwar El Tounsi	Founded in 2003 by Tahar Ben Hassine, a former opponent of Ben Ali's regime. He joined the party Nida Tounes in 2014 and sold his shares to Sami Fehri and his wife Asma Fehri. In March 2021, the Tunisian judiciary sentenced Sami Fehri to eight years in prison for financial corruption. Asma Ben Jmiaa (100%)

\*2 source: Media Ownership Monitor Tunisia- Reporters without borders

\*3 source: Media Ownership Monitor- Reporters without borders

Private TV	Ownership
Nesma TV	The capital of the company Nessma Entertainment is originally held by the Tunisian advertising Group Karoui & Karoui World run by Nebil Karoui. In 2008, the Group announced that the Italian Group Mediaset, linked to Silvio Berlusconi and the businessman Tarek Ben Ammar entered in the capital. In 2016, Nebil Karoui officially resigned as CEO of Nessma TV to concentrate on his political activities within the party Nida Tounes. He ran for presidential elections in 2019 finishing second. In December 2020, a Tunisian judge ordered the detention of Karoui on suspicion of financial corruption. Nebil Karoui (50%)-Silvio Berlusconi (25%)-Tarek Ben Ammar (25%)
Zitouna TV	Created in 2012 by Osama bin Salem, son of an Ennahda leader and financed by businessman, Sami Essid. In 2014, HAICA refused to give the TV station a licence, due to its affiliation a political party. The TV station now broadcasts through the Nile Sat satellite. Sami Essid (50%)-Rola Essid (50%)
Carthage +	Owned by businessmen Kais Mabrouk and Lassad Khedher. Launched alongside a audiovisual university and Mediacity, a free zone built to encourage the establishment of media outlets, news agencies, advertising agencies and other media companies. Kais Mabrouk (85%)-Lassad Khedher (15%)
Hannibal TV	Launched in 2005 by Tunisian millionaire Larbi Nasra, a close associate of Ben Ali. In 2013 Nasra sold almost 90% of the capital to Saudi Businessman Tarek Kedada and Tunisian investors Nouredine Hachicha (and others). A percentage of the shares were confiscated by the state. Tarek Kedada (49%)-Nouredine+others (41%)-Tunisian state (10%)
Al Janoubia TV	Founded by Farhat Jouini and Baaboura Rabii in 2012. Bought in 2013 by businessman and founder of the Tunisian Movement for freedom and dignity, Mohamed Ajroudi. Mohamed Ajroudi (99.9%)-Taoufik Bacca (0.1%)

# Mapping of Traditional Media

## Television



\*4

### PUBLIC TV

Channel	Group	Share of total viewing (%)
El Wataniya 1	Tunisian Radio and Television Establishment	13,1
El Wataniya 2	Tunisian Radio and Television Establishment	6,1

### PRIVATE TV

Channel	Group	Share of total viewing (%)
NESSMA TV	Nessma Broadcast	25,7
EL Hiwar EL Tounsi	Asma Fehri	23,6
Hannibal-TV	Audio Visual International Production AVIP - Tunisie SA	13,1
Attesiaa TV	V Production	10,1
Carthage +	TWT	2,2
Al Janoubia TV	FM3 Production	1,6
Zitouna TV	Reseau zitouna d'information et de communication	1,3
Al Insen TV	SICAD	Information not available
Tunisna TV	Tunisiana Prod	Information not available
M Tunisia	le groupe méditerranéen des médias et de la production culturelle	Information not available

\*4 source: Open Sigma 2020

## Radio



There are 108 radio stations in Tunisia (11 public, 19 private, 22 community radios and 56 web radios established in the youth centers). Most of the private radios are based in the big cities (e.g. Sousse has 4 private radios) while community radios are more prominent in the interior regions. Youth center web radios are quite popular amongst the younger population in information underserved areas and is supported by the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

\* The radio audience in Tunisia reaches its peak between 8 and 9 am

\* Mosaïque Fm is leading with 28.6% of listeners per day on average. Followed by Zitouna FM with 12%, Jawhara FM with 8.4% and IFM with 7.3% of listeners.

\*5

\* 37.3% of Tunisians listen to the radio every day<sup>1</sup>  
Radios represent 14.2% of total advertising investments (2019) after TV channels which represent 68.7% of the market

## PUBLIC RADIOS \*6

Governorate	Public Radios	Coverage	Audience
Tunis	RTCN	National	<b>386 140</b>
Tunis	Radio Jeunes	National	<b>87 233</b>
Tunis	RTCI	National	<b>32 205</b>
Tunis	Radio Culture	National	<b>32 889</b>
Tunis	Panorama	National	<b>44 611</b>
Tunis	Shems	National	<b>35 643</b>
Sfax	Radio Sfax	Regional	<b>163 248</b>
Monastir	Radio Monastir	Regional	<b>141 073</b>
Gafsa	Radio Gafsa	Regional	<b>86 924</b>
Tataouine	Radio Tataouine	Regional	<b>98 503</b>
Le Kef	Radio Kef	Regional	<b>89 879</b>

\*6 source: Open sigma 2020

## PRIVATE RADIOS

Governorate	Public Radios	Coverage	Audience
Tunis	Mosaïque	National	<b>1 465 468</b>
Tunis	Express	National	<b>46 638</b>
Sousse	Jawhara	Sahel	<b>426 348</b>
Tunis	IFM	National	<b>400 951</b>
Sfax	Diwan	National	<b>68 765</b>
Nabeul	Cap Fm	Regional	<b>35 643</b>
Monastir	Ribat	Regional	<b>3 932</b>
Sousse	Nejma	Regional	<b>23 718</b>
Kairouan	Sabra Fm	Regional	<b>124 641</b>
Nabeul	Radio Med	Regional	<b>32 157</b>
Bizerte	Oxygene	Regional	<b>79 672</b>
Mahdia	Mahdia Fm	Regional	–
Sousse	Knouz	Regional	<b>73 420</b>
Sidi Bouzid	Karama	Regional	<b>13 435</b>
Medenine	Ulysse	Regional	<b>39 643</b>
Mahdia	MFM	Regional	–
Sousse	Msaken	Local	<b>17 9569</b>
Tunis	Misk	Regional	<b>16 904</b>
Tunis	Zitouna FM	National	<b>517 616</b>

## YOUTH CENTER WEB RADIOS

In 2013, the Ministry of Youth and Sports launched a nationwide initiative to support the creation of 56 web radios in youth centers across the country. These radios are proving to be a valuable platform through which young Tunisians in remote regions can communicate their voices, needs and concerns.

## COMMUNITY RADIOS

Since 2011, there has been a significant increase in what has become known as community or associative media. This was a natural result from the surge of civil society organizations in Tunisia post-revolution. Community radios are defined by HAICA to be “specialized, local, non-profit and serving the general interest”. 22 community radios in total have obtained a licence though two of them are inactive.

As identified in the media consumption habits assessment, **community radios are a valuable source of timely, credible and relevant local information.** They enjoy higher levels of editorial freedom in comparison to private radios as they do not have pressures from advertisers or major stakeholders. In addition to being platforms to communicate the views and voices of the communities they serve, community radios also play a social role.



**We don't just have an informant role. As a local radio associative we also play a social role: for example, many people have gone through our radio to make calls for donations during the coronavirus pandemic.**

Ahmed Lamloumi, founder of Radio Medenine

However despite their positive impact at a local level, community radios face immense sustainability challenges. The advertising market in Tunisia is monopolized by larger private radios, leaving only a small share for community radios. There has been a lot of interest from INGOs, however upon project completion funding challenges resurface imposing high risks of shut down especially that these stations rely mainly on volunteers. Some radio stations have been more successful than others in exploring business models not solely reliant on advertising. Based on the value these community radios provide to their communities, Internews performed further analysis through a mapping of all 22 stations in order to identify key areas of intervention and how best to duplicate and enhance successful business models across this ecosystem.



**SNAPSHOT OF COMMUNITY RADIO MAPPING (FULL MAPPING IN ANNEX 5) \*7**

Governorate	Community radios	FM/ Web	Description	Followed
Ben Arous	Radio Boukornine	90.2	Web radio covering the southern suburbs of Hammam. Recently, the radio got the license to broadcast on the FM. The team is composed mainly of volunteers.	40893
Bizerte	Radio Mandara Fm	90.9	Local community radio station covering Ras El-Jabal delegation with a focus on media education.	25455
	Radio 8 Menzel Bourguiba	104.3	Local community radio station covering Menzel Bourguiba delegation	141483
Mahdia	Radio Mahdia 1	99.3	The first community radio in Tunisia specialized in the field of tourism and culture.	41133
	Ambiance FM	Web	Specialized community radio station under the banner of the Kusour El Saf Association for Youth, Culture and Media, supported by the Ministry of Cultural Affairs within the framework of the national program «Tunisia, Cities of Arts».	138420
Gafsa	Radio Mines	Web	«Sawt El Manajem» (voice of the mines) is a private radio which broadcasts 18 hours a day and covers the entire Gafsa region. It has a broadcasting and recording studio.	100562
Jendouba	Radio Rayhana	Web	Community radio covering Jendouba and the northwest with a gender-focused approach.	5320

## Printed newspapers



Printed newspapers are in rapid decline due to Tunisia’s digital transformation, citizen’s preference to reading shorter news pieces and the cost and challenges of distribution in remote areas.

Amongst printed newspapers, which were ranked generally low as a source of information, Chorouk was cited as the most read, followed by AlSabah (both daily newspapers). However the electronic version of AlSabah and its French publication La Presse are garnering an increasing following as they progress in their digital transformation.

\*7 source: Internews Mapping of Community Radios 2021

## Mapping of Digital Media

Tunisia has relatively high internet, mobile and social media usage rates which is made possible due to a robust ICT infrastructure and the government’s vision and efforts towards digital transformation. The greatest challenges to internet and mobile data access exist in rural areas outside of Tunis and the coastal cities, particularly in the North East and Southern regions.

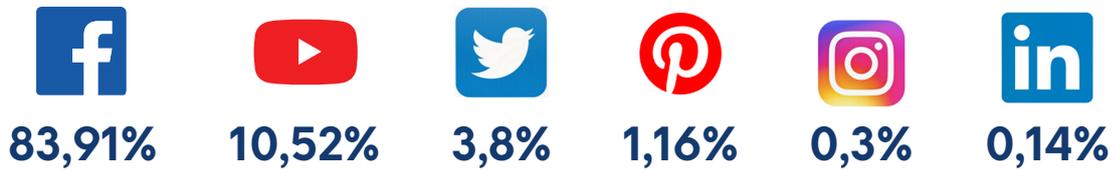
Freedom of speech and internet freedom in Tunisia have taken significant strides since the Jasmine revolution. This includes the ability of media outlets (traditional and digital) to produce and disseminate content on political and social issues without fear of government censorship and control. While there is still room for improvement, Tunisia provides a relatively stable ground for citizens to make their voices heard, organize social movements and hold elected officials accountable.

The media consumption habits assessment identified Facebook as the leading social media platform in Tunisia, by a mile. Official state owned Facebook pages such as those of Ministries and Parliament are used by citizens to verify information on national news and public policy, whereas Municipal level Facebook pages are a primary source of local news with relatively high degrees of credibility, reach, timeliness and relevance.

\*8



\*8 source: Digital 2021 Tunisia - Hootsuite



Social Media Stats in Tunisia - April 2021

To better inform targeted programming of interventions, Internews conducted a detailed mapping of the most followed digital pages in all 350 municipalities in Tunisia. This mapping will be used to identify the digital pages to be supported by the project based on criteria including reach, quality of content, neutrality, frequency of publishing etc. **The mapping identified at least one Facebook page in almost every municipality on which local communities rely to stay informed of all local news, current events and policy updates.** With such a high degree of reach, several administrators reported that their municipal level Facebook pages have been targeted by politicians and political parties to further their messaging.



politicians have always tried to control our Facebook page, especially during the election campaign period

Admin of Radio Sud Facebook page, Skhura municipality in Sfax

## DIGITAL MAPPING FOR THE GOVERNORATE OF GABES \*9 (FULL MAPPING OF ALL GOVERNORATES IN ANNEX 6)

Municipality	Population	Media (Facebook pages)	Number of followers	% of followers in relation to the population
Gabes	130984	Gabès Book	304005	<b>232%</b>
		Radio Elyssa FM Gabes	129462	<b>99%</b>
		Gabès News	137810	<b>105%</b>
Teboulbou	21727	الصفحة الرسمية لبلدية تيلبو commune de Teboulbou	3938	<b>18%</b>
El Hamma	41607	Elhamma الحامة 24	12604	<b>30,29%</b>
Ghannouch	28051	غنوش Tv	7440	<b>26,52%</b>
		بلدية غنوش الصفحة الرسمية	4197	<b>14,96%</b>
Chenenni Nahal	14803	بلدية شنني نحال - Commune Chenini Nahal	6218	<b>42,00%</b>
Kettana	13310	Kettana News	5665	<b>42,56%</b>
Bouchemme	12281	بوشمة الاخبارية بلعربي Bouchemme news	2183	<b>17,78%</b>
		بوشمة بو Bouchemme Book	31205	<b>254,09%</b>
Mareth	11678	بلدية مارت الصفحة الرسمية-Commune Mareth	4580	<b>39,22%</b>
		الصفحة الرسمية لمعتدلية مارت Délégation de Mareth	2575	<b>22,05%</b>
		Mareth 24	2775	<b>23,76%</b>
		مارث للاخبار	2159	<b>18,49%</b>
Metouia	10716	أخبار كوكب المطوية Metouia News	5570	<b>51,98%</b>
Dkhilet Toujan	10277	Dkhilet Toujane News	4454	<b>43,34%</b>
		راديو توجان Radio Toujane	5440	<b>43,34%</b>
Manzel ALHabib	10148	منزل الحبيب Menzel elhabib	2880	<b>28,38%</b>
Matmata	1847	معتدلية مطماطة الجديدة - Délégation Matmata Nlle	4666	<b>252,63%</b>
		Radio Matmata	5339	<b>289,06%</b>

\*9 source: Internews Mapping of Digital Media 2021

# **MEDIA CONSUMPTION HABITS**



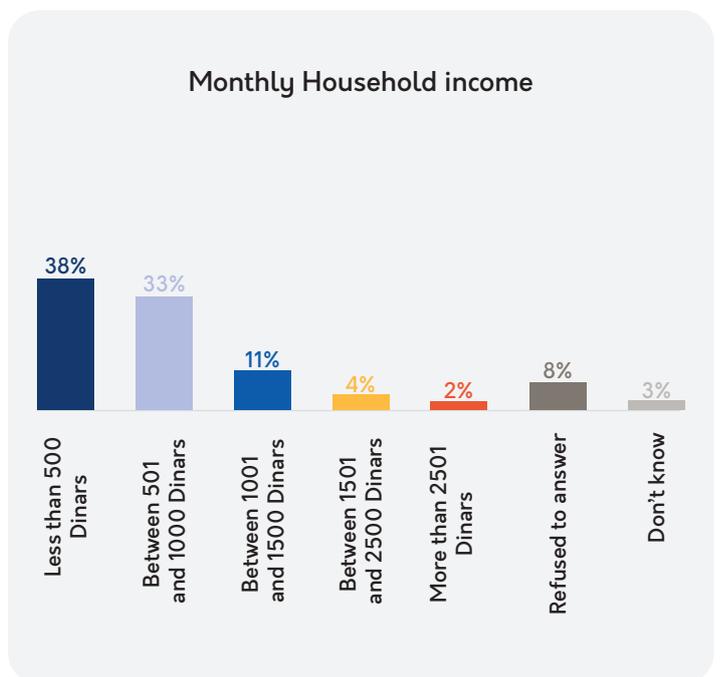
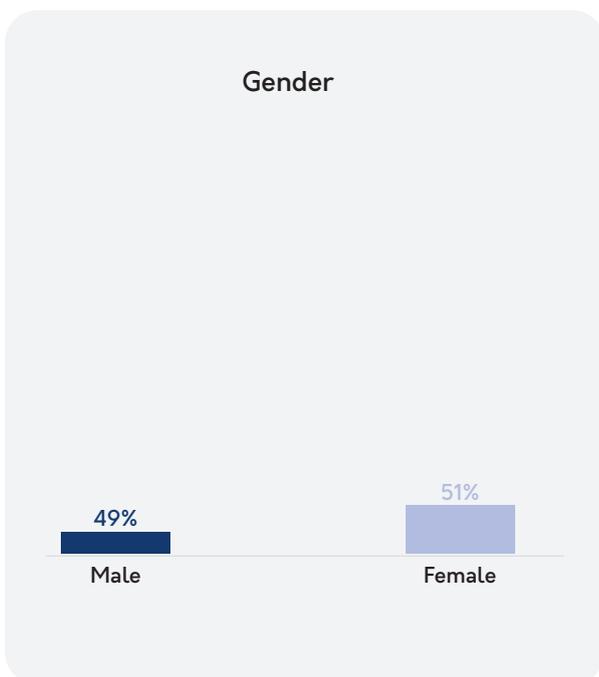
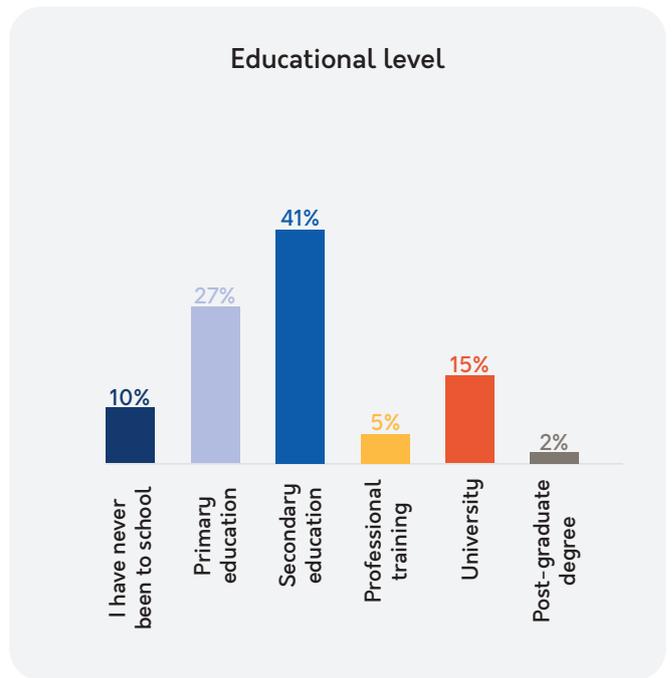
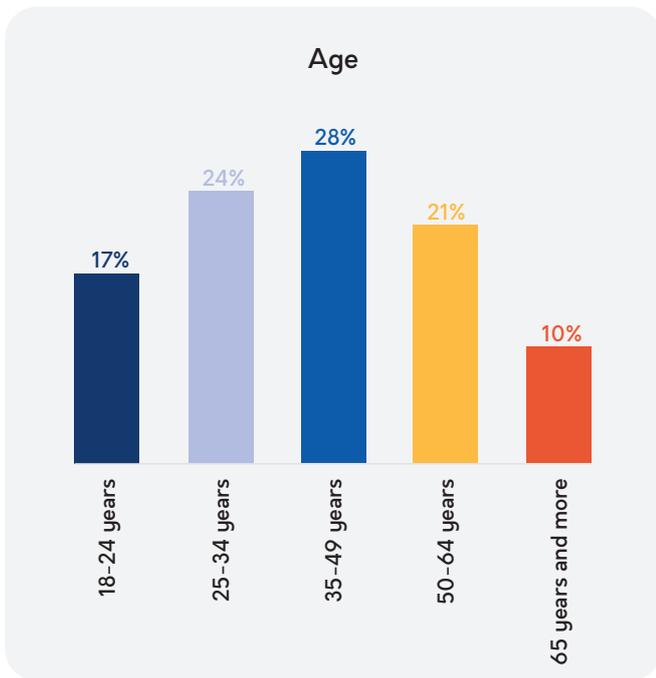
It is important to recognize that although there are general trends to media consumption, there are **distinct nuances and differences across gender, age, region and socio-economic backgrounds**. There are also shifts in information source preferences and credibility depending on whether the news sought out by citizens are at a local/community/regional level or national level.

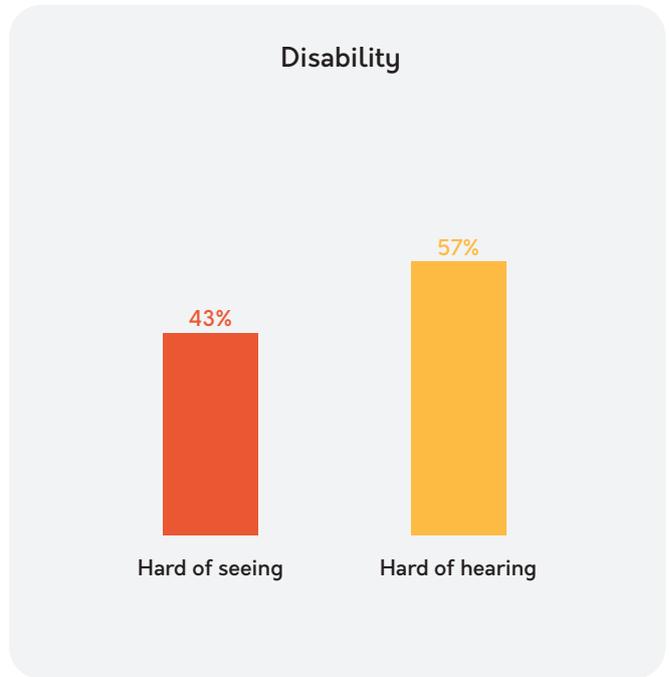
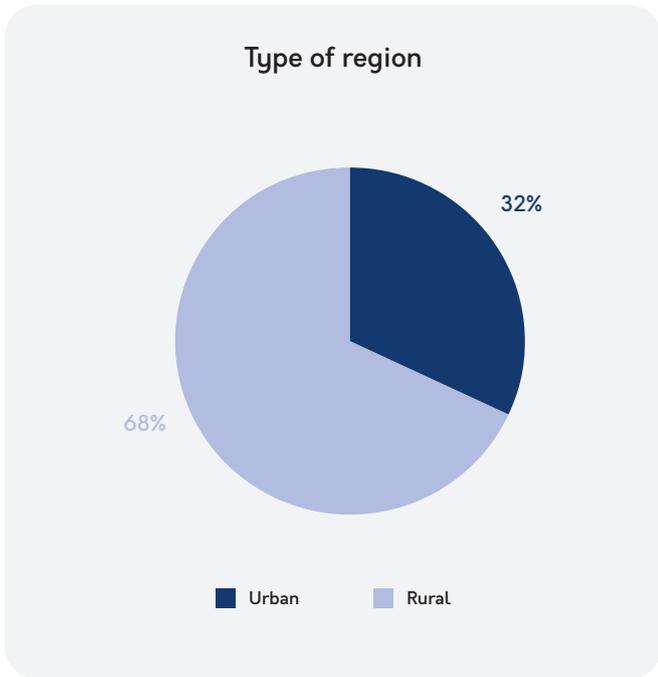
The assessment of the media consumption habits amongst the selected target groups was conducted by Internews in collaboration with ELKA Consulting, a research firm based in Tunisia with a research team trained and recruited from local communities across the country's 24 Governorates. The data and key findings presented in this section were collected using a qualitative and quantitative mixed-methods approach: survey, focus groups discussions and in-depth interviews\*.



# Demographics of target groups

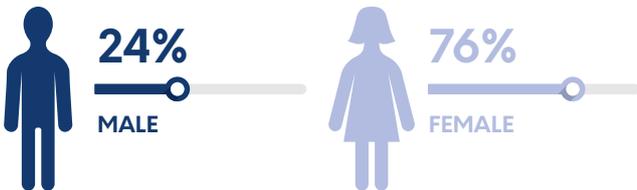
Survey- sample size 1052 across all 24 Governorates





Focus groups- sample size 70 in Sousse, Kasserine and Medenine.

Participants were selected and shortlisted to ensure a **diverse representation of neighbourhoods, socioeconomic backgrounds, education levels, and occupations.**



## Information Sources (consumption and credibility for local and national news)

Segmentation according to target group demographics is not the only factor to consider in understanding media consumption habits. Preferred sources of information also vary according to the **subject of interest**. For example national television is a widely followed source of national news and current events, while the audience of private television is primarily searching for entertainment content, and the local cafe is the go-to source for young men seeking the latest in sports news.

Additionally, there is a clear distinction between information sources most followed and those most trusted. This is an important distinction that resonates not only between the various media channels but also within the various programming content and types of formats within each channel.

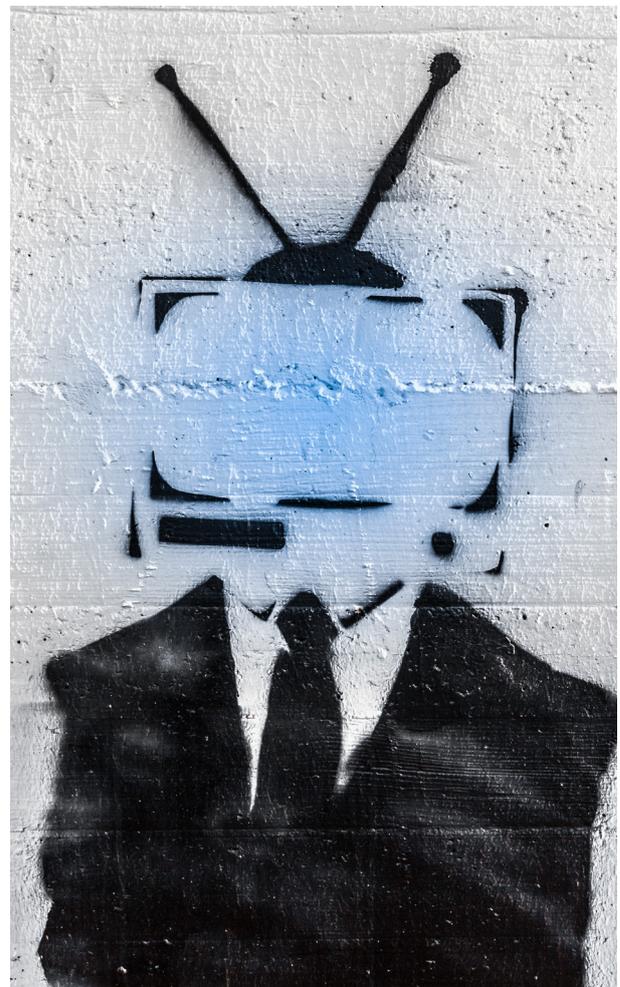
### TV

Unsurprisingly, Facebook enjoys a significant following amongst youth, however most participants in the research, regardless of age, gender or region, cited news on national television as the most trusted source of national news.

National television programming and in particular the 8 o'clock news is the most trusted source of **national news** because they are considered more “official”.

Citizens have less speculations over the owners of the channel, they view the sources of news as more reliable and they trust audiovisual content more than text-only content on Facebook pages.

Persons who are hard of hearing also cited the 8 o'clock news as an important source of national news due to the inclusion of sign language interpreters in the news segments.



“

Al watanya is a public channel that is financed by citizens  
« money »

Male 20-35 years old Sousse

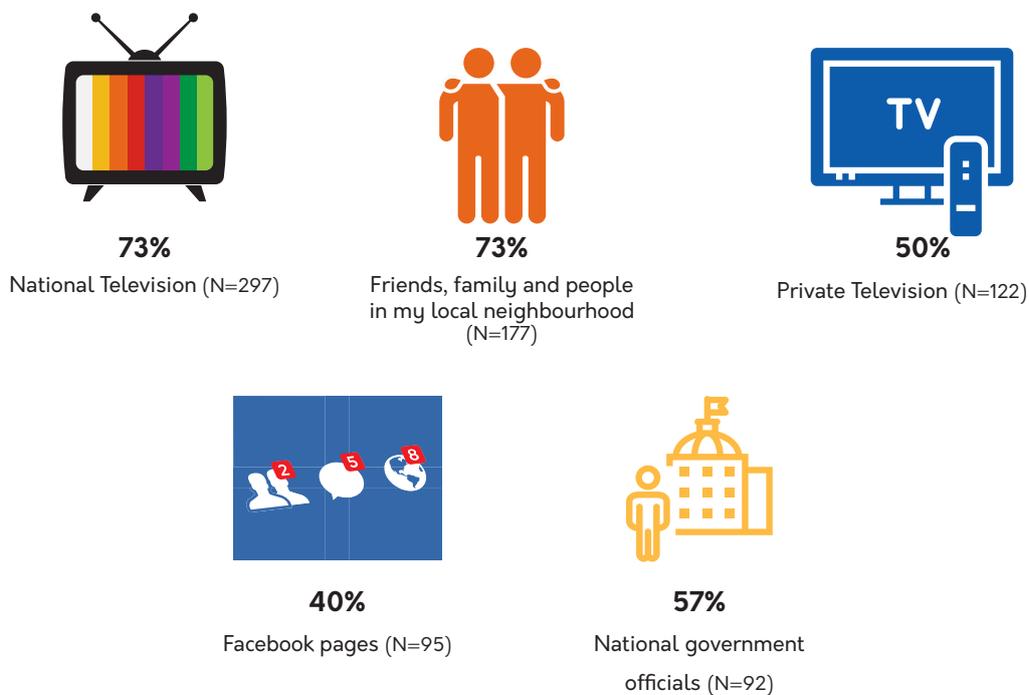
“

TV provides official information

Woman +35 years Kasserine

Information received from live coverage of parliamentary hearings is also considered to be a highly trusted source of national news related to parliament and political parties. In addition to the credibility it enjoys from being broadcast on national television, research participants cited the fact that it is broadcast **live and non-edited** contributes to its high levels of trust. These live hearings are one of the primary sources citizens refer to for confirming news related to parliamentary members and political parties as their other platforms, such as their Facebook pages, are received with a certain level of skepticism.

«How much do you trust the following information sources when it comes to news about political parties and representatives, parliament and elections?» <sup>\*10</sup>



\*10 source: Internews Media Consumption Habits Survey 2021

Amongst private television channels, Elhiwar ElTounsi and Nessma TV are the two most followed due to their diverse programming, entertainment content and shows which discuss current events in an engaging talk-show format. They are followed mostly by women and in urban areas. However, even though they have a relatively big following, the credibility of their programming is lower than national television. The primary reason is that they are owned by political figures and businessmen and thus lean towards certain political inclinations. The same applies to most of the private channels as opposed to public television which is “financed by taxpayer money”. Several research participants, also expressed reservations towards Elhiwar Ettounsi and Nessma for broadcasting “trivial and inappropriate content”.



All private channels have served the interests of their candidates, for example Attesiaa: Youssef Chahed, Nessma: Nabil Karoui, Zitouna: Nahdha»

Male 20-35 years old Sousse

Nessma during the elections were praising Nabil Karoui all day long »

Female 20-35 years old Kasserine

Apart from media ownership, the target groups also cited the **lack of credibility of “subject matter experts”** as another key factor contributing to the low levels of trust they have towards private television.

Research participants believe the “experts” who host or appear as guests on various private television and radio channels have political biases, are connected to the owners of the channels they appear on, lack in-depth knowledge on the subject matters they discuss and don’t have the capacity to communicate their messages and ideas clearly.

The fact that a significant portion of programming on private television and radio is dedicated to air time for non-credible subject matter experts, has contributed greatly to the perceived weakness citizens have towards the media sector.

In general, television is followed more by inhabitants of rural areas than those living in urban areas. This can be attributed to lower internet reach and higher data costs for inhabitants of rural regions.

Electricity cuts were cited as the main technical barrier to accessing television news particularly in the Southwest regions.



How do we know this person is an expert? He doesn't add anything new to what I already know. And you see the same faces over and over again talking about various topics, they're experts in everything

Woman, +35, Sousse



The 8 o'clock news is the most trusted source of national news because it is **“official”**



Live parliamentary sessions on national television are trusted because they are **live and non-edited**



Media ownership and lack of credibility of subject matter “experts” are the key reasons for low trust in private television programming

## Radio



Mainstream radio is followed more by inhabitants of urban areas rather than those in rural areas due to the lack of coverage of several radio stations in rural parts of the various Governorates.

Amongst the mainstream radio stations, research participants cited Mosaïque and Shems FM as the most followed, while persons hard of seeing prefer national radio RTCN. Radio programs that broadcast political content with a humorous tone are the most popular among the majority of participants.

A program widely followed is “Midi-show” on Mosaïque Fm. This program is appreciated for the skills of the host, Boubaker Ben Akacha, and the expertise and professionalism of his columnist, Zied Krichéne. «El matinale» on Shems Fm is also popular due to its renowned host Hamza Belloumi.

In general, radio programming is valued for allowing citizens to follow the news while doing other tasks such as driving or cooking.



**Radio programs are aired live so if an event takes place, the information would be reported in real time unlike TV where most of the programs are recorded**

Male 20-35 years old Kasserine

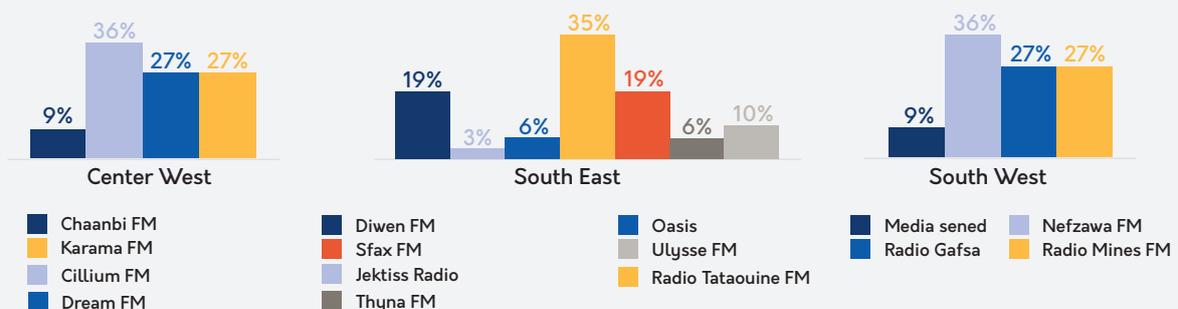
While mainstream radio is followed more for national news, regional and community radio are a more valuable source of local news. Regional and community radios provide information that is **more immediate, more detailed, more locally relevant and more credible** as the listeners are more familiar with the hosts. Each region has its preferred regional and community stations and they have a loyal following within the community as they feel the program hosts and guests represent them. Radio Kef, Radio Tataouine and Radio Monastir stood out as the most cited regional radios. **Women and youth in particular, who live in areas with lower access to mainstream media, feel that community radios and youth-home radios broadcasting from educational campuses and community centers represent them and provide the local information they need.**

Persons hard of seeing cited radios as an important source of information and are encouraged to call in and share their views, particularly on regional and community radios.

“  
**Information on the radio is credible because it circulates over several stations and we can call in to intervene and correct information if it’s happening in our area and is wrong**  
 Man, 29 years old-hard of seeing, Tunis

Among the sources you mentioned earlier, could you specify what is the most trusted source of information for you for news about «your local area»? \*11

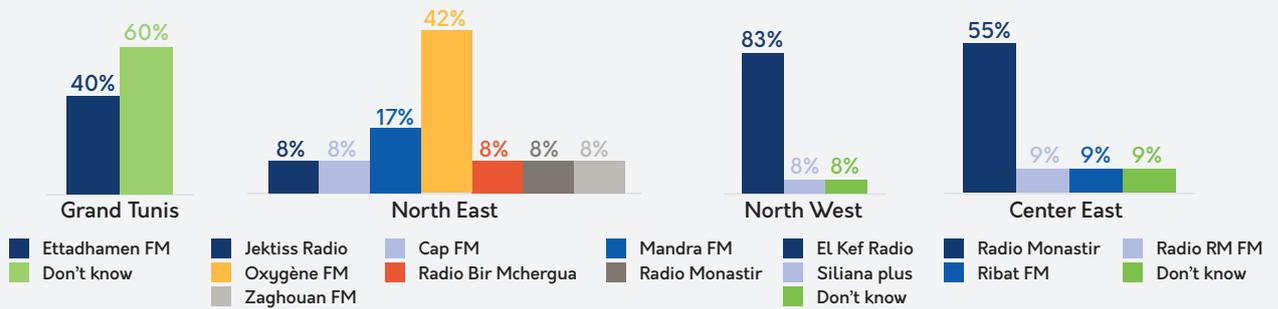
Local and community Radio (By Region)



\*11 source: Internews Media Consumption Habits Survey 2021

Among the sources you mentioned earlier, could you specify what is the most trusted source of information for you for news about «your local area»?

Local and community Radio (By Region)



I listen to Radio Monastir to be aware of the news of the region. I like the immediacy of the information, unlike national radio which covers our areas once in a blue moon

Woman +35 years Sousse

Yet with the benefits they provides to local communities, regional and community radios face challenges including lack of resources, limited coverage and limited access to policy makers and government officials as guests on their shows.



Lack of coverage was cited as the main technical barrier to accessing radio news, particularly in rural areas and in the Northwest regions. This obstacle is generally overcome by accessing the Facebook pages of those radio channels.

Radio stations have been very successful in adapting to the digital transformation through their social media platforms especially Facebook, through which they have significantly expanded their reach and overcome accessibility challenges in rural and remote areas. This is true for private as well as regional and community radios. The Facebook page for Mosaïque FM for example is the most followed Facebook page for news in Tunisia.



Our radios cannot invite important figures such as ministers, whereas Mosaïque Fm can

Man 20-35 years old Kasserine

Regional and community radios provide information that is more immediate, more detailed, more locally relevant and more credible than mainstream radio.

Radio stations have been very successful in adapting to the digital transformation through their social media platforms especially Facebook

Lack of coverage was cited as the main technical barrier to accessing radio news, particularly in rural areas and in the Northwest regions

## Digital Media

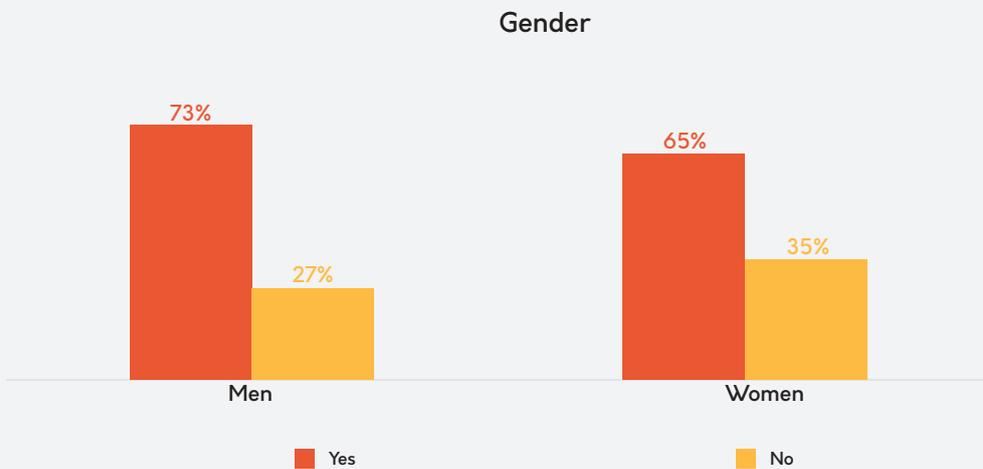


Unsurprisingly Facebook is the most used social media platform with its affiliated applications Messenger and WhatsApp used widely to share timely information amongst citizens. Younger populations also use Instagram and TikTok, primarily to access cultural news and to follow celebrities and influencers. However at the time this research was implemented, Facebook use significantly surpassed any other platform.

Most Tunisians, in particular the younger population, access the Internet through their mobile phones. Accessing through desktops and laptops is minimal. Citizens living in the Southwest region out as the highest utilizers of Facebook and who access the internet via mobile phones.

Men have slightly better direct access to the internet than women yet the biggest differences across segments is by age and region with citizens above 50 and the Northwest regions being the most underserved.

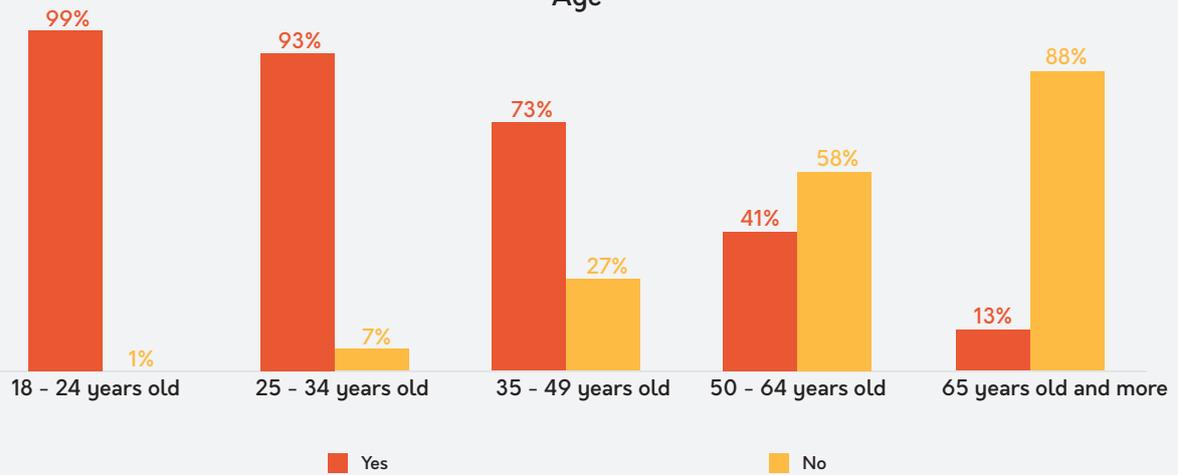
Do you have direct access to the Internet? \*12



\*12 source: Internews Media Consumption Habits Survey 2021

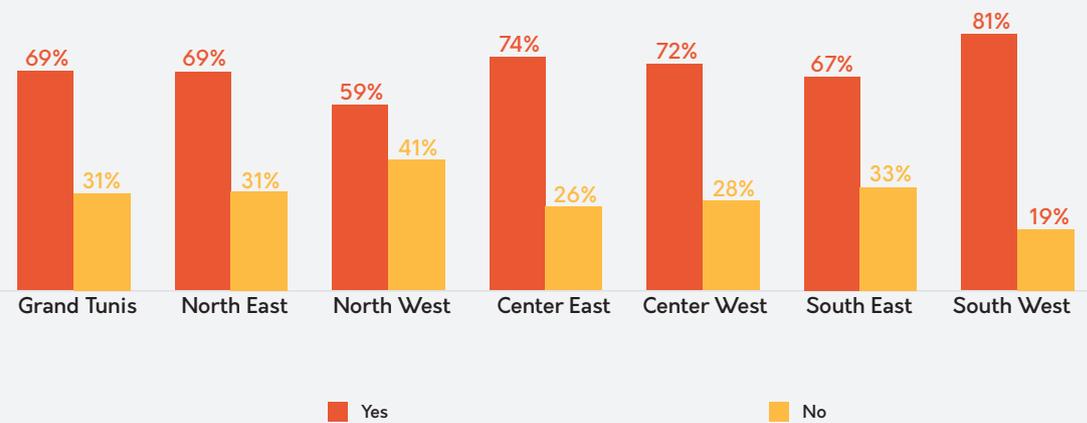
### Do you have direct access to the Internet?

#### Age



### Do you have direct access to the Internet?

#### Region



**Citizens prefer to view and share Facebook videos and short text-based content.** Videos are considered more engaging, more entertaining and are generally more trusted as viewers can see and hear the source of information, especially if they are non-edited interviews. Persons who are hard of hearing also cited Facebook videos as their preferred digital format for consuming information.

Generalizing “Facebook” as a source of information is misleading as there are stark differences in information consumption habits and credibility across the various “types” of Facebook pages.

**Citizens residing in information underserved areas such as neighbourhoods in rural areas in the interior regions and the Southeast rely heavily on their local community, municipal and city level Facebook pages for news and events related to their areas.** They stated that national Facebook pages, such as official Ministry pages or the social media pages of mainstream radio, while providing national news, do not cover news at the local level. Facebook pages of local and community radios were also highly followed for local news.

“

**Medenine city Facebook page, in this page you can find all the information about the region.**

Man 20–35 years old Medenine

“

**The municipal level Facebook pages are the best and sometimes only way to know about water and electricity cuts in our neighbourhood.**

Woman 35 years old Kasserine

“

**The pages of Bouzguéme and Cellium fm are the source where you can find all the information about the region that you can't find anywhere else.**

Woman +35 years old Kasserine

These local level Facebook pages have also proven to be effective in creating impact at a community level. **They are often used as platforms to induce “call-for-actions”** in local communities such as calls to clean the neighbourhood or organize a community event.

“Official” Facebook pages of state structures were rated highly as a credible source of national news for citizens, especially when seeking to verify information received from other online sources. Facebook pages of Ministries, Governorates, Parliament and the Prime Ministry are trusted more than the pages of individual government and political party representatives.

In general, citizens are sceptical towards news on non official Facebook pages as they believe they serve the interests of “mysterious people” and spread a lot of rumours. There is a strong belief that politicians are the root cause for the spread of disinformation and media is merely a tool they use to that end.

### Regarding the reliability of information during digital election campaigns, to what extent do you trust these information ?

\*13

	I trust this information	I don't trust this information	Don't know	Refuse to answer
Information shared by my friends on social networks	37%	35%	28%	1%
Information shared by electronic newspapers	25%	42%	32%	1%
Information shared by known experts and analysts through the media	39%	33%	27%	1%
Information shared by bloggers and influencers	24%	48%	28%	1%
Information shared by FB pages of main TV and radio stations	40%	33%	27%	1%
Information shared by well-known but unofficial pages	12%	59%	27%	1%
Information shared by political figures	12%	60%	28%	1%
Information shared by candidates	11%	62%	26%	1%
Information shared by civil society (ATIDE, mourakiboun, etc ...)	39%	39%	27%	1%

The research participants recognize a Facebook page as official through the logo, number of followers, and the Facebook verification badge. Another important indicator is the language. **Citizens seem to trust information written in classical Arabic more than in the Tunisian dialect as it seems more “official”.**

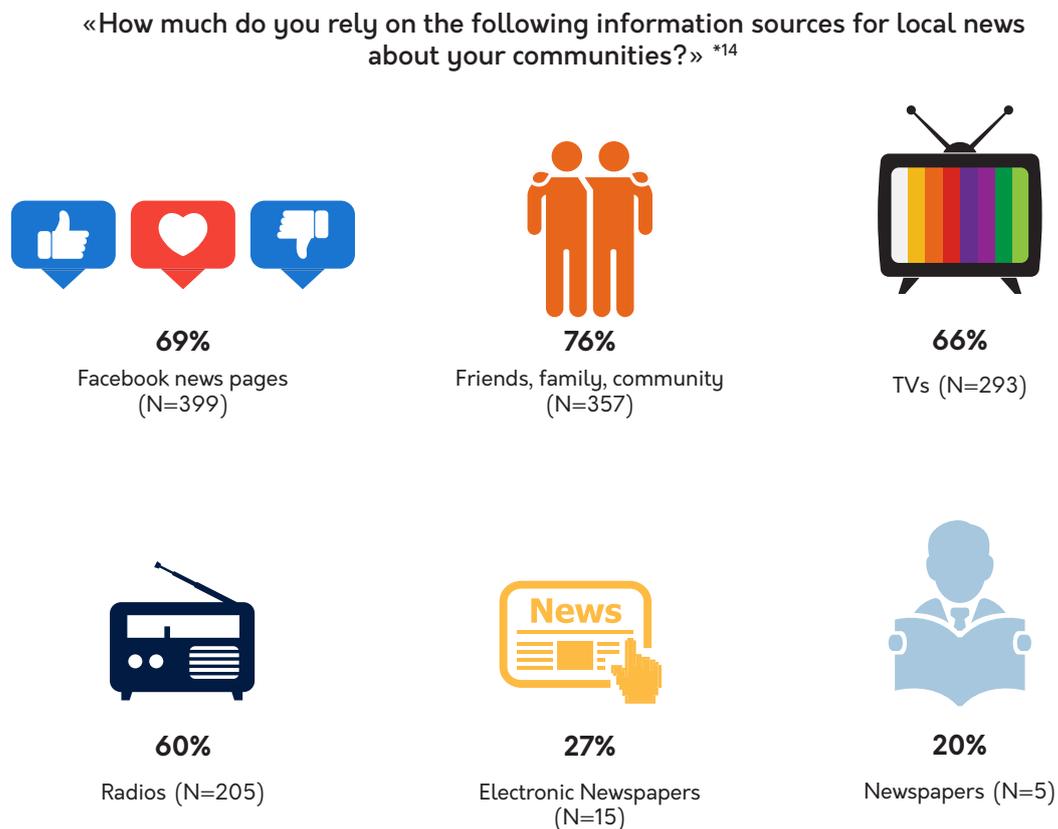
Generalizing «Facebook» as a source of information is misleading. There are different «types» of Facebook pages with varying levels of relevance, influence and credibility.

Facebook videos and short text-based contents are the preferred formats to view and share content online.

## Friends, family and community

“Friends, family and community” were cited as an essential channel for information flow of local news amongst target groups participating in the research. Especially used by older citizens, young people also consider their immediate network as an important source.

Most research participants, including persons with disabilities also cited “Friends, family and community members” as a highly trusted source of information about news in their local areas, with the highest percentage given to family followed by friends.



\*14 source: Internews Media Consumption Habits Survey 2021

“

When we go to the café, we talk about several subjects and have in-depth discussions on them.

Man 20–35 years old Sousse

“

I get information when I go to the local grocery store to do my errands.

Woman +35 years old Kasserine

“

Students in my class are a valuable source of information to me and I am a source to them.

Women +35 years old Sousse

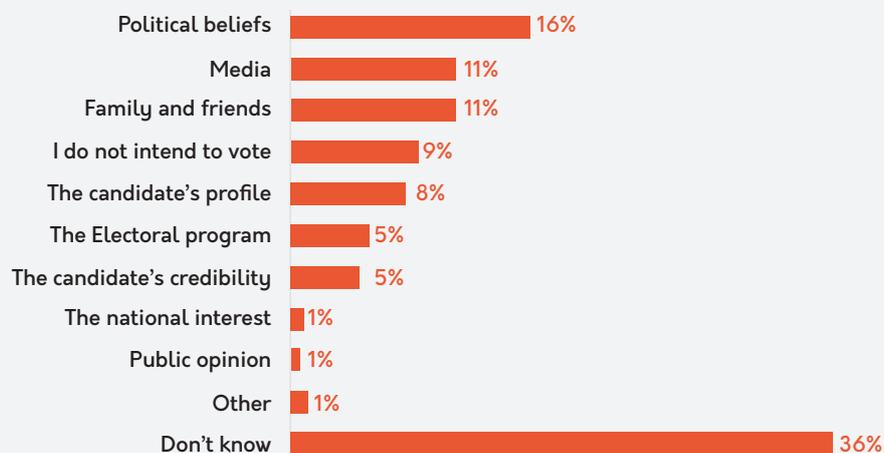
“

I trust information from my friends because I know them.

Man 37 hard of seeing, Tunis

“Friends, family and community” was also identified as an information source with **great influence over the decision making process** for target groups, especially pertaining to elections and political participation. Target groups indicated that they are more inclined to be influenced by the opinions of family and friends they respect, as opposed to a candidate’s profile or electoral program or the media.

### What factors influence your voting decisions ? \*15



\*15 source: Internews Media Consumption Habits Survey 2021

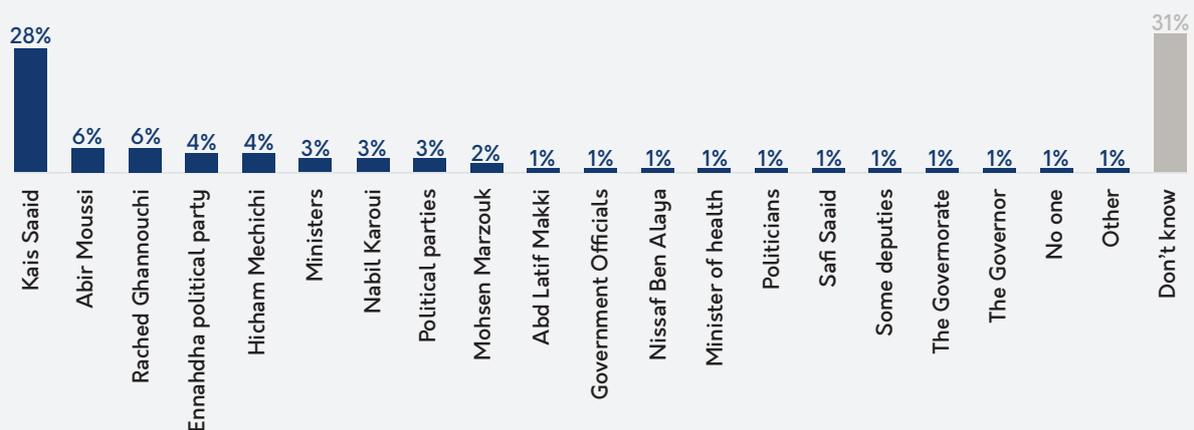
“Friends, family and community” have **great influence over the decision making process** regarding elections and political participation

The majority of research participants expressed relatively high levels of trust towards civil society organizations working in their communities due to the proximity of their field work and their familiarity with the communities. They generally believe they have the best interests of the community in mind.

## Government officials and political figures

With regards to trust levels towards government officials, most research participants viewed the president as relatively credible in comparison to members of parliament and political party representatives. A primary reason for this is the general belief that he does not have any personal stake in a media outlet and does not misuse the media to influence public perception through disinformation and fake campaigns like other political figures. Citizens have a high awareness of the misuse of media outlets by political figures, particularly through social media.

Among the sources you mentioned earlier, could you specify what is the most trusted source of information when it comes to news about «national news on political parties and representatives, parliament, elections»? \*16



Kais Saïd’s campaign in the 2019 presidential elections was completely independent and it was a surprise to his opponents that he won. We knew the games the other candidates were playing.

Woman, +35 Sousse

\*16 source: Internews Media Consumption Habits Survey 2021

In general, citizens are sceptical towards news on non official Facebook pages as they believe they serve the interests of “mysterious people” working for the benefit of a political party or figure and spread a lot of rumours. There is a strong belief that politicians are the root cause for the spread of disinformation and media is merely a tool they use to that end.



**The political class is the source of manipulation.**

Male 20-35 years old Sousse



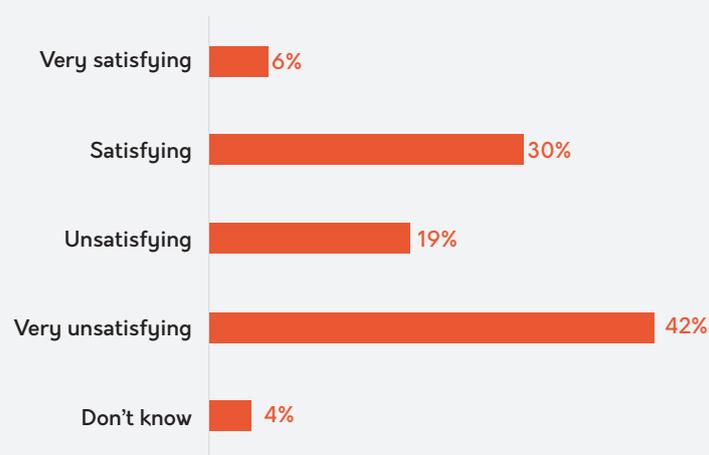
**They (the politicians) only divulge false information.**

Female +35 years Sousse

## Information Needs

In general, citizens feel that the media does not care about what they have to say, in particular those in underserved areas such as inhabitants of rural areas and regions outside of Greater Tunis and the coastal cities. Persons with disabilities also expressed great dissatisfaction with the lack of content to meet their needs across all platforms.

How do you evaluate the coverage of your local and community news by the media outlets ? <sup>\*17</sup>



<sup>\*17</sup> source: Internews Media Consumption Habits Survey 2021

The majority of research participants stated that they do not share their views through mainstream radio, television or community and public events. Their preferred channel of expressing their views is through social media such as through posting or commenting on public posts on Facebook, followed by calling in to their regional or community radio. However, it is important to note that even though Facebook provides a platform for engagement, it opens the door for hate speech, improper comments and slander in the comments section. Persons with disabilities also shared similar frustrations regarding sharing their views with the media.



The radio and TV channels themselves don't encourage two way communication. They just want us to post our views on Facebook so they don't have to respond.

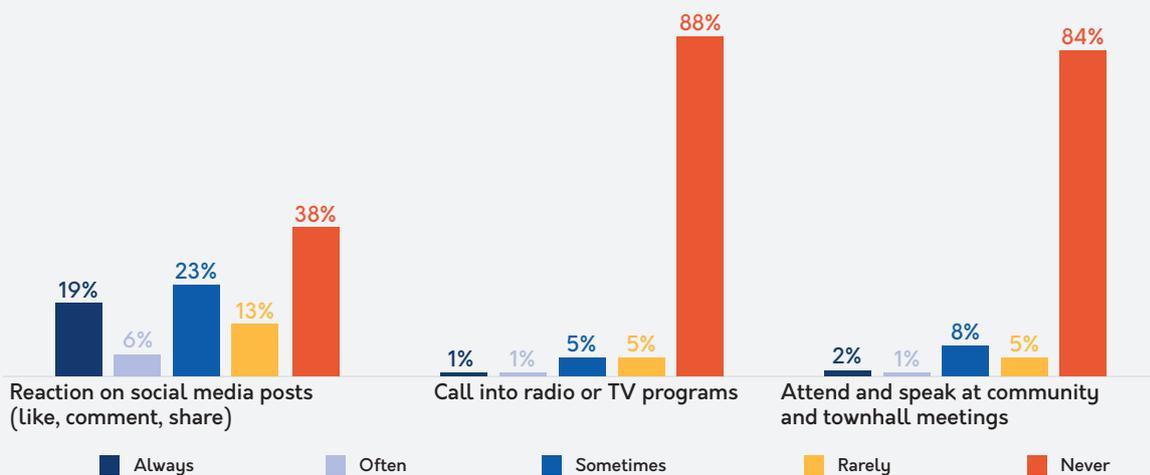
Male 20-35 years old Sousse



The only time the media comes to us and listens to what we have to say, is when we go on a strike."

Male 20-35 years old Sousse

How often do you communicate your views and opinions through the channels mentioned below ? \*18

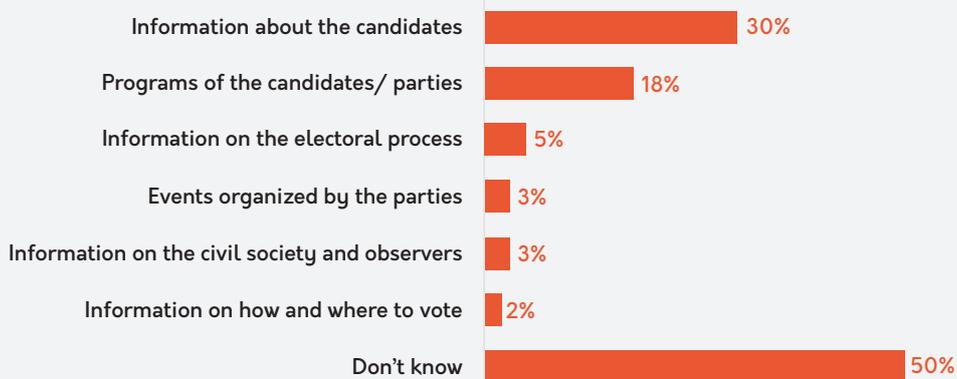


\*18 source: Internews Media Consumption Habits Survey 2021

Health and the economy ranked first among the topics of interest for citizens during the research period. **Information on vaccinations, government imposed restrictions due to Covid 19, prices of commodities, employment opportunities etc. are the main topics the target groups feel are directly related to their wellbeing in the present time.** These issues have priority over elections and political participation at the time the research was conducted.

When asked about the type of information the target groups need in order to make an informed decision with regards to elections, the majority of respondents indicated that they are well aware of the mechanisms of voting such as how, when and where to vote etc. The main information gaps are more related to the various candidates/parties and their programs. They cited a great deal of unclarity and lack of communication in this area during the last elections and highlighted that the media only added to this vagueness primarily due to the core reasons of media ownership and lack of credibility of subject matter experts.

What kind of information do you need more of but are not getting through the media, in order to make an informed decision with regards to voting and political participation ? \*19



Health and the economy are the topics citizens are most interested in.

\*19 source: Internews Media Consumption Habits Survey 2021

# **MEDIA CAPACITY ASSESSMENT**

# Methodology

Internews conducted a mapping of non state-owned media outlets in Tunisia in order to identify the outlets which would be supported and trained through the lifetime of the project, with the objective of providing credible, relevant and engaging content to the communities they serve. This detailed assessment was designed to ensure that the project’s selection criteria for media entities supported is targeted and not random or based on an ad-hoc call for applications.

Internews conducted online and in-person interviews, meetings and focus groups with electronic media outlets (websites and social media), radio stations, CSOs, startups, print media and independent content creators. Through this mapping, **Internews identified media outlets with the highest potential of having a positive, sustainable impact on the information and media landscape serving their communities** based on 8 key criteria:

- Capacity to create accurate and reliable information
- Technical capacity to package and disseminate accurate and reliable information
- Sustainability
- Inclusivity
- Capacity to reach target communities with specific themes
- Capacity to generate trust
- Capacity for audience engagement

Snapshot of media capacity assessment \*20 (full assessment in Annex 4)

**Organization's Name :** Journalistes Sfaxiens 

**Region:** Sfax, Tunisia 

**Email:** jsfaxien@yahoo.fr

**Website:** <https://bit.ly/3kyCl8B>

<https://bit.ly/2ZXeZfR> Followed by 2 737 821 people

54 779 966

**Language :** Arabic

**Description**

Journaliste Sfaxiens is an independent electronic newspaper published by the Sfax Press Company.

**Capacities Assessment**



Category	Score
Capacity to create good information	4
Technical Capacity to Package and Disseminate Good Information	4
Capacity to offer safe access	4
Capacity for audience engagement	4
Capacity to be sustainable	4
Capacity for Inclusivity	4
Capacity to reach target communities with specific thematic information...	3
Capacity to generate trust	4

**Organization's Name :** Radio Medenine 

**Region:** South-East, Medenine 

**Email:** livemednine@gmail.com

**Website:** <https://bit.ly/3sNdlxJ>

<https://bit.ly/3uEISrW>

27 741 518

**Language :** Arabic

**Description**

Medenine Radio is a youth project and the first community radio founded through an association of activists in the city of Medenine. This radio, which works to be the voice of the Medenine side, started with a simple idea to take its first steps by covering everything that matters to the Medenine side in various societal, sports, artistic and cultural fields. Medenine Radio, which is located in the city center of Medenine has been rented out with a studio that broadcasts and records programs produced by the Art Laboratory Company, the producer of all radio programs.

**Capacities Assessment**



Category	Score
Capacity to create good information	4
Technical Capacity to Package and Disseminate Good Information	3
Capacity to offer safe access	4
Capacity for audience engagement	4
Capacity to be sustainable	4
Capacity for Inclusivity	3
Capacity to reach target communities with specific thematic information...	3
Capacity to generate trust	4

\*20 source: Internews media capacity assessment

**Organization's Name :** Gabes Book 

**Region:** Tunis, Tunisia

**Email:** rimthabet@gmail.com

**Website:** <http://www.gabesbook.tn/>

**Followed by:** 309 730 people

**Phone:** 53 231 383

**Language :** Arabic

**Description**

The first electronic magazine in the region of Gabes created by Rim THabeti blogger active in civil society.

**Capacities Assessment**



Capacity Category	Score
Capacity to create good information	4
Technical Capacity to Package and Disseminate Good Information	4
Capacity to be sustainable	4
Capacity for Inclusivity	4
Capacity to reach target communities with specific thematic information...	4
Capacity to generate trust	4
Capacity for audience engagement	4
Capacity to offer safe access	4

**Organization's Name :** Djerid Fm 

**Region:** South-West, Tozeur

**Email:** contactedjeridfm.com

**Website:** <https://bit.ly/3g5qkjl>

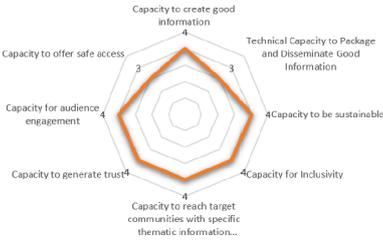
**Followed by:** 75 710 701

**Language :** Arabic

**Description**

"El Jareid FM" is daily electronic media and community radio, issued by the Tunisian associations of newspaper journalists, and it is the association that incubates the radio and the publisher of the newspaper "El Jereid FM" on its daily website and in its daily electronic newspaper, according to the original professional rules of the profession of journalism, which give priority in the press industry to produce news and information with absolute credibility, depth of analysis, and transparency of information.

**Capacities Assessment**



Capacity Category	Score
Capacity to create good information	4
Technical Capacity to Package and Disseminate Good Information	4
Capacity to be sustainable	4
Capacity for Inclusivity	4
Capacity to reach target communities with specific thematic information...	4
Capacity to generate trust	4
Capacity for audience engagement	4
Capacity to offer safe access	4

**Organization's Name :** Student Magazine 

**Region:** Nabeul, Tunisia

**Email:** studentmag.contactegmail.com

**Website:** <http://studentmag.tn/>

**Followed by:** 54 773 people

**Language :** Arabic, French, English

**Phone:** 55 328 137

**Description**

Student Magazine guide and empower young students by creating content that inspire, educate and celebrate them.

**Capacities Assessment**



Capacity Category	Score
Capacity to create good information	4
Technical Capacity to Package and Disseminate Good Information	2
Capacity to be sustainable	2
Capacity for Inclusivity	2
Capacity to reach target communities with specific thematic information...	3
Capacity to generate trust	3
Capacity for audience engagement	3
Capacity to offer safe access	4

## Key Findings

The media capacity assessment of various media outlets and interviews with experts in the field brought to the forefront a set of key findings:

1. Local media outlets with a high audience engagement rate within their communities and which are operated primarily by citizen journalists and volunteers, reported the need for clear professional **reporting guidelines** to facilitate the transfer of knowledge amongst staff.
2. Local media outlets often face challenges in obtaining news and official information from government sources due to the limitations of specialized communications and public affairs department at a local level.



**Some national public institutions do not have even a spokesperson or press officer.**

Radio El Kef representative

3. Several media focused organizations have demonstrated the ability to produce community driven content, however they **lack the know-how of gaining access to financial and technical support** from various sources including grants provided by national and international projects. It was noted in the assessment that a few select organizations often benefit from more than one media-focused program.
4. Most community radios face significant financial challenges which threaten their sustainability. Bank loans are scarce due to the economic downturn in Tunisia and the mainstream advertising market is monopolized by private radios. **This highlights the need to strengthen their marketing and fundraising capacities.** Some community radios have been more successful than others in tapping into smaller scale local advertising markets. Others have added cultural and entertainment content to their programming by offering young artists and content creators air time to produce engaging content and thus expanding their audience, making them more attractive for advertisers.
5. A new law on crowdfunding was adopted by Parliament in July 2020 and aims to introduce new means of financing smaller projects and businesses via small sum contributions through online fundraising platforms. However, several media outlets interviewed expressed frustration at the regulatory restrictions imposed by the Government on crowdfunding platforms which has made it very difficult for them to fully capitalize on this potential revenue source.

**Financial viability is one of the biggest challenges faced by local media outlets. Exploring alternative business models and new revenue streams is of utmost importance.**

6. Several community radios have expressed frustration at the lack of clarity over their legal status and their recognition by the state as professional media outlets. Decree-law 115, Article 7 states that in order to qualify as a “professional journalist” it is necessary to obtain a bachelor’s degree or an equivalent diploma and to have journalism as a regular and main activity and main source of income (Article 7). Under these restrictions, **many online content creators and community radio staff may therefore not qualify to the rights granted to press card holding members of the press and media.**

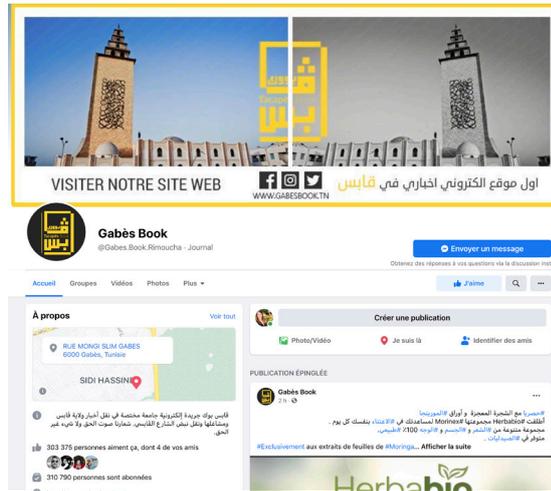
7. Local level Facebook pages enjoy very high levels of trust and engagement from the audiences in their communities. This reaffirms the findings in the media consumption habits survey. They ranked high on their capacity to reach target communities with specific themes and their capacity to create accurate and reliable information. Local level Facebook pages are also used as platforms to mobilize activities with positive social impacts. Supporting the content creators of these pages by training them on **utilizing digital tools to improve the production quality and packaging of their information pieces**, will add significant value to their efforts.



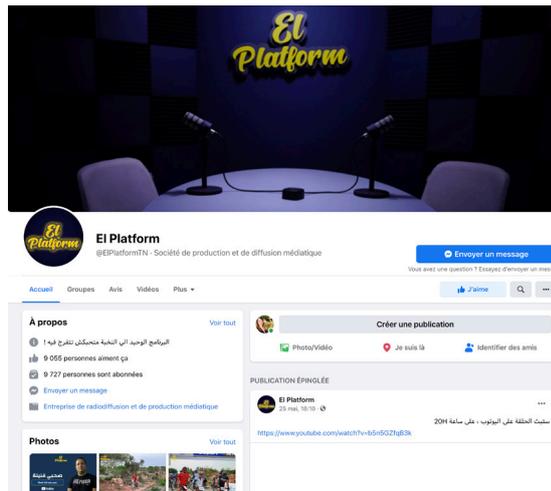
**We know almost all of our audience by person as we focus on our small sized community.**

Elhara United Facebook page administrator

8. Many young online content creators have successfully managed to develop social media platforms with a huge following in their communities. The content caters to the younger population, is region specific and utilizes a variety of platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and Podcasts. **The high engagement rates on these platforms have made it attractive for digital advertisers and sponsors.**



Gabès Book is a Facebook page and website started by Rym Thabti, a young Tunisian blogger from Gabès. The page was created with the objective of catering to the information needs of the younger populations of the Southern regions. The page now has over 300,000 followers and as a result of its success, Rym is duplicating this models in the Southern cities of Kebili, Medenine and Tataouine. The page’s high engagement rate has attracted advertisers, bringing in a steady revenue stream for Rym and her team.



Podcasts is the new and rapidly growing medium for online content worldwide. Low-cost production, simple technology and ease-of-access by listeners have made Podcasts the go-to medium for many content creators to communicate with their audiences. El Platform is one of the first podcasts in Tunisia. It is run by three young Tunisians from the coastal city of Hammamet, producing content catering specifically to the information needs of their region.

**9. Alternative and local level media outlets in general demonstrate a high capacity to be inclusive** with women highly represented in the media workforce and in the news covered. Staff and volunteers in community based media outlets care about social issues (perhaps more than staff in mainstream media) and so make it part of their jobs and responsibilities to amplify the voices of underrepresented groups in their communities, such as rural women. Although local level media outlets cover news concerning person with disabilities, more effort needs to be done to include them as information producers within these organizations.

**10. Local information producers in remote areas with limited resources would benefit from a media shared space facility catering to organizations in neighbouring municipalities.** Such a facility would serve as a creative hub and would house an audio-visual production studio, training space and digital lab for editors, designers and graphic artists. Adopting a shared-cost approach to run and maintain this facility would enable groups of information producers to gain access to the tools and resources needed to produce community driven information products in a sustainable manner.

**11. Many local media outlets are run by enthusiastic, dynamic and skilled information producers.** However the assessment revealed the need to enhance the **organizational capacity** of these media outlets through developing and implementing strategic and customized capacity building plans adapted to their specific and evolving needs and missions. Strengthening their organizational capacity is key to supporting their sustainability and growth.

Strengthening the organization capacity of local media outlets is key to supporting their sustainability and growth.

**12. Although many local media outlets have a wide reach, they have expressed the desire to learn how to use analytical tools** to help them collect and track data related to the information consumption behaviours, trends and demographics of their audiences. This would assist them in creating content which is better tailored to the needs of their audiences.

**13. Mobile journalism is a growing form of new media on Tunisia** which is being embraced by young information producers in remote areas with limited resources. These citizen journalists are embedded within their communities and are ideal communicators of local news. Yet many lack the technical training which would enable them to produce concise mobile video stories, as opposed to a point-and-shoot approach which only captures low quality live videos. Training on the technical elements of mobile journalism (lighting, sound, interviews, editing, captions etc.) would significantly enhance their capacity to package and disseminate engaging community driven information products.

**14. Although there has been a lot of training initiatives in the past by local and international projects and donors, many have expressed the need for more practical field training in local news environments utilizing available resources.**



A lot of trainings take place but then what? I believe it would be much more beneficial to save the money spent on hotel venues and allocate these resources towards training the journalists in the field and providing them with the basic equipment to enable them to transfer what they learned in the training to their actual work

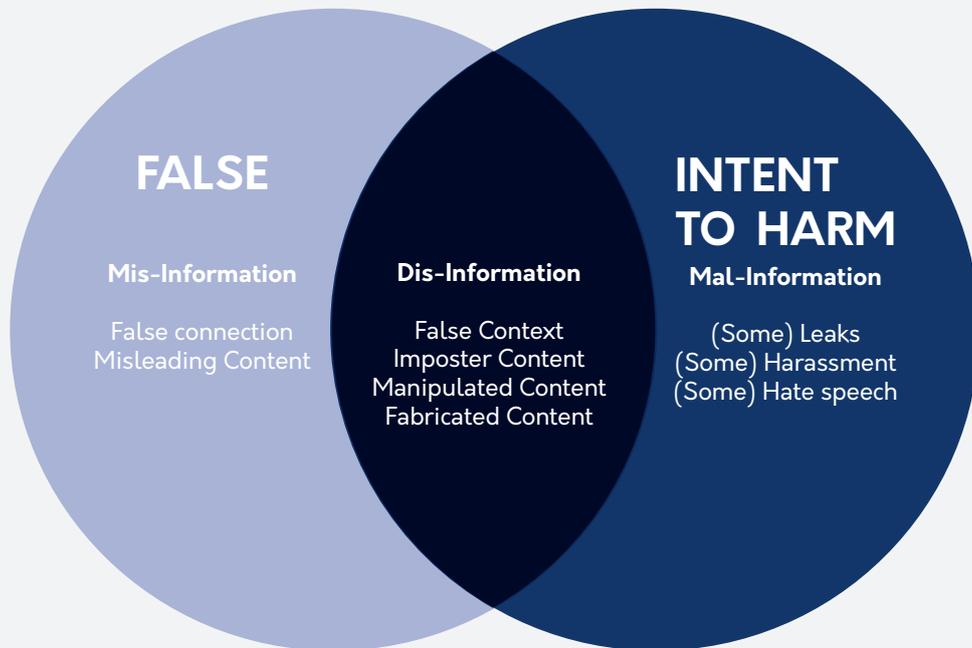
# TRAINING NEEDS FOR LOCAL MEDIA OUTLETS AND INFORMATION PRODUCERS



**COMBATTING  
MIS/  
DISINFORMATION**

\*21

## Information disorder



The spread of misinformation, disinformation and malinformation has grown at an alarming rate in recent years becoming a worldwide phenomena and a significant detriment to the levels of trust between citizens, the media and state institutions. Tunisia is no different and prior to designing activities to effectively combat mis/disinformation, it is critical to first assess and better understand:



The following assessment is based on findings from the Media Consumption Habits national survey and focus groups, the Media Capacity Assessment, desk research, stakeholder interviews and the National Democratic Institute (NDI)'s Listening Tour mapping assessment activity. NDI is a partner member organization of The Consortium for Electoral and Political Process Strengthening (CEPPS). PTP activities to combat disinformation will be implemented jointly between Internews and NDI. NDI's Listening Tour methodology includes a series of interviews with Tunisian and international stakeholders, including representatives of civil society organizations, regulatory and oversight institutions, media outlets, international organizations, and subject matter experts.

## Root causes for the spread of mis/disinformation in Tunisia

### MEDIA OWNERSHIP

Several major television and radio channels are owned by political figures and businessmen as is detailed in the “Media Ownership” section of the Media Landscape Assessment. This has a direct effect on the objectivity of content and information produced and broadcast through mainstream private media. Biased reporting which favors the political inclinations of channel owners, often resorting to spreading false or misleading information about opposing parties and political figures, is particularly prominent before and during election time. As major television and radio channels also have social media platforms with a large reach, media ownership presents a high risk of spreading disinformation in the online space as well.

### FINANCIAL VIABILITY OF JOURNALISTS

The explosion of social media in the past decade has made it easier and faster for journalists to take shortcuts in performing their duties, **as priority is given to buzz and speed to the detriment of information reliability**. Journalists in Tunisia generally are not well compensated financially and so it is more lucrative for many of them to produce, or simply share, content and news on sensationalism-based platforms with bigger followings or to produce information for platforms serving political figures or businessmen, as opposed to focusing on in-depth, investigative journalism and fact checking which requires time, dedication and resources. Independent smaller media outlets which strive to produce credible non-biased news, particularly at a local level such as community radios suffer from a lack of funding and a reliance on volunteers for staff.

### VOLATILE POLITICAL CLIMATE

Divisions between political parties, political figures and government institutions continue to widen in Tunisia. This volatile political climate created fertile ground for utilizing the media as a tool to further polarize citizens' views and dispositions particularly as they relate to elections and political participation. Politicians are increasingly pushing their campaigning efforts online to maximize their reach and with that comes the intrusion of “shadow pages” which amplify negative rhetoric, spread disinformation on opponents and sensationalize the news giving **more weight to controversy over factual information** to better inform citizens. The spread of disinformation and biased coverage online is becoming more sophisticated every year with “shadow campaigns” starting up to a year ahead of elections and infiltrating social pages, not necessarily dedicated to news, but with a huge following such as Facebook pages on sports, fashion or cooking.

### TECHNICAL CAPACITY OF JOURNALISTS

The media capacity assessment revealed that technical trainings gaps still exist despite many capacity building efforts. Training needs related to fact checking include gaining practical knowledge of how to utilize multimedia tools and software (such as image verification tools) and better understanding the legal context, limitations and liabilities associated with dispersing false information. The assessment also highlighted the need for **practical, news room environments** focusing on local news environments and contexts as opposed to hotel venue trainings delivering international best practices.

## LOW REACH AND ENGAGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL MEDIA

The media consumption habits assessment identified news on national television and radio channels as highly credible in comparison to news on digital and private platforms. Yet on the other hand, digital and private platforms provide content that is more real-time, more diverse, more entertaining and ultimately more engaging. Tunisia's media landscape would greatly benefit if its credible national news sources would develop and implement a strategy designed to maximize reach and engagement in order to meet its citizens media consumption needs and expectations in the modern times.

## LACK OF COORDINATION AMONGST KEY ACTORS

Stakeholder interviews highlighted the need for more coordination amongst donors, NGOs, INGOs and media regulation bodies, engaged in combatting false information in Tunisia. There have been various interventions by key actors in this space particularly since the 2019 elections yet the lack of coordination has given rise to a redundancy of efforts and missed opportunities to establish partnerships built on achieving targeted goals as part of a national vision and strategy.

## FACEBOOK MONITORING CHALLENGES

Facebook remains the leading social media platform in Tunisia and as such is also the leading social media platform for spreading false information. Yet, there is growing dissatisfaction in the platform's ability to monitor false information and hate speech in Tunisia. In the lead up to the 2019 elections for example, several organizations advocated to prompt Facebook into instituting an Ads Library which would have provided a significant degree of transparency on digital campaigning. Their advocacy efforts however were not successful. **Facebook has also proven to be much less equipped to combat false information in Arabic speaking countries.** There are not enough monitors who speak the language and the algorithms used to detect false information often find it challenging to untangle the Tunisian colloquial dialect which in internet lingo combines Arabic and French characters as well as numbers and symbols. Additionally, with all the social media monitoring efforts pooled towards Facebook, less attention is given to other platforms such as TikTok and Instagram which are susceptible to being used to spread false information.

## ABSENCE OF CONSISTENT, CLEAR, TIMELY INFORMATION FROM OFFICIAL SOURCES

Communications efforts from official state sources (ministries, political leaders, parliament etc.) lack clarity, consistency and timeliness. Ideally, citizens turn to these official sources to seek information on public issues and policies that have an impact on their daily lives. Shortcomings in these official information sources creates a void which becomes easy to fill with false information from unofficial sources.

## MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY (MIL)

Tunisian citizens in general lack a "culture of verification". Although they acknowledge the fact that mis/disinformation is a widespread problem with significant negative implications, they are not sufficiently equipped with the skill sets to spot and verify information they doubt is accurate. Most efforts are focused on combatting false information producers, leaving a lot of opportunity to strengthen the levels of media and information literacy amongst the information consumers across

all demographics. Additionally, most efforts focus on combatting online mis/disinformation whereas offline false information, spread through word of mouth, is harder to spot, monitor and regulate. The media consumption habits assessment identified word-of-mouth as an information source with a high degree of influence especially within local communities. **This makes empowering citizens with the skill sets needed to spot and verify offline false information even more pertinent.**

### COVID19-

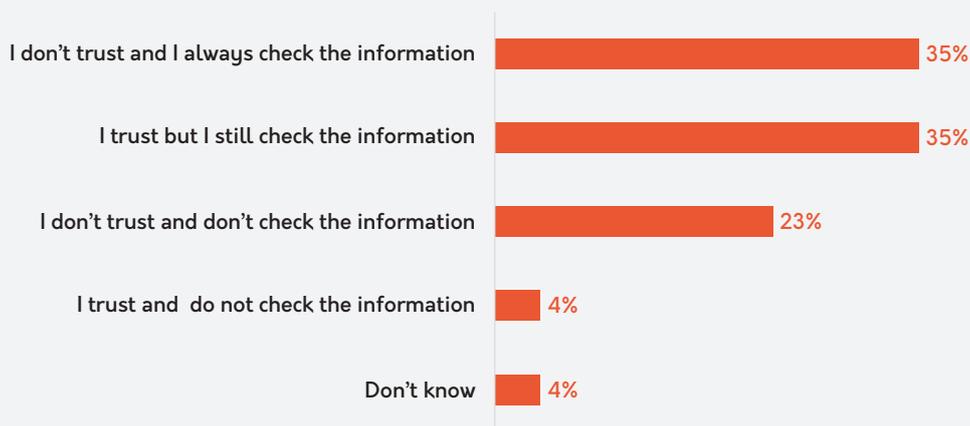
The Covid19- pandemic has given rise to the spread of false information worldwide and Tunisia is no different. Furthermore, government imposed regulations in Tunisia during the pandemic worsened the economic situation for many sectors including the media sector, adding to the financial viability challenges faced by journalists and media outlets. As stated in a previous section of this report, financial viability is one of the main reasons journalists and content creators jeopardize their journalistic integrity for the sake of producing more buzz worthy content.

## Target group behavior around mis/disinformation

Understanding citizens' media consumption behaviors around disinformation provides valuable insight in planning and developing activities to combat it.

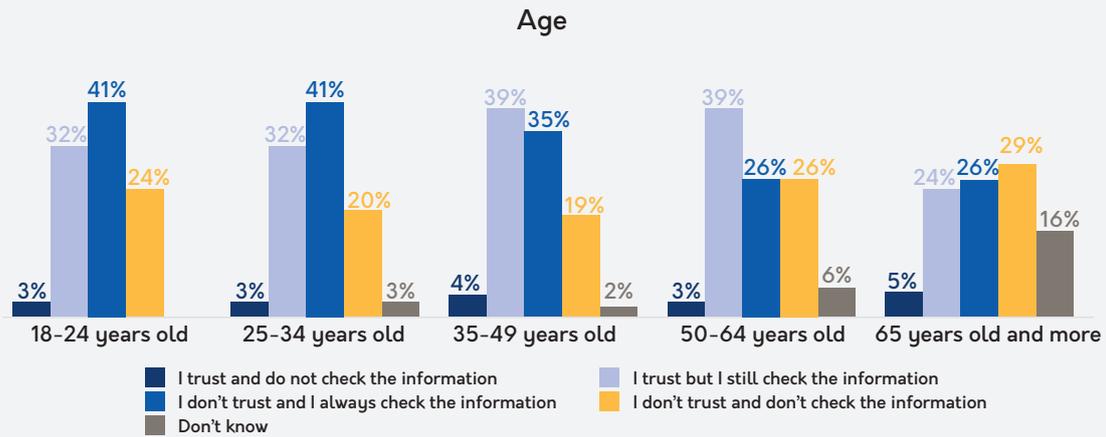
70% of citizens surveyed stated that they check information (regarding news on political parties, parliament and elections) which they receive from audiovisual media, whether they trust it or not. It is important to note however that upon deeper investigation in the focus groups several respondents stated that they check information simply by "giving it time". This means that they don't actively seek out verification but rather confirm a piece of information's validity if it re-appears on other sources or doubt its credibility if met with conflicting information also on other sources. This is an important finding in assessing the levels of media and information literacy for target groups. Furthermore, a distinction has been identified based on age, with **citizens between 35 and 64 years old generally having more trust towards the media than the younger population ages 18 to 34.**

Regarding the « local and national news on political parties and representatives, parliament and elections» you get from the audiovisual media, which of the following statement would agree on? \*22



\*22 source: Internews Media Consumption Habits Survey 2021

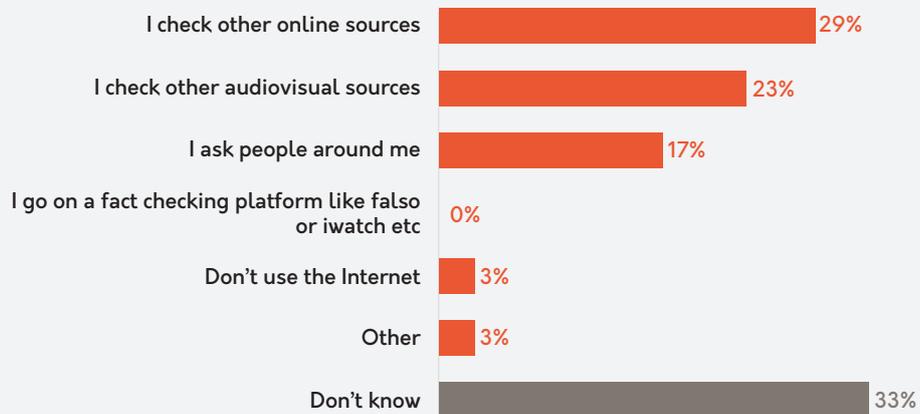
Regarding the «local and national news on political parties and representatives, parliament and elections» you get from the audiovisual media, which of the following statement would agree on? \*23



The majority of citizen surveyed stated that their primary method of verifying online information they doubt is accurate, is by checking other online sources. These other online sources constitute mainly of official pages such as Ministry and Parliament Facebook pages for national news and municipal and city level Facebook pages for local news.

Other audiovisual sources (TV and radio) were reported as the second most used sources to verify online information, followed by “asking people around me”, while less than 1% of respondents reported using fact checking platforms.

How do you check the reliability of online information (on political parties and representatives, parliament and elections) in case of doubt? \*24



\*23 source: Internews Media Consumption Habits Survey 2021  
 \*24 source: Internews Media Consumption Habits Survey 2021

With regards to the reliability of information during digital election campaigns, the research participants indicated they have moderate levels of trust in information shared by Facebook pages of main TV and radio channels as well as information shared by civil society, known experts and friends. On the other hand, political figures and candidates were the least trusted sources of information during digital election campaigns.

Regarding the reliability of information during digital election campaigns, to what extent do you trust this information ? \*25

	I trust this information
Information shared by my friends on social networks	37%
Information shared by electronic newspapers	25%
Information shared by known experts and analysts through the media	39%
Information shared by bloggers and influencers	24%
Information shared by FB pages of main TV and radio stations	40%
Information shared by well-known but inofficial pages	12%
Information shared by political figures	12%
Information shared by candidates	11%
Information shared by civil society (ATIDE, mourakiboun, etc ...)	39%



**Politicians have a lot of power, they put pressure on journalists**

Female +35 years old Kasserine



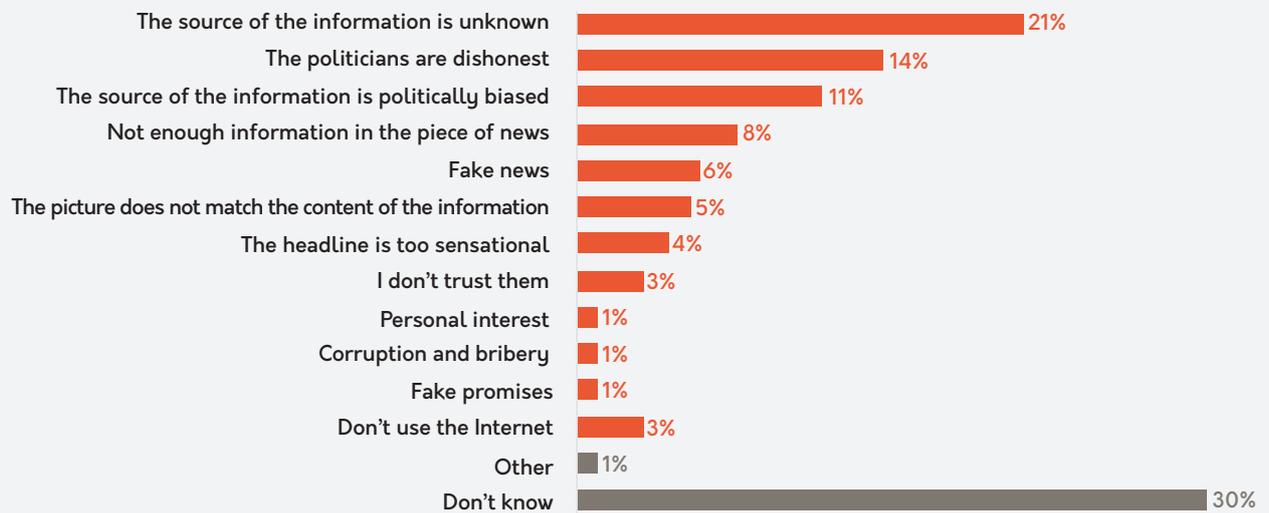
**Parliamentarians are responsible for the disinformation**

Male 20-35 years old Kasserine

\*25 source: Internews Media Consumption Habits Survey 2021

The assessment revealed a general trend of mistrust towards information coming from politicians and parliamentarians. Indeed citizens perception that “politicians are dishonest” is the second reason that makes them doubt a piece of online information on elections is false or misleading. Not knowing the source of information was identified as the leading reason to doubt the accuracy of online information. Within the credibility spectrum of politicians and government officials, the president is perceived as more trustworthy than members of parliament and elections candidates.

### What makes you doubt that a piece of online information on elections or political figure is false or misleading? <sup>\*26</sup>



\*26 source: Internews Media Consumption Habits Survey 2021

## Areas of intervention to combat mis/disinformation in Tunisia

Key actors operating within Tunisia’s media landscape have increased their efforts over the last four years to implement activities and initiatives designed to combat the spread of false information. The 2019 elections, followed by the Covid19- pandemic in 2020 caused a significant surge in the spread of false information and with the pandemic still ongoing as well as elections planned for 2022 and 2023, these interventions are expected to increase. The various interventions fall under 5 main categories, each presenting its own set of strengths and weaknesses.

### GOVERNMENT REGULATION OF THE TRADITIONAL AND DIGITAL MEDIA SECTORS

Strengths	Weaknesses
Establishing and enforcing clear rules on online campaigning and media pluralism in traditional channels during elections, provides a more solid foundation for a transparent information ecosystem where equal opportunity is given for divergent voices and views.	Risk of government overreach jeopardizing civil liberties and freedom of speech.
	Advocating for regulatory amendments is a lengthy bureaucratic process

### FACT-CHECKING PLATFORMS

Strengths	Weaknesses
Can harness automated fact checking technology	Very low reach- less than 1% surveyed use them to verify information
Lot of interest from national and international stakeholders	Some fact-checking platforms are criticized for not being run by journalists
Provides opportunity to increase reach if partnered with more mainstream channels	Lack of coordination between the various fact checking platforms
	Non sustainability of funding
	Tackles primarily online mis/disinformation

## SOCIAL MEDIA MONITORING

Strengths	Weaknesses
Can harness technology to monitor hate speech, media pluralism and compliance to electoral laws	Focuses primarily on Facebook with less attention paid to other social media platforms
Lot of interest from national and international stakeholders	Ad Library on Facebook to monitor transparency of digital campaigns not implemented
	Facebook staff monitoring Arabic language content is not enough
	Facebook monitoring algorithms find it challenging to untangle and process Tunisian colloquial Arabic
	Challenge to communicate and get feedback from Facebook
	Tackles only offline mis/disinformation

## RAISING LEVELS OF MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY (MIL) FOR CITIZENS

Strengths	Weaknesses
There is much less focus on empowering information consumers as opposed to combatting disinformation producers, thus providing ample opportunity for interventions dedicated to MIL	Works on behavioral change which takes time
Tackles both online and offline mis/disinformation	
Serves citizens with more barriers to access to information (no internet, persons with disabilities, illiterate)	
Beneficial for all demographics, including younger school-age citizens	

### TRAINING OF INFORMATION PRODUCERS AND MEDIA OUTLETS

Strengths	Weaknesses
Direct technical support and training to journalists and media outlets enables them to create credible, timely information which reflects the voices and needs of the communities they serve and builds the resilience of the information production component within the media landscape in a sustainable manner	Better coordination between key actors who provide training is needed in order to identify training needs gaps
	More training is needed on how to sustain and grow small to medium media outlets and explore various business models and revenue streams
	More post-training follow up is needed as many training recipients reported not utilizing their acquired knowledge in their jobs. Bigger focus needed on practical trainings on available resources and within local contexts.

### MAPPING OF INTERVENTIONS TO COMBAT MIS/DISINFORMATION

Initiative	Fact Checking	Social Media Monitoring	Media and Information Literacy	Training of Information Producers
SNJT	✓			✓
Falso	✓			
Iwatch (+TCC)	✓	✓		✓
Mourakiboun		✓		
DRI		✓		✓
ATIDE		✓		
Digital Citizen		✓		✓
Access Now		✓		
ISIE (+IFES and UNDP)		✓		
HAICA (+UNDP)	✓			✓
Nawaat	✓			
UNESCO			✓	
Tunisian Association for Media Education			✓	
JamiLnet			✓	
IREX			✓	

**MOVING  
FORWARD**

The media landscape assessment conducted by Internews was designed to inform targeted programming of activities and interventions based on key findings from all the interconnected components which make up Tunisia's information ecosystem.

Working with local information consumers and producers and within the context of local communities, Internews proposes a set of key activities and approaches to enhance the Tunisian information ecosystem and support its journey to self-reliance



### Mobile journalism network

Build a national network of mobile journalists consisting of local information producers from diverse backgrounds across Tunisia. Train them in creating low-cost high-quality community-driven engaging content tailored and packaged for online mobile audiences. Create a **unified "brand identity"** for the network across all regions and for all content in order to maximize its footprint thus rendering it more attractive for advertisers and sponsors. Capitalize on the power of the collective to share knowledge and expertise and increase revenue streams.



### Incubators for media startups

Launch incubator programs to provide opportunities for entrepreneurial-minded information producers to develop their ideas and **explore new business models** for media startups. Support the startups through technical, business development and marketing mentorship. Partner with mainstream media outlets (TV and radio) to maximize reach and visibility. Harness the high penetration and usage rates of internet and mobile in Tunisia to develop media-focused digital tools.



### Listening posts

Establish online and offline listening posts in underserved areas (identified in the assessment) to provide journalists and information producers with tools and platforms to **listen to the information needs of their communities** on a regular basis. Support information producers to create news stories that respond to input received from the listening posts and produce content to serve their information needs, reflect their lives and enable them to make informed decisions. Tailor the format of the listening posts based on the media consumption habits of each community.



## Reporting guidelines

Support local media outlets in creating and following journalistic reporting guidelines in order to facilitate transfer of knowledge across staff and various departments.

Reporting guidelines should cover topics such as **journalistic standards and ethics**, factual reporting, accuracy, fairness, sourcing and accountability amongst others.



## Investigative journalism

Select a group of local journalists, based on their seriousness and performance in other support and training activities, to undergo intensive investigative journalism training.

Mentor them in selecting and investigating topics of most interest to them and their local communities.



## Monitoring and evaluation tools

Utilize Internews' media content assessment tools to analyze and measure the quality of content created by information producers supported.

**Monitor the enhanced capacity to produce information products** based on criteria such as accuracy, balance, sourcing, context, language, relevance, gender sensitivity and inclusivity and/or conflict sensitivity.

Train the information producers to familiarize themselves with these tools to maintain high quality reporting.

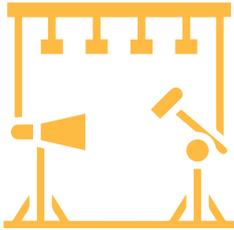


## Organizational capacity building

Build organizational resilience by strengthening the managerial, human resources, financial and digital departments within local media outlets.

Utilize Internews' Organizational Capacity Assessment tool to perform needs assessments and measure progress based on customized capacity building plans adapted to the specific and evolving needs and missions of every organization.

Focus on creating an **ecosystem of self-reliant local media outlets**.



## Shared media resources

**Forge partnerships** amongst civil society and media organizations at a local level to maximize usage of available resources, skill sharing and access to citizens.

Connect information producers across geographical proximities to cost share co-working spaces designed to serve as media production studios, post production suites and training facilities.



## Subject matter experts

Train a roster of subject matter experts on topics of local interest and importance to the citizens of each region.

Provide thematic journalistic training on topics such as health, the economy and elections to build local expertise and enable local journalists to fact check, analyze and deliver accurate information to citizens.

**Assist citizens in making better informed decisions** by giving them access to credible, knowledgeable information sources on topics of importance and relevance to their daily lives.



## Media and information literacy

Raise the awareness of citizens and empower them to become **critical thinkers and smarter consumers of information products**.

Provide them with the skillsets which would enable them, as individuals, to determine the credibility of news pieces and recognize the various perspectives, messages and intents inherent within them.

Cultivate a **fact checking culture** so citizens can share information responsibly and limit the spread of mis/disinformation in their communities.

Key considerations in the design of civic education trainings and awareness raising campaigns on media and information literacy:

- Understand the topics that matter the most for the target groups (such as the economy and COVID restrictions) and have them at the core of the campaigns. Use these topics to engage the interest of citizens and expand upon them to broader subjects on civic engagement and participation.
- Tailor the formats and channels of the various components of the campaigns and trainings to the various demographics (rural women, university students, persons with disabilities, illiterate population etc.)
- Create a national movement around the campaign. Even though the tools and channels to deliver the campaign are varied depending on specific audiences, the campaign as a whole should be identifiable and under a unified banner. Whether it's a song for school children, a poster, a training course, online videos, a radio soap opera, a board game, a mobile app etc. they should all be identifiable as one unified nationwide campaign.
- Collaborate with local and international partners such as local CSOs and CEPPS/NDI and CEPPS/IFES for optimal reach and effectiveness.
- Explore opportunities to work alongside government led initiatives such as media literacy curriculums introduced by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

## Local Facebook pages



Identify the local level Facebook pages with high engagement rates and which communities rely on for their local information needs, based on the digital mapping conducted in the assessment.

Support the content creators and administrators of these pages in **using digital production and post-production tools to produce and package community-driven, accurate and engaging information products.**

Establish these pages as reliable, timely sources of verified information for their communities through providing fact checking training to their content creators and administrators.

Enrol these local Facebook pages in Facebook Journalism Project Partnerships and certification programs.

## Official Facebook pages



Identify the official state owned Facebook pages which citizens **rely on to verify national information on public affairs and policy updates.**

Support the content creators and administrators of these pages in using digital production and post-production tools to produce and package national-level, accurate and engaging information products.

Reinforce the reputation of these pages as primary sources of information verification through providing fact checking training to their content creators and administrators, with an increased focus on proactively disseminating accurate information in a timely manner.

## Community, regional and youth web radios



Identify the capacity needs of radio stations with high engagement rates and which communities rely on for their local information needs, based on the media capacity assessment conducted.

Build their capacities to produce community driven, accurate and engaging information products.

Learn from the experiences of successful radio station who managed to find alternative business models and work on transferring this knowledge to other stations in order to **strengthen the network of radio stations as a whole.**



## Connect fact checking platforms with local media outlets

Capitalize on the existence of multiple fact checking platforms in Tunisia by connecting them to local media outlets with larger reach and proximity to local news.

Offer citizens the added benefit from this mutual partnership: Local media outlets can verify local information for fact checking platforms. Fact checking platforms can provide verified national information to local media outlets.

## Community of practice



Develop a digital community-of-practice platform in partnership with local young web developers and media professionals.

Collect and make available news and opportunities in the media space (funding, internships, competitions, projects, partnerships, events etc.) Share practical guides, reports, surveys, best practices, success stories, audiovisual content etc.

**Facilitate access to information, partnerships and opportunities** within the media landscape in Tunisia.

Grow the platform and make it attractive to sponsors and advertisers, thus creating a potential revenue stream.



## Digitization of print newspapers

Capitalize on the high credibility levels and journalistic professional standards of established newspapers and support their digital transformation to offer citizens the benefits provided by social media platforms such as reach, ease of access and engagement.

Train regional journalists and correspondents to utilize digital production and post-production tools in the creation of accurate, engaging local news for the newspaper digital platforms.



## Media and digital marketing

Strengthen the marketing arms of small and medium local medium outlets to empower them in seeking news business models and revenue streams.

Guide them through developing and implementing a **marketing strategy to best position them within the media market** based on their core values, mission, messaging, voice and target audiences.

Provide them with the skill sets to navigate the digital advertising space and the analytical tools to best understand audience trends and media consumption habits.

