



NETWORK OF UNESCO CHAIRS IN COMMUNICATION
RED DE LAS CÁTEDRAS UNESCO DE COMUNICACIÓN
RÉSEAU DES CHAIRES UNESCO EN COMMUNICATION

A background image showing a network of glowing lines and nodes over a view of Earth from space. The lines are in shades of blue, orange, and yellow, connecting various points on the globe. The Earth's horizon is visible on the left side.

ORBI-INFO

FEBRUARY 2026

A WORD FROM THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF ORBICOM

Dear ORBICOM members,

The start of this new year is an opportunity to highlight ORBICOM's vitality, the wealth of its expertise, and the strength of the ties that are forged between chairs, associate members, and teams engaged in collaborative research.

As you will see, this first issue places particular emphasis on the network's chairs, which are driving forward ideas, actions, and innovations that echo UNESCO's priorities. The initiatives presented reflect research rooted in social, cultural, and technological realities, and demonstrate the ability of the chairs and their members to engage in dialogue across disciplines, territories, and generations.

This dynamism is reflected in the participation of all those who dedicate themselves to ORBICOM's governing bodies, to whom we express our deepest gratitude. You will find the complete list on pages 17 and 18 of ORBI-INFO.

The Board of Directors is rich in experience, the Advisory Committee stands out for its diversity and complementarity, the Governance Committee provides a solid structure, and the Organizing Committee for the ORBICOM International Conference is now taking off with enthusiasm and determination.

In this regard, we are pleased to announce that this conference, organized by the UNESCO Chair in Communication and Technologies for Development, will take place during the week of October 26, 2026, in Montreal. All practical, scientific, and logistical information will be sent to you as soon as possible. The call for papers is currently being finalized, and we are already looking forward to the exchanges, meetings, and collaborations that this major event will generate within the network and beyond.

I hope you enjoy learning about our Chairs, their members, and their projects.

I also invite you to contact the International Secretariat (orbicom.unesco@uqam.ca) if you have any questions, ideas, or collaboration projects.

Your ongoing commitment to our open, inclusive, and supportive Network remains our priority.

Sincerely,
Magda FUSARO
Secretary General of ORBICOM



A WORD FROM THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF ORBICOM	2
ORBICOM ACTUALITIES	4
ORBICOM 2026 Annual Conference in Canada	5
Welcoming new members	6
ORBICOM 2025 Annual Conference in Strasbourg	7
CHAIRS' NEWS	8
South America	
Argentina , UNESCO Chair in Public Communication for Social Justice, Human Rights and Territorial Development (Comunic.ar)	9
North America	
Canada , UNESCO Chair in Communication and Technologies for Development (CUCTD)	10
UNITED STATES , UNESCO Chair for Data, Media and Society	11
ASIA	
INDIA , UNESCO Chair on Community Media	12
Europe	
France , UNESCO Chair in Emerging Practices in Technology and Communication for Development (COMTECDEV)	13
Portugal , UNESCO Chair on Communication, Media, Information, Education and Citizenship	14
royaume-uni , UNESCO Chair on Media Freedom, Journalism Safety and the Issue of Impunity	15
MEMBERS' NEWS	16
Lists of ORBICOM committees	17
UNESCO ACTUALITIES	19
RUNES/AFIRSE International Scientific Conference in partnership with UNESCO	20
New UNESCO report: Global trends in freedom of expression and media development	21
Call for proposals – UNESCO Participation Program 2026–2027	22



**ORBICOM
ACTUALITIES**

ORBICOM 2026 ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE IN CANADA



The annual ORBICOM 2026 International Conference will be held in Montreal, Canada, during the week of October 26, 2026. This edition will focus on media, communication, AI, and democracy.

Organized by the UNESCO Chair in Communication and Technologies for Development in partnership with the International Network of UNESCO Chairs in Communication, this conference is part of ORBICOM's mission to promote international and interdisciplinary dialogue on issues related to media, digital technologies, and society.

The event will bring together researchers, teachers, and communication professionals to explore the profound transformations in media and communication practices in the digital age. Plenary lectures, thematic panels, and interactive workshops will allow participants to share their experiences, reflections, and innovative research.

Detailed information on the program, speakers, and activities will be provided at a later date. Participants are therefore invited to reserve this week in their calendars now so as not to miss this major event in the field of communication and technology.

WELCOMING NEW MEMBERS TO THE ORBICOM NETWORK



The International Network of UNESCO Chairs in Communication, ORBICOM, is pleased to announce the addition of new members who joined the network in 2025, a year marked by sustained commitment and renewed dynamism within the community.

These new members, from Canada, Argentina, Peru, Brazil, Italy, and Belgium, strengthen ORBICOM's geographical, disciplinary, and institutional diversity, while promoting international dialogue and collaboration among researchers and practitioners working on contemporary communication issues.

Among these new members are Eleonora Mesquita Ceia (Brazil), Jaime Bailón Maxi and Julio-César Mateus (Peru), Martin Becerra (Argentina), Luca Baraldi (Italy), Nico Carpentier (Belgium), and Régis Barondeau (Canada).

ORBICOM is delighted to be able to count on their commitment and expertise, and welcomes them to this community working to promote inclusive and responsible communication.

ORBICOM 2025 ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN STRASBOURG: WATCH THE PRESENTATIONS ON VIDEO!



The ORBICOM Annual Conference was held in Strasbourg (France) on September 29 and 30, 2025, under the theme: “Communication, artificial intelligence, remediation, ethics, and inclusion.”

This event provided an opportunity to explore the challenges and impacts of generative artificial intelligence in the field of communication, through presentations by researchers and members of UNESCO chairs.

To review the conference presentations, videos are available here:

<https://www.canalc2.tv/video/16977>

To find memories of ORBICOM in general, you can:

- Download photos and videos: <https://seafire.unistra.fr/d/93aeed1a91/>
- Upload your own photos or videos: <https://seafire.unistra.fr/u/d/0ebdea1ed9b549ecb292/>



CHAIRS' NEWS

SOUTH AMERICA

ARGENTINA

UNESCO Chair in Public Communication for Social Justice, Human Rights, and Territorial Development (Comunic.ar)

UNational University of Villa María (UNVM)

Villa María (Córdoba), Argentina

The UNESCO Comunic.ar Chair welcomes a delegation from the University of Málaga and presents an international project on climate change

The UNESCO Comunic.ar Chair informed ORBICOM of the organization of a scientific day, held on December 11, 2025, at the Universidad Nacional de Villa María (Argentina), with the participation of a delegation from the University of Málaga (Spain) composed of Belén Barroso and Alejandro Álvarez-Nobell.

Organized in a hybrid format, the meeting featured the presentation of the international project "Citizen Activism and Communication in the Face of Climate Change," co-financed by the European Union, and gave rise to discussions on the links between communication, citizen participation, and climate issues.

The event was opened by Malvina Rodríguez, Director of the UNESCO Comunic.ar Chair, and enriched by the participation of Claudia Ardiní, President of the ComLatam Foundation, member of the Chair and ORBICOM, highlighting the regional and international scope of the work carried out.



Link: [click here](#)

The UNESCO Comunic.ar Chair launches its new website and strengthens its presence on LinkedIn

The UNESCO Comunic.ar Chair now has a new website, providing centralized access to news, projects, and activities carried out by the Chair. This platform is a new tool for disseminating and promoting its actions in the fields of public communication, social justice, human rights, and territorial development.

Link: [click here](#)

In addition, the Chair has also developed its presence on the professional social network LinkedIn in order to increase the visibility of its work and promote exchanges within academic and professional networks.

LinkedIn profile: [click here](#)

NORTH AMERICA

CANADA

UNESCO Chair in Communication and Technologies for Development (CUCTD)

*University of Quebec in Montreal
Montréal*

Call for papers for the international study day

The UNESCO Chair in Communication and Technologies for Development is pleased to invite you to an international study day on the theme: "From smartphones to artificial intelligence systems: understanding the changes and reconfigurations in the use of digital technologies in different development sectors."

This event offers an interdisciplinary reflection on the profound transformations in digital technologies since the widespread adoption of smartphones and the growing integration of AI into everyday devices. Taking a cross-disciplinary approach to the processes and dynamics at work in both the North and the South, the study day aims to examine and understand the continuities, ruptures, and reconfigurations in the uses of digital technologies (including emerging technologies such as AI) in key sectors of development in our contemporary societies, notably: education, health, culture, agriculture/environment, and the economy.

- For more details, see [the call for papers](#)
- Date of event: March 19, 2026 /Location: University of Quebec in Montreal (UQAM), Montreal
- Deadline for submitting proposals: February 12, 2026
- Contact : Destiny Tchehouali (tchehouali.destiny@uqam.ca)
Jean-Michel Ledjou (jean-michel.ledjou@universite-paris-saclay.fr)

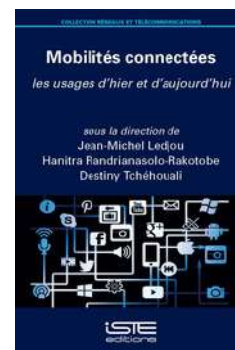
Publication of the collective work: **Connected Mobility: Past and Present Uses**

The collective work *Mobilités connectées. Les usages d'hier et d'aujourd'hui* (Connected Mobility: Past and Present Uses) has just been published by ISTE. Focusing on the socio-technical effects of digital technology in public spaces, it analyzes social interactions, collective imaginaries, and modes of communication linked to digital technologies.

Co-edited by Destiny Tchéhouali, holder of the UNESCO Chair in Communication and Technologies for Development at the University of Quebec in Montreal (UQAM), Jean-Michel Ledjou, and Hanitra Randrianasolo-Rakotobé (Paris-Saclay University), the book takes an interdisciplinary approach. It explores the continuities and discontinuities between past and contemporary uses of mobile applications in the era of permanent connectivity.

Based on surveys conducted in various fields, the contributions examine the impact of ongoing technological and societal changes on consumption practices, the accessibility and discoverability of diverse cultural expressions online, and power relations in increasingly digitized environments.

To find out more about the book, all the information is available on the ISTE publishing website: : <https://www.istegroup.com/fr/produit/mobilites-connectees>



NORTH AMERICA

UNITED STATES

UNESCO Chair for Data, Media and Society

*University of South Carolina
Columbia*

Contribution of a UNESCO Chair to the UNESCO World Report on Freedom of Expression and Media Development

The College of Information and Communications at the University of South Carolina (United States) plays a central role in the latest edition of UNESCO's World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development, a landmark publication analyzing the state of press freedom, the integrity of information, and emerging challenges facing the media worldwide.

As part of this collaboration, the coordinator of the UNESCO Chair for Data, Media and Society, Mr. Randy Covington, served as the report's senior editor. In addition, Mr. Dan Sultanesu, a UNESCO associate researcher and former Fulbright scholar, contributed original research to the chapter on technology and its impact on media and democracy.

This work is based in particular on a comparative study of public opinion conducted in four countries—the United States, Mexico, South Africa, and Romania—using data from the Global Opinion Tracker developed by the university. The results offer unique insights into society's perception of artificial intelligence, revealing that AI tools are, in many contexts, perceived as more reliable than governments, businesses, or traditional media. The study thus provides a comprehensive overview of the public's expectations and questions regarding the adoption, regulation, and democratic effects of AI.

This contribution is part of a strengthened partnership between the institution and UNESCO, launched in 2021, focusing on the challenges of journalism, information integrity, and the future of democratic communication. Through this long-term collaboration, the Chair continues to actively contribute to international discussions on the transformation of journalism and the role of technology in contemporary societies.



Randy Covington, holder of the UNESCO Chair



Dan Sultanesu, associate researcher at UNESCO and former Fulbright scholar, presents data from the University of South Carolina's Global Opinion Tracker at the Center for Civic Engagement and Democracy in Bucharest.

ASIA

INDIA

UNESCO Chair on Community Media

University of Hyderabad

Hyderabad

Appointment to the UNESCO Chair on Community Media

The UNESCO Chair on Community Media at the University of Hyderabad (India) announces the appointment of Prof. Kanchan K. Malik as the new holder of the UNESCO Chair on Community Media. This appointment, supported by the UNESCO Office in New Delhi, has been approved by UNESCO Headquarters in Paris.

A recognized expert in community media, Prof. Malik has been a member of the Department of Communication at the University of Hyderabad for nearly 20 years and has served as head of the department. Associated with the Chair since its creation, she has contributed to several structural initiatives, including the Community Radio Continuous Improvement Toolkit, as well as capacity-building and advocacy actions in India and South Asia, but also in Africa and Europe. Her work also focuses on community radio, gender-sensitive approaches, and the promotion of indigenous languages in community media.

She succeeds the founding Chair, Prof. Vinod Pavarala, who is stepping down after fourteen years at the helm of the Chair, following his voluntary retirement from the University.

Link: [click here](#)



EUROPE

FRANCE

UNESCO Chair in Emerging Practices in Technology and Communication for Development (COMTECDEV)

Bordeaux Montaigne University

International Conference on Artificial Intelligence and Digital Technologies – May 2026

The UNESCO COMTECDEV Chair, headed by Mr. Étienne Damome, is organizing an international symposium entitled “Reflecting on the relationship with artificial intelligence and digital technologies: powers, resistance, innovations” on May 20, 21, and 22, 2026, at the Cité des Langues Étrangères, du Français et des Francophonies (CLEFF) in Bordeaux.

As part of an action research approach and in line with UNESCO's priorities, this event offers a multidisciplinary reflection on the social, cultural, and political transformations brought about by digital technologies and artificial intelligence. In particular, it will examine the role of media and communication in development, access to knowledge, and capacity building, with a focus on citizen participation and the social uses of technology.



The conference will feature 78 presentations by researchers and practitioners from Canada, Africa, and Europe. The detailed program will be published in March 2026. link: [click here](#)

Creation of Chair-Up, a research-action and societal innovation laboratory

The UNESCO COMTECDEV Chair also announces the creation of Chair-Up, a research-action laboratory and societal innovation laboratory dedicated to the transfer and promotion of research produced by doctors, doctoral students, and master's students associated with the Chair, as well as UNESCO chairs and partner laboratories in Africa (Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, Togo).

Developed in the form of a start-up, Chair-Up is supported in partnership with the Monarch Intelligence association, an associate member of the Chair. The program aims to train and employ PhD students to develop solutions for organizations and lead social innovation projects in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

An initial training course, lasting 4 to 6 months (2 to 3 hours per week), will be launched at the end of February with a cohort of 11 participants. It will include a theoretical phase focused on collective intelligence, project management, professional network development, and coaching, followed by practical fieldwork, particularly in the priority neighborhoods of the city policy (QPV) in the Grand-Parc neighborhood of Bordeaux.

EUROPE

PORTUGAL

UNESCO Chair on Communication, Media, Information, Education and Citizenship

Polytechnic Institute of Lisbon

Lisbonne

Media literacy, citizenship, and human rights at the heart of an international conference

On November 27 and 28, 2025, the Faculty of Arts of the University of Coimbra (Portugal) hosted the VII Congress on Literacy, Media, and Citizenship, under the theme “Behaviors, Narratives, and Human Rights.” Organized by GILM (Informal Group on Media Literacy), the event was supported by the UNESCO Chair in Communication, Media, Information, Education, and Citizenship, directed by Ms. Fernanda Bonacho.

The 2025 edition brought together leading international speakers, including Adeline Hulin (UNESCO, Paris), Lee Edwards (London School of Economics), and Paul Mihailidis (Emerson College, Boston). The program alternated between plenary sessions, scientific presentations, workshops, and cultural initiatives, bringing together researchers, teachers, and media professionals to discuss contemporary issues in media literacy, democracy, and human rights.

Several contributions highlighted the work of LIACOM (ESCS-IPL) members, particularly around the “Citizenship Week ‘Do I know?’” initiative, community media in “news deserts,” and the contributions of psychology to journalism. At the close of the conference, Ms. Fernanda Bonacho moderated the plenary session “Media, Journalism, and Human Rights,” contributing to high-level discussions on the links between media practices and fundamental freedoms.

link: [click here](#)



“The cinema awaits you” initiative, with a screening of Andrew Levitas' film “Minamata” (Sofia Martins, TAGV)



Plenary Session III “Media, Journalism, and Human Rights” (João José Bica, SGPCM)



Communication “Citizenship Week ‘Do I know?’: contributions of the UNESCO Chair to media literacy and democracy” (João José Bica, SGPCM)

EUROPE

UNITED KINGDOM

UNESCO Chair on Media Freedom, Journalism Safety and the Issue of Impunity

University of Sheffield

Sheffield

Contemporary Issues in Journalism in the United States: a lecture by the UNESCO Chair at KU Leuven

In December 2025, the UNESCO Chair on Media Freedom, Journalism Safety and the Issue of Impunity gave an inaugural lecture at the Brussels Center for Journalism Studies at KU Leuven University (Belgium), entitled "Making sense of the contemporary news-scape in the USA." This presentation was devoted to analyzing the profound transformations in the American media landscape in an international context marked by the rise of authoritarian regimes and the weakening of democracies.

The lecture highlighted the decline in freedom of expression and the increase in pressure and harassment targeting journalists, while emphasizing that the media continue to play a central role as a counterweight to power. The presentation emphasized journalism's ability to resist the dynamics of "democratic decline," in particular by highlighting abuses of power and publicly denouncing attacks on press freedom.

In order to understand these sometimes contradictory dynamics between state power and journalistic independence, the presentation offered an analytical reading of the American information ecosystem, showing how it is organized around several key dimensions: the convergence between traditional and digital media, the commercial logic that structures information, and the exercise of political power over media spaces. These dimensions were analyzed based on two main configurations: pluralistic media environments, based on democratic debate and diversity of viewpoints, and partisan environments, characterized by increased polarization of information.

While the rise of partisan news and the relative decline of traditional media are major trends in the American media landscape, the conference emphasized that this evolution cannot be analyzed in a straightforward manner. Unlike more repressive contexts, the United States remains a place where criticism of the excessive use of state power remains widely visible, debated, and covered by the media. The outcome of the power struggle between pluralistic and partisan approaches therefore remains open, making journalism a central arena for tension, but also for democratic renewal.

Link: [click here](#)



MEMBERS' NEWS

LIST OF BOARD MEMBERS

Ex officio members

- **Lucie Menard**, Vice-Rector for Research, Creation, and Dissemination, Université du Québec à Montréal, Canada
- **Magda Fusaro**, Professor, Secretary General of ORBICOM, Université du Québec à Montréal, Canada
- **Davide Storti**, UNESCO representative

Chair holders

- **Malvina Eugenia Rodriguez**, Professor, UNESCO Chair in Public Communication for Social Justice, Human Rights and Territorial Development, Argentina
- **Amparo Huertas Bailén**, Professor, UNESCO Chair in Communication (InCom-UAB), Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain
- **Philippe Viallon**, Professor, UNESCO Chair in Journalism and Media Practices: Between Globalization and Cultural Diversity, University of Strasbourg, France
- **Eric Olmedo**, Professor, UNESCO Chair in Social Practices in Intercultural Communication and Social Cohesion, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Malaysia
- **Juan Ignacio Martinez de Morentin**, Professor, UNESCO Chair in Communication and Educational Values, University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU), San Sebastián, Euskal Herria, Spain
- **Rainer Rubira Garcia**, Full Professor, Coordinator of the UNESCO Chair in Communication, Rey Juan Carlos University, Spain

Associate Members

- **Manuel Alejandro Guerrero Martínez**, Professor, President of ORBICOM, Universidad Iberoamericana, Mexico City, Mexico
- **May Abdallah**, Professor, President of AARCS, Lebanese University, Libam
- **Deni Darmawan**, Professor, Bandung University of Education, Indonesia
- **Nurul Akqmie Binti Badrul Hisham**, UNESCO Chair Manager, UNESCO Chair in Social Practices in Intercultural Communication and Social Cohesion, Institute of Ethnic Studies (KITA)

LIST OF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- **Manuel Alejandro Guerrero Martínez**, Professor, President of ORBICOM, Universidad Iberoamericana, Mexico City, Mexico
- **Magda Fusaro**, Professor, Secretary General of ORBICOM, Université du Québec à Montréal, Canada
- **Patricia Iranzo Izquierdo**, Professor, UNESCO Chair in Communication Research, Rey Juan Carlos University, Spain
- **Khaled Lalaoui**, Professor, Associate Member, National School of Journalism and Information Sciences, Algeria
- **Juan Ramos Martin**, Professor, Pontifical Javeriana University, Colombia
- **May Abdallah**, Professor, President of AARCS, Lebanese University, Libam
- **Jamal Eddine Naji**, Director General of Audiovisual Communication, International University of Rabat, Rabat, Morocco

LIST OF ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- **Manuel Alejandro Guerrero Martínez**, Professor, President of ORBICOM, Universidad Iberoamericana, Mexico City, Mexico
- **Amparo Huertas Bailén**, Professor, UNESCO Chair in Communication (InCom-UAB), Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain
- **Olga Vikhora**, Professor, UNESCO Chair in Journalism and Mass Communication, Moscow, Russia
- **Eric Olmedo**, Professor, UNESCO Chair in Social Practices in Intercultural Communication and Social Cohesion, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Malaysia
- **Etienne Damome**, UNESCO Chair in Emerging Practices in Information and Communication Technologies for Development, University of Bordeaux Montaigne
- **Carmen Rico**, Associate Professor, Montreal, Canada

UNESCO ACTUALITIES



RUNES/AFIRSE International Scientific Conference in partnership with UNESCO, Gustave Eiffel University, and the scientific journal La Recherche En Éducation



The international French-language scientific conference, organized by RUNES/AFIRSE in partnership with UNESCO and Gustave Eiffel University, will be held in Paris from February 17 to 20, 2026.

The event will bring together researchers and international experts to discuss major contemporary issues in education, promoting dialogue between scientific, institutional, and forward-looking perspectives.

The conference will take place as follows:

February 17, 19, and 20, 2026, at Gustave Eiffel University;
February 18, 2026, as part of an international scientific day co-organized at UNESCO (Paris).

On this occasion, Magda Fusaro, professor and researcher in the Department of Analytics, Operations, and Information Technology at the University of Quebec in Montreal (UQAM) and Secretary General of the ORBICOM Network, will participate as a panelist in the plenary session entitled: "How is AI transforming research and foresight in education? ," organized on February 18, 2026, at UNESCO.

This session will focus on the transformations brought about by artificial intelligence in research, foresight, and strategic thinking practices in education.

Information about the conference and registration details are available online: <https://eduparis2026.sciencesconf.org>

New UNESCO report: Global trends in freedom of expression and media development



The UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Program has published a [report on global trends in freedom of expression and media development: Journalism: Shaping a Peaceful World](#).

Based on original research and evidence, the report examines two key aspects: information as a public good and the integrity of information. The findings reveal that these values are facing unprecedented pressures today. In particular, the Freedom of Expression Index has declined by 10% since 2012, due to the weakening of democratic governance, growing hostility towards journalists, and the proliferation of forms of digital repression.

The report benefited from significant contributions from Randy Covington, UNESCO Chair in Data, Media and Society (University of South Carolina, United States), and Catalina Botero Marino, UNESCO Chair in Freedom of Expression in Latin America (University of the Andes, Colombia).

The UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Program invites chair holders and UNITWIN network coordinators to widely disseminate this report and its findings within their networks.

For more information, please contact Ana Cristina Ruelas: ac.ruelas@unesco.org

CALL FOR PROPOSALS – UNESCO PARTICIPATION PROGRAM 2026–2027



The UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Program team is pleased to announce the opening of the call for proposals for the UNESCO Participation Program 2026–2027.

This program supports national, subregional, regional, and international projects aligned with the Program and Budget 2026–2027 (43 C/5), with grants ranging from US\$26,000 to US\$38,000.

UNESCO Chair holders and UNITWIN network coordinators are encouraged to broaden their partnerships, particularly with other Chairs and UNITWIN networks, and to submit projects with a regional or global dimension.

Important: proposals must be submitted via your country's National Commission for UNESCO and submitted online by February 27, 2026.

Responses and initial approvals will be announced starting in July 2026, and projects approved for financial contributions for the 2026–2027 biennium must be implemented by December 31, 2027, at the latest.

For more information, please visit the dedicated web page: [Participation Program | UNESCO](#).

FEBRUARY 2026



www.orbicom.ca

Layout by
Estelle BADZIKLOU and Clara NOVET under the supervision of Magda Fusaro