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Online Videos Reports with Recommendations on Virtual Environments, AI, and Ethics in Volunteering & the Third Sector

Detailed summary in English

Introduction

The following summaries provide an overview of four sessions focused on virtual environments, artificial intelligence (AI), and ethics in volunteering and the third sector.

Each session explores practical applications, ethical considerations, and recommendations for responsible use of technology.

Session 1: Introduction to AI in the third sector – What it is, what it's for, and how to apply it ethically

During the session, we introduced the concept of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and explained how it had evolved to become an integral part of everyday life.

We described AI as a system that imitated human thinking and behaviour, learning from millions of examples to predict outcomes. Over the years, AI had become widely present in tools such as content recommendations, biometric unlocking, voice assistants, and smart navigation.

We highlighted the recent leap in AI capabilities, noting that it could understand context, process natural language, and operate on powerful cloud infrastructures. It then focused on Generative AI, listing tools for text, images, video, audio, code, and design, and emphasized the importance of prompt engineering for effective use.

We explored how AI had supported the social sector, presenting it not as a substitute for human talent but as an accelerator. We outlined opportunities such as task automation, improved communication, personalized services, innovative fundraising, project design, learning facilitation, idea generation, and inclusion.

However, we also addressed risks and threats, including hallucinations and errors, bias and discrimination, privacy concerns, technological dependency, job displacement, digital divides, lack of transparency, and misinformation. Each risk was explained with its potential impact on organizations and beneficiaries.

Then, we discussed key challenges for implementing AI in the third sector: staff training, change management, resource allocation, identifying use cases, ensuring sustainability, and aligning technology with mission and values. Ethical and governance considerations were stressed, focusing on privacy, transparency, fairness, protection of vulnerable groups, and compliance with regulations such as the EU AI Act.

In conclusion, we asserted that AI was not the future but the present, and it could become a powerful ally for the social sector if used responsibly.

We urged organizations to harness AI's potential while addressing risks and keeping ethics at the centre, reminding readers that the real challenge was not technological but human.

Session 2: AI and Volunteering. How artificial intelligence can enhance voluntary action

We explored how artificial intelligence had enhanced volunteer action in multiple ways. First, we discovered that real-time voice translation allowed us to hold conversations

across languages, making inclusion easier in multicultural environments. We realized that AI had supported us in drafting and reviewing our volunteer plans, suggesting improvements based on best practices in the sector.

It had also helped us manage grants by transforming financial data into useful texts and aligning them with the requirements of each call. We used AI to translate content quickly and accurately, adapting tone and context to different languages. Furthermore, we implemented chatbots to welcome and guide new volunteers, providing instant answers and essential information at any time.

AI had assisted us in creating clear and engaging volunteer offers, even generating images to increase visibility. It had also enabled advanced research, helping us find and summarize relevant information for projects, detect social needs, and inspire new activities. Finally, we leveraged AI to improve accessibility, reducing digital, linguistic, and cognitive barriers so that people with diverse abilities and backgrounds could participate more easily.

Session 3: "Beyond the algorithm"

FCVS hosted a session to explore the ethical, legal, and practical challenges of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in communication. The event marked the final session of the 6th Social Communication Cycle and took place from 10:00 to 12:00 at the headquarters of the Rosa Sensat Teachers' Association in Barcelona.

The session highlighted how AI has evolved from being a mere technological tool to becoming a transformative cultural force that significantly impacts how organizations communicate. Under the title *"AI as a Cultural Shift in Organizational Communication,"* the discussion focused on several key areas:

- The cultural approach to AI in companies and third-sector organizations
- The basic legal framework, including the European AI Act and associated risks and obligations
- International ethical principles (UNESCO, OECD, Montreal Declaration)
- Practical cases and a participatory debate on responsible uses of AI

The session was led by Ignasi Llorente, CEO of the consultancy Utopiq and partner at the agency Karmina. With over 20 years of experience in communication strategy consulting and academic training in Ethics in AI (London School of Economics) and Philosophy of Science (University of Pennsylvania), Llorente provided a practical and immediately applicable perspective.

This event was part of a broader initiative: the 6th edition of the Social Communication Cycle, which included four training sessions on AI throughout the year. The cycle was funded by the European VERA project and aimed to equip social organizations with tools to enhance their communication strategies.

The session was designed for communication managers in social entities, individuals who have taken on communication tasks without being specialists, and technical staff interested in AI and its cultural implications.

Participation was free and in-person, with registration available online until October 29th.

The Social Communication Cycle, launched in 2020 during the pandemic, has become a key initiative to strengthen the relationship between social organizations and the media. Its success over the years has helped promote professionalization and quality communication within the third sector.

Session 4: AI and Strategic Management in Organizations: Decision-Making, Efficiency, and Inclusion

We held the final session on AI and volunteering, led by Utopiq Consulting.

We explored how AI had supported strategic management in organizations by improving decision-making, efficiency, and inclusion. We learned that AI had automated repetitive tasks, augmented our capabilities, and even acted autonomously within defined limits.

It had helped us scale impact without increasing human resources, improve accessibility, and accelerate processes.

We reviewed practical applications of AI in our strategic plan: identifying potential partners, creating shared resources, matching volunteer profiles, and generating territorial maps. We also saw real cases such as personalized GPTs for grant management, automated workflows, and intelligent alerts.

Finally, we discussed best practices, emphasizing ethics, privacy, transparency, compliance with EU regulations, and the importance of piloting before scaling.

We closed the session by outlining next steps and upcoming events, reaffirming our commitment to innovation and collaboration in the volunteering sector.