

IFKAD
International Forum on Knowledge Asset Dynamics

IFKAD 2027

22nd International Forum on Knowedge Asset Dynamics

University of Basilicata, Matera, Italy

The Ecology of Knowledge in the AI Era

CALL FOR EXTENDED ABSTRACTS - IFKAD 2027
www.ifkad.org

Special Track n.: 36

Mission, People and AI: Leadership, Culture and Human Resource Development in Social Enterprises

Description

Social enterprises, from social cooperatives to the other entrepreneurial organisations of the third sector, occupy a distinctive place in the economy. Positioned at the crossroads of market, public policy and civil society, they pursue social goals through entrepreneurial means, and their capacity to create value rests to an unusual degree on people. Their services are relational and "personality-intensive": quality is decided in the encounter between professional and beneficiary, and depends on motivation, judgement and care more than on tools or structures. Their workforce blends employees, professionals and volunteers; their cultures are strongly value-driven; their governance is participatory and multi-stakeholder; and their commitment to inclusion makes diversity management a constitutive feature rather than an add-on.

As artificial intelligence enters social enterprises, they are becoming knowledge ecosystems in which human and artificial agents jointly sense needs, allocate resources, match people to roles and support decisions. This makes them a revealing setting for the IFKAD 2027 theme, "The Ecology of Knowledge in the AI Era". On the one hand, AI can ease chronic constraints such as limited managerial capacity, weak planning and the difficulty of measuring social impact. On the other, AI systems designed around efficiency logics may erode the relational, tacit and value-laden knowledge that is the core asset of these organisations, crowd out intrinsic motivation, or reproduce biases that contradict their inclusive mission. The ecological risk the conference warns against, a knowledge monoculture, is particularly concrete here.

The track focuses on leadership, organisational culture and human resource development as the levers through which social enterprises can cultivate healthy human–AI knowledge ecosystems. How should leaders balance professional autonomy, managerial accountability and algorithmic support? How do mission and values shape the adoption, meaning and limits of AI? How must workforce planning, recruitment, evaluation, training and volunteer management be rethought, and how can AI serve diversity and inclusion rather than undermine them?

The track draws on a tradition of business economics that places the promotion of the human person at the centre of every institution, a view that closely resonates with the notion of integral ecology underpinning the conference theme. From this perspective, the experience of social enterprises offers lessons that extend well beyond the third sector: it shows how efficiency and human flourishing, economic sustainability and social purpose can be held together. Scholarly contributions are expected to extend HRM, leadership and knowledge management theories to settings where values, relationships and AI coexist. Managerially, the track seeks frameworks and evidence useful to managers, HR professionals, policymakers and the support networks of the social economy. Conceptual, empirical and practice-based studies are welcome, including comparative research between social enterprises and for-profit or public organisations.

Indicative Topics

- Leadership styles and competences for social enterprises adopting AI
- Balancing professional autonomy, managerial culture and algorithmic decision support
- Mission, values and organisational culture as filters for AI adoption
- Preserving relational, tacit and embodied knowledge in personality-intensive services
- AI and intrinsic motivation, engagement and meaningful work in social enterprises
- AI-supported workforce planning, recruitment and selection: opportunities and risks

- Performance and potential evaluation in the AI era: fairness, transparency and participation
- Training, reskilling and professional development of employees and volunteers
- Managing volunteers and "unpaid professionals" alongside AI tools
- Diversity management and inclusion: can AI reduce or amplify bias?
- Participatory and multi-stakeholder governance of AI in social enterprises
- AI for measuring social impact and HR outcomes in social enterprises
- Work-integration social enterprises: AI, inclusion and the employment of disadvantaged workers
- Integral ecology, humanistic management and the promotion of the human person in AI-augmented social enterprises
- Lessons from social enterprises for human-centred AI adoption in for-profit and public organisations

Keywords

Social enterprises; Third sector; Mission-driven HRM; Leadership; Organisational culture; Diversity management; Human–AI collaboration

Organizers

Maria Zifaro – Mercatorum University, Italy
Giuseppe Ambrosio – Mercatorum University, Italy
Giovanni Spatola – Mercatorum University, Italy
Stefania D'Aprile – Mercatorum University, Italy
Marianna Mancino – Mercatorum University, Italy

Follow this link to see the Special Track details on IFKAD website ››

Guidelines and Requirements

Researchers wishing to contribute are invited to submit an EXTENDED ABSTRACT (in MS Word format) of min 500 and max 1000 words, not later than **22 JANUARY 2027**. All submission must be done via dedicated form on our website. The abstract should address theoretical background, research objective, methodology, and results in terms of expected contribution to Knowledge Management theory and practice.
Authors are required to follow the guidelines and templates available on IFKAD website: www.ifkad.org

Important Dates

22 January 2027 – Extended Abstract Submission Deadline
19 February 2027 – Acceptance Notification to Authors
16 April 2027 – Early-Bird Registration & Payment Deadline
23 April 2027 – Full Paper Submission Deadline
28 May 2027 – Regular and PhD Students Registration & Payment Deadline
12 June 2027 – Conference Program Release
28-30 June 2027 – Conference sessions *(to be considered as 3 full working days)*

Please note that all above indicated dates are **CUT-OFF** deadlines. There will not be an extention to any of these.

Further Information

For any information related to the conference and/or any special track, please see the event website at www.ifkad.org or contact the conference manager at **info@ifkad.org**