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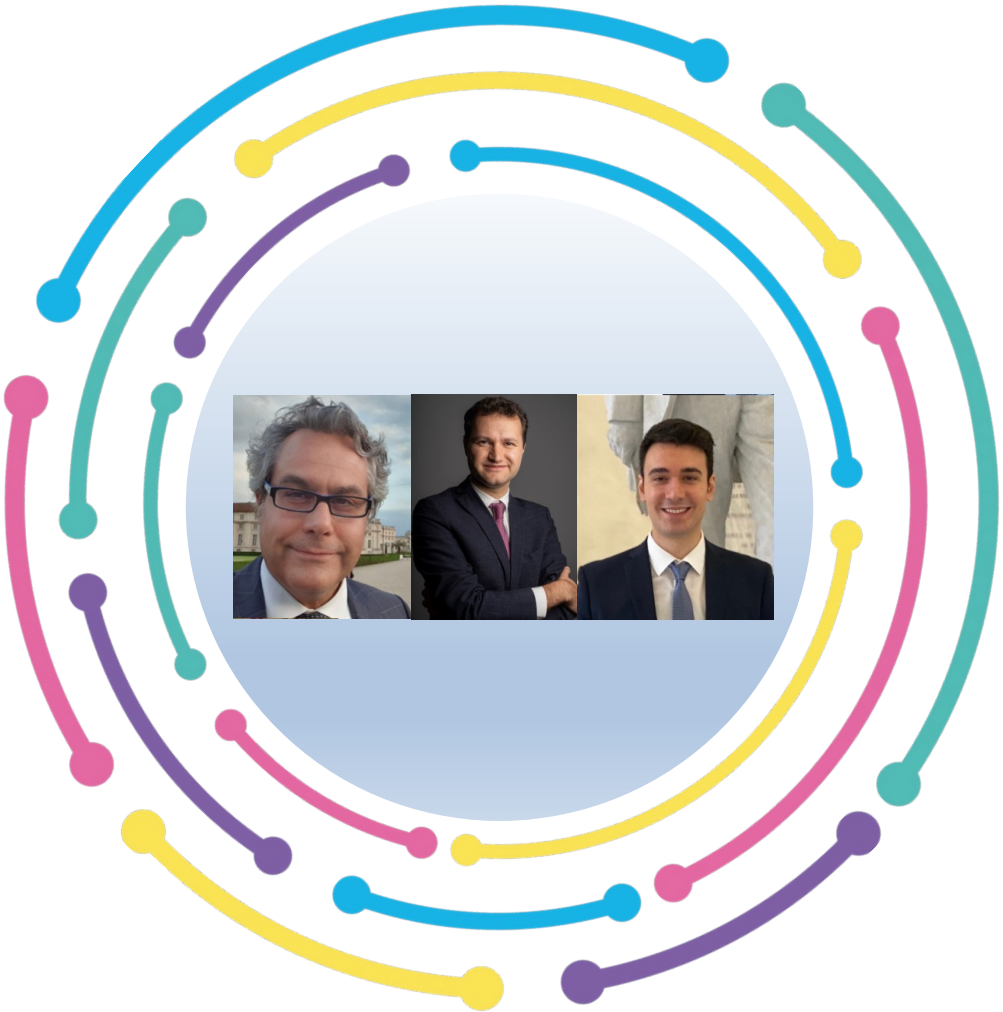
Transnational Capacity Building workshop 4

Boosting Social Impact Measurement Capacity through digitalisation & data use

29 January 2026 – Italy (Online)



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Teaching Social Impact Assessment

Interactive Session: Methodologies and digital tools for impact measurement

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Teaching Social Impact Assessment

Teaching how to assess social impact means acting within an **ecosystem**. This is what we have done together with Torino Social Impact. The university professional development course in Social Impact Assessment brings together skills from the public and private sectors, from profit and non-profit organisations, to discuss and disseminate the most widely used methodologies.

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Some highlights:

- 6 past editions and the 7th is scheduled from February 2026
- **344 learners**
- Acting in an ecosystem level with (no profit and third sector entities), incubators and accelerators, banking foundations, profit entities, public bodies, universities and research entities, professionals' associations)

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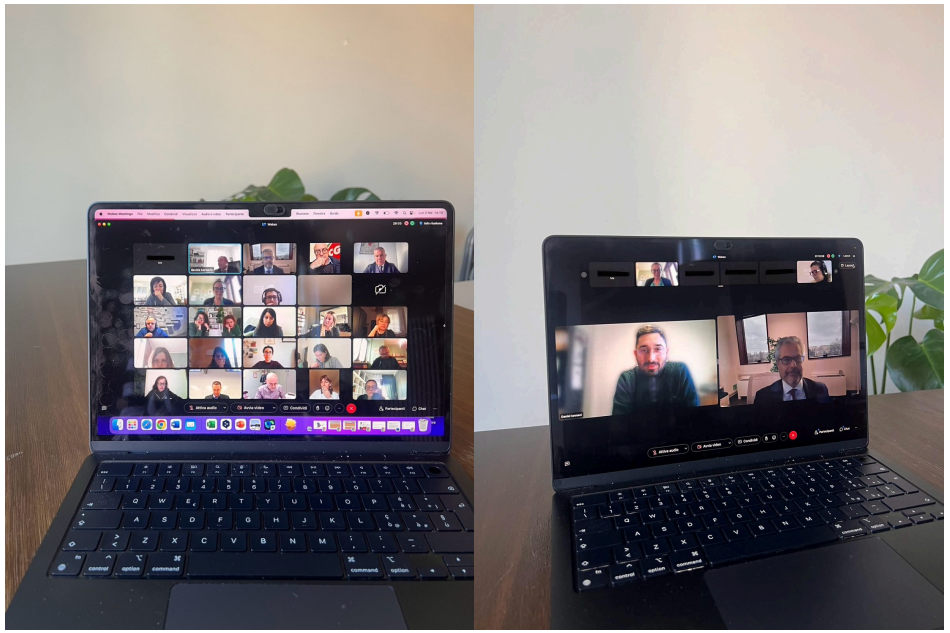
Digital and data-driven Opportunities to strengthen the Social Economy Impact

Online lessons for a more national reach



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125 hours: 40 lecture-style teaching and 85 group activities and individual study

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Methodologies and digital tools for impact measurement

What Generative AI Really Adds to Social Impact Evaluation

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Why impact measurement still needs (good) methods?

- Theory of Change → Inputs → Activities → Outputs → Outcomes → Impact
- Mixed methods: quantitative + qualitative + administrative data
- Generative AI different from replacement: it augments design, analysis, and reporting with human oversight
- Human-in-the-loop

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A simple workflow (human-in-the-loop)

- **Plan**: draft indicators and questions → review by evaluator
- **Collect**: translate/adapt surveys; basic checks on answers
- **Understand**: group themes from interviews; find patterns/outliers
- **Share**: write short summaries; show limits and next steps

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Keep it safe & fair

- **Privacy first**: only needed data; access by roles; respect GDPR and AI act
- **Quality check**: sample reviews; double coding; track accuracy
- **Transparency**: note where AI was used and who reviewed it

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Tool / Model	What it is (short)	Benefits & opportunities for impact evaluation
OpenAI – GPT-4.1	Flagship multimodal LLM with **very long context (up to ~1M tokens in OpenAI API)**.	Swallow long evidence bases (policies, reports, transcripts); reliable extraction to tables; strong summarization for funders/policymakers; good for structured outputs to dashboards.
OpenAI – o3	**Reasoning-focused** model (trained to "think longer" before answering).	Complex triangulation across mixed evidence, drafting sensitivity analyses, step-by-step qualitative synthesis (with human review).
Anthropic – Claude	High-quality LLM; **200k token context by default; up to 1M in preview on Bedrock**.	Strong long-document reading and concise, cautious summaries; good for codebook proposals + transparent outlining of assumptions/limitations.
Google – Gemini 1.5 Pro	LLM with **very long context (up to 2M tokens)**.	Upload and analyze very large corpora (thousands of pages); efficient multi-doc comparison; useful for multilingual projects and RAG over big archives.
DeepSeek – R1	**Open reasoning** model family; RL-trained for math/logic/coding; open weights/variants available.	Low-cost reasoning for stepwise analysis (e.g., consistency checks, simple causal logic walkthroughs) where self-hosting or budget is key.
Microsoft – Copilot (Microsoft 365)	Assistant embedded in **Word/Excel/PowerPoint/Outlook/Teams**, grounded on **your Microsoft Graph data** with enterprise controls.	Rapid drafting of indicators/surveys/reports **inside** the tools your team already uses; pulls org documents/emails/meetings to create briefings; enterprise privacy/compliance for sensitive projects.
Perplexity	**Answer-engine** that performs live web retrieval with **inline citations**.	Quick literature scans with **sources you can click**; helpful for evidence maps, benchmarking similar programs, and checking claims before reporting.

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Power BI as a Visual Analytics Tool for Social Impact

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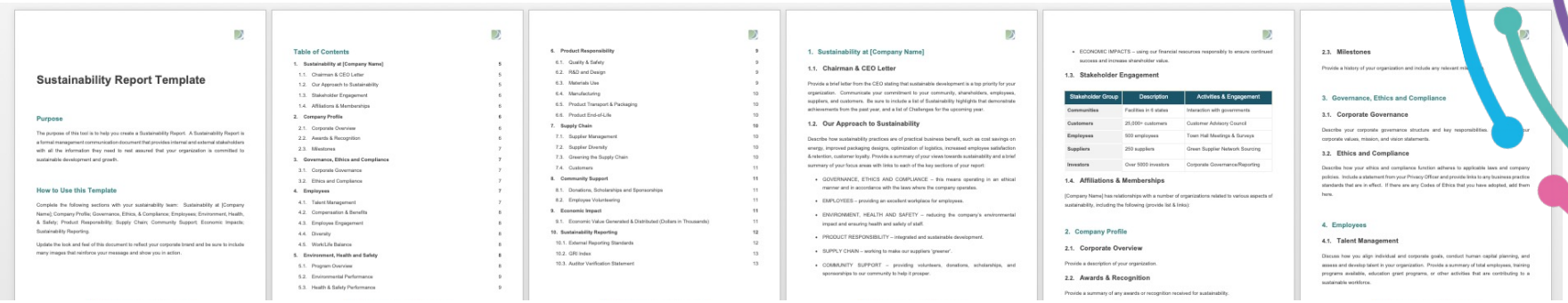
The Limits of Traditional Impact Reporting



- Conventional impact reports are predominantly static, linear, and backward-looking;
- Tables and narrative formats often generate cognitive overload;
- Causal relationships are obscured and evidence is fragmented across disconnected indicators;
- Such reports frequently fail to support strategic decision-making, organisational learning, and stakeholder dialogue;
- This limitation points to the need for tools that integrate synthesis, exploration, and interpretation within a coherent evaluative architecture.

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Social Impact Evaluation as an Information System

Impact evaluation can be conceptualised as **a complex information system** rather than a mere measurement exercise.

It operates across multiple dimensions: temporal (baseline and trajectories), territorial (sites and contexts), and stakeholder-related. Inputs, outputs, outcomes, and impacts must be read as parts of a causal chain. Any visualisation system must therefore reflect this structural complexity instead of simplifying it into isolated metrics.

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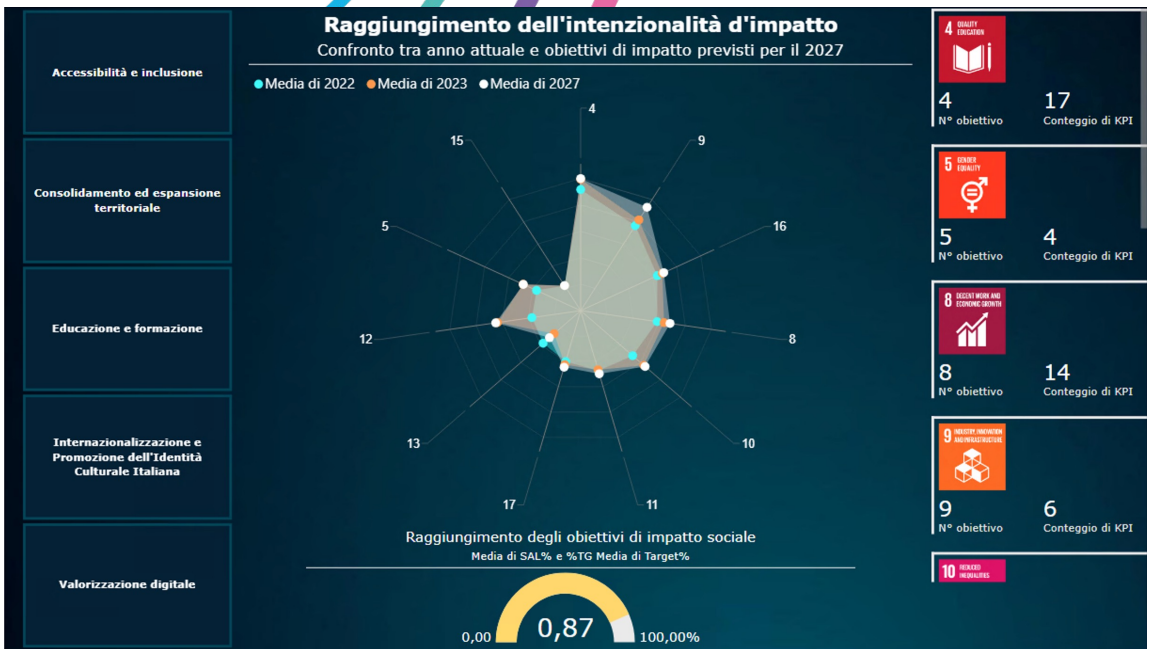
Overview of the Case Study

- The case study refers to a large, multi-site cultural institution operating within an ESG-oriented strategic framework;
- A structured social impact evaluation system was developed based on a Theory of Change;
- The evaluation design is aligned with international sustainability frameworks;
- The framework is operationalised through a comprehensive and coherent set of indicators;
- The dataset integrates administrative data, survey-based evidence, qualitative inputs, and contextual information
- Data collection and management are governed through a centralised governance model.

Power BI



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From Evaluation Design to Dashboard Architecture

The Power BI system was designed as a direct operational translation of the evaluation framework. Each visual layer corresponds to a specific evaluative question: overall impact trajectories, thematic dimensions, stakeholder-related outcomes, and site-level performance. The dashboard architecture mirrors the underlying **Theory of Change**, ensuring coherence between what is measured, how it is visualised, and how it is interpreted.

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Thank you!

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