



# Zakaria Bychlifen

26 years old | Mahir Center | 1<sup>st</sup> year  
1 brother

**Hometown:** Agadir



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**Zakaria is an original, driven by a freedom deeply ingrained in him. He explores life with an insatiable curiosity, always ready to step off the beaten path.**

Meeting Zakaria is like opening a book filled with exciting and unexpected chapters. At 26, this young man from Agadir is a true free spirit, an original who doesn’t fit into any mold. From the very first moments of our meeting, he stands out not only for his appearance — his hair is red — but also for his unique way of thinking. Zakaria is an independent thinker, with a well-grounded and confident reflection on life.

He grew up with a father who served in the military and a stay-at-home mother. His only brother is ten years younger than him, so Zakaria spent much of his early years on his own. «I’ve been different since the day I was born,» he laughs, reflecting on his distinctiveness. His journey certainly reflects that uniqueness, marked by fortunate encounters, colorful anecdotes, and impulsive decisions.

In 2013, Zakaria failed his high school exams. This led to a long period of experimentation during which he explored various ways to continue learning and growing. «I worked as a freelancer, wrote academic and journalistic articles, and did some video work.» In 2018, he met a friend who was passionate about

photography and videography, and who introduced him to the *Momkin* program at the Connect Institute in Agadir. Following his advice, Zakaria joined the program.

This first immersion into the world of culture and alternative learning was pivotal for what came next. It was there that Zakaria discovered the richness of debates, theater, and intellectual discussions, which encouraged him to retake his high school exams. Unfortunately, the pandemic delayed his plans, but in 2022, he finally earned his diploma.

“ I love human beings,  
they fascinate me ”

It was then that he heard about the Mahir Center, and the nostalgia for his time at the Connect Institute pushed him to apply at the last minute, on the final day of registration. Admitted to the program, he quickly found himself in his element. «My training is based on three pillars, and that's what I love: study, discussion, and writing. Every day, we have an hour of reading, passionate debates, and we write summaries of our days.» He also participates in artistic and cultural activities such as theater, conferences, and even choir, though he laughs, admitting he has «no talent for singing.»

Zakaria is a voracious reader, with a preference for the classics. «I love Dostoevsky, Camus, Sartre, and Montaigne. These authors help me reflect and see things from a new angle.» But his interests aren't limited to writers from the past. He's also drawn to contemporary thinkers like Yuval Noah Harari, Steven Pinker, and Noam Chomsky. «For me, a book is like a portrait with many layers. Each reading brings something new.»

When asked about his greatest achievement, he answers without hesitation: it's his participation in an artistic drawing residency with the painter-writer Hassan Bourkia. «We created four paintings in five days. I understood that art is a human experience, and it allows you to express emotions, ideas, and traumas. It revealed artistic talents in me that I didn't know I had.»

Despite his successes, Zakaria is not immune to difficulties. He admits to having encountered numerous

failures, but he views them as necessary. «If you don't fail, it means you're not trying new things. If you're not trying new things, you're living in a bubble. And if you live in a bubble, you fall into routine. And if you fall into routine, you do things automatically, leaving no mark on life.» QED.

What stands out most from our conversation with Zakaria is his desire to understand the world. «I love human beings, they fascinate me.» This interest is reflected in everything he does, from his readings to his daily interactions and everything he envisions for the future: he is an explorer of the human mind, a critical thinker, and possibly an artist in the making. As he says, «You just have to want it.»

