Primary SDG	16: PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS
Broad theme	Media and communication for development and peace
Research	Assess the success of media approaches to peacebuilding in (post) conflict areas
Impact region	Kenya, Philippines, Sierra Leone, Colombia, other global conflict areas
Faculty	Arts and Social Sciences
School/Institute	School of the Arts and Media
Academic	Dr Valentina Baú
Project partners	Faculty funded
Related SDGs	11: Sustainable Cities and Communities
	10: Reduced Inequalities

Elevator pitch

UNSW research is investigating and documenting the use of different types of media productions and communication channels by NGOs and UN bodies in post-conflict areas to promote sustainable peace, highlighting positive impacts on communities and encouraging future use.

The Challenge: Media and communication tools are not used effectively in peacebuilding

Immediately after war or intense conflict, tension remains between community members. This tension can manifest into violence and disharmony, negatively influencing people's lives. UN bodies and NGOs intervening in these communities to appease tension do not pay enough attention to the valuable role media and communication can play to harmonise people. If they are using media and communication, it is often without adequate strategy or documentation of their efforts, resulting in hard-to-measure results and little information about how others could make a similar use of these tools in future initiatives.

UNSW's solution: Investigate and document the use of media and communications

In her research, Valentina investigates how media and communication can be used to rebuild peace. For her PhD, she spent time in Kenya interviewing warring ethnic groups from the 2007/08 conflict who had participated in a participatory video project run by the US-based NGO Mercy Corps, where they told their personal stories. A participatory theatre project was another initiative Valentina examined while there. Valentina also facilitated a participatory photography project with slum kids who had been affected by the conflict in Kenya.

In 2015, Valentina headed to Mindano, Philippines, where displaced people were living in camps because of a siege led by Islamic militias. The camps hosted people from different religious and ethnic backgrounds who had lost their homes during the siege. Children of the camps were idle and not attending school. Bullying and

discrimination had become a feature. A UNICEF project used participatory puppetry and photography to help kids tell their stories. Valentina interviewed the children to measure the project's outcome and determine ways other NGOs and governments could improve on this kind of intervention in the future.

Sierra Leone was experiencing an uprising from farmers in 2015/16. The farmers had been stripped of their land by multinationals who had negotiated agreements with the government without farmer consent. Without land, farmers turned to burning it, destroying property and attacking people. US NGO, Search for Common Ground, decided to run a radio drama depicting the unfolding events, which also instructed farmers how to take injustices to court. Valentina spoke to these farmers and reported on the drama's impact.

For the rest of 2018, Valentina is working as a Senior Visiting Research Fellow at UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre in Italy, to consolidate her research and expand her work by providing high level reporting on the use of media and communication with refugees during the current migration crisis in Europe. With further funding, she would like to head to Gaza and the West Bank to report on projects there that seek to bridge the entrenched divide between different communities. Her ultimate goals would be to help reduce violence in the region, stop young people from being recruited by extremist organisations, and help to provide more stability.

The Impact: Better use of media and communication in conflict areas, facilitating healing

Valentina's work is helping large international organisations to understand how they can use media and communication in post-conflict areas to facilitate more peaceful, harmonious relations between conflicting communities. For those organisations already using media and communication, her research documents how this can be done more effectively, influencing the design and implementation of future projects.

Researcher

Prior to the start of her academic career, Valentina Baú worked as an international development professional for various non-governmental organisations, government departments and the United Nations, both in head offices and in Africa. She completed her PhD on Kenya at Macquarie University before moving to UNSW and becoming a Lecturer in the School of the Arts and Media. Valentina is driven by an awareness of the strong role that media and communication have in society, and of the benefits they can bring to disadvantaged areas of the world.

Ben Falkenmire 31.07.18