



MUNICIPAL STRATEGY TO FIGHT SOCIAL ISOLATION

2026—2030

BREAKING ISOLATION

Pombal, December 2025



URBACT



Co-funded by
the European Union
Interreg

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PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE:



Social isolation is one of the most significant social challenges of our time, affecting the emotional well-being, mental health, and quality of life of people of all ages. In the Municipality of Pombal, fighting against isolation and promoting social interaction is essential to strengthening community cohesion and building an inclusive, supportive, and participatory society.

Socialization helps prevent loneliness, depression, and cognitive decline, promotes active and healthy ageing, and reinforces the sense of belonging to the community. In territories with rural areas and ageing populations, this challenge requires close-knit responses adapted to local realities.

Fortunately, in the Municipality of Pombal, several good practices have been implemented that highlight the importance of networking and proximity, particularly **Senior Spaces** and the activities promoted by the Parish Councils and local associations. These initiatives, expressed through moments of conviviality and sharing, create safe contexts for

meeting and interaction. At the same time, the development of intergenerational projects—often in partnership with schools, social institutions, and associations—has helped bring young people and older adults together through cultural, educational, and community-based activities, contributing to fight against isolation and loneliness, the strengthening of social bonds, the exchange of knowledge, and the appreciation of life experience.

Based on an integrated and collaborative approach, this Plan reinforces the Municipality's commitment to the early identification of isolation cases, the promotion of proximity-based support, and the creation of concrete opportunities for socialization. Tackling the issue of social isolation means recognizing it as a public problem, not merely an individual one; therefore, fighting it is a collective responsibility that mobilizes local government, institutions, associations, and the wider community.

Tackling social isolation involves recognising it as a PUBLIC CHALLENGE and not simply an individual problem.

In this context, the **Breaking Isolation Project** is a strategic priority for this Municipality, expressing a political vision guided by inclusion, social cohesion, and the valuing of human and community capital. The project implements an Integrated Action Plan with 16 intervention proposals in the areas of social action, health, education, culture, and civic participation—9 of which result from a co-participatory process with the Pombal's ULG, while the remaining proposals incorporate initiatives already included in other strategic documents, ensuring coherence and sustainable impact.

The commitment to structuring projects such as **Breaking Isolation**, combined with the good practices already in place, demonstrates that investing in socialization is investing in people's health, dignity, and quality of life—contributing to a more humane, supportive, and resilient Municipality.

Pedro Pimpão,
Mayor of the Municipality of Pombal



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CONTEXTUAL FRAMEWORK

This strategy (Integrated Action Plan) has been produced by the Municipality of Pombal through the close cooperation with 9 other european, small & medium sized cities, within an URBACT network called Breaking Isolation.

For about 2,5 years, the City of Pombal (Portugal) exchanged, learnt, experimented with its fellow european cities about social isolation, until it was able to reach and develop, by the end of 2025, its own strategy to fight isolation.

The present document tells the short story of this european collaborative peer-to-peer learning journey and the concrete, tangible action plan of the City of Pombal.

As any strategy, this plan might evolve and change in the future, depending on opportunities, funding, political support, citizen's will, etc. It is, therefore, a guiding document, not a binding one.

Pombal's Local Team,

Catarina Silva (Elected Official in charge of this Urbact Project),

Pedro Carrana (Project Manager, Head of Social Development and Health Division),

Virgínia Santos (Urbact Local Group Coordinator),

Liliana Domingues (Public Servant, Social Affairs).



Pombal's Local Team at the European Parliament | Transnational Meeting in Brussels, September 2024

For more info about the URBACT network of Breaking Isolation:

<https://urbact.eu/networks/breaking-isolation>

And more information about the work carried out under this project in Pombal:

<https://www.cm-pombal.pt/servicos/desenvolvimento-social-e-saude/breaking-isolation-urbact>



POMBAL



Country: Portugal

Region: Center | Leiria's Region

Area: 626 km²

Population: 51 170 hab (2021)

Population density: 82,2 hab/km² (2021)

LOCAL TERRITORIAL AND SOCIAL CONTEXT

The Municipality of Pombal is located in the Central Region of Portugal, within the district of Leiria, and covers a territorial area of approximately 626 km². It is administratively organized into 13 parishes, forming a Municipality of significant size with a notably dispersed territorial occupation.

According to the 2021 Census by the National Statistics Institute (INE) of Portugal, the Municipality has 51,170 inhabitants, corresponding to a moderate population density, below the national average. This reflects a predominantly rural territorial structure and a population that is largely concentrated in urban centres.

This demographic context highlights relevant social challenges, widely identified in the Pombal Social Diagnosis (2024), reinforcing the relevance of the Municipality's integration into the Breaking Isolation Network. One key challenge is the high prevalence of social isolation: **5,263 residents live alone**, representing more than 10% of the population, and more than half of these single-person households are composed of individuals aged 65 or over (INE, 2021 Census).

This phenomenon stems from a long-term process of population ageing, combined with successive waves of emigration over recent decades, which have led to family separation and the weakening of informal support networks. Additional structural factors include residential stability throughout the life course, labour dynamics in economic sectors that require prolonged absences of household members, and the transition to retirement, often experienced as a break from previous social reference points. At the same time, civic participation is lower than desirable, limiting the sense of community belonging.

Together, these factors contribute to negative impacts on the Municipality's psychological well-being and social cohesion, justifying the adoption of integrated strategies to fight against isolation and promote active participation across the life cycle, as mentioned in the **Baseline Study**, in alignment with the objectives of the Breaking Isolation Network.

POMBAL AND SOCIAL ISOLATION

“Social isolation is a condition in which a person suffers from a long term lack of social relations both in quantity and quality”. And social isolation a rapidly growing social issue, worldwide. According to the World Health Organization, nearly one person out of four is experiencing social isolation.

Our society is increasingly part of a (social) network, but that does not mean that people are and feel more connected and closer to their family, friends, and neighbors. People have never been as isolated and distant from each other as they are today.

Unfortunately, the same situation can be seen in Pombal. Despite being a small to medium-sized city, where we might believe that people know each other and are closer to each other than in large cities, the citizens living in the Municipality of Pombal are increasingly isolated. And this is a problem that affects all age groups, not just the elderly, as is commonly associated. Social isolation is not related to age. It can affect anyone: those who have lost their life partner, those who have divorced or separated, those who have lost their job, those who have moved away from family and friends, those who suffer from a prolonged or chronic illness, those who do not have time for social gatherings, such as single parents, those who suffer from addictions (alcohol, gambling, drugs, etc.), etc. Literally anyone can suffer from isolation.

In Pombal, some citizens suffer from isolation, but this is not always a visible problem, so it may not be widely known. And when it is appointed, it becomes difficult to find tools, solutions, concrete ways to take these people out from the situation of isolation in which they find themselves. Sometimes, people are not yet in a situation of social isolation, but they may be approaching it because one or more of the multifactorial causes that lead to this social problem are present in their lives. Sometimes, social isolation is seen by society as something shameful, which makes the situation even more complex.

This is why Pombal wanted to join this international network in order to learn, exchange experiences, and try out actions and solutions with other European cities facing the same challenge: **Breaking Isolation!**



Pombal's Transnational Meeting gathering at City Hall, February 2024



Pombal's URBACT Local Group meeting in Pombal's Municipal Library, March 2025



*Picture of **Living Street Testing Action** example of social intergenerational space at Cardal's Garden in the city of Pombal, May 2025*



*Public participation on **Living Street Testing Action** at Cardal's Garden in the city of Pombal, May 2025*

*Pombal's Local Team in
Serres's Transnational
Meeting,
April 2024*



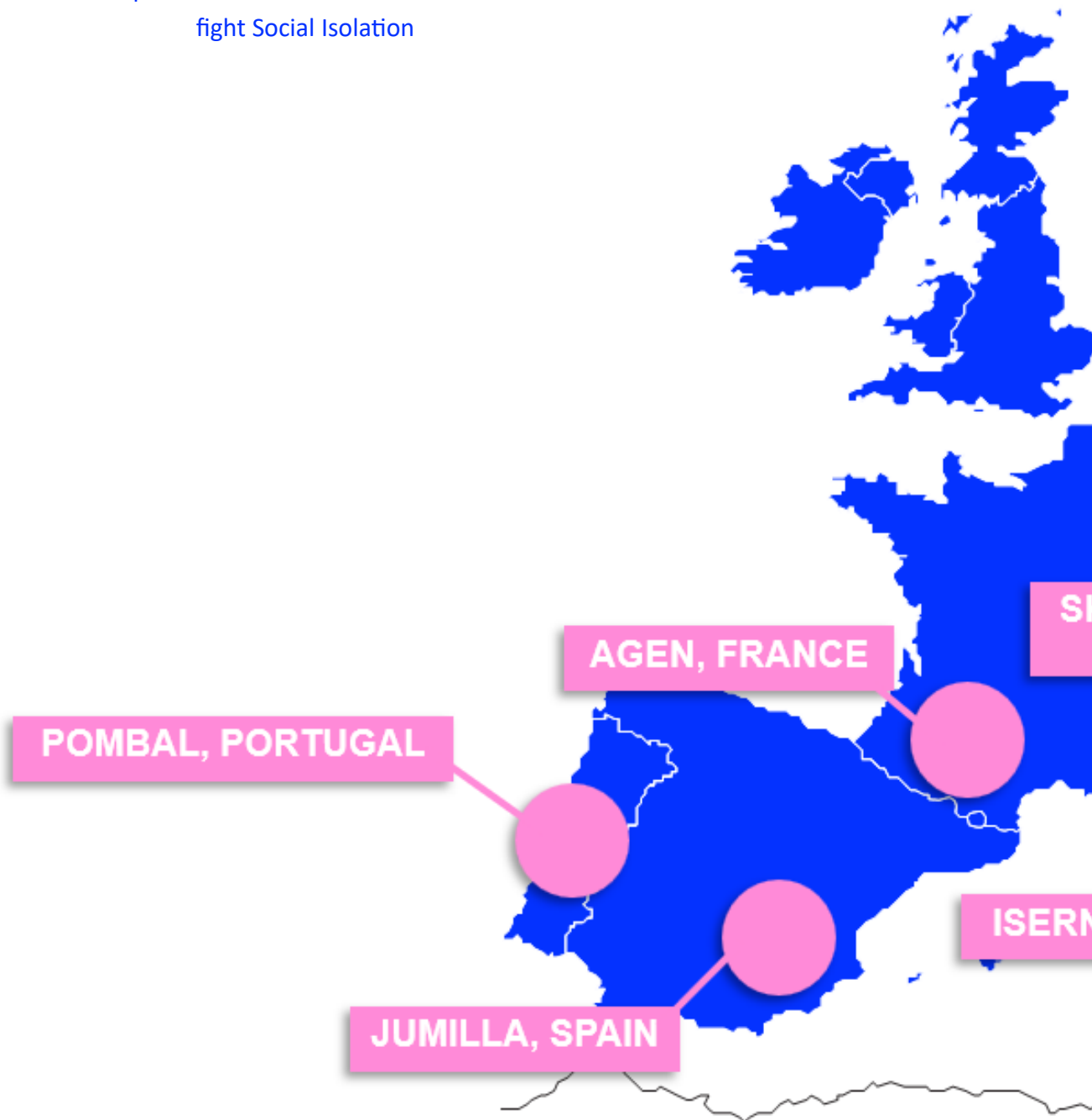
*The network in Roman's
Transnational Meeting,
December 2024*

*Pombal's Local Team in
Fót's Transnational
Meeting,
September 2025*



THE BREAKING ISOLATION NETWORK

10 European cities of 10 EU countries united to
fight Social Isolation



Why a European network?

Social isolation is a growing issue everywhere, not just in one country but worldwide. This means that everyone is potentially affected but it also means that potential solutions can be found everywhere. Solutions might lie not just in our own country but perhaps in a distant city elsewhere in Europe.

Started in June 2023 (until Dec. 2025), the Breaking Isolation network gathered 10 small & medium sized cities from 10 European countries facing issues of social isolation and willing to fight it.



For 2,5 years, we learned from each other, exchanged practices, visited each other, tried out new methodologies together and conducted local testing actions, to finish this journey producing our own local strategies to fight social isolation.

A EUROPEAN AND LOCAL JOURNEY

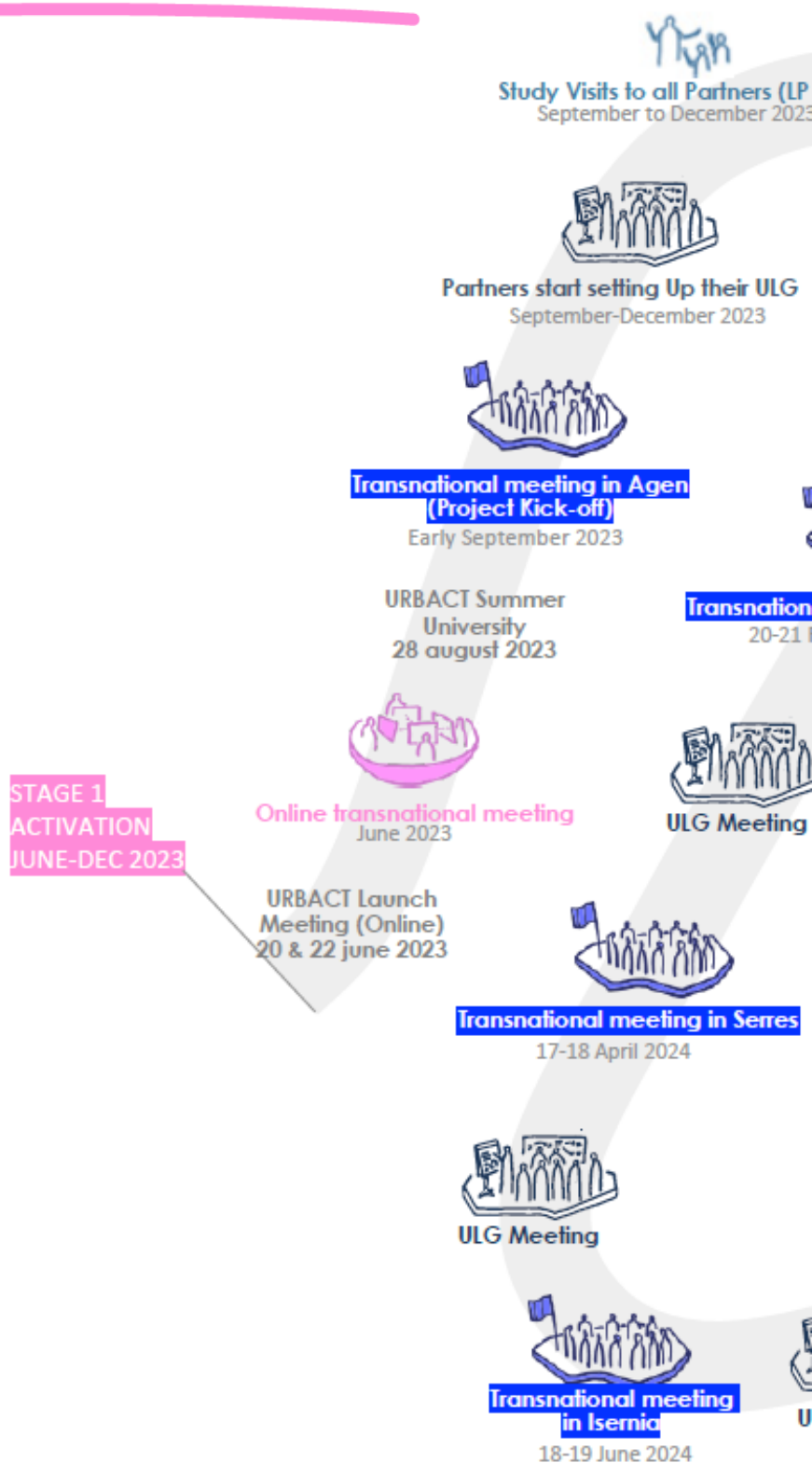
The Breaking Isolation journey is structured around a series of collective meetings called Transnational Meetings (TNM). These TNM gather, systematically, the 10 cities of the Breaking Isolation network and are the most valuable space and moments for exchange and learning for the network.

During these TNMs, each city presents the results of their work at local level with their URBACT local group (composed of a mix of local stakeholders, NGOs, citizens, civil servants, etc.), the host city of each meeting presents inspiring practices that help fight social isolation (through on site visits), the Lead Partner checks up administrative and communication matters while the Lead Expert explains the next steps and presents the customized tools specially created for this network, which cities will have at their disposal to use with their ULGs on order to carry out the necessary work for the development and preparation of the Integrated Action Plan.

In between each TNM, cities organize their URBACT Local Group (ULG) meetings, carry out the tasks requested at the previous transnational meeting and prepare the results to share at the next TNM.

Alongside ULG and TNMs meetings, the network also ponctually organizes online meetings as well as webconferences on specific issues/topics.

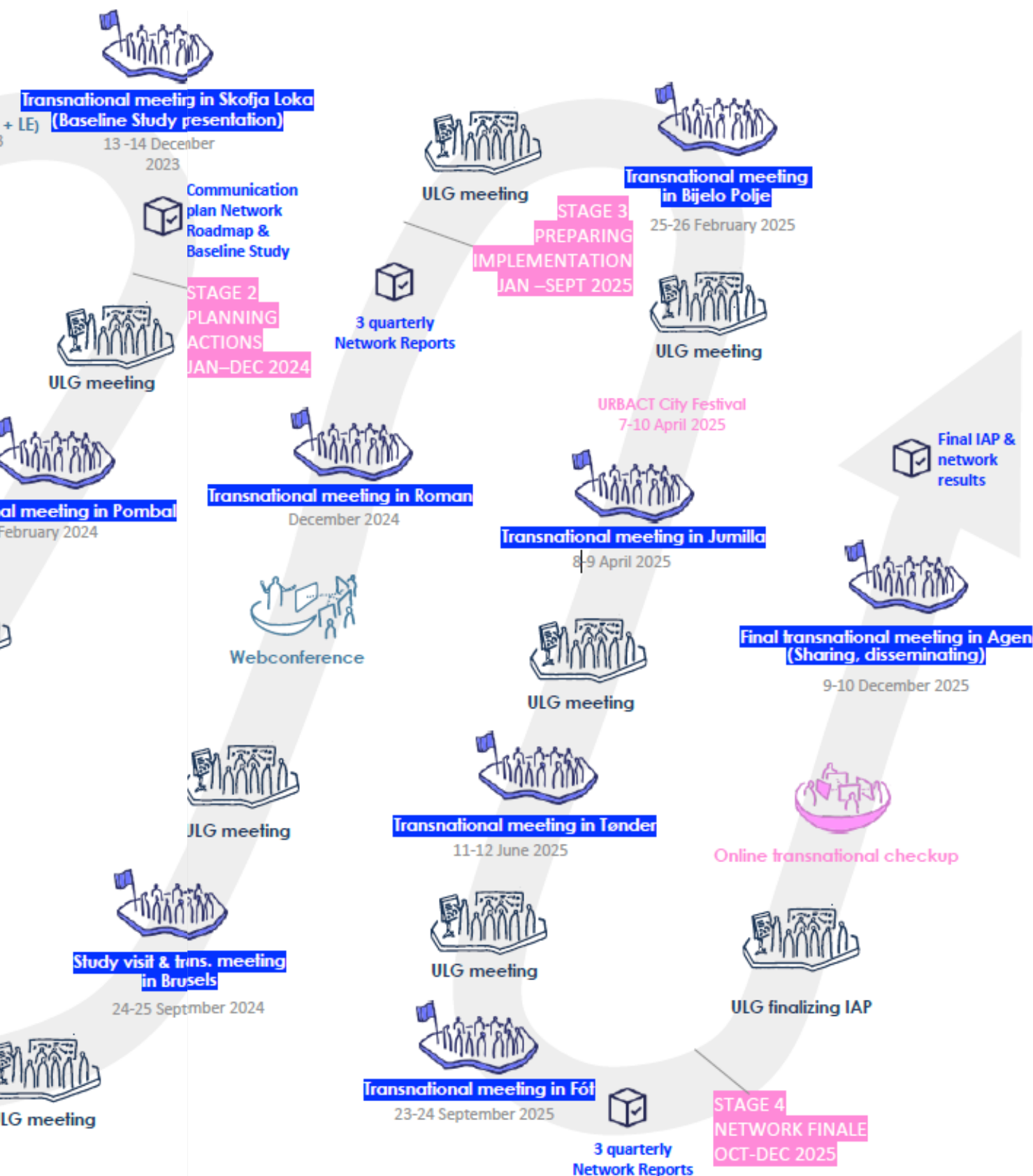
This 2,5 years long journey is not only a learning experience but also a beautiful example of European cooperation based on genuine sharing and exchanging.



The Pombal's Urbact Local Group meetings

2024: January 31st, March 13th, May 21st, June 11th

2025: January 23th, February 11th, March 28th



took place on the following dates:

July 10th and November 26th

18th and October 23th

A LOCAL COLLABORATIVE ADVENTURE

URBACT networks are a European and transnational cooperation journey, but also a local collaborative one. In fact, each network must bring together the main stakeholders in order to build and work collectively on local challenges and strategies. This document, and all the work behind it, has benefited from the contribution and commitment of all the entities listed below in the construction of this action plan, in addition to the Local Team, already presented.

The composition of the Urbact Local Group of Pombal resulted from the recognition that social isolation, as a public problem, is a complex social one, and therefore requires transdisciplinary action with various local players who are genuinely interested and committed to mitigating this “discreet epidemic”. From this reflection, major areas of intervention emerged namely:

- ◆ Authority/Municipal Services,
- ◆ Promotion and Protection of Children and Young People,
- ◆ Social Security,
- ◆ Health,
- ◆ Education (teaching and research),
- ◆ Public Security Forces,
- ◆ Employment and Adults Qualification,
- ◆ Proximity Social Intervention,
- ◆ Social Institutions (Ageing, Dementia, Disability, Domestic Violence),
- ◆ Citizens.

These general areas cover various fields of intervention in the Municipality of Pombal. They are also related to the multifactorial causes that increase the risk of social isolation and aim to cover all age groups, to avoid working on the issue through the lens of age, as recommended by the Breaking Isolation Network.



Pombal's first URBACT Local Group meeting in Pombal's Municipality Noble Hall, January 2024

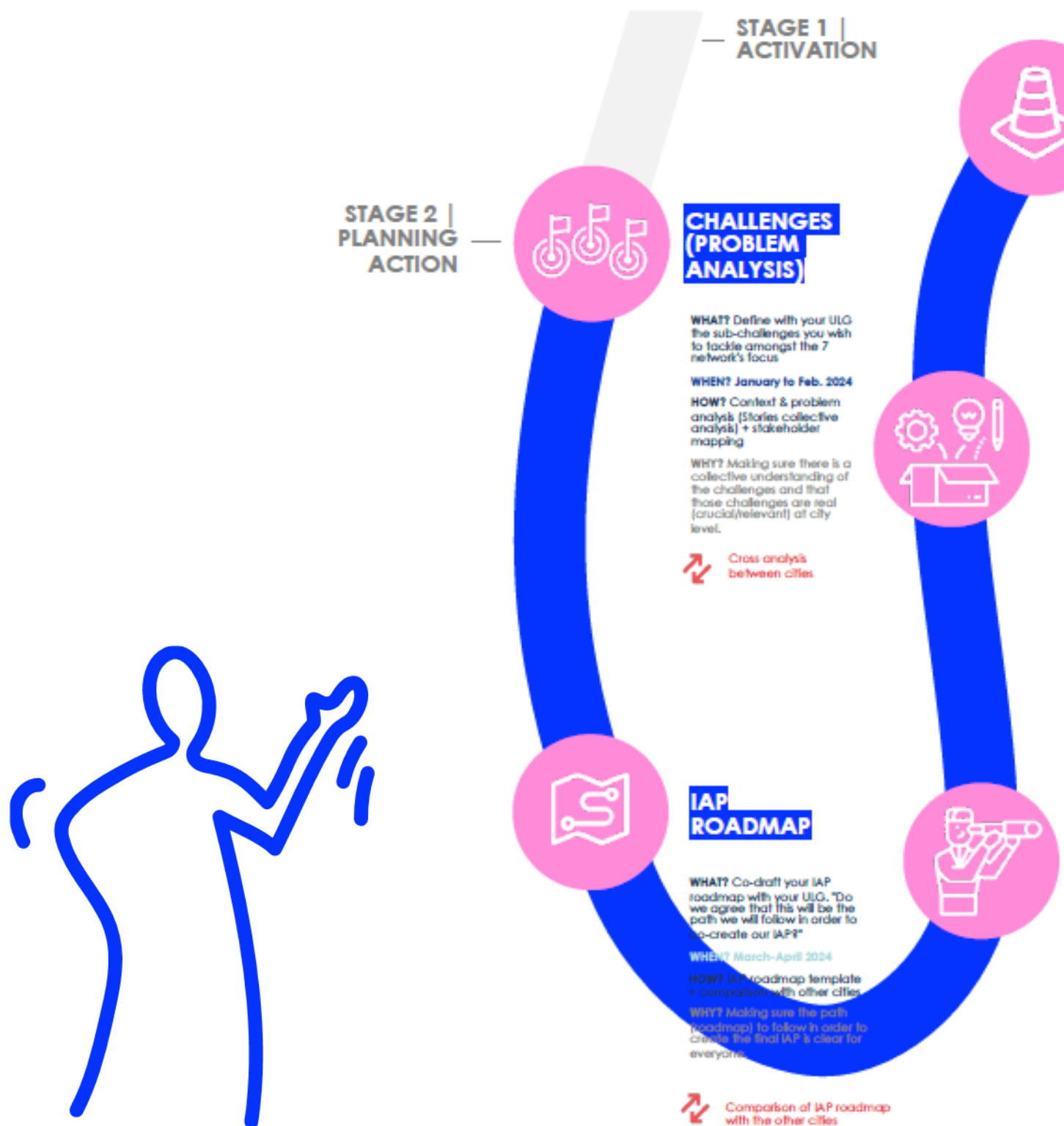


Pombal's URBACT Local Group at the first meeting in Pombal's Municipality Noble Hall, January 2024

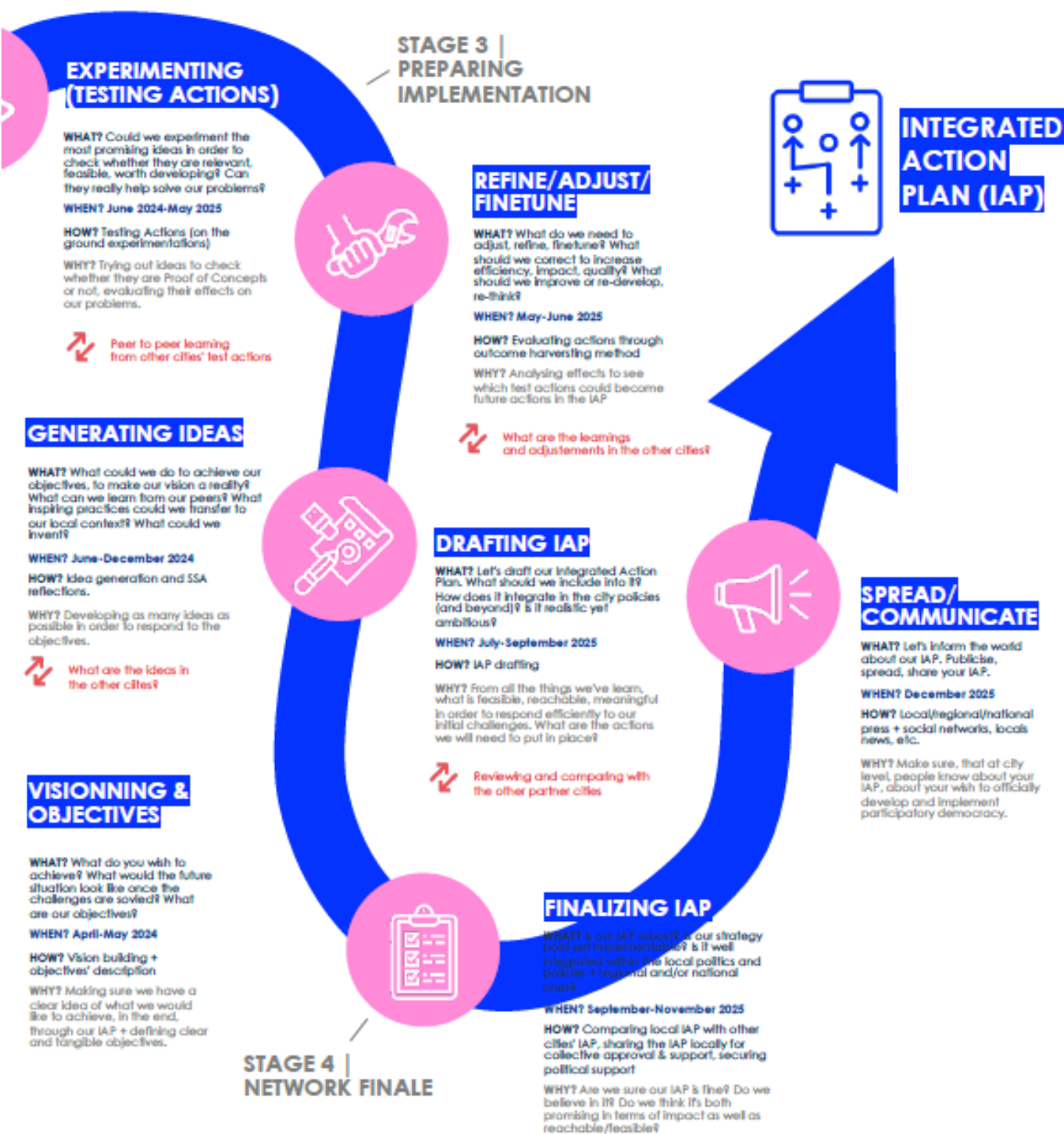


Pombal's URBACT Local Group meeting at Parque Verde do Açude, city of Pombal, July 2024

THE ACTION PLAN ROADMAP



Breaking Isolation network is an action-planning network of cities aiming at developing, each one of them, a local strategy to fight social isolation, called an Integrated Action Plan (IAP). In order to build this IAP, each city of the network is taken through a collective process (together with local stakeholders composing URBACT Local Groups) to first, diagnose the challenges and issues of their city regarding the topic of isola-



tion, then come up with the vision and objectives they want to achieve, or in other words, express their ambition, then, co-create ideas, copy and transfer promising practices from the other partner cities, then experiment, meaning try out ideas locally to collect proofs of concepts, then evaluate, refine, adjust then pack together the **strategy**.

SOCIAL ISOLATION



« **Social isolation** is a condition in which a person suffers from a long term lack of social relations both in *quantity and quality.*»

Definition discussed and approved by the Network partners

THE PROBLEM OF ISOLATION

Causes of social isolation are often multi-factorial. A well and sound socially inserted person can end up very rapidly isolated.

Why? For plenty of reasons (see the risk cards below):

- ♦ **Death of a loved one** (a divorce, a break up),
- ♦ **Mental health issues** (depression, dementia),
- ♦ **Physical impairments** (long illness),
- ♦ **Unemployment** (the loss of a job, or even retirement),
- ♦ **Poverty** (lack of financial resources, opportunities, rights, and dignity),
- ♦ **Intimate partner violence** (domestic violence),
- ♦ **Remote location** (the fact of living far from relatives),
- ♦ **Addictive use of social media**,
- ♦ **Addictions** (drugs, alcohol, gambling),
- ♦ **Lack of social skills** (communicating struggles of getting along with people and understanding others).

There are plenty of factors which may lead to social isolation.

It does not mean that you will automatically face isolation if you experience one of these situations, but it might increase the risk, especially when you start combining them (as factors add up).

SOCIAL ISOLATION IS MULTIFACTORIAL

THE (CAUSES) OF SOCIAL ISOLATION



BREAKING ISOLATION NETWORK – CHRISTOPHE GOUACHE

'Addressing individual risk factors in isolation will not be enough to tackle loneliness, and more holistic solutions will be needed.'

Joint Research Center, EU Commission 2022

THE PROBLEM OF ISOLATION

Key research data

SOCIAL ISOLATION IS HARMFUL

Findings indicate that the influence of social relationships on the



RISK OF DEATH ARE
COMPARABLE WITH
WELL-ESTABLISHED RISK
FACTORS FOR MORTALITY SUCH
AS SMOKING AND ALCOHOL
CONSUMPTION

and
exceed the influence of other
risk factors such as physical
inactivity and obesity.

(Holt-Lunstad J., 2010)

A study conducted on a 10 year period with over 12 000 people demonstrated that loneliness is associated with a

40 %

INCREASED RISK OF
DEMENTIA.

(Sutin AR., 2020)



Findings suggest that deficiencies in social relationships are associated with an

INCREASED RISK OF
DEVELOPING CORONARY
HEART DISEASE AND
STROKE

(Valtorta NK et al., 2016)



*'Vision without action is a dream.
Action without vision is a nightmare.'*

Japanese proverb

VISION



MENTAL TIME TRAVEL

The “**Mental Time Travel**” tool was designed by the Lead Expert of the Breaking Isolation network, Christophe Gouache, with the aim of supporting the projection of future scenarios and the definition of strategic ambitions for the partner cities.

In the context of Pombal’s Local Group (ULG), this methodology was applied as part of a structured vision-building process. Through a guided narrative, participants were invited to imagine future scenarios, fostering forward-looking reflection on the Municipality of Pombal.

This exercise encouraged creativity and offered a distinctive working experience, promoting the analysis of multiple representations of the future.

From a collective discussion, ULG members produced fictional articles for local newspapers, developing the “**News of the future**” tool, describing a context in which social isolation was no longer a problem, as illustrated in the following example.



Isolation? Not in Pombal.

While in most countries throughout Europe, cities face a growing issue with social isolation, in the city of Pombal, in Portugal, things are quite different. Indeed, social isolation has been declared as a key public problem since 2024.

Despite the European trend, we have found a **real social oasis in the municipality of Pombal**. According to the Mayor, Pedro Pimpão, this is due to the **set of strategies discussed by the Urbact Local Group** of the **Breaking Isolation project**, which are reflected in an **Integrated Action Plan** that will be implemented with the community by 2025.

Part of “News of the future” dynamic by Pombal’s ULG, March 2024

OUR VISION

The technique of *mental time travel* was used as a creative process for individual and collective foresight process. During the **visioning** method, participants were invited to imagine what Pombal could become in the absence of social isolation. This approach encouraged our ULG to reflect deeply on their aspirations and future perspectives: “Visions are (...) a desirable future in which present and upcoming challenges have been overcome, resolved or attenuated.”

ULG's perspective

IN THE FUTURE, IN POMBAL, WE
WOULD BE HAPPY AND PROUD IF

we became a society without social isolation, meaning...

...that a vibrant and welcoming Pombal is imagined as a place full of life and community spirit, where streets are lively with groups of people, terraces filled with conversation, and green spaces with families, children, and playful activities. Birds chirp, pets wander freely, and playgrounds echo with laughter, while homes and public spaces remain open, accessible, and barrier free. Neighbours invite one another in, creating a warm and festive atmosphere indoors, supported by a community that visibly cares for the elderly and promotes emotional freedom. In this technology free, harmonious environment—filled with colour, music, and joyful encounters—the essence of belonging and shared living truly thrives with:

- ◇ Evidence of life and community living,
- ◇ Green spaces with families and children playing, and with various leisure activities,
- ◇ Society where community support is visible (support for the elderly).

The feelings and values we aspire to cultivate in Pombal's future, as a municipality free of social isolation, are...

HAPPINESS

UNITY

EMPATHY

SOLIDARITY



News of the future" dynamic by Pombal's ULG, March 2024

7 (CHALLENGES FOR BREAKING ISOLATION

The Lead Expert of this Breaking Isolation Network, Christophe Gouache, identified 7 needs regarding social isolation:

1. We need to **better identify** socially isolated people;
2. We need to **better diagnose those at risk** of isolation (early signs);
3. We need to **develop direct answers** to help out those already isolated;
4. We need to **reinforce and multiply solutions** to prevent isolation of those at risk;
5. We need to **raise awareness** on social isolation, how to recognize it and its effects;
6. We need to **develop city-wide answers** by partnering within municipality departments and with local stakeholders, and in particular, local NGOs;
7. We need to **reinforce a culture of mutual community care**.

IN POMBAL, (CONCRETELY, WE DECIDED TO FOCUS ON...

After a process of reflection and discussion on the issue of social isolation in the Municipality, and bearing in mind that this topic should not be approached solely through the lens of age, the Pombal's URBACT Local Group concluded that an integrated and comprehensive approach is necessary, acting across several complementary fronts, as outlined below:

In Pombal, we plan to work on improving the [identification of people who are already socially isolated](#), because the existing responses are still scarce, and on [diagnosing those who are at risk of isolation](#), focusing on early signs and the multifactorial causes that increase this risk, due to the lack of action at this level. In fact, we believe that the problem in question can only be mitigated if we work on these two fronts simultaneously, and only in this way can we have a real idea of the needs to [develop direct responses at a local level](#) for those already suffering from social isolation and to [strengthen prevention solutions](#) for those potentially at risk. This is a real challenge for us!

On the other hand, we believe it is [essential to explore the dimension of raising awareness of social isolation as a public problem and the co-responsibility of civil society as a whole](#), as well as how to [recognize it and the negative impacts on people's quality of life](#).

Last but not least, we want to [strengthen social cohesion and social and intergenerational relations](#), in order to foster a [culture of mutual support/care in the community](#).



Group dynamic to define Pombal's focus, January 2024



ULG's discussing Pombal's focus, January 2024



STRATEGY



OUR STRATEGY IN ONE PAGE

[Challenge/problem]

Too many people, of all age range, are suffering from the growing phenomenon of social isolation



[Strategic objective]

Pombal is a city where no one is left aside suffering from isolation and where those at risk are taken care of by the community.

[Specific objectives]

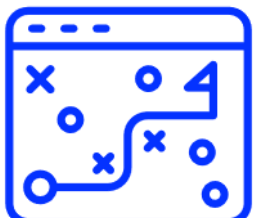
1. Better identify socially isolated people and better diagnose those at risk of isolation

2. Develop direct answers to help out those already isolated

3. Reinforce and multiply solutions to prevent isolation of those at risk

4. Raise awareness on social isolation

5. Reinforce social cohesion and social and intergenerational relations to foster a culture of mutual community care



The Strategy of Pombal

[Operational objectives]

- 1.1. Provide psychosocial support for people at risk or in social isolation / collect data for a municipal diagnosis.
- 1.2. Promote social literacy and prevent social isolation.
- 1.3. Strengthen local social intervention through early identification and coordinated use of resources.
- 1.4. Train social and health professionals to recognize signs of isolation and intervene effectively / raise awareness of this issue.
- 1.5. Ensure timely identification of risk or isolation and gather information for a more accurate municipal diagnosis.

- 2.1. Prevent and reduce social isolation by guiding and supporting people toward suitable community-based responses.

- 3.1. Promote social interaction, inclusion, and informal learning through artistic and creative activities.
- 3.2. Encourage social and intergenerational interaction and community participation.
- 3.3. Create public spaces that foster conviviality, socialization, and intergenerational contact.
- 3.4. Promote seniors' physical and mental well-being, increasing social interaction and independence.
- 3.5. Support Ageing in Place with health and quality of life, reducing isolation and loneliness.
- 3.6. Ensure access—especially for older adults—to public transport and essential services to reduce isolation.
- 3.7. Support a positive and informed transition to retirement, keeping older adults active in the community.

- 4.1. Raise community awareness about social isolation to encourage prevention, help-seeking, and solidarity.
- 4.2. Promote knowledge sharing and good practices to prevent and reduce isolation and loneliness.

- 5.1. Create spaces that encourage proximity, interaction, and solidarity among neighbours.

[Actions]

1.1.1. **Municipal Telephone Line—SOS Isolation and Loneliness**

1.2.1. *Social Isolation Webpage*

1.3.1. **Social Radar**, a national program that requires a local support network

1.4.1. *Skills training program for technicians*

1.5.1. *Online form*

2.1.1. **Social Prescribing**, joint venture between people, healthcare and support resources

3.1.1. **Sharing Glances Through Art**, artistic project

3.2.1. **Librarycoffee**, an informal meeting space to talk about books and adventures

3.3.1. **Living Streets / Meeting Points**, in the municipality

3.4.1. **Sports for All**, a program that encourages sports and physical activity in group

3.5.1. **Senior Spaces**, a program a decentralized socialization and welfare program

3.6.1. **On-demand transportation**, a way to ensure transportation for people living in remote areas

3.7.1. **Retirement preparation program**, to facilitate a successful transition from working life to retirement

4.1.1. *Awareness campaign on social isolation*

4.2.1. *Seminar/Conference on social isolation and loneliness*

5.1.1. **Municipal Neighborhood Promotion Program**



ACTION PLAN



Municipal Telephone Line

SOS Isolation and Loneliness

WHAT IS IT? WHAT IS THE OBJECTIVE?

This requires setting up a municipal line for people at risk of isolation, or who are isolated and alone, which can be used to request support and to talk to someone. It can also be used to refer friends, family members and neighbors in this situation.

The technician who answers these calls is a public servant in social affairs, in order to provide comprehensive assistance, appropriate to each situation, and to refer cases to the relevant authorities, if necessary.



SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE

Better identify socially isolated people and better diagnose those at risk of isolation



OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES

Provide psychosocial support for people at risk or in social isolation

Collect data for a municipal diagnosis



KEY STEPS

- 1: Define service goals and scope
- 2: Select and prepare phone location
- 3: (Hire and) train staff
- 4: Create call handling protocols
- 5: Develop referral and support network
- 6: Set up phone system and number
- 7: Design awareness campaign
- 8: Promote line to the public
- 9: Launch the helpline officially
- 10: Monitor calls and gather data
- 11: Adjust based on feedback
- 12: Report outcomes regularly



ACTION LEAD & PARTNERS

Co-lead: Municipality of Pombal

social institutions and other local entities

Supporting partners: Parish Councils, Local Health Unit of Leiria's Region, educational establishments,

Communication friends: Protocol and communication office of the Municipality of Pombal



COSTS & FUNDING

1.000€

allocated to cover the service and equipment costs, while the human resource assigned to the line, as well as other expenses related to space and energy, are normally ensured by the Municipality of Pom-bal under separate budget lines.



MONITORING INDICATORS & EVALUATION

INDICATORS:

- . Number of calls answered per week
- . Number of cases of social isolation identified per year
- . Number of referrals of potentially socially isolated citizens



RISK MITIGATION

1. Risk: Insufficient financial and/or human resources

- **Impact**: The telephone line may not be installed due to lack of allocated municipal budget.
- **Mitigation**: Explore alternative funding sources at regional, national, European, or other levels.

2. Risk: Ineffective communication of the initiative

- **Impact**: Low interest and engagement from potential users.
- **Mitigation**: Promote the initiative through local and regional media (newspapers, radio, social media, municipal website), as well as billboards, outdoor advertising, partnerships with local entities and associations, schools, leisure groups, community projects, and Local Health Units in the Leiria Region — ensuring outreach to all age groups and potential beneficiaries.

Social Isolation Webpage

WHAT IS IT? WHAT IS THE OBJECTIVE?

This requires the creation of a webpage with information on social isolation and loneliness, frequently asked questions, answers and a reference do the helpline. It will also serve as an archive for other publications that may be useful to interested people.



SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE

Better identify socially isolated people and better diagnose those at risk of isolation



Promote social literacy and prevent social isolation



KEY STEPS

- 1: Define webpage goals and users
- 2: Design user-friendly interface
- 3: Develop core content structure
- 4: Collect reliable information
- 5: Include support and contact links
- 6: Ensure accessibility and inclusivity
- 7: Test platform with real users
- 8: Launch website publicly
- 9: Promote through communication channels
- 10: Monitor traffic and feedback
- 11: Update content regularly



ACTION LEAD & PARTNERS

Co-lead: Municipality of Pombal

social institutions and other local entities

Supporting partners: Parish Councils, Local Health Unit of Leiria's Region, educational establishments,

Communication friends: Protocol and communication office of the Municipality of Pombal



COSTS & FUNDING

The webpage is municipal and does not generate additional expenses.

The technician responsible for updating the page is already employed by the Municipality of Pombal. This task, along with others resulting from their work is covered under the municipality's regular budget lines. Therefore, all related expenses are ensured through the usual municipal expenditure.



MONITORING INDICATORS & EVALUATION

INDICATORS:

- . Number of webpage visitors
- . Average visit duration
- . Number of interactions with FAQ's
- . Number of resource or publications downloads
- . User feedback



RISK MITIGATION

1. **Risk:** Inadequate or insufficient communication

- **Impact:** Low engagement and webpage failure.
- **Mitigation:** Promote outreach in diverse contexts (schools, public services, local entities and institutions).

2. **Risk:** Complex and unappealing accessibility

- **Impact:** Limited access to information for people with low digital literacy.
- **Mitigation:** Build a visually intuitive website with simple and clear language, suitable for access by youth, adults, and seniors.

Skills training program for technicians

WHAT IS IT? WHAT IS THE OBJECTIVE?

Professional training program to provide skills to the technicians who deal with people in the Municipality of Pombal, in order to better identify signs of social isolation and raise awareness of social management issues, with regard to partnerships, established protocols, and municipal synergies that can be an asset to citizens.



SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE

Better identify socially isolated people and better diagnose those at risk of isolation



OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES

Train social and health professionals to recognize signs of isolation and intervene effectively
Raise awareness of this issue



KEY STEPS

- 1: Identify training needs and goals
- 2: Design training modules and content
- 3: Select trainers and experts
- 4: Set training schedule and format
- 5: Promote training to technicians
- 6: Deliver training sessions
- 7: Assess knowledge before and after
- 8: Collect feedback from participants
- 9: Issue certificates of completion
- 10: Plan follow-up or refresher sessions



ACTION LEAD & PARTNERS

Co-lead: Municipality of Pombal

Supporting partners: Educational institutions offering adult training programs, Parish Councils, Social institutions

Communication friends: Protocol and communication office of the Municipality of Pombal



COSTS & FUNDING

5.000€

allocated to cover the fees of trainers/technicians, pedagogical and didactic materials, services provided by a certified entity, logistical costs related to the venue where the sessions will take place—including technical support—and the communication and promotion of this initiative, considering one edition of approximately 25 hours of certified training



MONITORING INDICATORS & EVALUATION

INDICATORS:

- . Number of sessions scheduled
- . Number of sessions delivered
- . Number of participants reached
- . User feedback
- . Assessment of learning outcomes



RISK MITIGATION

1. **Risk: Insufficient financial resources to hire trainers**

- **Impact:** Incomplete participant training may prevent accurate diagnosis or recognition of individuals at risk of social isolation.
- **Mitigation:** Seek funding from regional, national, or European sources, or establish partnerships with higher education institutions.

2. **Risk: Low participation due to personal and/or professional constraints**

- **Impact:** An insufficient number of participants may prevent the training of technicians across the entire municipality, resulting in incomplete identification of local needs.
- **Mitigation:** Raise awareness among local employers and institutions to encourage the release of technicians to attend the training sessions.

3

Online form

WHAT IS IT? WHAT IS THE OBJECTIVE?

Creation of an online form with key questions to diagnose the existence of people in social isolation or at risk, taking into account the multifactorial causes, in each parish of the municipality. Access to the form will be distributed throughout the municipality via awareness campaign materials and made available to technicians for use during appointments with citizens. All data collected through the form will be processed uniformly and stored in a centralized database, ensuring consistency and equal treatment of all entries.



SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE

Better identify socially isolated people and better diagnose those at risk of isolation



OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES

Ensure timely identification of risk or isolation and gather information for a more accurate municipal diagnosis



KEY STEPS

- 1: Define screening questions
- 2: Design online form
- 3: Test form usability
- 4: Distribute forms
- 5: Promote access via campaigns
- 6: Collect and monitor completed forms regularly
- 7: Analyze responses monthly
- 8: Refer urgent cases immediately
- 9: Report findings to stakeholders



ACTION LEAD & PARTNERS

Co-lead: Municipality of Pombal

Communication friends: Protocol and communication office of the Municipality of Pombal



COSTS & FUNDING

The online form is municipal and does not generate additional expenses.

The technicians responsible to create the form and to monitor the responses are already employed by the Municipality of Pombal. This task, along with others resulting from their work is covered under the municipality's regular budget lines. Therefore, all related expenses are ensured through the usual municipal expenditure.



MONITORING INDICATORS & EVALUATION

INDICATORS:

- . Number of forms submitted monthly
- . Number of risk cases identified
- . Number of isolations cases identified
- . Number of urgent referrals made



RISK MITIGATION

1. Risk: Lack of consent to complete the form

- Impact: The absence of records may result in an unrealistic municipal-level diagnosis.
- Mitigation: In the initial phase, target a specific group of participants with whom the technician applying the form already has a trusted relationship.

Social Prescribing

WHAT IS IT? WHAT IS THE OBJECTIVE?

This is an innovative approach that creates links between people, healthcare, and support resources in the community to improve the health, well-being, and quality of life of people at risk of social isolation. It involves a technician who refers people, as if it were a prescription for “social treatment,” to one or more of the available responses, according to the interests of the person concerned.

Each situation will have to be monitored to understand whether the person is attending the indicated responses and what impact this is having on their life.



SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE

Develop direct answers to help out those already isolated



OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES

Prevent and reduce social isolation by guiding and supporting people toward suitable community-based responses



KEY STEPS

- 1: Define goals and target users
- 2: Map local support resources
- 3: Establish referral pathways
- 4: Engage healthcare professionals
- 5: Train staff on social prescribing (complete training at the National School of Public Health (ENSP) and become part of the Portuguese Social Prescription Network)
- 6: Create referral and follow-up tools
- 7: Develop communication materials
- 8: Launch pilot in selected areas
- 9: Collect user and provider feedback
- 10: Monitor outcomes and satisfaction



ACTION LEAD & PARTNERS

Co-lead: Health Unit of Leiria's Region

Supporting partners: Municipality of Pombal and Social Security Institute

Communication friends: Health Unit of Leiria's Region and Municipality of Pombal



COSTS & FUNDING

100.000€ per year

allocated to a pilot project to be implemented over one year, covering human resources, infrastructure, training and capacity building for technicians, communication and awareness-raising, as well as monitoring and evaluation activities.



MONITORING INDICATORS & EVALUATION

INDICATORS:

- . Number of healthcare professionals engaged
- . Number of staff trained
- . Number of social prescriptions referred
- . Number of participants
- . Number of prevented risk situations and mitigated cases of social isolation



RISK MITIGATION

1. Risk: Lack of cooperation, engagement, or opposition from healthcare professionals

- **Impact**: Difficulties in implementation and potential failure of the initiative.
- **Mitigation**: Propose the implementation of this initiative as a pilot project within a health unit in the Municipality of Pombal, and include it in the respective action plan of the Local Health Unit.

2. Risk: Absence of updated mapping of available community resources and projects

- **Impact**: The lack of updated mapping compromises the effectiveness of social intervention, hinders coordination between entities, leads to resource waste, and weakens the response to the real needs of the population.
- **Mitigation**: Assign responsibility to Parish Councils for regularly communicating and updating the list of local services and resources available in each parish to the Municipality.

3. Risk: Inadequate systems to track progress, measure results, and identify issues during implementation

- **Impact**: Difficulty in identifying failures and improvement opportunities, leading to poorly informed decisions, resource waste, and reduced effectiveness of the initiative.
- **Mitigation**: Implement a structured monitoring and evaluation system with clear indicators, appropriate digital tools, and regular data collection and analysis processes, ensuring that teams receive training to use the system effectively.

5

Sharing Glances through Art

WHAT IS IT? WHAT IS THE OBJECTIVE?

A pilot artistic project on informal learning, across all parishes in the Municipality of Pombal, ending in an exhibition of the final product and a social gathering. The sessions will be grouped by artistic areas, and it will be possible to select the group that each individual wants to be part of.

Anyone interested can sign up, and these ongoing sessions will also be open to the participation of the referred people at risk of social isolation, who have this type of interest.



SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE

Reinforce and multiply solutions to prevent isolation of those at risk



OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES

Promote social interaction, inclusion, and informal learning through artistic and creative activities



KEY STEPS

- 1: Define project goals and themes
- 2: Select artists and facilitators
- 3: Choose accessible locations
- 4: Design inclusive art activities
- 5: Prepare materials and logistics
- 6: Promote project in community
- 7: Hold creative workshops sessions
- 8: Encourage sharing and interaction
- 9: Organize public art exhibition
- 10: Collect feedback from participants



ACTION LEAD & PARTNERS

Co-lead: Municipality of Pombal

Supporting partners: Parish Councils

Communication friends: Protocol and communication office of the Municipality of Pombal



COSTS & FUNDING

10.000€ per year

to human and material resources to support the development of the continuity workshops, with two editions per year and a final exhibition, including different types of workshops.



MONITORING INDICATORS & EVALUATION

INDICATORS:

- . Number of inclusive activities designed
- . Number of workshop sessions held
- . Number of participants
- . User feedback



RISK MITIGATION

1. **Risk:** Workshop formats do not consider the social, cultural, or economic context of participants

- **Impact:** Activities may become irrelevant and lead to low engagement.
- **Mitigation:** Develop a diverse range of workshops to ensure broad inclusivity, based on the interests of potential participants. Integrate this initiative as part of a Social Prescription response.

2. **Risk:** Excessive project implementation costs

- **Impact:** The sustainability of the project may be compromised without secured funding.
- **Mitigation:** Seek additional funding sources at national, European, or other levels, and recruit volunteers to help facilitate the sessions.

Librarycoffee

WHAT IS IT? WHAT IS THE OBJECTIVE?

This is an informal space to be created in the Municipal Library of Pombal, intended for the entire community, with the aim of increasing interpersonal relationships and intergenerational interaction.

Various activities will be held in this space, such as: book and reading animation, specific approaches to certain topics (in open conversation with or without experts), to discuss taboo or current issues, according to the interests of the participants, with coffee or tea.



SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE

Reinforce and multiply solutions to prevent isolation of those at risk



OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES

Encourage social and intergenerational interaction and community participation



KEY STEPS

- 1: Design the community space layout
- 2: Prepare area in Municipal Library
- 3: Gather materials and equipment
- 4: Plan activity schedule
- 5: Invite participants and facilitators
- 6: Organize reading and book sessions
- 7: Host open discussions and talks
- 8: Promote intergenerational interaction
- 9: Provide coffee and tea service
- 10: Collect feedback from participants
- 11: Adjust action to the needs of the participants
- 12: Evaluate results and impact



ACTION LEAD & PARTNERS

Co-lead: Municipality of Pombal

Communication friends: Protocol and communication office of the Municipality of Pombal



COSTS & FUNDING

2.000€ per year

allocated for the implementation of the annual program.



MONITORING INDICATORS & EVALUATION

INDICATORS:

- . Number of scheduled activities planned
- . Number of activities held
- . Number of participants
- . User feedback



RISK MITIGATION

1. **Risk: Lack of human resources to lead the initiative**

- **Impact:** The implementation of the initiative may be compromised and fail to achieve the intended results.
- **Mitigation:** Coordinate with Municipal Employment Office (GIP) to recruit a staff member through employment support measures.

2. **Risk: Low engagement with the space**

- **Impact:** The space may not attract sufficient participation, limiting its social impact.
- **Mitigation:** Develop an attractive, simple, and diverse program with effective communication regarding schedule, frequency, and other relevant details. Integrate the initiative as part of a Social Prescription response.

Awareness campaign on social isolation

WHAT IS IT? WHAT IS THE OBJECTIVE?

A multifaceted awareness campaign on social isolation will be created and spread throughout the municipality of Pombal on mupies, social media, and municipal buses (PomBUS), among others.



SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE

Raise awareness on social isolation



OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES

Raise community awareness about social isolation to encourage prevention, help-seeking, and solidarity



KEY STEPS

- 1: Define campaign goals and messages
- 2: Create visual and written content
- 3: Select communication channels
- 4: Plan campaign timeline
- 5: Launch campaign in key areas
- 6: Use real stories/testimonies
- 7: Promote on social media, municipal and isolation website
- 8: Monitor engagement and reach
- 9: Evaluate results and impact



ACTION LEAD & PARTNERS

Co-lead: Municipality of Pombal

Communication friends: Protocol and communication office of the Municipality of Pombal



COSTS & FUNDING

15.000€

allocated to cover the different types of communication.



MONITORING INDICATORS & EVALUATION

INDICATORS:

- . Number of materials planed
- . Number of publications delivered



RISK MITIGATION

1. Risk: Inadequate Communication

- Impact: Inaccessible language hinders understanding and the campaign's objectives.
- Mitigation: Adapt the campaign's type, format, and language according to each target population.

2. Risk: Difficulty in Evaluating the Impact of the Action

- Impact: The absence of evaluation prevents informed decisions regarding the continuati-on or termination of the action.
- Mitigation: Create a mechanism that links the campaign to participation in other initiati-ves.

Seminar/Conference on social isolation and loneliness

WHAT IS IT? WHAT IS THE OBJECTIVE?

A seminar/conference on social isolation and loneliness will be held at a national level, where leading experts and technicians in these areas will be invited to attend, in order to demystify this social problem and help find answers at local, regional, and national levels, as well as to reflect on the most important concerns to be taken into account and how to prevent these situations.

All interested people are welcome to attend, including social professionals, students, local authorities, citizens concerned about their neighbors, among others.



SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE

Raise awareness on social isolation



OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES

Promote knowledge sharing and good practices to prevent and reduce isolation and loneliness



KEY STEPS

- 1: Define objectives and target audience
- 2: Select date and venue (or online)
- 3: Invite speakers
- 4: Create event agenda/program
- 5: Design communication materials
- 6: Promote event through networks
- 7: Open registration to participants
- 8: Prepare logistics and equipment
- 9: Host seminar/conference
- 10: Facilitate discussions and Q&A
- 11: Collect feedback from attendees
- 12: Share results and key insights



ACTION LEAD & PARTNERS

Co-lead: Municipality of Pombal

Communication friends: Protocol and communication office of the Municipality of Pombal



COSTS & FUNDING

3.000€ per year

allocated to cover speaker fees, travel and meals, coffee breaks for all event participants, as well as materials, communication, and promotional activities.



MONITORING INDICATORS & EVALUATION

INDICATORS:

- . Number of sign-ups
- . Number of participants
- . Number of promotional actions (emails, social media posts, partner shares)
- . Number of sessions held
- . Number of registrations over time



RISK MITIGATION

1. **Risk:** Lack of thematic diversity and good practices to present
 - **Impact:** The seminar content may not reflect the complexity of the phenomenon of social isolation in different contexts.
 - **Mitigation:** Create a multidisciplinary technical team that encompasses the various multifactorial causes of social isolation.
2. **Risk:** Communication limited to local channels (municipal website, local social media)
 - **Impact:** The event may not reach audiences from other regions or relevant professionals at the national level.
 - **Mitigation:** Develop a multichannel communication strategy, including dissemination through national networks.

INTEGRATED ACTIONS



Integration of municipal initiatives with impact on fighting Social Isolation

Taking into account this is an Integrated Action Plan, it is relevant to mention a set of initiatives and projects promoted by the Municipality of Pombal, some of them are already included in other municipal strategic instruments, namely the **Social Development Plan 2024-2028** and the **Municipal Strategy for Active, Healthy and Happy Ageing (2024-2030)**.

Although these initiatives were originally aimed to other objectives, they also fight Social Isolation and improve citizen's quality of life.

Their inclusion in this Action Plan guarantees an integrated **vision of municipal intervention**, that values the complementarity between policies and fosters synergies that strengthen the overall effectiveness of all the actions throughout the municipality.

Social Radar

FINANCED PROGRAM | National

WHAT IS IT?

Social Radar is a national program in Portugal designed to identify, support, and integrate individuals experiencing social isolation and other social issues. The name symbolizes the program's proactive approach to detect situations of vulnerability that may otherwise remain invisible to public services. Social Radar is based on the development of partnership and cooperation work, focused on referral and recognition of poverty and social exclusion issues, in complementarity with local networks and entities.

By linking national objectives with local implementation, RADAR ensures that no one is left behind, and that social isolation as well as other issues are addressed in a comprehensive and sustainable way.

ALIGNMENT WITH SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

Better identify socially isolated people and better diagnose those at risk of isolation



OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES

Improve local social intervention capacity by identifying situations of vulnerability early and coordinating the use of available resources



ACTION LEAD & PARTNERS

Co-lead: Municipality of Pombal

Supporting partners: Parish Councils, social institutions and health entities

Communication friends: Protocol and communication office of the Municipality of Pombal



COSTS & FUNDING

100.000€ until the end of march 2026, when it's expected to end the program

totally funded by Recovery and Resilience Plan (PRR), supported by the European Union.

10

Living Street / Meeting Point

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2024-2028 | Municipal

WHAT IS IT?

Creation of social spaces that encourage socialization and intergenerational interactions on a permanent basis in all parishes in the municipality of Pombal, in underused locations (e.g., unused bus stops, municipal market, bandstands, among others).

These social spaces are meant for people to relax, read, play, interact, etc... But they can also be spaces to publicize and promote the work of local artists, enabling the creation of future partnerships.

After carrying out the testing action related to this action, we can see that in the parish of Pombal, there is already a preference for location and type of space, and it will be interesting for all age groups, according to the opinions gathered.

ALIGNMENT WITH SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

Reinforce and multiply solutions to prevent isolation of those at risk



OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES

Create public spaces that foster social interaction, conviviality, and intergenerational exchange



ACTION LEAD & PARTNERS

Co-lead: Municipality of Pombal

Supporting partners: Educational institutions, Parish Councils, Local associations

Communication friends: Protocol and communication office of the Municipality of Pombal and Parish Councils



COSTS & FUNDING

35.000€

allocated to ensure at least one space is available in each Parish.

11

Sports for All

ANUAL ACTIVITIES PLAN OF UNIT OF SPORTS AND YOUTH | Municipal

WHAT IS IT?

This is a program that has been running for over 20 years in the Municipality of Pombal.

It is free and provided by municipal sports technicians. It offers sessions several times a week and, between physical exercise classes in sports pavilions, outdoor walks, and water aerobics, it has over 300 participants. We believe that this program should continue as it is a good way to prevent social isolation among the elderly.

ALIGNMENT WITH SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

Reinforce and multiply solutions to prevent isolation of those at risk



OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES

Promote the physical and psychological well-being of the senior population

Contribute to increase social interaction, reduce isolation, and increase higher levels of independence and autonomy



ACTION LEAD & PARTNERS

Co-lead: Municipality of Pombal

Communication friends: Protocol and communication office of the Municipality of Pombal



COSTS & FUNDING

4.000€ per year

allocated to ensure the human resources needed to hold the initiative as well as the materials for the sessions.

12

Senior Spaces

STRATEGY FOR ACTIVE, HEALTHY AND HAPPY AGEING (2024-2030) | Municipal

WHAT IS IT?

It all started with the Educational Center for Seniors in Pombal.

After seeing the positive impact on the older population who attended this new initiative, it was extended to all parishes in Pombal, and is now called the Senior Space in each parish. The activities available are different, but the basis is the same: motor and cognitive stimulation and creative arts. In some Senior Spaces, there are also classes that stimulate the arts and allow participants to enjoy other experiences on stage. This is a response that, in addition to bringing well-being to all participants, is an obvious solution to minimize the risk of social isolation among older people.

ALIGNMENT WITH SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

Reinforce and multiply solutions to prevent isolation of those at risk



OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES

Support ageing at home and in the community (Ageing in Place), with health and quality of life, delaying or avoiding institutionalization

Promote social interaction and community engagement, contributing to the reduction of social isolation and loneliness



ACTION LEAD & PARTNERS

Co-lead: Municipality of Pombal

Supporting partners: Parish Councils

Active contributors: ADILPOM (CLDS 5G— IdadeMAIOR), ANGES (National Association of Social Gerontology)

Communication friends: Protocol and communication office of the Municipality of Pombal



COSTS & FUNDING

100.000 € for 2025

This municipal project was recently launched in the parishes, following the model already in operation at Pombal's Senior Space. It's build on the local resources available in each parish, as well as the diverse focus areas each parish considers important to include in the space. There is clearly room for growth and improvement across all Parishes.

For the year 2025, the project is entirely funded by municipal resources. Its implementation is made possible through partnerships and formalized agreements already in place.

13

On-demand transportation

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2024-2028 | Municipal
STRATEGY FOR ACTIVE, HEALTHY AND HAPPY AGEING (2024-2030) | Municipal

WHAT IS IT?

That's a public service where passengers can book their trip (by taxi) in advance by phone call. This project is funded by Incentiva +TP, allowing users to pay a reduced fare, with the remaining cost covered by the Intermunicipal Community of the Leiria Region. The implementation of this project with priority given to some municipalities of Alvaiázere, Castanheira de Pera, Figueiró dos Vinhos, Pombal, and Pedrógão Grande, aims to contribute to combating the isolation of the senior population and improve access to the public transport network, particularly in areas where public transport services do not exist or do not offer schedules compatible with the needs of the population.

This is a complementary service to the public transport network and aims to ensure trips to the municipal seat, where users can access their usual places (health center, pharmacy, market, bank, post office, etc.).

ALIGNMENT WITH SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

Reinforce and multiply solutions to prevent isolation of those at risk



OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES

Ensure access to public transport and essential services—particularly for older adults—to reduce social isolation and improve mobility in low-service areas



ACTION LEAD & PARTNERS

Co-lead: CIMRL (Intermunicipal Community of Leiria's Region) & Municipality of Pombal

Communication friends: Protocol and communication office of the Municipality of Pombal

Supporting partners: Municipality of Pombal



COSTS & FUNDING

30.000€ for 2025

The funding comes from the Environmental Fund, specifically through the **Incentiva+TP** programme, which covers almost the entire cost of this initiative. Users pay a reduced fare for each trip.

14

Retirement preparation program

STRATEGY FOR ACTIVE, HEALTHY AND HAPPY AGEING (2024-2030) | Municipal
CLDS 5G IdadeMAIOR Action Plan | Municipal

WHAT IS IT?

This retirement preparation program offers group sessions designed to support a smooth and successful transition from professional life to retirement.

Each year, the sessions are developed in close collaboration with internal Human Resources to ensure the content is tailored to the specific needs of that year's participants.

ALIGNMENT WITH SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

**Reinforce and multiply solutions
to prevent isolation of those at
risk**



OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES

Promote a successful and well-informed transition to retirement, keeping older adults active and engaged in the community



ACTION LEAD & PARTNERS

Co-lead: ADILPOM (CLDS 5G—IdadeMAIOR) & Municipality of Pombal

Communication friends: Protocol and communication office of the Municipality of Pombal



COSTS & FUNDING

1.000€ per year

This activity is part of the “CLDS 5G—IdadeMAIOR” Action Plan, with a focus on ageing, which started working in 2025, and will remain for four years with older people in the Municipality of Pombal, to meet and reduce their needs, as identified and duly documented. As such, this project is funded by “PESSOAS2030,” which comes from European funds.

As this is an action developed in partnership with the Municipality of Pombal, there may be small internal expenses to develop the actions of this pilot project with municipal workers.

15

Municipal Neighborhood Promotion Program

ANUAL ACTIVITIES PLAN OF OFFICE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND
HAPPINESS | Municipal

WHAT IS IT?

This involves creating a municipal program to finance small interventions in public spaces, close to neighborhoods, with the aim of promoting a sense of belonging to the community and establishing a greater connection between neighbors.

After the testing action was carried out, we realized what were the needs of a group of neighbors and we will do our best to put their requests into practice. Happy neighbors with common interests are very powerful connections and strengthen social networks.

ALIGNMENT WITH SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

Reinforce social cohesion and social and intergenerational relations to foster a culture of mutual community care



OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES

Create spaces that promote closeness, unity, interaction, and solidarity among neighbors



ACTION LEAD & PARTNERS

Co-lead: Municipality of Pombal

Communication friends: Protocol and communication office of the Municipality of Pombal



COSTS & FUNDING

1.000€ per year

Entirely funded by the Municipality, to cover approved applications for proposed public space modifications.

16

Initiatives developed by Social Institutions with the involvement of the Municipality of Pombal and which are relevant to fight Social Isolation

The next projects are actually being developed in Pombal in which the Municipality of Pombal plays the role of **Social Investor** ou **strategic partner**.

Given their objectives, scope of action, and social impact, their inclusion in this Action Plan is considered highly relevant, as they directly contribute to strengthening community networks, promoting social inclusion, and fighting the isolation of citizens in situations of greater vulnerability.

It is important to note that these projects are linked to the below **multifactorial causes** associated with social isolation, namely situations of bereavement, mental and physical health vulnerabilities, and issues related to the ageing process, acting as an integrated way to prevent and mitigate their effects.

The reference to these initiatives highlights the Municipality of Pombal's commitment to a **systemic, integrated, and collaborative approach**, supported by interinstitutional partnerships and guided by a logic of innovation and social investment, enhancing the creation of social value and the sustainable development of the territory.



Memory Café (Café Memória)

WHAT IS IT? WHAT IS THE OBJECTIVE?

Pombal's Memory Café ("Café Memória") aims to fight social isolation experienced by many people, contributing to improve their quality of life and to raise community awareness about the relevance of the topic of dementia, helping to reduce the stigma associated with this issue.

This project positions itself as a meeting place for sharing experiences and to give and get mutual support, where interaction among all participants is encouraged and useful, up-to-date, and reliable information is provided.



ACTION LEAD & PARTNERS

Lead organization: Alzheimer's Portugal Association—Center Delegation

Partners: Sierra Portugal, SA; Parents and Childhood Educators Association of Pombal (APEPI); Municipality of Pombal

ALIGNMENT WITH THE SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THIS INTEGRATED ACTION PLAN

2. Develop direct answers to help out those already isolated

3. Reinforce and multiply solutions to prevent isolation of those at risk

5. Reinforce social cohesion and social and intergenerational relations to foster a culture of mutual community care

L.U.I.S.A.—Bereavement Support and Intervention Unit

WHAT IS IT? WHAT IS THE OBJECTIVE?

L.U.I.S.A. Is a Social Innovation project, funded by Portugal 2030 Programme and by Social Investors, aimed at supporting individuals and families experiencing bereavement, cancer disease and/or traumatic situations. It offers an integrated, humanized and multidisciplinary intervention that provides support, care, and empowerment to individuals.



ACTION LEAD & PARTNERS

Lead organization: Santa Casa da Misericórdia da Redinha

Social investors: Municipality of Pombal; Parish councils of Abiul, Almagreira, Carnide, Meirinhas, Redinha, Vermoil, Vila Cã, and Guia, Ilha e Mata Mourisca; local companies, such as Ambipombal, Gescar, Farmácia da Redinha, Agência Funerária Lourenço e Vicente and Policlínica de Pombal

Institutional partner: Copombal, CRL

ALIGNMENT WITH THE SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THIS INTEGRATED ACTION PLAN

1. Better identify socially isolated people and better diagnose those at risk of isolation

2. Develop direct answers to help out those already isolated

3. Reinforce and multiply solutions to prevent isolation of those at risk

Healthcare at home (Saúde em Casa 2.0)

WHAT IS IT? WHAT IS THE OBJECTIVE?

Healthcare at home (“Saúde em Casa”) project aims to provide personalized and continuous care, centered on the person and delivered in their home, with the goal of fighting social isolation and social exclusion, among older adults that haven’t the social and healthcare support to meet their physical and social needs, enabling them to continue living at home as they grow old. This is a home-based care program, focused on health and well-being, supported by a multidisciplinary team and technological tools that provides supervised, safe and peaceful ageing for seniors.

The integrated combines remote health monitoring, efficient medication management, cognitive and social stimulation and the empowerment of informal caregivers, with the aim of preventing health complications, reducing hospitalizations and promoting autonomy and dignity among the elderly.



ACTION LEAD & PARTNERS

Lead organization: Dr. José Lourenço Júnior Foundation

Partners: Municipality of Pombal, Nabeiro Group and Consoftweb

ALIGNMENT WITH THE SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THIS INTEGRATED ACTION PLAN

1. Better identify socially isolated people and better diagnose those at risk of isolation

2. Develop direct answers to help out those already isolated

3. Reinforce and multiply solutions to prevent isolation of those at risk



Group dynamic related to Isolation Stories at ULG's meeting at CERCIPOM, May 2024



Pombal's URBACT Local Group meeting at Casa Varela, city of Pombal, February 2025



IMPLEMENTATION

GOVERNANCE AND PARTNERS

Pombal's strategy to fight social isolation would not have been possible without the help of the Pombal's Urbact Local Group, but also without the political commitment of the Mayor, Pedro Pimpão, and the entire local political executive of the City Council, in both political mandates.

The local authorities and the technicians who work at all parishes were also indispensable in carrying out the necessary diagnostic work and finding feasible solutions for each reality in this municipality, which is a very large area, different in terms of traditions and culture, as well as the habits of citizens in each parish.

To ensure the implementation of our strategy, we plan to dedicate a special team to carry out social intervention projects in our municipality and monitor the implementation, development, and evaluation of these actions in the field, ensuring:

- ♦ A person responsible for the strategy,
- ♦ An advisory board (ex-ULG), composed of local stakeholders meeting at least once a year,
- ♦ A community of “friends of the strategy” informal group, composed of citizens committed to combating social isolation in the municipality and whose role is to provide input and brainstorm about the development of the strategy and new actions to continue combating this problem.



Pombal's URBACT Local Group with Pedro Pimpão (Mayor of Pombal), at Living Street Testing Action, May 2025

OVERALL COSTS AND FUNDING

To implement the Strategy of Pombal, municipal authorities have to approve it as well as the projected expenditures. Moreover, it must be treated as a cross-cutting concern across various municipal departments, ensuring that all actions are carried out in an integrated, sustainable, and holistic way, with a clear focus on promoting the well-being of the population.

Funding per action—Funding as a whole

It is important to distinguish between overall funding and the funding allocated to each specific action. Internally, these actions may be included under different areas of the municipal annual expenditure plan, depending on their nature and the specific objectives to achieve. This set of planned new actions represent an overall estimated expenditure of 471.000,00€, for the timeline we present ahead.

It should be noted that this amount already reflects the costs associated with the Municipality's own human resources, namely for the implementation of actions and for the coordination and monitoring of this Integrated Action Plan.

Funding sources

To reduce pressure on the municipal budget, the Municipality of Pombal will seek, whenever possible, access to external regional, national, and European funding, complemented by local partnerships with social and health-sector entities.

Potential funding sources include **Portugal 2030**, **Portugal Inovação**, the **European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)**, and other instruments under the European Cohesion Policy. Additional funds linked to environmental, mobility, and territorial cohesion policies, as well as programmes on demographic transition, may also be used.

Despite external financing, the Municipality of Pombal will ensure its own funding share, demonstrating political and institutional commitment to the effective and sustainable implementation of the Integrated Action Plan.

Sustainability and impact

This document adopts a sustainable approach, coordinating municipal services, local partners, and the community to ensure the continuity of actions beyond the initial implementation phase. Integrating these measures into municipal structures and planning, together with access to regional, national, and European funding, strengthens financial sustainability and maximizes social impact in the Municipality of Pombal.

The expected impact includes preventing and reducing social isolation, reinforcing community support networks, and increasing social participation, thereby promoting well-being, social cohesion, and a better quality of life, particularly for the most vulnerable individuals.



GLOBAL RISK ASSESSMENT

Policy implementation involves translation policy objectives into concrete actions and outcomes. While the process is crucial for achieving desired results, it is often fraught with challenges and risks.

Below are the 6 main risks identified by the City of Pombal:

1. Insufficient Resources

- **Risk:** Inadequate funding, staffing, or infrastructure can hinder the ability to execute the policy effectively.
- **Impact:** Programs may fail to achieve their intended outcomes due to resource constraints.
- **Mitigation:** Prioritize low-cost, high-impact actions; seek external funding; reallocate internal resources; and build local partnerships to share capacity.

2. Poor Stakeholder Engagement

- **Risk:** Failing to involve key stakeholders (e.g., government agencies, community groups, private sector) in the planning and implementation process.
- **Impact:** Resistance, lack of cooperation, or opposition from stakeholders can derail implementation.
- **Mitigation:** Engage stakeholders early and regularly; ensure transparent communication; involve them in decision-making; and build trust through collaborative planning.

3. Bureaucratic Inefficiencies

- **Risk:** Red tape, slow decision-making, and rigid organizational structures can delay or complicate implementation.
- **Impact:** Policies may lose momentum or fail to adapt to changing circumstances.
- **Mitigation:** Streamline procedures; assign clear responsibilities; promote interdepartmental coordination; and use flexible implementation mechanisms.

4. Resistance to Change

- **Risk:** Pushback from individuals or groups who are negatively affected by the policy or who are resistant to new ways of doing things.
- **Impact:** Implementation may be delayed or undermined by opposition.
- **Mitigation:** Communicate benefits clearly; involve stakeholders in the process; provide training and support; and implement change gradually where possible.

5. Inadequate Communication

- **Risk:** Poor communication of policy goals, processes, and benefits to stakeholders and the public.
- **Impact:** Misunderstandings, lack of buy-in, and low public support can hinder implementation.
- **Mitigation:** Develop a clear communication plan; use diverse channels; tailor messages to target audiences; and ensure regular updates and feedback loops.

6. Sustainability Issues

- **Risk:** Policies that are not designed for long-term sustainability may fail after initial implementation.
- **Impact:** Short-term gains may not translate into lasting benefits.
- **Mitigation:** Integrate long-term planning from the start; secure diverse funding sources; build local capacity; and embed sustainability goals into all actions.

TIMELINE

The present **Integrated Action Plan** was designed with a long-term perspective, going beyond political mandate cycles to ensure continuity in addressing the population's concerns, regardless of changes in municipal leadership. This approach aims to guarantee the stability, coherence, and sustainability of the planned interventions.

Accordingly, the strategy is expected to have a minimum duration of five years, during which the actions will be implemented, monitored, and progressively adjusted based on the results achieved and the needs identified.

In this context, the following table presents the execution schedule of the new planned actions. It is anticipated that, in 2030, the compilation of the Plan's monitoring data will be carried out to prepare the corresponding Evaluation Report. Based on the results obtained, the need to develop a proposal ensuring the continuity of measures to mitigate social isolation will be assessed.

ACTIONS	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Municipal Telephone Line— SOS Isolation and Loneliness	•	•	•	•	
Social Isolation Webpage	•	•	•	•	•
Skills training program for technicians		•			
Online form	•	•	•	•	
Social Prescribing	•	•	•	•	
Sharing Glances Through Art		•	•	•	
Librarycoffee	•	•	•	•	
Awareness campaign on social isolation	•	•	•	•	
Seminar/Conference on social isolation and loneliness	•	•	•	•	

Evaluation of this Integrated Action Plan

As part of the implementation of this Plan, follow-up and monitoring meetings will be held for these actions, in coordination with the Advisory Council and the community of 'friends of the strategy', thereby strengthening civic engagement.



MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring and evaluating a policy is essential to assess its effectiveness, efficiency, and impact. Here are the practices that the City of Pombal seeks to apply, to ensure continuous learning, transparency and improvement:

1. **Implement Continuous Monitoring:** Set up a structured system for tracking indicators throughout the implementation period. Engage stakeholders regularly to gather insights on relevance, accessibility, and perceived effectiveness.
2. **Develop a Logical Framework:** Define how and why the policy is expected to work, outlining assumptions, inputs, activities, outputs, and intended outcomes. Use visual models to map the relationships between resources, actions, and results.
3. **Apply a Mixed-Methods Approach:** Combine surveys, metrics, interviews, and case studies to capture both measurable and experiential impacts. Cross-check data from multiple sources to enhance reliability and depth of analysis.
4. **Establish Baseline and Context:** Collect initial data before implementation to enable comparison and measure progress. Examine social and economic factors that may influence outcomes and guide adaptations.
5. **Use of Digital Tools:** Explore digital platforms for real-time data collection, visualization, and reporting.
6. **Sustainability of Monitoring Practices:** Design and use systems that can be maintained beyond the initial project cycle and integrated into municipal routines.
7. **Define Evaluation Timing and Frequency:** Conduct assessments at key phases (e.g., mid-term, final) to monitor progress and inform decision-making. Use evaluation findings to adjust strategies and respond to emerging needs or challenges.
8. **Engage Stakeholders in the Evaluation Process:** Involve community members, beneficiaries, and partners to ensure diverse perspectives. Promote co-responsibility by using participatory methods in data collection and interpretation.
9. **Promote Learning and Adaptation:** Create mechanisms to integrate evaluation results into ongoing implementation and future planning. Foster a culture of reflection and shared learning, encouraging open dialogue about successes, challenges, and opportunities for improvement.
10. **Cross-Cutting Priorities**
 - Gender Equality:** Ensure monitoring tools capture gender-disaggregated data and reflect the experiences of diverse groups.
 - Digital Transition:** Use technology to enhance data collection and community engagement, while avoiding digital exclusion.
 - Green Transition:** Monitor environmental impact of activities and promote sustainable practices in implementation.



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Muito obrigado ("Thank you very much", in Portuguese)





LET'S COME TOGETHER AND END ISOLATION



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