Testing a Media Intervention in Kenya: *Vioja Mahakamani*, Dangerous Speech, and the Benesch Guidelines

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The Center for Global Communication Studies at the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania (CGCS) is a leader in international education, training, and research in the fields of media development, strategic communication, and comparative media law and policy. CGCS draws on various disciplines to explore public policy issues and the ways media and globalization intersect with the changing nature of states. The Center has experience both advising on and implementing innovative communication programs and research projects in restrictive, transitional, conflict and post-conflict environments, with particular expertise in the areas of media law and policy, media and democratization, monitoring and evaluation of media interventions, and the design and implementation of training and capacity-building programs.

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Introduction and Executive Summary

Susan Benesch, human rights scholar, genocide prevention fellow at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, and faculty associate at the Berkman Center for Internet & Society at Harvard University, has, over the last several years, developed an analytical framework for identifying 'dangerous speech' that catalyzes violence (Benesch, 2008; 2013). According to Benesch, "hate speech" is a vague term that encompasses many forms of speech, only some of which may catalyze violence under certain circumstances.

By creating a set of guidelines "for monitoring speech and evaluating its dangerousness, i.e., the capacity to catalyze violence by one group against another," Benesch aims to inform policies that reduce incitement to violence through speech while protecting free speech (Benesch, 2013).

Among questions about these ambitious guidelines were how they could be used to make audiences more skeptical of incitement and therefore less likely to succumb to it. In the summer of 2012, Benesch teamed up with Media Focus on Africa (MFA) and the cast and crew of a Kenyan television comedy drama series, *Vioja Mahakamani* (referred to as *Vioja* throughout this report). The collaboration aimed to "inoculate" audiences against inciting speech, and make them more skeptical of it, by increasing understanding of what constitutes incitement to violence, the psychology behind incitement that helps prepare groups of people to condone or even take part in violence, and its consequences.

This was accomplished through two avenues: 1) by applying her ideas through a medium that would entertain and educate the Kenyan public, and 2) by training the cast of the show so that they could become local agents of change, circulating this information outside the context of the television program.

This evaluation was partially tasked with examining whether audiences did indeed become more skeptical of inciting speech. As a real-world test of skepticism (i.e., exposing audiences to inciting speech and observing behaviors) was not a feasible or desirable evaluation method, "skepticism" as a concept was investigated by breaking down the concept into its component elements – those which are likely to lead to skepticism. Namely:

- Did viewers better understand the *origins* and *motivations* behind inciting speech?

- Did viewers better understand the *consequences* of inciting speech?

- Were viewers more likely to accept *personal responsibility* for violent actions arising from dangerous speech?

- Were viewers more likely to take *non-violent actions* in response to future perceived injustices (using a hypothetical scenario)?

- Were viewers more likely to promote love and forgiveness in response to the 2007-2008 post-election violence?

Through an evaluation of each of these components, we were able to draw a fuller picture of how the program influenced audiences, and how these influences might affect future behaviors. This report summarizes the findings of that evaluation, led by Dr. Lauren Kogen of the Center for Global Communication Studies at the University of Pennsylvania.

<u>Key findings:</u>

Regarding "inoculation" against inciting speech:

- Those exposed to the four program episodes evidenced a greater understanding of the idea that incitement can be a form of manipulation – that leaders often use incitement to their own advantage.

- Those exposed to the four program episodes evidenced increased awareness of the legal consequences of incitement to violence.

- The notion of personal responsibility for violence by those who carry out the violence did not come through strongly for viewers. Viewers were just as likely as non-viewers to blame the inciter for violence, rather than the individual perpetrator of violence. When focus group members were asked directly whether the inciter or perpetrator was to blame, most group members agreed that both were equally to blame. However, when asked through a hypothetical scenario (in which fictional characters engaged in incitement and violence), many more focus group members believed the inciter of violence was more to blame than the perpetrator of violence. Our analysis suggests that opinions put forth based on the fictional story offer a more accurate reflection of audience attitudes.

- Both viewers and non-viewers held a preference for non-violent responses to injustices (examined through a hypothetical scenario).

- Given the observable differences between viewers and non-viewers with respect to the first two elements of skepticism as we have defined them (understanding motivations for inciting speech and understanding the consequences of violence arising from inciting speech), it is our assessment that the intervention had a positive impact on viewers with regard to increasing skepticism.

- The absence of a change in the final three elements of skepticism as we have defined them (acceptance of personal responsibility for violence arising from inciting speech, preference for non-violent response, promotion of love and forgiveness) suggest areas where future interventions can be refined to increase impact.

- While most participants stated that love and forgiveness are crucial for moving Kenya past the violence of the 2007 elections, many argued that doing so is difficult, if not impossible, without an adequate justice mechanism in place.

Other findings:

- While it was not an explicit goal of the evaluation to teach audiences Benesch's theories regarding the Dangerous Speech Guidelines, the opinions and experiences of many focus group participants (including those that did not watch the dangerous speech episodes) reinforced the

legitimacy of the guidelines. In particular, many noted that influential speakers make speech more dangerous, and that addressing members of a particular group through use of local languages can make speech more dangerous.

- The characteristics of *Vioja* make it a useful vehicle for an edutainment intervention, though there are some characteristics of the show (including its limited reach[1]) that pose challenges.

- By working with the well-known cast of *Vioja* to spread the messages outside the context of the show, the intervention seems to be having a wider and longer-term impact than would have been achieved through the television program alone.

Recommendations:

- Continue to focus on the political incentives of manipulation in edutainment programs.

- Continue to work with celebrities as agents of change, role models, sources of information, and sources of positive speech.

- Increase focus on personal responsibility in edutainment programs, and make personal responsibility messages more explicit.

- Because *Vioja* is understood by audiences as a program with educational elements, the messages can and should be made more explicit.

- Focus on modeling atonement, in addition to love and forgiveness.

- In order to strengthen identification with characters, increase use of two characters – the judge and Makokha – as positive role models.

Literature review

Edu-tainment interventions like this one are premised on the idea that entertainment narratives are useful vehicles for relaying messages to audiences, and can increase knowledge, change attitudes and beliefs, and even change behaviors. This is primarily because 1) they work through mass media and therefore garner a large audience (if the narrative is truly entertaining) and 2) the messages become internally absorbed by the viewer. Identification and transportation are commonly cited as the mechanisms that subtly and subconsciously affect the viewer.

Identification occurs when viewers consider a character to be similar to them. Watching a character that might be considered a peer or role model portray certain attitudes or behaviors may influence the viewer to adopt the same attitude or behavior. This is based in part on social learning theory (Bandura, 1977).

Transportation facilitates this process. By inviting viewers into the 'world' of the narrative, viewers may 'lose' themselves in the story, priming them to absorb messages in the story, even if they run counter to viewers' current beliefs or attitudes. If an individual from an NGO told an audience member that it would

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1 See section "*Vioja* as a vehicle for messaging" for information on the reach of the program.

be good to adopt a certain behavior (say, forgiving a neighbor who has wronged him), the viewer may bristle at such a suggestion, coming up with counterarguments against forgiving. However, when the viewer is transported into a storyline in which someone forgives their neighbor for a wrong, it may not occur to the viewer to come up with reasons why the character should not have forgiven his neighbor. They thus subconsciously 'accept' the message. If identification has occurred as well, it increases the chance that viewers will adopt the desired behavior themselves (see, for example, Hinyard & Kreuter, 2007).

Many organizations have attempted to use this device (in particular in radio and television soap operas), to encourage particular behaviors and attitudes in post-conflict and development settings. Some examples include the NGO La Benevolencija's radio drama *New Dawn* in Rwanda to promote peacebuilding and forgiveness, Search for Common Ground's television program *The Team* in Kenya to promote tribal unity and reconciliation, *Noony the Loony* in Egypt to promote education, BBC Media Action's *Jasoos Vijay* in India to promote HIV awareness, and many others. Evaluations of some of these interventions provide evidence that they frequently do significantly change attitudes and behaviors. However, edutainment interventions designed to promote peacebuilding, such as those of La Benevolencija, Search for Common Ground, and the one evaluated here, have received much less attention in the literature, and less evidence exists regarding their impact.

Vioja Mahakamani

Vioja Mahakamani is a popular television comedy drama series in Kenya that has been running since the 1970s. The bulk of each episode takes place in a courtroom, in which the actors play the judge, prosecutor, witnesses, victims, and perpetrators of various crimes. The actors (except for a few exceptions, including the judge and the prosecutor) play different roles in each episode, but aspects of the characters endure: The character Makokha is typically naive, often confused; Ondiek frequently plays a businessman, and has often committed a crime to boost his own profits. The judge is always played by the same actress – Lucy Wangui.

Many of the episodes have pedagogical goals of increasing the audience's understanding of rights and rule of law in Kenya. Despite being a comedy, the show does not shy away from serious legal topics such as hate speech, child labor, alcohol abuse, and female genital mutilation. Evidencing the cast's willingness to engage in sensitive topics, one episode included in this intervention addressed the common incidence of rape during outbreaks of violence.

While this is a unique design for a show, a parallel might be the American television program *Saturday Night Live*. While the cast and producers of *Saturday Night Live* would be unlikely to describe the show as having educational or pedagogical goals as does *Vioja*, its format – in which a regular set of actors take part in sketches, usually play different roles, but includes some actors that have become well known for portraying a certain type of character – echoes the format popularized by *Vioja* in Kenya.

The *Vioja* intervention

In early 2012 Susan Benesch began working with the NGO Media Focus on Africa (MFA), based in Nairobi, to develop a media intervention that would promote peacebuilding and "inoculation" against inciting speech via an application of her research. MFA presented the idea of using the popular series

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Vioja as a vehicle for these messages. The cast and producers of the show, who have worked with NGOs on similar projects and see the program as a way to educate Kenyans, agreed to take part in the intervention.

In August 2012, Benesch spent two days training the cast of *Vioja* on the subjects of hateful and offensive speech, inciting speech, and her Dangerous Speech Guidelines.

Benesch's theory of change for the intervention, modeled after similar work by organizations such as La Benevolencija (see, for example, Paluck, 2009), is that exposing audiences to information about incitement to violence will help inoculate them against it. In other words, by showing audiences 1) the political incentives for leaders that engage in inciting speech, 2) how speakers manipulate audiences in order to incite violence, 3) the consequences for individuals engaging in inciting speech or in violence, and 4) how love and forgiveness can serve as countermeasures to hateful and dangerous speech, Benesch theorized that audience members will become more skeptical when they hear dangerous speech, more aware of the harm it can do, and more willing to accept personal responsibility for actions arising from inciting speech.

The purpose of this training was to teach the cast about her own theories and research, and to teach the cast to distinguish among different categories of speech – impolite speech, offensive speech, hate speech, and dangerous speech – so that they could use that information in two distinct ways:

1. To create and write the four episodes that constituted the intervention, with lessons about dangerous speech and incitement embedded in the narrative; and

2. To use their own popularity and influence to become agents of change, by spreading this knowledge beyond the context of the television show.

After the training, Benesch specified key messages she wanted embedded in the episodes, but left it to the cast to determine how to incorporate the messages into the storyline. This was in large part to ensure that the program felt natural to the audience and not something that had been imposed artificially and awkwardly by an outsider.

The key audience-related goal Benesch sought through the four episodes was to help audiences become less susceptible to, and more skeptical of, dangerous or inciting speech. This goal was operationalized by incorporating into the episodes the lessons described above (regarding the political incentives for inciting speech and manipulation, the characteristics of dangerous speech, its consequences, and love and forgiveness as countermeasures) through the following specific storyline messages:

On the origins and motivations behind inciting speech:

- Leaders often use incitement to 'play' communities against each other in order to advance their own interests

- Leaders often do not remain loyal to their communities, and citizens need to live day-to-day with each other, not their leaders

On the consequences behind inciting speech:

- There are consequences (including legal consequences) for engaging in inciting speech

On personal responsibility:

- Individuals must take responsibility for their own actions. There are consequences (including legal consequences) for engaging in violence, even if incited by someone else

On love and forgiveness:

- Freeing one's mind and discourse of hateful speech clears the way for love and forgiveness.

The four episodes were originally aired throughout Kenya in October and November 2012, and likely re-broadcast in later months.

Evaluation Design

Research questions

The evaluation sought to investigate the following elements:

1) *The degree to which Benesch's messages promoting skepticism of incitement to violence penetrated the audience.*

   Skepticism was investigated by breaking down the concept into its component elements:

   - Did viewers better understand the *origins* and *motivations* behind inciting speech?

   - Did viewers better understand the *consequences* of inciting speech?

   - Were viewers more likely to accept *personal responsibility* for violent actions arising from dangerous speech?

   - Were viewers more likely to take *non-violent actions* in response to future perceived injustices (using a hypothetical scenario).

   - Did viewers see love and forgiveness as important steps in Kenya's peacebuilding process.

2) *Whether* Vioja *was a useful vehicle for the intervention.* Vioja was an atypical medium for such edutainment programming, due to 1) its episodic, satirical nature; 2) its use of stereotypes in the program itself (described below); and 3) the fact that it was an already-existing program. In addition to examining these elements, we evaluate whether it was beneficial to have the cast take control of the content, whether they were able to usefully incorporate Benesch's ideas into the stories, whether the program felt didactic or unnatural to the Kenyan audience, and whether the messages associated with inoculation were appropriately and organically incorporated into the narrative.

3) *The effect of the intervention on the cast, and implications for broader impact.* The intervention was meant to change knowledge and attitudes among the cast in addition to the public. This was, in part, so that these messages might be promoted beyond the scope of the show through influential celebrities in Kenya.

To what extent were they themselves affected by the intervention? Did they use the lessons learned to spread that knowledge outside the show itself?

The above questions were investigated through focus groups with Kenyans, as well as in-depth interviews with the cast, and with Susan Benesch. The interviews with Benesch and the cast were conducted by Lauren Kogen. The focus groups were led by Grace Githaiga, a doctoral student at the University of Nairobi, and supervised by Dr. Kogen. The focus group script was developed with Dr. Jean Brechman, a professor at the College of New Jersey specializing in the effect of narrative on beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors.

Focus groups

Six focus groups were held with approximately 6-10 Kenyans in each group, for a total of 46 focus group respondents (27 females and 19 males). Because of the small total number of groups, the groups were not designed to be representative of the Kenyan population. Instead, the focus groups were largely comprised of a type of respondent understood as particularly vulnerable to violence arising from dangerous speech: youths from the lower economic classes of Nairobi. This is not to say this is the only group affected by violence, but the evidence regarding the 2007 elections suggests that a large portion of the violence took place in the slums of Nairobi – in particular Kibera and Mathare (Jacobs, 2011). By constraining the focus groups in this way and creating more homogenous participants we hoped to be able make more concrete observations about a particular at-risk group, rather than broader observations about Kenyans in general.

The participants were recruited by Githaiga and her research assistant, Venter, who conducts ethnographic research in the slums of Nairobi. We wanted a diversity of tribal affiliations within the group, but did not want to ask potential participants their tribal affiliation in the initial interview (and then, perhaps, reject them based on their tribal affiliation). Instead, Githaiga's assistant began with a group of youths she knew from her own research to be from different tribes, and from there performed a snowball sample. It was clear from the focus group discussions that this indeed produced a diverse mix of ethnicities. This was concluded both by Githaiga and her colleagues, primarily by observing the languages used by the participants, as well as mentions of ethnicity brought up during the discussions.

Three of the six focus groups were shown the four episodes of *Vioja* before the discussion began. The other three groups watched other episodes of *Vioja* unrelated to hateful or dangerous speech. This was done so that we could compare groups exposed and unexposed to the programs.[2] This provided a

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2   Because of complexities in recruitment, we were unable to limit our sample to only those Kenyans that had never seen any of the four episodes. However, as discussed later in the report, individual interviews conducted the day of the focus group sessions revealed that very few had seen the episodes when they aired on national television.

second layer of the analysis, allowing us to not only explore the themes of the show, but also see if we could tease out effects of the show through differences in the way exposed and unexposed participants responded to questions.

<u>Interviews with the cast</u>

The cast was interviewed as a group. Some cast members were interviewed individually to expand on their experience with the episodes, as time and availability allowed.

Findings

This section presents the findings from the focus group and interviews with the cast. Exposing half of the focus group participants to the episodes revealed some interesting findings, although many of the responses were similar for exposed and unexposed groups. Findings from all the groups are valuable for understanding the context in which the show is seen and the potential impact of such an intervention. Below, findings that differed between exposed and unexposed groups are described where relevant. For findings without mention to differences between exposed and unexposed groups, it can be assumed that the responses between groups were similar.

<u>Acceptance of messages promoting inoculation</u>

One of the long-term goals of these kinds of interventions is, of course, to reduce violence. More specifically, as Benesch stated in our interview, one of the primary goals was to "help the audience become less susceptible to violence the next time they hear it." Obviously, it is difficult to drastically change behaviors in such a short period of time, and more difficult still to measure that change. Nonetheless, this evaluation sought to elicit feedback that would be indicative of whether behavior change may have resulted from watching the show.

This was accomplished by evaluating the elements that would lead to skepticism. As described above (see section "Evaluation Design") this included gauging whether audiences 1) better understood the origins and motivations behind inciting speech; 2) better understood the consequences of inciting speech; 3) were more likely to accept personal responsibility for violent actions arising from dangerous speech; 4) were more likely to take non-violent actions in response to future perceived injustices (using a hypothetical scenario); 5) were more likely to promote love and forgiveness.

1. *Origins and motivations behind inciting speech*

Although almost everyone already seemed to agree that speeches by politicians, and in particular during elections, were more dangerous than those made by less influential speakers, not all of the groups noted that there is often a concrete benefit to politicians in inciting violence, and that manipulation of audiences for one's own benefit is a common element of inciting speech. Several participants however, and particularly those in the groups exposed to the dangerous speech episodes, did express the opinion that those who benefit most from violence resulting from inciting speech are politicians, and that those politicians are usually far away and safe from the fighting. Several expressed the sentiment that the politicians do not consider what will happen to victims as a consequence of such speech.

While this opinion was expressed in *all* the groups, it was brought up three times in the control groups and eleven times in the exposed groups. It was also discussed in a much more animated fashion in the exposed groups, with participants building off of each other, saying that the campaigns and leaders use the public for their own ends, that it is the leaders that benefit, that "the politicians don't live among us and don't have to deal with the consequences," and "[the politicians] forget about us who are left behind."

Given that this was one of the major goals of the program, this should be seen as an important positive outcome. Susan Benesch stated in our initial interview that her goal had been to create "something that would… get people to understand that when leaders use dangerous speech they try to present it as an effort to defend and protect the audience. I want the audience to understand that such speech is a political tool." Generally, it seems that the exposed groups accepted this message more readily than the control groups.

2. *Consequences of engaging in inciting or hateful speech*

In terms of impact of the program, this one was perhaps the most clear-cut. Every member of the exposed focus groups stated that they were not aware, before watching the episodes, of the hate speech provisions in Kenya's National Cohesion and Integration Act of 2008, or that one could actually be prosecuted for certain kinds of hateful speech. One participant said that after watching the episodes, "now, before I do anything, I should think if it's against the [law]," and also stated that he was going to look at the constitution to better understand what his rights were. Two members of the cast, Peter Sankale (Olexander) and Lucy Wangui (the judge), also stated that they received frequent feedback from viewers that they learned about the legal consequences of hateful speech through the show. While understanding the intricacies of the 2008 law was not an aim of the episodes, instilling in audiences the idea that they ought to think about whether a particular action is lawful before acting suggests the possibility of a more sober assessment of inciting speech in the future, and therefore increased skepticism.

3. *Personal responsibility: Engagement in violence arising from inciting speech*

The study attempted to evaluate attitudes about personal responsibility in two ways. First, a straightforward question was asked about who holds responsibility when violence occurs. Second, we posed to the group a hypothetical scenario, not explicitly tied to personal responsibility or inciting speech, to see if participants' reactions to the story aligned with attitudes of personal responsibility in the face of incitement. The issue of personal responsibility turned out to be a deep, complex, and divisive issue within the focus groups. There was a profound tension, and much debate, about whether the instigator or the incited is more to blame when violence occurs. The results of both measures are described below.

<u>When violence occurs, who should be held responsible?</u> When this question was posed to the group, most respondents across all groups thought that both the inciter and the incited were to blame. Differences in opinion elicited some debate within the groups, with most groups eventually coming to the agreement that both were to blame. Four of the groups came to the consensus that both were equally to blame, while one group agreed it was the person who acted violently, and one group came to no consensus. There was no discernible pattern between exposed and unexposed groups.

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<u>Using a hypothetical narrative to evaluate personal responsibility and behavior change.</u> In order to elicit views on personal responsibility in a less direct manner, both to get a different perspective on how respondents thought about personal responsibility and to avoid them giving the "right" answer, we experimented with two narrative stories in which we asked the group what a character, presented with a dilemma, ought to do.

In the first part of the story, a young group of ambitious and entrepreneurial youths start a business. After some frustrating encounters with a local official who has stolen all of the group's funds, the group has to make a decision about how to proceed. We gave the focus group four options: report this official's bad behavior to the authorities and have them deal with it; block the entrance to the official's building until the issue has been resolved; publicize it in order to make it a community-wide issue; or break the windows of the building in order to send a message to the official.

We asked focus group participants to close their eyes and raise their hands to indicate which option they thought the group should choose. In this first part of the story most of the groups, both exposed and unexposed, agreed that the best option was to bring the issue to the authorities, at least as a first line of defense. 39 of 45 participants chose this option. However, upon further discussion many members indicated that going to the authorities likely wouldn't solve the problem, even though they agreed that it made sense to do this before using more drastic measures. These attitudes did not seem to differ between the two groups, and indicate the complexity of attitudes regarding appropriate responses to perceived injustices.

Our second story produced much more varied responses. In this continuation of Story #1, it is revealed to the focus group participants that the official's *boss* had forced him to steal the money. The fictional youth group does not know this however, and after a series of intentionally misleading miscommunications, one group member beats up another group member, Nyambane, frustrated because he believes (incorrectly) that Nyambane was the one who really stole the money. Nyambane ends up in the hospital, and the focus group was asked who they though was the *most* to blame for Nyambane's hospitalization.

The participants seemed very much to enjoy the story, and the debate about what the fictional characters ought to do. The final question brought about so much debate that for most focus groups we were forced to cut off the discussion because of time constraints. While there were no significant differences between the exposed and unexposed groups, the debates revealed, much more than the more direct question about who is to blame when violence breaks out, what the participants really thought about who is ultimately responsible for violence. In contrast to the direct question, when most agreed that the inciter and the incited were both to blame without coming to a judgment on who was more so, in the case of the story when they were forced to make a choice (again, via an anonymous hand raise), many believed that the man who beat up his friend should not be held accountable for his actions, because other more powerful players had manipulated him. In total, there was an almost even split, with 19 participants saying that Onyango (the perpetrator) was the most to blame, and 17 saying Onyango was the *least* to blame, with either the official or his boss being more to blame. When the story was set up this way, many more participants openly expressed that one who has been angered or lied to by leaders cannot help but act out upon those emotions. Most simply said that leaders are more to blame because they have more responsibility, but many also focused on the lack of personal responsibility for acting out violently, including saying that Onyango had no other choice, and that Onyango "only" beat his friend up because he had been angered by others (four people).

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Overall, given both the pointed question and the abstract story responses, it does not seem that the "personal responsibility" message came through to the viewers of the show. While most of the participants rightly recognized that both inciter and incited are partially to blame for violence, the story in particular revealed that participants still had very divided feelings on the amount of responsibility one has for one's own actions if instigated by someone with greater political power.

Part of the reasoning for some was that they did not have faith that official institutions could help them, and that we therefore have to take actions into our own hands. This was brought up in half of the groups as a rationale for violence. As mentioned above, even though many people stated in Story #1 that the group should go to the authorities, many doubted that the action would result in any punishment of the official that took the group's money. This is also in line with the comments (discussed in the section "*Vioja* as a vehicle for messaging" below) that *Vioja* is unrealistic because the criminals who engage in hate speech and violence usually go unpunished.

The groups also made the valid and insightful point that in the media there is a much stronger focus on blaming the inciters than those who carried out violence. The focus of the international media is always on the leaders of violence (the ICC's prosecutions of both Uhuru Kenyatta and Joseph Kony were cited as examples), and in Kenya itself there has been much more attention focused on prosecuting those who instigated violence than those at the ground level that carried out violence, as described above. Looked at in this way, it is not surprising many of our participants believed that inciters and those carrying out violence should be equally held to account, or even that inciters hold greater responsibility for violence.

Factors that make speech dangerous. Benesch's research on dangerous and inciting speech posits that there are certain factors that make hateful speech more likely to become dangerous speech. While teaching audiences her framework was not an explicit piece of the intervention design, it is useful to observe the audience's level of understanding with regard to dangerous speech, as better understanding what makes speech "dangerous" should presumably help audiences hear such speech more critically, dispassionately, and with more skepticism.

We found that most participants, from both exposed and unexposed groups, had some sense of what makes speech dangerous. *All* of the focus groups brought up the fact that politicians were inherently more dangerous than less influential speakers. Two to four people in each group brought up this point, with others indicating agreement. Similarly, many mentioned that speech that is hateful toward another group becomes much more dangerous during elections. Participants noted that speech is dangerous "when it's a politician giving a public address" or "when it's a leader addressing a community." Another noted that "people follow politicians – whatever they say they follow." With regard to speech becoming more dangerous during elections when tensions are high, participants noted that "calling a Kikuyu a thief during an election period" is more dangerous than doing so at other times, and that determining how dangerous speech is "depends on mood, and the mood during elections is tense."

The effect of politicians speaking to crowds in local languages was brought up in five of the six groups, but was only a minor theme and usually only brought up by one person. Still, it seemed to resonate as an important element of dangerous speech.

4. Love and forgiveness as important steps in Kenya's peacebuilding process

One of the key messages in the programs was that love and forgiveness are important in order for Kenya to move forward, and that hateful discourse presents a roadblock to love and forgiveness. This was a particularly strong theme in the first two of the four episodes. In episode 1, the judge advises Makokha (who has been accused of offending citizens of different tribes by stereotyping them and referring to them only as a 'Luo,' 'Masai,' etc.) that in order to "live as brothers and sisters and respect each other" Kenyans need to start addressing each other by their given names, not stereotypes or tribal affiliations. In episode 2, when a man is accused of saying a particular group "does not belong" on another group's land, the judge, as part of her sentencing, explains why love and forgiveness are needed in order to come together as one community.

There was no significant difference between exposed and unexposed groups with respect to promoting love and forgiveness, but this was likely because there was a high level of agreement with the idea among all focus group members, making it difficult to distinguish differences between the two groups, if there were any. This high level of acknowledgement of the importance of love and forgiveness may have been partly caused by, as described by many of the participants, Kenya's large media and grassroots campaigns urging peace and unity, especially in the run up to the 2013 elections. Many of the participants said that the news and entertainment media carried these messages, that the media "played a key role" in promoting them, "contributed a lot," that celebrities promoted messages of unity and reconciliation, and that the messages were "everywhere."

While this does not necessarily mean that the media *caused* Kenyans to accept messages of love and forgiveness, the impression of those in the group certainly seemed to be that it affected and influenced them, providing some evidence that these kinds of campaigns were useful in the run-up to the elections. Such an inundation of media messages makes it very difficult to see the effects of an individual campaign like *Vioja*, unfortunately, but suggests that taken together, these interventions had a positive impact.

The issue of forgiveness after the 2007 election violence is a sensitive one. A 2012 survey partially funded by the UNDP found that 31 percent of Kenyans have not forgiven their perceived enemies, and 6.3% say they will never forgive them (Mureithi, 2012). These challenges came through strongly in the focus groups. Almost everyone in the group seemed to agree that forgiveness was *important* in order for Kenyans to move past the election violence. They thought it was important that people to interact peacefully with those from other groups with whom they lived, worked, and conducted business. (The ability to conduct business, exchange goods, and therefore prosper economically was by far, in fact, the most frequently mentioned reason that forgiveness in Kenya is crucial.)

However, many participants explained why forgiveness is difficult, if not impossible, and why they believe that while people may *seem* to have forgiven each other, and are currently living peacefully, it is, to a large extent, an illusion. Many believed that the only reason people are living in peace currently is that they remember the violence of 2007 and are fearful of the violence recurring. However, a common theme (in all six groups) was that the tension remained, and would likely "bubble up" again. There was no significant difference between the exposed and unexposed groups on this point, with three to four people in each group making the same comment. Therefore, love and forgiveness is clearly an important theme for Kenyans, but a complex one.

One of the main challenges people saw to forgiveness was that people feel there has been no justice for victims. Those who had been victimized are often left to interact daily with their perpetrators. One discussant even criticized *Vioja* for being unrealistic because "in reality the punishment doesn't happen." He continued, "After you finish the show, you turn on the news and you see that the people who engage in hate speech are set free." Some said that it would help if they could sit down with their neighbors, or their community, and talk about what had happened, but lamented that because this has not yet happened Kenyans are forced to behave as if nothing ever happened. This lack of resolution to the events of 2007-2008 made many agree that the violence was bound to recur.

On the other hand, some said that *Vioja* made them hopeful, and gave them confidence that criminals would be punished for their crimes. One participant said that "being a victim of injustice, it gives some hope that justice gets carried out."

While the ICC has indicted six Kenyan politicians for crimes against humanity because of the 2007 violence, those who actually carried out the violence seem to have largely escaped punishment. According to the International Center for Transitional Justice, a proposed Special Tribunal designed to prosecute perpetrators of post-election violence was defeated in the Kenyan Parliament in February 2009 and was never resurrected. Very recently, in early June 2013, a Kenyan civil society group called Kenyans for Peace with Truth and Justice launched a campaign urging the Kenyan government to revive this kind of tribunal. It remains to be seen if a mechanism will be put in place that will give Kenyans the kind of closure to the violence our focus groups suggest they desire.

In some post-conflict contexts, where it is not feasible to try and prosecute large numbers of people who have taken part in violence, it has been shown that victims are often willing to forgive perpetrators who show sincere remorse, because victims recognize that there is no other way to move forward (Avruch, 2010; Hayner, 2011). It is possible that modeling not only forgiveness but also *atonement*, for example through characters admitting their crimes to neighbors, may be the way to promote a path that can lead to forgiveness.

Exploring how the show affected viewers' attitudes about *asking* for forgiveness was, unfortunately, not part of the evaluation. However, it should be noted that the *Vioja* cast decided to create two episodes specifically focused on forgiveness *after* Benesch's intervention. These were influenced both by Benesch's project as well as post-election circumstances. The cast had observed that many Kenyans were being fired from their jobs for voting for the "wrong" candidate. Bringing this trend to the series, in one of these follow up episodes, Ondiek fires Makokha for voting for a candidate that Ondiek opposes, but Makokha forgives him later on in the episode after Ondiek apologizes and admits his mistake. This kind of narrative, emphasizing atonement, is a potentially crucial corollary to messages of love and forgiveness.

Vioja as a vehicle for messaging

Based on the results of the evaluation, the choice of *Vioja* as a medium for the intervention turned out to have some strengths and weaknesses that should be taken into account for subsequent interventions.

Strengths

The greatest strength of *Vioja* is that it is a local, Kenyan-produced program. In addition to the cost benefits of not having to start a production from scratch, this ensures that the messages are portrayed in a way that reads as 'natural' for viewers, and is appropriate to their own context. It also ensures a certain level of respect for Kenyan's own way of addressing issues that are affecting them directly. During the focus groups, no participants suspected that the episodes had actually been instigated by an outside intervention; they all assumed that the cast had generated the ideas themselves. They all believed that the situations described in the four episodes were very close to what they themselves had seen and experienced in their daily lives. For instance, in episode 1 when Makokha walks down the street laughing and joking with passersby about the stereotypes associated with their tribes, the participants saw this as very authentic and indicative of how people in Nairobi speak to one another. This makes it easier for viewers to relate to the characters and the story. As some respondents stated, Makokha "shows exactly what is happening in Kenya" and is "a typical Kenyan." While this intervention design allowed Benesch less control over the script, her two-day workshop with the cast, along with her request for key messages to include in each episode, was sufficient to have the cast incorporate the messages into the program in a way that felt organic to the show's storylines.

A second strength is *Vioja's* sensitivity to the issue of portraying tribal stereotypes. Part of what makes *Vioja* unique is its emphasis on portraying "typical" tribal characters. Most of the characters on the show represent a particular tribe, and many of the show's jokes rely on the audience's familiarity with the stereotypes associated with that tribe. Makokha, who is a funny, lovable, and sometimes naïve jokester, is a Luya. Olexander, who plays a Masai, always wears traditional Masai clothing and sometimes has a difficult time catching on to things. The focus group described him as "foolish," "semi-literate," "lacking education," and socially awkward. Ondiek, who usually plays the defendant, is a wealthy businessman, and a Luo. Participants described him as "rich," "representing the people who think they're above the law." One participant said, "He's bold. Us Luos, we have a certain pride in that, and feel like certain things we can only do within our class" and another that, "He plays the role so well. You can see politicians so completely."

It may seem counterintuitive to think that a show so reliant on the use of stereotypes for comedy would be used to teach audiences the dangers of speech that singles out certain ethnic groups. On its face, in fact, the show seems to *promote* the idea of stereotyping, a serious concern at the start of this evaluation. After talking with the cast and the show's viewers however, it became clear that portraying stereotypes on this kind of program is more complex that it may initially seem. The goal of the stereotyping, according to the cast, is to strike a balance between recognizing that stereotypes exist and dealing with them in a positive way. Hiram Mungai, who plays Ondiek, argued that pushing tribal identities under the rug is not the answer to Kenya's problems, and that Kenyans are proud of their backgrounds and cultures. In his words, "we are first Kenyan, but then secondly we are our tribe."

While, from an outsider's perspective, it still seems strange that some of the stereotypes 'celebrated' in the show are quite negative (such as the Masai and Luya characters' frequent buffoonery, and the greed of the Luo character), the cast argues that they do this in part to "correct" the stereotype and show that the members of these tribes are more complex than the stereotype accounts for. For example, the Masai character Olexander attempts to show that his naiveté belies an inquisitive and insightful core, such as when he is asked to swear on the bible and becomes confused, wondering aloud if he accidentally

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walked into a church instead of a courthouse. The actor that portrays Olexander, Peter Sankale, compares himself to the brilliant but awkward character Steve Urkel from the long-running American series *Family Matters* (which was apparently quite popular in Kenya).

These defenses were corroborated by the focus groups. The groups agreed that the show was not offensive, and that there was a clear line between making a joke and insulting a tribal group. In other words, they instinctively recognized that certain contexts make comments less inflammatory, supporting Benesch's research on the distinction between offensive and truly "dangerous" speech. They made observations similar to the cast's, noting that even though the actors portrayed stereotypes, they did so in creative ways. One participant said that Olexander "has ideas but translates them to the common man. He lacks information and education, so he makes his own judgments." Similarly, Makokha was described as someone who "is funny but delivers a message. He's very bright."

They also recognized that one of the purposes of the show was to acknowledge that stereotypes exist within Kenya. One participant noted that "even when they use them, it's a way to educate and to counter it. It tries to show that there *are* stereotypes." Another said, in reference to the episodes on dangerous speech, that "the show doesn't teach audiences to have stereotypes... They see the aftermath of stereotyping." The program therefore seems to be a concrete manifestation of the line between dangerous and less dangerous speech that Benesch outlines in her research.

Seen in this light, *Vioja* as a platform has unique potential, in the Kenyan context, to carry these types of messages through a show that primes viewers to think about how tribal affiliations and stereotypes fit into everyday Kenyan life.

A third strength of the show is its popularity and the Kenyan population's familiarity with its cast, some of whom have been on the show for over 20 years. Like *Saturday Night Live*, even those who do not watch the show know the actors and the characters they play. This gives the actors a unique power to promote *Vioja*'s messages *outside* of the context of the show. This is discussed further in the next section.

Finally, this kind of show is particularly useful for changing knowledge levels. The series is interpreted by audiences as educational; according to the focus group participants the show "teaches people about rights," "is information-oriented," and "educates." It therefore does not strike the audience as out of place when the show inserts lessons or facts about the law. As cited above, learning about the 2008 Cohesion Act was one of the strongest impacts of the intervention. The cast members noted that after those four episodes many members of the public either wrote in or stopped them on the street to ask them about the Act. This likely means that messages could be inserted more explicitly than other programs without it being obvious or affecting the audience in an adverse way.

Weaknesses

One weakness of the show as a vehicle for messaging is that *Vioja*, like *Saturday Night Live*, has decreased in popularity over the years, as more new technologies and entertainment options have become available. While everyone knows the show and its characters, few people watch the show regularly. Several members of the focus groups mentioned its low production value, and commented that there are now more "worthwhile" entertainment media. While about three quarters of our focus group members said they watch the show at least once in a while, only about 40% had seen even one of the episodes co-created by Benesch, and only one had seen all four. Given that our focus group was

primarily made up of the kind of audience that one would hope to reach through this kind of intervention, that percentage is not ideal. It would require further investigation to know what the true reach of the show is, and what types of viewers are most likely to watch. (This information was not available from the show's producers or from KBC, the station that airs the program.)

It also seemed that identification, one of the presumed factors that increase the viewers' likelihood of adopting characters' behaviors, is not strong in this type of episodic, satirical format. Social cognitive theory suggests that watching someone who we would consider a peer or role model makes us more likely to accept the behavior as a norm and copy it. In the case of *Vioja*, for one, the use of satire and stereotypes makes the characters more like exaggerated caricatures than people the audience might see as 'like them.' Secondly, since we do not follow the characters' personal storylines through multiple episodes, viewers are presumably less likely to take on those characters as parasocial 'friends' or as role models, and are also less likely to be transported into a storyline that is constantly restarting. This implies that viewers are then less likely to emulate the positive behaviors they see in the show than they would be if they were being performed by a character to whom they felt a strong connection.

Furthermore, the focus on a courtroom drama like *Vioja* is much more on *bad* behavior – the behaviors that one should *not* perform and will get one in trouble. While this is also important, past research suggests that it is also crucial to focus on positive behavior (Singhal et al, 2004). Since the focus of the interventions is on dangerous speech, and the courtroom setting therefore requires that the characters perform an ill, this may be difficult to change on this type of programs. One possibility might be to focus more on the witnesses that performed in a desirable way.

The one exception to this is the judge. Many of the focus group members, in particular females, explicitly cited her as a role model, and someone they aspire to be like. She was described as "strong," "no-nonsense," "honest," "fair," and "focused." The groups' strong identification with the judge may reflect the fact that she is the only character on the show that is consistent in every episode. It may be helpful, therefore, to place more emphasis on the judge and give her more opportunity to state her own thoughts on these kinds of topics. Since the judge is not the one confronted with dangerous speech, who has to choose to take responsibility for her own actions, it does not provide the opportunity for positive modeling of personal responsibility, but she does represent a character that viewers see as always knowing what is right and what is wrong, and who therefore serves as a moral compass.

Makokha, although he is not a consistent character over time, also has qualities that are repeated in many episodes, and which made the audience seem to relate to him, calling him "a typical Kenyan." He could also therefore be more frequently utilized to promote identification and positive behavior.

Using television, instead of radio, seemed to make sense for this intervention, even though radio is a popular medium for this kind of intervention in Africa. For one, as Benesch reported based on her background research, many of the radio stations in Kenya are broadcast in local languages. A show like this might therefore not be popular if it were broadcast in the national language. Instead, the producers might have to create several versions of the show to make it accessible to different language groups. Another reason television worked well is that, as came up in the discussion groups, people tend to watch television in groups, gathering at the home of whoever owns a television (particularly in the slums), which means that there is more potential for discussion. Many of the focus group participants stated that they watched the show (when they did watch it) with friends or family, and liked to talk about what was happening. As described above, some of the elements of the four episodes, in particular the issue of

trying to rid a certain group from a particular region by claiming ownership of the land, and the idea that politicians have something to gain from inciting violence, created a significant amount of debate and discussion within the focus groups. If this is any indication of how those watching the show might discuss it when watching in more natural settings, this suggests the television format is a powerful way to reinforce the information provided in the show and to make individuals think more carefully about the actions they take, through discussion with their family and peers. Other organizations have found that discussion is one of the key elements that reinforces a show's messages, and increases the likelihood that viewers will take on the desired attitudes and behaviors (e.g., Paluck, 2009).

Beyond *Vioja*: The Long-Term Impact of Working with Celebrities

Benesch's two-tiered intervention design targeted the Kenyan public through two distinct pathways: The first was the television program itself, discussed above. The second was the cast. By working with the cast, teaching them her theories on inciting speech, how to inoculate audiences against it, her dangerous speech guidelines, and their relevance in Kenya, Benesch's second aim was to promote influential and wide-reaching role models outside of the context of the show. In this way, the cast, as agents of change, could serve both to emphasize and entrench the lessons learned in the show, as well as become a source of *positive* speech: speech that would counter dangerous speech and provide the public with messages of love, unity, and peacebuilding.

It was evident from speaking with the cast that they had reflected frequently on dangerous speech, as well as love and forgiveness, in Kenya. Being part of a cast on a show that seeks to educate its audience and improve Kenyan society, it is not surprising that these actors would have already thought extensively about these issues. The fact that *Vioja* itself is a show about stereotypes also suggests that the cast is particularly attuned to the dangers of identifying citizens by their tribal affiliation. The cast spoke at length during our conversations about the historical and political roots of stereotypes, and of violence, in Kenya.

With regard to change in knowledge or attitudes, it was not evident that the cast increased their own knowledge about dangerous speech or changed their attitudes because of Benesch's work with them. This was likely because their baseline level of engagement with the issue was already high. When asked what makes speech particularly dangerous, most of their comments were similar to those of the focus groups, and focused on the role of influential leaders and politicians. Hiram, who plays Ondiek, mentioned calling groups of people kwe kwe (weeds, which was the subject of one of the episodes). When explicitly asked about what they *learned* from collaborating with Benesch, the cast could not offer much. One said the experience had not been much different from creating other episodes; one said that, rather than being affected by lessons about what leads to violence, "what affected [her] was the killings."

While the cast may not have significantly increased their own knowledge, it was evident that the cast had internalized Benesch's messages, at least in the short-term, by the way they integrated them into the four episodes. While Benesch's guidelines for each episode were broad, and she generally left it to the cast to incorporate the lessons they had learned, they incorporated many of her messages and guidelines into the episodes, and more than she had explicitly outlined for each episode, including dehumanization, "accusation in the mirror" (portraying an outgroup as a threat), and speaking in a local language, among others. Benesch's lack of control over the content of each episode therefore did not detract from the insertion of appropriate messages.

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In addition, the cast made it clear that they were personally affected by working on the four episodes with Benesch. Peter Sankale, who plays the Masai character Olexander, stated in his interview that "the fact that Susan thought it was wise to work with us is something I'll never forget… I wish people here would take it as seriously as Susan and Media Focus did."

The effect on the cast and their potential to bring the issues to the wider public was evidenced by one particularly powerful experience (according to the cast and Benesch) that occurred during the filming of the second episode, in Karagita. Karagita is a town that witnessed significant violence following the 2007 elections. The second episode that Benesch created with the cast involved an inciting political speech that led to the rape of a young woman in front of her family in this town (with Makokha and Olexandre acting as the perpetrators). They shot the first scene of the episode on location before returning to the traditional courtroom setting. By the end of the scene, which was filmed on one of the main streets of the town, dozens of people from the town were watching the cast re-create a piece of the violence they had lived through six years earlier.

Hiram described his experience there as follows:

> I thought 'what is going on in their minds as they're watching us act this out?' It really happened here. They really butchered each other. Will it happen again? I asked myself a million times. The scene has been running through my mind for a long time.

Benesch asked Hiram and Max, the actor who plays Makokha, to address the crowd, and make sure that the townspeople received a positive message from the experience rather than simply a reminder of the violence that had occurred there. In this first instance of broadening the scope of the intervention, Hiram told the crowd (as recounted by Benesch) that the show was about promoting unity and reconciliation. His words, according to both Benesch and the rest of the cast, affected everyone there strongly:

> If you bring a Luo here and you cut him, he will bleed. If you bring a Kikuyu here and you cut him, he will bleed. My brothers and sisters, what I want to tell you is that there will only be Kenyan blood on the ground.

Max followed this up with a more comedic speech and had the crowd laughing by the time they were finished.

The experience seems to have stuck with the cast, and they appreciated the opportunity to interact directly with those who could be most affected by the episodes. Hiram stated that the episodes "spoke to us and stuck in our minds," and by the end of the fourth episode he was "more Kenyan than Kikuyu."

This event exemplifies the power these kinds of celebrities have to engage in what Benesch refers to as "positive speech," which uses influential players to promote messages of unity, love, and respect, and serves to inoculate audiences against dangerous speech. Benesch believes that this kind of speech is a crucial corollary to her 'dangerous speech' model. Furthermore, much of the academic literature on celebrity and politics suggests that publics latch on to celebrities to understand political issues in the public sphere, due to their popularity, their cultural influence, and their (frequently) eloquent way of discussing political issues (Street 2004; Turner, 2004).

The cast confirmed that after these four episodes they frequently had chances to speak with the public, both informally and through formal organized events, about the importance of maintaining peace, supporting unity, and avoiding the kinds of speech that lead to violence. At a public level, the cast is often invited to take part in large concerts and city-wide events. At a day-to-day level, the cast is often confronted and asked questions by the show's viewers. Lucy Wangui, the judge, described how she is frequently treated with authority and respect because of her role as a judge, and has used it on more than one occasion to express her opinion about something inappropriate she sees someone doing. She told me she warns them "that they can be prosecuted for that kind of talk" and that they *listen*, and say "oh, the magistrate is here!"

It is not clear exactly what influence Benesch's intervention has on these outside events, but it is reasonable to assume based on these anecdotes, the cast's treatment of inciting speech in the storyline following their workshop with Benesch, their recounting of how the intervention affected them personally, and their interaction with the public, that Benesch's dangerous speech messages and guidelines are having a lasting impact beyond the airing of the episodes.

Conclusion

Overall impact of the intervention

Of the five elements of skepticism evaluated (understanding the origins and motivations behind incitement, understanding the consequences of incitement and violence, accepting personal responsibility for violence, responding non-violently to injustices, promoting love and forgiveness) the exposed groups exhibited observable differences in the first two elements, suggesting that the intervention did indeed have a positive impact on a portion of what we are defining as skepticism of incitement.

Viewers of the *Vioja* episodes on incitement to violence more frequently expressed the opinion that those who benefit most from violence resulting from hate speech are politicians, that those politicians are usually far away and safe from the fighting, and that politicians who incite do not consider what will happen to victims as a consequence of hate speech. Additionally, those who watched the episodes increased knowledge about the legal consequences of engaging in inciting or hateful speech, particularly with respect to Kenya's National Cohesion and Integration Act of 2008. While teaching the elements of the Act was not an aim of the episodes, the fact that audiences stated they were more aware of the legal consequences suggests that they might be less likely to engage in illegal actions in the future, and more likely to consider legal consequences the next time they hear inciting speech.

The absence of a change in the final three elements of skepticism as we have defined them (acceptance of personal responsibility for violence arising from inciting speech, preference for non-violent response, promotion of love and forgiveness) suggest areas where future interventions can be refined to increase impact.

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Limitations of the focus group study

This was a small-scale evaluation with a limited budget. We used only six focus groups, with 6-10 participants per group. While we dealt with this by focusing on a very specific demographic (youths from the lower socioeconomic rungs of Nairobi), it would have been useful to look as well at other audiences, such as adults, viewers from other parts of Kenya, or people that regularly watch the show.

It is also easier to find effects of a program like this immediately after watching the episodes, as occurred here. It is not possible to tell from such an evaluation whether the effects on the audience are long-term. It is possible that they would need more exposure than the four episodes to have long-lasting effects.

Language also posed a challenge during the focus groups. Because we wanted to promote discussion among a diversity of ethnic groups, this also meant promoting discussion among a variety of mother tongues. Kenya has two national languages – English and Swahili – and most Kenyans can speak these two languages. These languages were therefore used for the focus groups so that everyone could understand one another. While this was not a problem for the participants, it was however clear at some points that some participants were struggling a bit with the language, particularly when there was a very nuanced idea, or a particular expression, that they felt more comfortable expressing in their mother tongue. This said, everyone participated enthusiastically in the discussion, so this limitation was minor, but should be considered when performing this type of evaluation in the future.

Lessons moving forward

What does the intervention tell us about how to move forward with this kind of project?

Continue to focus on the political incentives of manipulation

This message was well understood by many members of the focus groups, but in particular those who were exposed to the dangerous speech episodes. Further promotion of this message may serve to more deeply instill the idea among audiences that violence benefits politicians above others, and that individuals need to use that knowledge to decide for themselves whether to take part in violence.

Continue to work with celebrities as role models, sources of information, and sources of positive speech

Celebrities have the ability to take mass media messages well beyond their original sources – such as a television program. Celebrities appear on television and radio interviews; they attend public events; they even Tweet and write Facebook posts. Emphasizing the role of celebrities in these interventions is an innovative and efficient addition not only because of the increased reach of the messages, but because of their influence in the public sphere: when celebrities do spread these messages the public is likely to listen.

More focus needed on personal responsibility

Despite the many efforts at peace campaigning around Kenya, and the general agreement by audiences that interethnic fighting is a serious threat in Kenya that should be avoided, there were a large number of comments made suggesting that when people do become violent they are not the ones to blame, or at most, share the blame with the inciter. More effort needs to be made to indicate that it is ultimately up to the individual to decide whether or not to act violently.

This pattern is less surprising when we consider the emphasis on inciters over perpetrators in the media. Messages of personal responsibility will be difficult to promote if they are not coupled with an effort by the Kenyan government and the international media to show that such violent behavior will be punished. If the government, the Kenyan media, and the international media focus coverage of the violence on the inciters, it is likely that many Kenyans will adopt the attitude that inciters are primarily to blame for violence.

More interventions needed on atonement*, as well as love and forgiveness*
For one, it is clear that more work needs to be done on Kenya on the issue of love and forgiveness. The challenge found here was that people *do* already recognize that love and forgiveness are important in order for Kenya to move forward. Rather, the challenge is that, for many, it is hard to forgive when perpetrators go unpunished, and there is no acknowledgement that a crime has been committed. As one of our focus group members said: "Imagine it happened to you. You don't go for counseling. You don't know *how* to forgive."

Kenya is currently struggling (some would say not enough) to put a transitional justice system in place, as discussed above. This political context poses a major challenge for an intervention aimed at love and forgiveness. In the minds of Kenyans, love and forgiveness have to start with an acknowledgement of a wrong. It is possible that this has to be addressed before messages promoting love and forgiveness can have any real effect. While some stated that *Vioja* made them hopeful that justice would prevail, this hopeful message could backfire and increase frustration if it does not jibe with Kenya's reality. Modeling how individuals can begin to seek forgiveness, through atonement or admission of their crimes, may be a helpful intermediary step to love and forgiveness, as was featured on some of the episodes that followed Benesch's intervention.

Strengthen identification with characters

Most of *Vioja*'s characters are not role models performing the desired behavior, but rather (with the important exception of the judge) antagonists performing undesirable behavior and demonstrating the consequences of those actions to viewers. While this can be a powerful motivator to avoid certain behaviors, and the program does show the perpetrators showing remorse (a positive behavior), avoiding violence in the first place (the ideal behavior) would likely be strengthened with the addition of positive role models (for example, those who do not take part in violence, but instead recognize that they are being manipulated). This might be difficult on a program like *Vioja* that focuses on criminals, but could be incorporated, perhaps by showing a witness to the event that behaved in a very different manner from the defendant. To strengthen identification even more, these witnesses could be guest stars from other shows, with whom the audience has already learned to identify in a positive way.

Alternatively, the judge and Makokha could receive more attention as positive role models. According to the focus group discussions, these were the two characters on the show that the audience seemed to identify with most explicitly: the judge because she is a clear moral compass and always knows the difference between right and wrong, and Makokha because he represents a "typical Kenyan," and because he often makes mistakes but is generally viewed as loveable and endearing.

Make intervention messages more explicit

Given the characteristics of *Vioja*, the show merits having more explicitly educational elements during this kind of intervention. This is because, for one, the episodic sketch format makes it more difficult for the audience to identify with the characters, and therefore become fully transported into the storyline. Making the lessons more explicit may therefore help the audience understand the lessons. Slater (2002) found this was sometimes necessary (in the form of a recap at the end of an episode) for a narrative story to be successful in changing behaviors. Second, because the show is already recognized as having educational elements by its audience (discussed above) it is likely that they would be more receptive to this kind of direct messaging, especially, perhaps, if it came from the judge.

Conduct a baseline

Like many interventions, the importance of conducting a thorough baseline study cannot be overstated. For this project, talking to the public before the intervention began would have given the implementers a better idea of what elements of dangerous speech the audience already understood, and which were particularly lacking. This would have provided evidence for which messages should have been stressed in the episodes. For instance, it may have caused the implementers to focus more on the idea that individuals have to take the ultimate responsibility for violence (rather than politicians) and less on the idea that inciting speech is most dangerous when it originates from politicians (a familiar fact to most of the Kenyans in the focus groups).

Expand to other media

As mentioned in the focus groups, *Vioja* is considered passé by some, who opt for entertainment media with higher production value. Benesch's current work focuses on social media, and some of her work on dangerous speech focuses on the ability to spread dangerous speech through mobile phones. Given the ubiquity of these new media, it would be worthwhile to see how these interventions might be translated. It is unclear what kind of access the most at-risk portions of the population have to the internet (such a question was beyond the scope of the current study), but anecdotal evidence suggests that almost everyone (including everyone who participated in the focus groups) has access to mobile phones and uses them frequently. Learning how to use this accessible and ubiquitous form of media to increase awareness regarding dangerous speech would be a logical next step to the current program.

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APPENDIX A: MODERATOR GUIDE

Note: "Exposed groups" refers to groups that were shown the dangerous speech episodes of Vioja. "Control groups" refers to groups that were shown other episodes.

Overarching research questions to keep in mind:

1. Do the viewers identify with the show's characters?
2. Did the episodes help viewers learn what makes particular kinds of speech more "dangerous"?
3. Did the episodes help viewers learn what kind of hate speech are actually illegal?
4. Did the episodes encourage viewers to have greater love, respect, and forgiveness for fellow Kenyans?
5. Do the episodes make viewers more likely to take responsibility for their own actions?
6. Do the episodes make viewers more likely to choose dialogue over violence?
7. Did the episodes feel forced, unnatural, or didactic?

Introduce self and purpose of focus group:

Grace: Hello, everyone. I would like to welcome you all and thank you for agreeing to participate in our discussion today. My name is Grace [*point at my name card*]. I am a graduate student at the University of Nairobi.

Lauren: Hello. I am a researcher at the University of Pennsylvania. Today we are interested in getting your opinions on several episodes from the television comedy, Vioja Mahakamani.

Grace: We want you to know that everything you say here is completely confidential. That means that no one's comments will ever be linked to their names. So we would like for you to feel free to express your true feelings so that we can learn as much as possible about the topics we are going to discuss. Our session today will last about 90 minutes. Please remember that there are no right or wrong answers here; we would like to hear your honest opinions. We are recording this in case we miss anything while we're taking notes. The recording and your name will not be made public in any way.

Are there any questions before we begin?

To get things started, let me tell you a little bit about myself.
[*Insert information that might help gain rapport with the audience, if needed*].

Now that you know something about me, I'd like each of you to tell us a little bit about yourself. Can you tell us your first name only and a fun fact?

[Have the participant who is most at ease start so as to set a good example of discussion for the rest of the respondents]

[Have respondents go around and briefly introduce themselves.]

Thank you, it is nice to meet all of you.

Today we're interested in knowing more about your thoughts on the television comedy, Vioja Mahakamani.

For those of you who watch the show, do you normally watch the show by yourself, or with others? [if "others", probe:] Who else do you watch with? Do you talk to one another, or are you quiet while the show is playing? **(Ice Breaker Question)**

ABSTRACT LEARNING

Why do you think there was minimal violence associated with the most recent elections?

Do you think that Kenyans have forgiven those people that instigated violence in the last election?

Do you think it's important to forgive in order for Kenya to move forward?

Sometimes people say things to others that are mean. Sometimes these things are specifically about someone's tribe, or ethnicity, or religion. When do you think this kind of speech becomes particularly dangerous? When could it lead to violence? [Prompt, if necessary:] Are there certain types of speech that are more dangerous than others? Can you give examples of what kinds of situations might lead to violence? Why?

When you watched the episodes of Vioja Mahakamani, what emotions did you feel?

CHARACTERS/IDENTIFICATION

What do you think about the characters? Do you like them? [Show character photos as necessary.]

Which character do you think you are most similar to? [probe: why or why not?]

Do you think that any characters perpetuate any negative stereotypes? [if yes, probe: in what ways]?

Do you think you can learn anything from what a character experiences when he/she is going through a problem? [if yes, probe:] What sorts of things can you learn?

REALISM

[For exposed groups only:] For those of you that have seen the show a lot, are the episodes you saw today similar compared to other episodes of Vioja Mahakamani that you may have seen? Why or why not? [Probe whether writing/acting seemed unnatural or unusual]

[For exposed groups only:] Were the storylines in these episodes believable? For example, Makokha using slurs, or politicians and/or flyers suggesting that certain groups be removed from town? Why or why not?

KNOWLEDGE & PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

If someone encourages a group of people to speak or act out against another person or group or people, and if violence then breaks out, who is to be held responsible?

Are there things that your community or government can do to minimize violence and/or make it easier for you to live peacefully?

What can you, as an individual, do to prevent violence and promote peace?

[Exposed groups only]: Did you learn anything new about dangerous speech by watching this program? [if yes probe:] what did you learn?

BEHAVIORS

I'm now going to read you a short story.

A small group of recent university graduates from diverse backgrounds has decided to form an organization that will provide job application and interview training for young adults. Their experiences in the post-graduate job market have taught them the importance of having the necessary skills and attitudes that will impress potential employers, and they want to ensure that, in the future, their peers will not have to suffer the same hardships that they went through before landing their respective jobs. After several months of preparation and fundraising in their community, they have managed to raise enough money to set up their enterprise. Excited and optimistic about this challenging project, they approach Mutua, a junior staff member of the local government council to ask him the best way to proceed with their initiative. Mutua is so impressed that he offers them free use of a small office in a government- owned office complex in town, and encourages Akin, the group president, to let him deposit their money in a government-backed business account until they have completed their budget. The group feels it's a wise suggestion, and collectively agree to let him safeguard the money.

But when Onyango, the group treasurer, goes to the bank to make their first withdrawal, he is told there is no money in their account! Bewildered, he hurries to Mutua's office. His secretary won't let him in. Onyango waits and waits and waits until he sees Mutua come out of the building. He walks quickly to his car but Onyango runs after him and asks, "What happened to our money?" By the time they catch up to him, he is already getting in the driver's seat, preparing to drive off. As Mutua starts his car, he responds, dismissively, "Well, we had to use the money to pay for the office rent, electricity, the security guard...as you know, those things don't come cheap." Onyango is shocked! "But you said you were giving us the space free of charge!" he sputters.

"You should be grateful that you even have a place to work from," Mutua retorts. "Do you know how many people wish they could have an office in the area we gave you? And you got it at a discounted rate. So I suggest you learn some gratitude, and stop biting the hand that feeds you!" With that, he drives off.

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Later that evening, Onyango calls an emergency meeting to tell the rest of the group what happened. All the members feel cheated and angry: Mutua had promised to give them the office for free; how could he have gone back on his word? As the discussion continues, their frustration grows and tempers are rising quickly. Their voices are getting louder and louder, as they grow angrier.

"What are we supposed to do now?" someone shouts.

Options:

What should the youth group do? I am going to read four options, and then I will have you close your eyes so you are not influenced by each other's answers, and vote.

- Request a meeting to present their concerns to a larger group within the local administration, in spite of previous efforts to discuss the issue with Mutua peacefully.

- Break local administration windows or burn the office to send a message

- Blockade the entrance to the local administration to prevent any work from being done until they got their money back

4. Inform the larger community that their money was stolen by the local administration to sensitize people about the injustice (make it public)

So, the four options are "request a meeting", "break windows", "block the building entrance", "inform the local community". Now everyone close your eyes.

Raise your hand if you think the group should request a meeting? [Go through the other options, record the number of responses for each option.]

You can open your eyes now. Who would like to volunteer what they voted for and explain why?

[Have group discuss / debate options. If necessary, probe:] Do you think breaking windows would have been effective? Why or why not? What about blockading?

I'm now going to continue the story.

It turns out that Mutua's boss, John, told Mutua that if he didn't steal the money and funnel it to John then he would be fired! Mutua has a family he has to support, so, feeling that he had no choice, he funneled the money to John. Mutua doesn't want to admit what he's done, so he lies to Onyango, the treasurer, and says that another member of the group, Nyambane, picked the money up that morning! When Onyango confronts Nyambane about it, Nyambane denies that he has the money. Onyango loses his temper and beats Nyambane up. Nyambane ends up in the hospital.

Who is the MOST to blame for Nyambane's injuries?

ONYANGO because he beat up Nyambane?
MUTUA because he's the one that stole the money and then lied to Onyango?

JOHN because he forced Mutua to steal the money in the first place?

So the choices are Onyango who beat up Nyambane, Mutua who stole the money, or John who told Mutua to steal the money. I'll give you a minute to think about it and then I'm going to ask you to close your eyes and vote again.

Now close your eyes. Who thinks Onyango who beat Nyambane up is most to blame? [Go through other choices.]

Keep your eyes closed. Who is the LEAST to blame? [Repeat options]

You can open your eyes now. Who would like to volunteer who they voted for and why?

[Have group discuss / debate choices. If necessary, probe:] Why would Onyango be to blame? Mutua? John?