

Translating Knowledge into Innovation Dynamics

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CALL FOR ABSTRACTS – IFKAD 2024

Special Track n.: 32

Research Area: Knowledge-Based Development

From Knowledge to Social Innovation: How Cultural Transformative Ecosystems Leverage the Transformative Nature of Culture and Cultural Heritage

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Description

The world that we live in and our lives constantly change. The acceleration of transformation however has increased during the last years and decades. Currently, Europeans are confronted with manifold environmental, cultural, social, economic and technological transformations in which many aspects of life are accelerating. Uncertain times lead people to rethink their social, civic and community habitus, paving the way for the need to tread new paths marked by dialogue with others, by collaboration for collective benefit and not just individual well-being. CH has a key role in this scenario and many voices have been raised to imagine a new way of managing cultural institutions, so that they may be more responsive in addressing new challenges and criticalities. Undoubtedly, this change becomes also tangible in the ways that the meaning, the use and the understanding of CH has transformed: the methods of conservation, the definitions of heritage and the ways of managing heritage sites have evolved rapidly, creating new development trajectories and offering new ways of living with and using cultural heritage in everyday life.

Engaging with heritage boosts a social process that builds a relationship between individuals and communities. There is no heritage without someone engaged in its transmission, by acting with other people in understanding, teaching, and preserving it. Equally, there is no transmission without people reusing, reproducing, and adapting heritage assets for their personal life, work, and enjoyment. Thus, the definition and reconfiguration of heritage is not only “responding to institutional discourses and policies around heritage holdings”. Rather, it is also a “lived community practice” (Ciolfi et al., 2018, p. 12). The idea that CH and

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cultural institutions have a key role to promote social cohesion, economic development, and fairer and more sustainable societies has been widely spread in the scientific literature and in the framework of European initiatives and legislation for decades. However, it is only in more recent years that identity, environment, and digital assets have been identified as recurring and primary drivers of change in the CH field. Moreover, cultural organisations do not face these changes in isolation, but are rather embedded in networks (e.g. Scheff and Kotler, 1996) and it is clear that cultural networks, rather than a single organisation, are more likely to produce social innovation and generate value (Scrofani and Ruggiero, 2013; Bagdadli, 2003). Alongside an increasing call for participation, and a growing number of participatory CH initiatives, social innovation has gained momentum as a mode of governance through which to address societal challenges (Pel et al., 2020). Seeking to empower SI initiatives, researchers and policy makers are concerned with the development of supportive “ecosystems”. An ecosystem is defined as “A biological system composed of all the organisms found in a particular physical environment, interacting with it and each other. Also in extended use: a complex system resembling this” (Oxford dictionary). The multi-actor network perspective expanded the boundary of the analysis to include the policy makers, consortiums, innovators, entrepreneurs, private investors, and user communities. The purpose of this ecosystem approach is to clarify the dynamic change mechanism of the multi-actor network and find the specific patterns of evolution and extinction. If we can understand the mechanism, we will be able to design and manage the ecosystem strategically. Supporting SI requires a deeper understanding of the enablers, the critical success factors and the obstacles to SI. Such understanding can be eased by taking a perspective on ecosystems. Actors in ecosystems co-construct settings, identities, and actions through interaction and negotiation and through deliberate and unforeseen actions (Russo-Spena et al., 2020). Thus, analysing social innovation ecosystems is paramount to understand how CH expresses its full potential as a driver of sustainable innovation and a European sense of belonging, and promotes the awareness of the European way of life. Different configurations of cultural social innovation ecosystems may affect the realisation of the transformative nature of CH and the deployment of a continuous engagement with society, citizens and economic sectors.

Nonetheless, just a few attempts have been proposed to conceptualise what social innovation ecosystems entail and how they produce value for their actors and the society as a whole. Among these, Fernandez Fernandez (2022) proposes a framework that represents the sectors and factors that must intercept in order for the social innovation ecosystem in CH to occur. Factors that are needed include CH, as the content of socially innovative services, and social needs, such as for example education, integration, access to culture, democracy and participation. This proposed track focuses on social innovation ecosystems, conceiving social innovations as new ways of doing, organising, framing and knowing (Avelino et al. 2019). In a world where innovation happens at the interconnections among actors, and to a lesser extent depending on the R&D investment of a single organisation, Social Innovation initiatives are increasingly acknowledged as drivers of change which have a societal significance beyond their immediate societal impacts.

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Digital technologies can provide a simple integrated media-capture interface to enable rich expression and participation in CH. While some systems collect and showcase experts and user-generated content, others pay special attention to underserved communities, support activism and counteract stigma. Many CH oriented digital technologies and interactive applications provide a combination of content sharing and storytelling tools (authoring and viewing), some of which focus on connecting stories and memories of vulnerable communities with CH, supporting heritage-making discourse and dialogue, fostering participation and embracing cohesion.

We encourage submissions, both theoretical and evidence-based, that discuss the following aspects of transormative cultural ecosystems that foster social innovation, such as:

- Creation of new solutions (products, services, models, processes, etc.) that comply in a more sustainable, fairer and improved way with the objectives of conservation, management, dissemination, defence or enhancement of some type of CH.
- Coverage of social needs such as access to education, science and knowledge, culture, quality and non-relocatable employment, new technologies; participation and democracy, environmental conservation, sustainable development, social inclusion, integration, gender equality, etc.
- Creation of new types of relationships that improve society's capacity to act by incorporating citizens as active agents in innovation processes, or by facilitating the means for these processes to be directly driven by them
- The impact of digital technology on the above and on the opportunities for "polyvocality", as an emerging concept that helps to diversify the accepted knowledge, values and stories formed in response to or challenging "authorised cultural heritage"

Keywords

Social innovation, ecosystem, transformative ecosystem, participation, engagement, change, transformative nature of CH, polyvocality

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Guidelines

Researchers wishing to contribute are invited to submit an **EXTENDED ABSTRACT** (in editable MS-Word format) of **min 500 and max 1000 words** by **15 JANUARY 2024**, using the submission procedure available on the 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 for both extended abstracts as well as full papers available on IFKAD site: www.ifkad.org

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Important dates

15 January 2024	<i>Extended Abstract submission deadline</i>
10 February 2024	<i>Acceptance notification to authors</i>
30 March 2024	<i>Early-Bird registration cut off</i>
10 April 2024	<i>Full paper submission deadline</i>
20 May 2024	<i>Registration deadline</i>
12-14 June 2024	<i>Conference sessions</i>

For further information

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