

\\ Quarterly Report 05 ///

Stories and updates from U.R IMPACT Network



In this report we speak about how the IAPs and the theories of change are becoming communication products and we share our experience during our Transnational meeting in Broumov and offer some tools and methods for impact planning

July 2025



NETWORK OVERVIEW

U.R. Impact, co-funded by the URBACT IV European program, is spearheaded by the Municipality of Cinisello Balsamo. Its primary aim is to craft an Integrated Action Plan assessing the societal impact of urban revitalisation initiatives.

Emphasising the significance of social impact and community engagement, this project seeks to reconceptualise urban renewal endeavours. This entails reorienting these actions to prioritise the welfare of citizens—addressing their social, economic, and environmental well-being at the core of these transformative processes. Additionally, by fostering a greater sense of belonging and encouraging civic involvement, the initiative aims to enhance community participation in these efforts.

Three key components for impact

The network core object is to learn and implement social impact management in their cities. the methodology around this aim is divided into three main elements:

Intentionality puts impact evaluation ex-ante, allowing planning designing for impact and includes constant monitoring and replanning

Additionality Taking into account various areas and stakeholders involved in the process.

Measurability Collecting valuable data and showcasing the impact.

City identity and key themes

Across the ten diverse cities engaged in this transformational journey, several key themes emerge, reflecting common challenges, innovative approaches, and distinctive characteristics intrinsic to each location.

Crafting a unique identity and safeguarding local heritage hold utmost significance for all U.R IMPACT cities. While some aim to establish a distinct identity and allure to draw in new permanent residents, others prioritise enhancing the sense of place for current inhabitants.

Social Inclusion	Sustainable Tourism
Brain drain and youth policy	Heritage and innovation
Governance models	Local commerce and proximity economy

- IAP -

Communicating Our IAPs and Theories of Change: From Clarity to Impact



As the network moves toward finalising its Integrated Action Plans (IAPs), the ability to communicate our work clearly and convincingly becomes essential. It is not only about documenting the process and results but also about reaching diverse audiences—colleagues, decision-makers, funders, and local communities—with messages that resonate.

Dr. Lidia Gryszkiewicz recent masterclass on Impact Data Analysis & Communication offered valuable reminders: good communication should reflect both numbers and narratives, include multiple formats (charts, visuals, quotes), and be grounded in real experiences. A well-presented Theory of Change (ToC) is more than a logical framework—it becomes a compelling story of purpose and progress when tailored to the audience. We were reminded that ethical and strategic communication is crucial to avoid “impact washing” and instead build transparency, credibility, and buy-in.

KEY TAKEAWAYS



Define your audience and adapt the format to their needs.



Use a mix of data types (qualitative and quantitative) to tell a complete story.



Choose the right visual tools—infographics, timelines, photo reporting, etc.—to highlight what matters.



Communicate not just outputs, but change: “what’s different because of our work?”



Keep it clean and honest: storytelling must be rooted in accurate and ethical data use.

- IAP -

Communication workshop

During the Transnational Meeting in Broumov, we held a hands-on session titled **"Communicating the IAPs and Theories of Change"**. The session supported cities in refining how they communicate their local plans and strategic logic. The workshop was divided into two parts:

Part 1 – Making Your IAP Speak:

Participants were guided through a series of activities to help them identify key messages, define target audiences, and select appropriate formats for communication. They drafted mini communication strategies using the "Strategic IAP Communication Canvas" and practiced adapting their messages to different audiences—pitching their IAPs to imaginary funders, citizens, and mayors. Tools such as the Pixar storytelling method were used to help cities develop clearer, more human-centered narratives.

Part 2 – Sharpening the Theory of Change Poster:

Cities then worked on finalising their Theory of Change posters. The session focused on clarity, consistency with the IAP, and visual storytelling. Cities annotated their drafts, exchanged peer feedback through a gallery walk or pair reviews, and submitted refinements for final production.

This workshop helped cities consolidate their planning work into communicable formats that can support real-world implementation, advocacy, and visibility—while also reinforcing internal clarity and strategy.



- 5TH UR IMPACT TRANSNATIONAL MEETING -

Social inclusion, Governance models and IAP communication



The fifth Transnational Meeting of the U.R Impact network took place in Broumov, Czech Republic from 17–20 June 2025, focusing on how cities communicate and implement their Integrated Action Plans (IAPs). This meeting marked a transition point, from designing strategies to preparing for delivery, by combining reflection, practical tools, and immersive learning in a local context.



Programme Overview and Key Focus Areas

Day 1 – Communicating the IAPs and Theories of Change

The first full day of the meeting focused on helping cities sharpen how they communicate their work. In the morning, participants revisited their Theories of Change, working on improving visual clarity and strategic alignment. The session included peer feedback on poster drafts and refinements in preparation for publication.

In the afternoon, cities engaged in a hands-on workshop on IAP communication, where they used storytelling methods (e.g., the Pixar method) and a “Strategic IAP Communication Canvas” to identify audiences, key messages, suitable formats, and opportunities for visibility. They also practiced pitching their IAPs to different fictional stakeholders - citizens, funders, mayors - receiving live feedback to help adjust tone and content. The day concluded with a cultural evening in Broumov's city centre.

Day 2 – Governance and Implementation

The second day explored how IAPs can be implemented through inclusive and fit-for-purpose governance models. In the morning, cities were introduced to governance practices from other municipalities, including youth engagement and participatory structures.

This led into a workshop on governance models, designed and facilitated by the Lead Expert. The session helped cities reflect on their local implementation context: Who needs to be involved? What decisions need to be made, and by whom? What capacity and resources are needed? Through a collaborative “governance game,” each city team built and tested a model tailored to their IAP priorities.

In the afternoon, participants visited various local sites across the Broumov region, showcasing how cultural heritage, cross-border cooperation, and community participation can strengthen social impact. The day concluded with a joint barbecue and cultural programme with the Roma community in Janovičky.

Day 3 – Closing and Looking Ahead

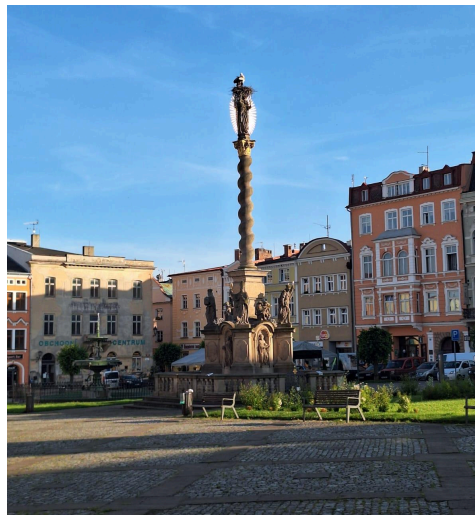
On the final day, the network met at the Broumov Monastery to reflect on lessons from the meeting and prepare for the final phase of the project. Cities shared ideas for communicating results, engaging stakeholders, and sustaining momentum beyond the project’s formal end.

Broumov revitalisation of the main square

At the start of the URBACT U.R. Impact project, Broumov’s main square (Mírové náměstí) was marked by depopulation, shuttered shops, and a lack of cultural activity—reflecting broader issues such as ageing demographics, economic decline, and public mistrust in local authorities. The revitalisation of the square was chosen as the central focus of Broumov’s Integrated Action Plan to visibly demonstrate positive change and rebuild confidence in participatory urban development.

The approach combines quick, low-cost pilot actions—like placing tables and chairs in public space or launching a mobile coffee stand—with long-term strategies aimed at restoring vibrancy to the city centre. These include reducing car traffic, creating pedestrian zones, and transforming vacant properties into spaces for exhibitions, pop-up shops, and cultural events. A new “Vacant Space Activation” initiative, supported by an online platform and renovation incentives, connects property owners with temporary users.

The city is also enhancing support for local entrepreneurship through a business incubator and appointing a city architect to guide design quality. These actions align with Broumov's broader development strategies and newly introduced urban standards. At its heart, the revitalisation of the main square is about more than urban design—it's about restoring social life, fostering civic pride, and turning the city centre into a welcoming, functional space for all residents.



GOVERNANCE MODELS

Why Governance Matters

As cities move from planning to implementation of their Integrated Action Plans (IAPs), the question of who decides, who delivers, and how coordination happens becomes central. Governance is no longer just an internal administrative concern — it's about building relationships, shared ownership, and sustainable mechanisms for action.

In our Broumov transnational meeting, we dedicated a full session to exploring governance models that are fit for delivering long-term urban strategies.

What We Did

We opened the session with a short talk on real-life governance innovations from European cities — from anchor institutions like Leuven 2030, to citizen-led structures in Manresa, and internal transformation efforts in Glasgow.

Then, we introduced the “10 Questions Game”, adapted from [GG4C resources](#), which helped cities reflect on:

- the purpose of their governance model,
- the actors involved,
- how decisions are made,
- how citizens participate,
- and how continuity is ensured.

Each city worked through the questions in small groups using a governance canvas, discussing trade-offs, formal vs informal power, and what makes people stay involved over time.

The Game: 10 Questions for Building a Governance Model

A playful yet serious tool prompting teams to reflect on:

1. What's the governance *for*?
2. Who's involved?
3. Are citizens included? How?
4. Is it a new body or an existing one?
5. Who leads it?
6. How are decisions made?
7. How often does it meet?
8. What does it produce?
9. Are members compensated?
10. How is coordination and accountability ensured?

The game helped cities clarify not just structures, but *motivations* — why people or organisations would engage and remain committed.

Key Insights

- **Governance is relational:** trust, roles, and informal dynamics matter just as much as structures.
- **Flexibility is key:** cities are choosing hybrid models — part advisory, part operational, some embedded in municipal structures, others externally anchored.
- **Motivation matters:** cities must consider *what each actor gets* from participation — voice, influence, data, legitimacy, learning.
- **Formalisation is a journey:** not every governance body needs a charter at first — but it needs *clarity*, purpose, and continuity.
- **No one-size-fits-all:** from rotating boards (Leuven), to random citizen panels (Orléans), to SDG-aligned internal units (Gävle), each model reflects local values and capacities

Cities will continue to refine their **Chapter 4 on Governance** in the IAPs, using the game outputs and canvas work as a base. The session also sparked interest in further exchange around:

- formal agreements and legitimacy,
- stakeholder compensation and motivation,
- and governance beyond the life of the project.

Question 1

What is the purpose and mandate of your participatory governance body?

Pick its areas of responsibility and mandate. Add your own if needed.

10 min

democratic society URBACT

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- TOOL FOCUS -

Make your communication strategy for the IAP

The *IAP Communication Canvas* is a practical, hands-on tool designed to help cities treat their Integrated Action Plans not as static reports, but as living, communicable strategies. Rather than waiting until the end of a planning cycle to "announce" the IAP, the canvas guides cities to think about audience, tone, timing and formats from the very beginning. It invites teams to identify who needs to be involved, why communication matters at each stage, and how to tailor messages to build trust, support and visibility. By breaking down communication into manageable components—such as milestones, channels and opportunities—the canvas makes strategic communication more accessible, structured and proactive.

STEP 1.A 30 min

City:

IAP Communication Canvas Work

Instructions: Work together in your group to fill in the exercise.

WHY communicate your IAP?
What's your communication purpose?

- ☐ Inform citizens and stakeholders
- ☐ Build support and engagement
- ☐ Make the plan visible to decision-makers
- ☐ Share good practices
- ☐ Attract interest or funding
- ☐ Other: _____

WHO communicates?
Who in your team leads communication?

Communication contact point: _____

Supporting roles (Internal/external): _____

Available tools (e.g. web access): _____

WHAT are the key messages in the IAP?
What's that people need to know?

Main challenges addressed: _____

Priority actions (list 2-3 flagship ones): _____

Who is responsible for implementing it: _____

When will people see change: _____

STEP 1.B 30 min

City:

IAP Communication Canvas Work

Instructions: Work together in your group to fill in the exercise.

WHO do you want to reach?
Stakeholders, residents, institutions – who needs to know?

Audience	Why do they matter?	What should they do or feel?

HOW to communicate?
Choose channels and formats based on your capacity.

Audience	Channel (e.g. social media)	Format (e.g. poster, map)

STEP 1.C 30 min

City:

IAP Communication Canvas Work

Instructions: Work together in your group to fill in the exercise.

WHEN to communicate?
Match messages to milestones.

Milestone	What happens	Communication opportunity

HOW to check if it worked?
Simple evaluation

Activity	What will you measure?

06th / Broumov / June 18th

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WHAT NEXT?



We are truly entering the **final stretch** of the UR Impact journey. Over the next weeks, cities will be putting the finishing touches on their **Integrated Action Plans**, while also preparing to **communicate their results** — both locally and at our final transnational meeting in **Cinisello Balsamo**.

This is a time of focus, pressure... and possibility.

In our upcoming sessions, we'll work with **Ed Thorp** to critically examine how *integrated* our IAPs really are — taking a sharp look at vertical alignment, cross-sector collaboration, and long-term ownership. We'll also learn from **Matthew Baqueriza-Jackson** about using **social procurement** as a powerful, practical tool to reinforce our IAPs and link them to inclusive local economies.

These final moments are always a little bittersweet. But we'll also take time to reflect on the relationships built, the insights gained, and the **opportunities to continue collaborating beyond the network** — through partnerships, proposals, and shared practice.