ISERNIA'S STRATEGY TO FIGHT SOCIAL ISOLATION

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URBACT

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INTRODUCTION

ABOUT THIS STRATEGY

This strategy (IAP - Integrated Action Plan) has been produced by the Municipality of Isernia (Italy) through the close cooperation with 9 other European small and medium-sized cities, within an URBACT Action Planning Network called «Breaking Isolation». For about 3 years, the Municipality of Isernia has exchanged, learnt and experimented with its fellow European cities on the issue of social isolation.

During the network journey, guidance and support from the Lead Partner and the Lead Expert was fundamental and very useful were also guidelines, documents and tools provided by the the URBACT IV Programme *(e.g. IAP guidelines for APN 2023-2025, IAP Study 2023 and 2019, Urbact Toolbox, etc.)*. Anyway, cooperation and exchange with the Partner cities was the real added value of journey, in fact, several actions of our IAP are inspired by their experience (to name a few: projects for seniors in Jumilla, Pombal, Fót; “Nature walks” in Tønder, “Mission local” in Agen, etc.).

It is noteworth to mention that useful information and inspiration came also by getting in contact and networking with other cities (e.g. thanks to Urbact Italian National Campus, october 2024) and also by exploring previous projects financed by Urbact and also other EU programmes (e.g. Urban Innovative Actions, Horizon 2020, Horizon Europe, Erasmus+).
All this contributed to develop, by the end of 2025, to our strategy to fight isolation.

This document tells the short story of this European collaborative peer-to-peer learning journey and presents the Integrated Action Plan of the Municipality of Isernia. The IAP is conceived as a dynamic tool, flexible enough to be adjusted and enriched depending on the evolution of the community, the funding available, the engagement of citizens and stakeholders, and the institutional and political support it receives.

As with any strategy, the plan might evolve and change in the future, it is therefore a guiding document, not a binding one. An update of the IAP is also expected with the start of the new programming period (2028-2024) of the European Union cohesion policy.

For more info about the URBACT network of Breaking Isolation:
https://urbact.eu/networks/breaking-isolation

BREAKING ISOLATION

URBACT NETWORK OF EUROPEAN CITIES TACKLING 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 impacted but it also means that potential solutions are eventually to be found everywhere. Solutions might lie not just in your own country but maybe in a far away city somewhere across 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, they learnt about one another, exchanged their practices, visited each other, experimented new methods altogether, conducted local testing actions, to build, in the end, their own adhoc strategies to fight isolation.

ISERNIA AND SOCIAL ISOLATION

'Social isolation is a condition in which a person suffers from a long-term lack of social relationships both in quantity and quality'. And social isolation is a rapidly growing social issue, worldwide. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), nearly one in four people is experiencing social isolation. Moreover, according to the last WHO report on the topic (2025), loneliness is linked to approximately 870,000 deaths each year.

Yes, we live in a society supposedly more and more connected, through the promise of social media, yet, studies show that people have never been more isolated than today. And Isernia is no different.

Despite being a medium sized city in which we could believe that people know one another, are closer to each other than in big cities, people in Isernia are growingly isolated. And it does not concern only the elderly, as one could think at first. Isolation has no age. It can concern anyone: anyone who's lost a partner, who divorced/broke up, who's lost his/her job, moved far from family & friends, who are suffering long illness or chronic disease, who's got no time for social encounters such as single parent, who's suffering from addictions (alcohol, gambling, drug, etc.), etc.

Literally anyone can suffer from isolation.

In Isernia, a growing number of citizens suffer from isolation. This is especially true when we consider the steadily declining population, the growing share of the elderly and the deterioration of family relationships.

Social exclusion is growing and we see it also in the lack of participation in the economic, social, political and cultural sectors, as well as in the declining services, both public and private.

Isolation often remains invisible, also because is usually accompanied by a social stigma, and even when it is recognized, there is frequently a lack of specific protocols and tools to support people in overcoming it. And this is why Isernia believed it could benefit greatly by learning from, exchanging with, experimenting alongside other European cities facing this same challenge.

This is how the city of Isernia ended cooperating in this URBACT Action Planning Network, chasing towards the same goal: preventing and fighting social isolation.

ISERNIA AND SOCIAL ISOLATION

Comune di Isernia

Isernia is located in Southern Italy (Regional Group SOUTH, NUTS 1: ITF), within the Molise Region (NUTS 2: ITF2, classified as a “less developed region”). It is the capital of the Province of Isernia (NUTS 3: ITF21).

Key data:
- Area (km²): 69.15
- Elevation: 423 m a.s.l.
- Population: 20,684 inhabitants
- Percentage of foreign residents: 5.7%
- Population density (inhabitants/km²): 299.1
- Average annual population change (2018–2023): –0.68%

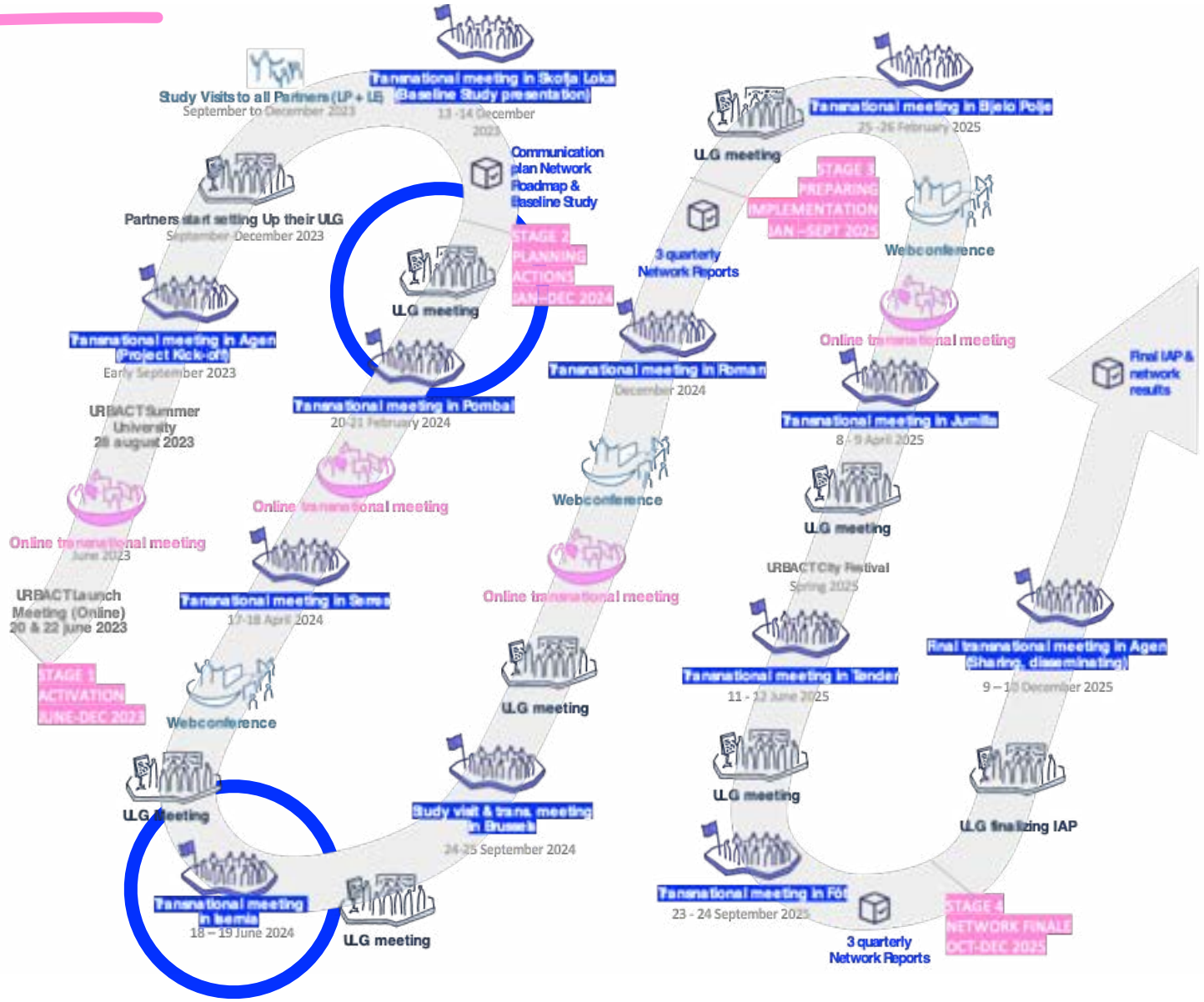
A EUROPEAN JOURNEY

The Breaking Isolation journey is structured around a series of collective rendez-vous called Transnational Meetings (TNM). These TNM gather, systematically, the 10 cities of the Breaking Isolation network and is the most precious exchange & learn space for the network. Indeed, during those 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.), then the hosting city showcases inspiring practices (through on site visits), Lead Partner checks up administrative and communication matters while the Lead Expert explains the next steps of the journey as well as presents the ad-hoc tools that cities will have to use with their ULGs.

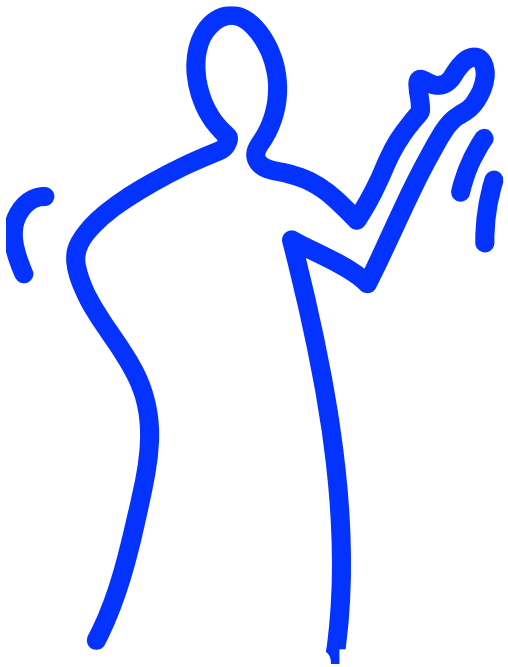
In between each TNM, cities organize their URBACT Local Group (ULG) meetings, in order to share their results to the next TNM.

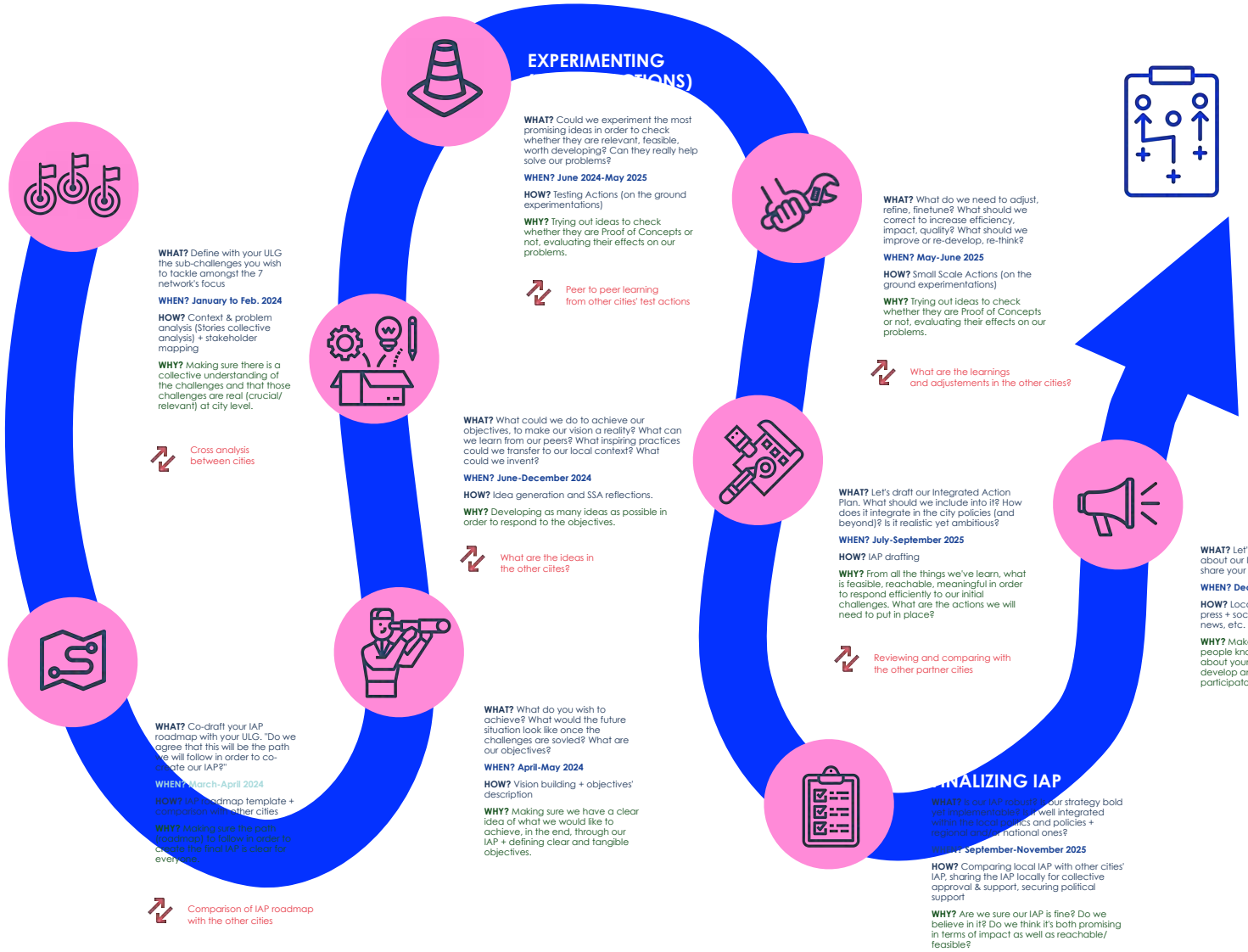
Alongside ULG meetings and TNMs, the network also punctually organizes online meetings as well as web conferences on specific issues/topics.

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



URBACT LOCAL GROUP





A COLLECTIVE JOURNEY

The **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 isolation, 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.

WELCOME TO
ISERNIA,
ITALY

A LOCAL COLLABORATIVE ADVENTURE

Although **URBACT** promotes transnational cooperation, its core value lies in its local impact. Each participating city is required to form a **URBACT Local Group (ULG)**, gathering local stakeholders from public institutions, civil society, academia, and the private sector. These groups co-design solutions tailored to their city's unique challenges, ensuring that local strategies are not only technically sound but socially inclusive.

In line with URBACT's participatory principles, the Municipality of Isernia initiated an **open and transparent call for participation to form its ULG.** A public notice was published on the municipality's official online register (Albo Pretorio) on November 3, 2023. This call invited organizations, associations, professionals, and citizens to contribute to the co-design of local actions tackling the problem of social isolation.

Following the public call, **the group was formally convened for the first meeting on January 30 2024,** during a meeting held at the Municipality of Isernia. From that point onward, the group has evolved as an open and collaborative body, welcoming new members, contributions and perspectives along the way.

To further strengthen its institutional foundation, the ULG was formally recognized by a municipal administrative decree (Determination Dirigenziale) issued on October 30, 2024. This step solidified the group's role within the URBACT framework and marked an important milestone in Isernia's commitment to co-desing and inclusive urban policy.

GRAZIE

VANS

A LOCAL COLLABORATIVE ADVENTURE

The strategy presented in this document is the direct result of the collective effort and commitment of a diverse and dedicated group of local actors. Each has contributed valuable experience, insight, and energy to our common goal of breaking social isolation in Isernia:

- **Piero Castrataro** – Mayor of Isernia
- **Nicolino Paolino** – Elected Official
- **Caterina Zacchia -** Head of the Public Policy Office
- **Stefania Bendato –** Project Manager and URBACT Local Group Coordinator
- **Celestino Manselli** – Thematic Expert and methodologist
- **Vincenzo Grande and Alessandra Cimino –** Coordinator and Social Services Operator, Social Territorial District of Isernia
- **Annamaria Di Palma -** Municipal Social Services Operator
- **Leandro Campopiano** – President, Sabino D'Acunto Social Centre (for elderly citizens)
- **Luigi Di Re** and **Elisabetta Di Biasio** – Volunteers, Italian Red Cross – Isernia Section
- **Pietro Scarduzio** and **Roberta Placella** – Social Worker and Psychologist, L.A.I. Cooperative (supporting people with disabilities)
- **Federica Vinci** — Activist
- **Brian Antonilli** – President, Vita da Pentro Association
- **Tecla Boccardo** – Member, U.I.L. Trade Union
- **Sergio Fraraccio** – Social Researcher
- **Joanna Jadwiga Madejska** – NUOVA ASSISTENZA – Social Cooperative
- **Sara Ferri** – President, Il Geco Social Cooperative (working with migrants)
- **Luce Visco** – President, Arcigay Isernia (LGBTQIA+ advocacy)
- **Daniela Grignoli** and **Mariangela D'Ambrosio** – Professors of Sociology, University of Molise (UNIMOL)
- **Gianni Ciao** – Representative, Civica S.r.l.
- **Salvatore Mincione** – Member, C.A.S.T. Association
- **Lucilla Frattura -** Medical Director
- **Giovanni Pirone -** Expert in Social Medicine Research and Studies

hobby
hobby

A LOCAL COLLABORATIVE ADVENTURE

The URBACT Local Group (ULG) of the Municipality of Isernia carried out a structured and participatory process, consisting of a total of **nine meetings**, with the aim of co-designing an Integrated Action Plan (IAP).

At the heart of the work was the fight against social isolation, with particular attention to the most vulnerable segments of the population: the elderly, young people (with specific reference to the phenomenon of hikikomori), people with disabilities, and migrants.

First Meeting – January 30, 2024, Municipality of Isernia

The first meeting served as the founding session of the ULG and was held at the municipal headquarters. The meeting had an introductory and general alignment function. The following were presented:

- the URBACT Programme and the objectives of the project;
- the results of the study visit by the Lead Partner and Lead Expert, which provided a useful methodological framework for the group;
- the preliminary study (Baseline Study), which outlined the relevant social and urban context;
- the roadmap of activities planned over the project period for the activation of the project;

Finally, the ULG coordinator, Dr. Stefania Bendato, was appointed.

Second Meeting – April 4, 2024, “Sabino D’Acunto” Social Centre

The second meeting marked the beginning of the operational phase, with the first working session dedicated to “vision building.”

During the meeting, participants worked on outlining a shared vision, discussing the seven thematic focus areas of the project.

A LOCAL COLLABORATIVE ADVENTURE

3. Third Meeting – May 30, 2024, L.A.I. Cooperative
During the third meeting, an “ideation” session took place, dedicated to generating ideas and proposals.

The open and creative exchange generated numerous project ideas, including unconventional ones, to address social isolation from multiple perspectives: some have become actions within the IAP (2 and 5), while others will be further explored within the OIS, such as widespread socialization hubs, intergenerational workshops, training programs, and more.

4. Fourth Meeting – September 4, 2024, Il Geco Social Cooperative
This meeting marked the beginning of the “testing actions” phase, i.e., small-scale experimentation of some of the previously proposed ideas.
The aim was to assess their effectiveness, feasibility, and real impact, directly involving ULG members, with particular attention to their active role in the actions.

5. Fifth Meeting – November 22, 2024, Italian Red Cross – Isernia Committee
The group continued evaluating the pilot actions, analyzing their strengths and the critical issues that emerged, as well as the conditions for potential future replication.

The discussion helped strengthen collective awareness of the process and gave momentum to the improvement of the proposals, making them more suited to the real context.

6. Sixth Meeting – January 21, 2025, Municipality of Isernia
The third phase of testing took on a more reflective tone.
Through the analysis of collected feedback, the group evaluated the ability of the actions to meet the actual needs of the population.

In parallel, the process of structuring the Integrated Action Plan was launched, and the first testing action was planned: a focus group aimed at gathering new data, information, and expert opinions on the issue of social isolation, as well as testing the usefulness of a potential IAP measure—namely, the establishment of an observatory on isolation.

A LOCAL COLLABORATIVE ADVENTURE

7. Seventh Meeting – May 23, 2025, Italian Red Cross – Isernia Committee
The work then focused on the definition of the structure of the Integrated Action Plan.
In particular, efforts were dedicated to:

- defining priorities and actions;
- identifying the stakeholders involved and their respective roles;
- definition resources and implementation models.

The central goal: ensuring coherence between the vision, objectives, and concrete actions.

8. Eighth Meeting – June 27, 2025, L.A.I. Cooperative
The process was consolidated with a technical and strategic in-depth discussion on the Plan.
Topics included:

- objectives, contents and timelines for implementing the actions;
- building long-term operational partnerships;
- identifying tools for monitoring and evaluation of the Plan.

9. Ninth Meeting - October 16, 2025, Town Hall of Isernia

During the last ULG meeting, as scheduled, were discussed:

- the Fòt TNM and feedback on the IAP by the Partners and the Lead Expert;
- the IAP, the six planned actions, the municipal funds, and the implementing partners;
- the project's closure and the continuation plans starting from 2026.

DEFIBRILLATORE

TESTING ACTION

EXPERIMENTATION

TESTING ACTION: "EXPERTS' FOCUS GROUP ON SOCIAL ISOLATION"

Network challenge

The testing action was designed in order to further explore, with the precious support of relevant professionals and experts, all the seven project "focus" identified in the project's Baseline study, and especially: 1. We need to better identify socially isolated people; 2. We need to better diagnose those at risk of isolation; 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, in particular local NGOs.

What we did.

The focus group was held at the Town hall (April 11, 2025 - from 10.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m.) and involved: 3 policy makers (the Mayor and two Municipal Councillors), 4 project's staff members and, above all, 10 professionals/experts (e.g. social workers, healthcare professionals, educators, municipal staff operating in the social services area, community members, etc.) who brought valuable insights from different fields. The focus group was preceded by a design phase (identification and involvement of participants, drafting and sharing of background material and methodological tools to effectively run the meeting, etc.) and was followed by a follow up phase (design and submission of a questionnaire in order to get from the "experts" involved further and more structured information and opinions).

EXPERIMENTATION

TESTING ACTION: "EXPERTS' FOCUS GROUP ON SOCIAL ISOLATION"

Main objectives and outcomes

The main objective was to test the idea of a permanent multi-stakeholder coordination mechanism on social isolation (e.g., permanent "table", "think tank", etc.) to be included in the IAP in order to continue monitoring and addressing the issue of social isolation after the end of the project. Moreover, the testing actions was designed also: to get opinions and insights on social isolation from different types of professionals/experts; to identify research areas that should be explored further in future; to further explore ideas already emerged within the ULG; to stimulate new concepts, ideas and suggestions for the IAP and Municipal policies in general.

What did we learn from the testing action

First of all, the experimentation of a participative approach was greatly appreciated by all the experts and stakeholders involved in the focus group. In particular, the idea under assessment (relevance of setting up a permanent multi-stakeholder coordination mechanism on social isolation) was validated and considered worthy of further development then inclusion in the IAP (the future Action 1 - Observatory on social isolation. The relevance of this idea was confirmed also by the follow up questionnaires completed by the experts a few weeks after the focus group: it turned out to be on the most appreciated idea, together with "training workshops for social workers/volunteers" (the future Action 2 of the IAP). Action . Also other ideas already circulating within the ULG got positive feedbacks by the experts involved in the focus group hence were shortlisted for a possible inclusion in the IAP. Finally, the experts acknowledged that social isolation manifests very differently depending on the age group hence recommended to consider that in order to avoid an IAP focused only on factors/problems affecting exclusively the elderly (here are the basis for other IAP Actions, especially 4, 5 and 6.

ISOLATION

THE PROBLEM

SOCIAL ISOLATION IS MULTIFACTORIAL

Causes of social isolation are often multi-factorials. A well and sound socially inserted person can end up very rapidly isolated. Why? For plenty of reasons (see the risk cards below): the death of a loved one, a divorce, a break up, depression, dementia, long illness, the loss of a job, or even retirement, addictions, the fact of living far from relatives, domestic violence. They are plenty of factors which may lead to isolation. It does not mean that you will automatically face isolation if you experience one these situation, but it might increase the risk, especially when you start combining them (as factors add up).

“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

SOCIAL ISOLATION IS MULTIFACTORIAL

THE PROBLEM

SOCIAL ISOLATION IS HARMFUL

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 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)

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

OUR VISION

IN THE FUTURE, IN ISERNIA, WE WOULD BE HAPPY AND PROUD IF ...

In the future, in Isernia, we would be happy and proud if nobody is left behind and alone and every resident feel part of a united and open community, inspired by principles of participation, solidarity and mutual support.

In this community, social stigma on isolation disappeared and who needs help can ask for - and find – several form of support and services to prevent and contrast isolation.

In this community,

- the elderly feel safe, connected, actively involved and share their long experiences,
- the young people play also in parks and streets and, once grown up, can remain and generate opportunities, for themselves and the whole community,
- Roma community and other minorities are fully integrated and they diversity is a resource for the community;
- vulnerable groups are fully included, with equal dignity and equal opportunities,

We hope that Isernia will be recognized as a friendly and inclusive city, where solidarity between people and active participation are the basis of city life.

7 CHALLENGES FOR BREAKING ISOLATION

The Lead Expert of the 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 ISERNIA, CONCRETELY, WE DECIDED TO FOCUS ON...

For Isernia, all the Network's areas of focus are considered relevant to an effective strategy for preventing and combating social isolation and have therefore been integrated into the IAP.
Nonetheless, particular attention will be devoted to **Focus Areas 1 and 2** (identification and early diagnosis of individuals who are isolated or at risk of isolation). Indeed, unlike other areas of social services intervention—where citizens generally reach out to the competent authorities on their own—individuals affected by social isolation, by definition, tend to withdraw or, at the very least, rarely take independent action to seek support. It is therefore essential to proactively identify and reach out to these individuals.

For this reason, especially through the **core action of the Plan (Action 1 – Observatory on Social Isolation)**, it is deemed necessary to continue conducting research and in-depth analyses in line with the aforementioned priority Focus Areas.

That said, as previously noted, the Plan encompasses all the Network's Focus Areas, reorganizing them into three main areas of intervention:

- **Research, networking, and fund raising** (Action 1);
- **Information, awareness-raising, and training** (Actions 2–3–4);
- **Opportunities and processes for socialization** (Actions 5–6).

CONTEXT

THE GROWTH OF LONELINESS WORLDWIDE, IN EUROPE, IN ITALY

The *Baseline Study* written by our Lead Expert Christophe Gouache has clearly shown that social isolation is a growing global phenomenon, to the extent that the WHO (World Health Organization) has, for several years, identified it as a global emergency with serious consequences for population well-being. According to the organization's most recent publications (*From loneliness to social connection – charting a path to healthier societies: report of the WHO Commission on Social Connection. Geneva, World Health Organization, 2025. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO*), one in six people worldwide suffers from loneliness, with a significant impact on health and overall well-being. Loneliness, in fact, is linked to approximately 100 deaths every hour, or around 870,000 per year.

The European Union has also been increasingly attentive to this issue in recent years. For example, in 2022 the Joint Research Centre launched a pilot project ("Monitoring Loneliness in Europe") with the aim of deepening knowledge of its various dimensions (e.g., the groups most affected, risk factors, consequences, as well as the main policies and prevention or mitigation initiatives implemented across EU Member States). According to the first pan-European survey on loneliness (*EU Loneliness Survey, 2022*), on average 13% of respondents reported feeling lonely most of the time, while 35% reported feeling lonely at least occasionally. Moreover, this figure is likely underestimated due to the negative "social stigma" generally associated with loneliness.

The highest rates were recorded in Ireland (over 20% of respondents), followed by Luxembourg, Bulgaria, and Greece (16–17%). The lowest rates were found in the Netherlands, Czech Republic, Croatia, and Austria (less than 10%). Italy falls around the European average (13–14%).

Italy, however, is among the European countries experiencing the most significant aging of its population. For this reason in particular, loneliness is expected to become an increasingly pressing issue. Indeed, recent demographic forecasts published by the National Institute of Statistics (*ISTAT, Italy 2050: Challenges and Prospects of a Society in Transition, 28/07/2025*) estimate that within 25 years Italy will lose 4 million inhabitants (falling below 55 million residents), one in three people will be over the age of 65, and one in four households will consist of a single person.

While loneliness can be triggered by various factors and is increasingly affecting adults and younger age groups as well, it is primarily shaped by the interplay between demographic trends and social developments. For example: population aging and rising life expectancy generate more elderly living alone; declining birth rates lead to more single parents; and the weakening of couple relationships results in a higher number of individuals living alone and an increase in single-parent families.

In summary, a growing number of older people in Italy will face loneliness: by 2050, the population aged over 75—generally more vulnerable and with greater needs—who may find themselves living alone is projected to reach approximately 4.6 million, an increase of 1.7 million compared to today. Thus, population aging represents the key driver of social isolation in Italy and the factor requiring the greatest policy attention.

THE GROWTH OF LONELINESS WORLDWIDE, IN EUROPE, IN ITALY

In addition to population aging, other factors are increasingly contributing to social isolation in Italy, with significant implications:

- **Rising poverty**: in 2023, approximately 5.7 million people were living in absolute poverty, representing 9.7% of the Italian population, a figure that has shown an almost continuous increase since 2005 (*ISTAT data*).
- **Growing youth distress**: 49.4% of adolescents and young adults aged 18 to 25 experience problems of anxiety and depression, which exacerbate feelings of isolation (*CENSIS data*).
- **Increased immigration**: the number of immigrants grew by 13% in 2023–2024 compared to the previous two-year period, raising challenges related to inclusion and social integration (*ISTAT data*).

These trends affect the entire country but are particularly evident in Southern Italy, which is generally characterized by fewer economic opportunities, lower employment rates, and consequently lower income and well-being levels compared to the national average. The issue is especially pronounced in the country's internal areas, particularly in smaller municipalities—once vibrant with social connections but now facing progressive aging and, in several cases, the risk of depopulation.

In essence, social isolation is increasingly manifesting in small and medium-sized communities as well, no longer being a phenomenon primarily associated with large urban agglomerations, where family and social ties are typically weaker or often absent.

THE CONTEXT OF ISERNIA: KEY FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO SOCIAL ISOLATION

Isernia is located in the Molise Region, a small southern Italian region classified as “less developed” under the principles of European cohesion policy. The two provinces of Molise—Campobasso (the regional capital) and Isernia—present a broadly similar socioeconomic profile, with overall levels of development and well-being lower than the Italian average (*ISTAT, Fair and Sustainable Well-being of the Territories – Molise Region, 2024*).

In particular, the region shows a “mixed picture,” with certain strengths (e.g., positive performance in education, environment, and security) but also several persistent weaknesses, including: progressive population aging; a predominance of micro and small enterprises with low productivity and limited propensity for innovation; high unemployment (9%), peaking at 30% among young people aged 15 to 24; inadequate infrastructure; and a progressive reduction in the availability of services. It is also worth noting that, among the dimensions considered by ISTAT in its territorial well-being assessments, Molise records lower-than-average national levels in “Social Relations” (indicators: generalized trust, civic and political participation, satisfaction with friendships). Stronger family ties, however, continue to endure, with Molise showing above-average performance in this dimension compared to the national level.

Isernia, in particular, has for several years been directly affected by the demographic, social, and economic trends outlined above. Over the past decade, the city has experienced a steady demographic decline: in 2023, the resident population stood at 20,684, with an average annual decrease of -0.68% between 2018 and 2023. Compared to ten years earlier (2013), the population has fallen by almost 1,400 inhabitants. This decline, however, has been partially mitigated by the steady increase in foreign residents, who now account for nearly 6% of Isernia’s population.

At the same time, the average age is rising (46.7 years, compared with the national average of about 45 years), as is the old-age index (222.6 versus 220.1 for Italy). Individuals aged over 65 now represent more than a quarter of the population (25.8%), a share that is expected to grow significantly due both to population aging and to the constant decline in the number of young people. Regarding the latter, according to Openpolis estimates based on ISTAT data (*Openpolis, Forecasts on the Condition of Young People in Italy in 2030, 5/8/2025*), in a median scenario the number of residents aged 10–19 in the province of Isernia could fall by -4.6%, from 6,488 in 2023 to 6,190 in 2030. As for the 15–34 age group, according to CGIA of Mestre (*Research Office News, 1/2/2025*), Isernia recorded the third largest decline among Italian provinces between 2014 and 2024, with a reduction of -21.5%, corresponding to 4,235 fewer residents in this age range.

Isernia experienced significant development starting in the 1970s, primarily as the political and administrative center of the Province of Isernia. However, beginning in 2014, with the restructuring and downsizing of provincial functions, the city began to lose momentum. This was further compounded in subsequent years by the effects of several economic crises that led to the closure of important local industries (e.g., *ITTIERRE*, which employed approximately 700 workers in the fashion sector).

As a result, levels of employment and well-being began to decline, public and private services contracted, and young people—especially those with higher levels of education—started emigrating in increasing numbers.

Within this broader context of demographic, economic, institutional, and social decline, the number of individuals experiencing or at risk of social isolation has been rising. While the elderly remain the primary group affected, work carried out with the ULG, together with experts and stakeholders involved in the testing action, has highlighted that social isolation—though often less visible—is also growing among young people, as well as among individuals facing broader challenges of social inclusion or even direct discrimination (e.g., persons with disabilities, people with chronic illnesses, migrants, ethnic minorities, LGBTQIA communities, etc.).

THE CONTEXT OF ISERNIA: INTERVENTION STRATEGIES AND MAIN CONNECTIONS WITH THE KEY MULTI-ANNUAL REFERENCE POLICIES

Strategy and Areas of Intervention of the IAP
The Municipality of Isernia, also thanks to its participation in the *Breaking Isolation* network, has developed a deeper awareness that a growing number of people of all ages in the city suffer from or are at risk of social isolation (*Problem*). The municipality aspires to become a city where the entire community is aware of this issue and takes care of those affected or at risk of falling into a spiral of social isolation and loneliness (*Vision*). In short, a city where no one is left alone (*Strategic Objective*).

In this regard, all seven focus areas identified in the *Baseline Study* are relevant to the IAP strategy, with particular emphasis on the first two:

1. The need to better identify socially isolated individuals;
2. The need to better identify individuals "at risk."
3. The IAP's areas of intervention can be summarized as follows:

1. **Research, networking, and fundraising** (*Action 1*);
2. **Information, awareness-raising, and training** (*Actions 2–3–4*);
3. **Opportunities and processes for socialization** (*Actions 5–6*).

Coordination of the IAP with Other Policies and Strategies
The Municipality will coordinate the IAP strategy with its ordinary social policies and services, as well as with other ongoing projects and initiatives in the territory that show complementarities and synergies with IAP actions. The goal is to contribute specific added value (e.g., analytical perspectives, methodologies, tools) on the issue of social isolation and loneliness. In particular, opportunities for coordination and development will be explored in relation to two significant multi-annual programming frameworks, currently at an advanced stage of definition and expected to become operational around January 2026.

Isernia–Venafro Inner Area Strategy (SNAI)
For the 2021–2027 EU cohesion policy programming period, the Municipality of Isernia has been designated by the Molise Region (Managing Authority of the ERDF/ESF+ Programme 2021/2027) as the lead authority for a territorial strategy targeting the Isernia–Venafro Inner Area. This area includes 14 neighboring municipalities, with a total population of around 45,000—representing more than half (56%) of the entire population of the Province of Isernia.

The SNAI, which is close to approval by the Molise Region (ERDF/ESF+ Managing Authority), foresees a set of interventions across the 14 municipalities involved, funded primarily by the ERDF but also by the ESF+, aimed at counteracting the socio-economic decline that has affected the area for several years. While ERDF interventions focus on enhancing the area's key resources, strengthening infrastructure, and stimulating the productive fabric, ESF+ will, among other objectives, aim to increase levels of social protection and to address the growing vulnerabilities generated by the factors highlighted in previous sections (population aging, weakening of family welfare networks, unemployment and youth emigration, migrant integration, etc.).

These dynamics are also leading to an increasing demand for socialization and, in many cases, to conditions of "risk" or actual loneliness. Therefore, the implementation of the SNAI will actively seek synergies with the IAP's actions and, more broadly, will aim to transfer the knowledge on loneliness gained through *Breaking Isolation*.

THE CONTEXT OF ISERNIA: INTERVENTION STRATEGIES AND MAIN CONNECTIONS WITH THE KEY MULTI-ANNUAL REFERENCE POLICIES

Local Social Plan (PSZ)
Isernia serves as the lead municipality of one of the *Ambiti Territoriali Sociali* (ATS, Territorial Social Areas) into which the Molise Region is divided. Currently, there are seven ATS, but a rationalization process is underway which, among other measures, foresees a reduction in their number. The ATS are clusters of neighboring municipalities through which the integrated system of social interventions and services is implemented, with the aim of ensuring homogeneous service provision across the territory and adequate responses to the population's needs.

Each ATS operates on the basis of a three-year programming framework—the *Piano Sociale di Zona* (PSZ, Local Social Plan)—developed in line with the guidelines and funding mechanisms defined at the regional level by the *Piano Sociale Regionale* (PSR, Regional Social Plan). The ATS of Isernia involves 24 municipalities, and the current PSZ defines services in the following priority areas of intervention: Access to welfare; Family responsibilities and minors; Elderly; Persons with disabilities / non-self-sufficiency; Adult hardship and poverty. These are areas where loneliness is often present or finds fertile ground, and with respect to which synergies will therefore be sought with the actions of the IAP. Similarly, potential synergies will be identified and promoted in relation to the next PSZ, based on the new PSR 2025–2027 (approved in June 2025), which will enter into force in January 2026.

In conclusion, both programming frameworks are considered to provide significant avenues for the implementation and potential future development of the IAP. These will be further explored and developed primarily within the framework of Action 1 of the IAP (Observatory on Social Isolation). Since both initiatives involve collaboration with neighboring municipalities, there will be opportunities—following the logic of territorial integration—to engage additional municipalities in certain IAP actions or, at a minimum, to raise their awareness regarding the growing prevalence and importance of loneliness.

Moreover, these programming processes include direct dialogue with the Molise Region, creating the opportunity to promote the themes and results of the IAP to a higher political-administrative level, in line with the logic of vertical integration, particularly with the ERDF/ESF+ Managing Authority (e.g., for purposes of dissemination, mainstreaming, and fundraising). This aspect is considered especially significant, as it directly addresses an area for improvement identified within *Urbact III* regarding the feasibility and sustainability of IAPs: the need to strengthen links with the Managing Authorities of the European Structural Funds (*cf. Urbact Networks Follow-up Study, March 2021; IAP Study 2023 and 2019*).

STRATEGY

OUR STRATEGY IN ONE PAGE

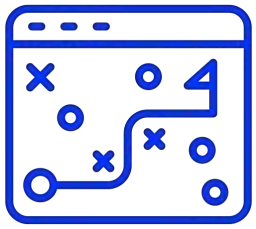
CHALLENGE/PROBLEM

An increasing number of people of all ages are suffering from, or are at risk of, social isolation.

Strategic Objective

In Isernia, no one is left alone.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES	ACTION
Enhance general awareness and understanding of the phenomenon of increasing social isolation.	Monitor the evolution of the phenomenon and design increasingly effective prevention and mitigation strategies and actions.	1. Observatory on social isolation (OIS)
Disseminate specific knowledge and skills among operators, volunteers, and citizens in…	Improve the ability to identify individuals who are isolated or at risk of social isolation, and to interact with them appropriately.	2. Information and Training Workshops
Promote knowledge and understanding of the growing phenomenon of social isolation and its serious consequences.	Provide adequate information to key stakeholders and the wider community, raising their awareness and encouraging possible forms of active involvement in actions aimed at preventing and combating social isolation.	3. Community Information and Awareness-Raising Events
Provide information and raise awareness regarding the issue of increasing social isolation among young people.	Engage schools and families in initiatives to prevent and address social isolation among young people.	4. Meetings for Families and Schools
Create opportunities for the exchange of knowledge and experiences between older adults and young people who are isolated or at risk of social isolation.	Initiate structured and potentially long-lasting processes of socialization between older adults and young people.	5. Intergenerational Workshops
Create opportunities for the exchange of knowledge and experiences among various target groups who are isolated or at risk of social isolation.	Initiate socialization processes for different categories of target groups.	6. Thematic Days for Socialization



The strategy of Isernia

ACTION PLAN

Observatory on Social Isolation (OIS)

The Observatory on Social Isolation (OIS) will serve as the driving force behind the entire Integrated Action Plan. It will actively involve the members of the ULG, as well as additional relevant stakeholders who wish to participate by responding to a dedicated call for expressions of interest. This call will be launched during the initial months of the Plan's implementation and will remain open throughout its duration. The overarching goal of the OIS is to guide, direct, and oversee the implementation of the Plan, as well as to design and develop, according to the principles and methods of participatory planning, increasingly effective strategies and actions to prevent and combat social isolation.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE

Enhance overall understanding of the growing phenomenon of social isolation.

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE

Monitor the evolution of the phenomenon and develop increasingly effective strategies and actions for its prevention and mitigation.

MAIN ACTIVITIES

1. Definition of the OIS's organizational and operational model and launch of the Call for Expressions of Interest to join the Observatory.
2. Research, analysis, and in-depth studies on social isolation.
3. Focus groups and participatory planning workshops aimed at providing useful input for the implementation of the Plan's actions, further developing ideas already identified but not included in the Plan, and fostering the emergence of new ideas.
4. Annual survey on social isolation in Isernia (through questionnaires and in-depth interviews).
5. Fundraising and networking activities to support the Plan's actions and, where appropriate, to promote new initiatives.

LEAD AND PARTNERS OF THE ACTION

Co-lead: Municipality of Isernia
Active contributors: ULG members
Support partners: OIS members

Communication friends: ULG members, OIS members, other stakeholders.

COSTS AND FUNDINGS

EUR 9.800,00 – Municipal Funds
Through fundraising activities, additional funding opportunities (at regional, national, and European levels, as well as from private sources, etc.) will be continuously monitored to support the sustainability of the Plan and, where possible, its strengthening and expansion.
In relation to this latter aspect, for instance, the annual survey could be extended to other neighbouring municipalities (SNAI Isernia-Venafro Area, Territorial Social District) should they be interested in the activity and willing to co-finance it.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION INDICATORS

- Number of new members joining the OIS: at least 6 new entities in addition to those already part of the ULG.
- In-depth studies on social isolation to be published on the Municipality's website and those of Communication Friends: at least 2 per year.
- Focus groups and participatory planning workshops conducted: at least 4 + 4 (online and in person).
- Number of cases of isolated or at-risk individuals identified: 3 per year.
- Survey questionnaires administered: at least 150 per year.
- In-depth interviews conducted: at least 4 per year.
- Funding opportunities analysed: at least 3 per year.
- Networking opportunities explored: at least 2 per year.

RISK MITIGATION

The main risk is a low level of engagement from ULG members and, above all, from new entities joining the OIS. This risk will be mitigated by keeping OIS members constantly informed of the Plan's progress and, above all, actively engaged, particularly through the numerous planned focus groups and participatory planning workshops (a total of at least 8). In addition, the action foresees the involvement of volunteers and/or experts to carry out fundraising, stakeholder engagement and networking activities.

1

Information and Training Workshops

This action aims to disseminate and strengthen knowledge and skills in the field of preventing and combating social isolation, also based on the information and evidence generated by other actions of the Plan, in particular Action 1 (OIS). Operationally, two workshop cycles will be held each year: one aimed at professionals (e.g., social workers, social and healthcare operators, teachers, doctors, etc.) and one aimed at young volunteers/potential volunteers and citizens in general. Each cycle will consist of two 4-hour workshops providing knowledge—tailored to different levels of depth depending on the target group (professionals or young people)—on how to address situations characterized by loneliness (e.g., old age, illness, discrimination, etc.). The workshops will also provide practical knowledge on listening to and activating socially isolated or at-risk individuals (e.g., how to motivate them, engage them, and direct them towards support services and initiatives).

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE

Disseminate specific knowledge and skills among professionals, volunteers, and citizens in general.

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE

Improve the ability to identify socially isolated individuals or those at risk of social isolation, interact effectively with them, and provide motivation and support.

MAIN ACTIVITIES

1. Co-design of the workshops (e.g., venue, specific content, speakers, testimonials, educational materials, supporting equipment, etc.) with OIS members and other stakeholders wishing to contribute.
2. Preparation of the Call for Expressions of Interest to participate in the workshops (including specific requirements and order of application).
3. Development and dissemination of information and promotional materials to encourage participation in the workshops.
4. Delivery of two annual workshop cycles: one for professionals and one for young volunteers/potential volunteers and citizens in general.

LEAD AND PARTNERS OF THE ACTION

Co-lead: Municipality of Isernia
Active contributors: ULG members
Support partners: OIS members

Communication friends: ULG members, OIS members, other stakeholders, citizens in general.

COSTS AND FUNDINGS

EUR 2.000,00 – Municipal Funds
Through the fundraising activities outlined in Action 1 (OIS), additional funding opportunities (at regional, national, and European levels, as well as from private sources, etc.) will be continuously monitored to potentially strengthen and/or expand this action (e.g., increasing the number of workshops). In this regard, for example, the activity could receive support from the PR FSE+ Molise Region 2021–2027.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION INDICATORS

- Total number of workshops delivered: 8.
- Number of participants: 10 per cycle, 40 in total.
- Level of satisfaction with workshop participation: at least 75% of participants satisfied.
- Level of learning: at least 75% of participants successfully pass a short final test.
- Number of cases of isolated or at-risk individuals reported by training participants: 4.
- Number of individuals requesting further information on the Plan and on social isolation in general following workshop participation: at least 30 in total.

RISK MITIGATION

The main risk for this action is a low level of interest and, consequently, low participation among the target audience. This risk is slightly higher for the “professionals” target group due to their work commitments. For this reason, the cycles aimed at this target group may also be delivered in synchronous online mode.
Overall, the risk will be mitigated through the commitment of all partners (e.g., promotion of the Call for Expressions of Interest through their respective communication channels, both traditional and social media), as well as through the preparation and adequate dissemination of informative and promotional materials capable of attracting attention and stimulating interest.

2

Community Information and Awareness-Raising Events

For the success of the Plan, it is essential to continue informing and raising awareness within the local community, particularly regarding the information, knowledge, and evidence that will be generated by the various actions comprising the Plan. The overarching goal is to foster a growing, informed, and proactive awareness towards socially isolated individuals and those at risk of isolation (e.g., how to identify them, understand them, engage with them, and refer them to the most appropriate services or projects). Operationally, two events will be organized—one per year. The final event, scheduled at the conclusion of the Plan, will also serve to present a preliminary analysis of the results achieved.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE

Disseminate knowledge about the growing phenomenon of social isolation and its severe consequences.

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE

Inform key stakeholders and the community at large, and encourage their involvement in actions aimed at preventing and combating social isolation.

MAIN ACTIVITIES

1. Co-design of the events (e.g., venue, format, speakers, testimonials, supporting materials and equipment, etc.) with OIS members, relevant stakeholders, and citizens willing to contribute.
2. Preparation and dissemination of promotional materials to encourage participation in the events.
3. Preparation and dissemination of informative materials to encourage further exploration of the issue of social isolation and the implementation of the Plan.
4. Delivery of two events, one per year.

LEAD AND PARTNERS OF THE ACTION

Co-lead: Municipality of Isernia
Active contributors: ULG members
Support partners: OIS members

Communication friends: ULG members, OIS members, other stakeholders.

COSTS AND FUNDINGS

EUR 1.600,00 – Municipal Funds
Through the fundraising activities outlined in Action 1 (OIS), additional funding opportunities (at regional, national, and European levels, as well as from private sources, etc.) will be continuously monitored to potentially strengthen and/or expand this action.
It will also be possible to secure contributions from private entities (e.g., sponsorships, donations, provision of venues and equipment for the organisation of events, etc.).

MONITORING AND EVALUATION INDICATORS

- Number of events held: at least 2 (one per year).
- Number of participants: at least 50 per event.
- Level of satisfaction with event participation: at least 70% of respondents to a dedicated questionnaire satisfied.
- Number of individuals requesting further information on the Plan and on social isolation in general following event participation: at least 20 in total.

RISK MITIGATION

The main risk for this action is a low level of interest and, consequently, low participation from the local community. This risk, however, is considered very low and will be mitigated through the commitment of all partners (e.g., promotion of the events through their respective communication channels, both traditional and social media), as well as through the preparation and adequate dissemination of informative and promotional materials capable of attracting attention and stimulating interest.

Meetings for Families and Schools

In recent years, particularly in the post-pandemic period, there has been a significant increase in socially withdrawn young people (the so-called *"hikikomori"*). According to research conducted by the Istituto Superiore di Sanità (2024) on young people aged 11–17, in Italy the phenomenon affects approximately 70,000 young people and is on the rise, with a slightly higher incidence in the 11–13 age group. The overarching goal of this action is to raise awareness among students, families, and the school community at large regarding this issue. Operationally, two pilot schools will be identified —one lower secondary school and one upper secondary school—each of which will host a meeting aimed at raising awareness of the problem, while also providing useful guidance on how to identify it (since, in many cases, the individual concerned is neither aware of their condition nor willing to seek help) and how to address it.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE

Inform and raise awareness on the issue of the growing social isolation of young people.

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE

Engage schools and families in actions aimed at preventing and combating social isolation among young people.

MAIN ACTIVITIES

1. Survey of local schools (e.g., data on school dropout and early school leaving, specific issues, concrete cases, etc.) and identification of two pilot schools: one lower secondary school and one upper secondary school.
2. Co-design of the meetings (e.g., format, speakers, informational and supporting materials, etc.) with the pilot schools and the ULG/OIS members.
3. Awareness-raising among families (e.g., invitation letter from the Mayor and the Principals of the pilot schools).
4. Delivery of the meetings, each lasting 3 hours, in the two pilot schools.

LEAD AND PARTNERS OF THE ACTION

Co-lead: Municipality of Isernia
Active contributors: ULG and OIS members
Supporting partners: Pilot schools

Communication friends: ULG/OIS members, schools, and other relevant stakeholders (e.g., USR – Regional Education Office)

COSTS AND FUNDINGS

EUR 600,00 – Municipal Funds
Through the fundraising activities outlined in Action 1 (OIS), additional funding opportunities (at regional, national, and European levels, as well as from private sources, etc.) will be continuously monitored to potentially strengthen and/or expand this action. In this regard, for example, the activity could receive support from the PR FSE+ Molise Region 2021–2027 and the PN School and Skills 2021–2027.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION INDICATORS

- Number of meetings held: 2.
- Number of participants per meeting: at least 50 (including students, families, and teachers).
- Level of satisfaction with meeting participation: at least 70% of respondents to a dedicated questionnaire satisfied.
- Number of individuals requesting further information on the Action Plan and on social isolation in general following participation in the meetings: at least 30 in total.

RISK MITIGATION

The main risk for this action is a low level of interest and, consequently, low participation, also due to the general social stigma surrounding the topic of loneliness. This risk will be mitigated by framing the meetings within broader and more general themes (e.g., psychological and social well-being of adolescents) so as to avoid focusing exclusively on a specific "problem." In this way, it will be possible to attract interest from a larger number of people, who may also be interested in other topics likely to be related to that of social isolation.

Intergenerational Workshops

The immediate objective of this action is to combat the social isolation of older people—and, where applicable, of young people—by initiating structured and potentially long-lasting socialization processes. More broadly, when older adults establish personal connections with younger generations, the benefits for both parties can be significant. Intergenerational exchange, for example, can offer older people the opportunity to learn about new technologies and trends and to see the world from a younger perspective. Conversely, such connections allow young people to benefit from decades of wisdom and to learn values such as solidarity, mutual assistance, and the importance of social networks. In short, both generations help each other not only to overcome social isolation but also to remain connected with—and gain a better understanding of—the past and the future.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE

Create opportunities for the exchange of knowledge and experiences between older people and young individuals who are socially isolated or at risk of social isolation.

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE

Initiate structured and potentially long-lasting socialisation processes between older and younger generations.

MAIN ACTIVITIES

1. Co-design of the workshops, with particular focus on defining the main theme(s) (e.g., recreational activities, digital literacy, physical exercise, gardening, pottery, etc.) and implementation methods.
2. Identification of workshop participants (through a call for expressions of interest) and definition of the facilitation/animation team.
3. Delivery of the workshops: 1 workshop per year (consisting of a cycle of four fortnightly meetings of 2 hours each, for a group of approximately 12 participants).

LEAD AND PARTNERS OF THE ACTION

Co-lead: Municipality of Isernia
Active contributors: “S. D’Acunto” Senior Centre, Youth Forum, Vita da Pentro Association

Supporting partners: ULG members / OIS members
Communication friends: ULG/OIS members, schools, other relevant stakeholders

COSTS AND FUNDINGS

EUR 2.000,00 – Municipal Funds
Through the fundraising activities outlined in Action 1 (OIS), additional funding opportunities (at regional, national, and European levels, as well as from private sources, etc.) will be continuously monitored to potentially strengthen and/or expand this action. In this regard, for example, the activity could receive support from the PR FSE+ Molise Region 2021–2027 and from other funds supporting social policies.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION INDICATORS

- Number of workshops delivered: 2 (one per year).
- Number of participants per workshop: a group of at least 12 people (approximately 8 older adults and 4 young people).
- Level of satisfaction with workshop participation: at least 70% of respondents to a dedicated questionnaire satisfied.
- Number of individuals requesting further information on the Action Plan and on social isolation in general following participation in the workshops: at least 10 in total.

RISK MITIGATION

The main risk for this action is a low level of interest and, consequently, low participation among the target audience. This risk, however, is considered relatively low, both due to the dynamism of the “Sabino D’Acunto” Senior Centre and in light of previous successful collaborations between the Senior Centre and the Youth Forum (e.g., the “Social Tombola” event, held in January 2025 under the patronage of the Municipality of Isernia).

Thematic Days for Socialization

As widely observed during the “network journey,” social isolation can be triggered by a variety of factors and, therefore, can affect different types of target groups. The overarching goal of this action is to involve individuals who are socially isolated or at risk of social isolation in opportunities that encourage social exchange and, in the longer term, foster lasting processes of socialisation. Operationally, four thematic days will be organised for a limited number of participants (approximately 10 per day), to be carefully selected from among categories most at risk of isolation (e.g., by including relevant criteria in the call for expressions of interest, such as age, marital status, economic condition, residence in peripheral neighbourhoods, etc.). The specific themes of these days will vary (e.g., mountain and nature walks, cultural visits, craft workshops, community gardening, etc.) and will also be defined based on the expressions of interest collected.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE		OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE
Create opportunities for the exchange of knowledge and experiences among different types of target groups who are socially isolated or at risk of social isolation.	→	Initiate socialization processes across diverse target groups.

MAIN ACTIVITIES

1. Co-design of the thematic days (e.g., specific theme, format, group facilitation methods, etc.).
2. Preparation and promotion of Calls for Expressions of Interest to participate in the thematic days (selection based on specific requirements and chronological order of application submission).
3. Delivery of the thematic days: approximately one during the first year of the Plan and three during the second year.
4. Survey to be conducted three months after each thematic day to assess the socialisation processes triggered.

LEAD AND PARTNERS OF THE ACTION

Co-lead: Municipality of Isernia
Active contributors: ULG and OIS members
Supporting partners: To be identified during implementation, based on the specific themes of the days (e.g., CAI – Italian Alpine Club, sports and cultural associations, etc.)
Communication friends: ULG/OIS members, other local stakeholders (e.g., Auser).

COSTS AND FUNDINGS

EUR 4.000,00 – Municipal Funds
Through the fundraising activities outlined in Action 1 (OIS), additional funding opportunities (at regional, national, and European levels, as well as from private sources, etc.) will be continuously monitored to potentially strengthen and/or expand this action. In this regard, for example, the activity could receive support from the PR FSE+ Molise Region 2021–2027 and from other programmes supporting social inclusion.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION INDICATORS

- Number of thematic days organized: 4.
- Number of participants: at least 40 in total (approximately 10 per thematic day).
- Level of satisfaction with participation: at least 70% of respondents to a dedicated questionnaire satisfied.
- Number of participants requesting further information on the Action Plan and on social isolation in general following the thematic days: at least 20 in total.
- Number of participants remaining in contact after attending a thematic day: at least 20 in total (survey conducted three months after each thematic day).

RISK MITIGATION

The main risk for this action is a low level of interest and, consequently, low participation, also due to the general social stigma surrounding the issue of loneliness. This risk will be mitigated by framing the thematic days within broader themes (e.g., promotion of personal well-being, culture, environmental sustainability, etc.), thereby avoiding association with a single specific “problem” that might discourage participation.

6

OTHER IDEAS TO BE DEVELOPED

Some ideas that emerged during the development of the project were not included among the “official” IAP actions, mainly because they require further study as well as dedicated fundraising and networking activities. Nevertheless, these are valid ideas that were shared within the ULG and remain strategic for future implementation, particularly in view of the upcoming programming period of the Cohesion Policy (see also the Timeplan section). Therefore, one of the first tasks of the OIS – Observatory on Social Isolation (Action 1 of the IAP) will be to revisit, explore, develop, and promote these ideas with a view to their potential adoption during the next update of the IAP.

ACTION	OBJECTIVES AND BRIEF DESCRIPTION	ESTIMATED COST	POSSIBLE FUNDINGS
«Community facilitators»	To train *Community Facilitators* capable of promoting processes of social engagement, empowerment, and active participation. The training course, primarily aimed at unemployed young people, seeks to provide the knowledge and skills necessary to animate the local community, foster social connections, and identify situations of hidden vulnerability.	€ 20.000,00	PR Regione Molise (FSE+).
«Augmented human»	To test an innovative model for combating social isolation that combines relational technology (AI and guided digital environments) with enhanced human interaction. The action includes the training of interns and volunteers, as well as the creation of immersive spaces (fixed and/or mobile) designed to facilitate meetings that integrate AI support with human relationships.	€ 8.000,00 (per year)	PR Regione Molise (ESF+/ERDF); Erasmus+; calls for social and digital innovation; private funding.
«Center for Socialization and Mutual Support»	To identify, attract, and engage socially isolated individuals and those at risk, particularly vulnerable people who are less likely to access social services. The initiative involves the activation, setup, and management of a physical space—preferably through the recovery or repurposing of underused or abandoned facilities—where citizens can meet and socialize through various types of activities, guided by principles of solidarity (intergenerational, interethnic, interreligious, etc.) and mutual support.	€ 35.000,00 (per year)	PR Regione Molise (ESF+/ERDF); calls for social inclusion and poverty reduction, social innovation, private funding, etc.

INTEGRATION: ASPECTS INCLUDED IN THE IAP

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT IN THE PLANNING PHASE

The Integrated Action Plan was developed with the active participation of the ULG, which is representative of the main stakeholders relevant to the core themes of the Action Planning Network, as well as potential beneficiaries or participants in the IAP actions. Moreover, through the testing action carried out (focus group on social isolation), additional key actors were engaged and made aware of the project (e.g., professionals and operators in the social and healthcare sectors, education professionals, etc.), from whom valuable ideas, information, and inputs were gathered to support the definition of the Plan.

CONSISTENCY WITH EXISTING STRATEGIES

The Plan is consistent with municipal policies and services in the social domain and will be integrated with them, bringing specific attention to the prevention and mitigation of social isolation and loneliness. In particular, the Plan will seek appropriate synergies with two important forthcoming multi-annual programs—the *Piano Sociale di Zona* (Local Social Plan) and the *Internal Area Strategy Isernia-Venafro*—both coordinated by the Municipality of Isernia.

SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT

The Plan takes into account the three key dimensions of sustainable urban development. While it primarily focuses on the **social dimension**, it also duly considers the **economic** and **environmental** dimensions.

Regarding the economic dimension, the risk factor of “poverty” will be considered in the implementation of IAP actions (e.g., during the identification and/or selection of participants).

With respect to the environmental dimension, this concern will be mainstreamed throughout the management of the Plan (e.g., paper-saving practices, use of recyclable materials, etc.) and will also feature in at least one of the thematic events foreseen under Action 6 (e.g., nature walks, outdoor activities in community gardens, etc.). This aspect clearly intersects with the cross-cutting issue of **“green”**.

INTEGRATION: ASPECTS INCLUDED IN THE IAP

As for the other two cross-cutting issues:

- **Digital**: the use of digital technologies will be a transversal element throughout the Plan. Furthermore, the development of digital skills among elderly participants will be one of the themes addressed in the intergenerational workshops planned under Action 5 (indeed, improved digital skills can help them find new stimuli and new forms of social interaction).

- **Gender**: equal opportunities will be ensured across all actions of the Plan, as well as in its management and in the selection and procurement procedures to be implemented. Moreover, considering the longer life expectancy of the female population, the research activities envisaged under Action 1 will include specific insights on this topic (e.g., interviews with long-term widows).

TIME INTEGRATION

The actions included in the Plan are distributed over time in a diversified manner, ensuring a logical and balanced coverage throughout the entire implementation period. They include both a key action that will remain active for the entire duration (*Action 1 – Observatory on Social Isolation*), as well as Actions (2–5–6) to be implemented over both years, allowing the second year to benefit from the *lessons learned* during the first.

The actions dedicated to information, awareness-raising, and dissemination (*Action 3*) are scheduled at the beginning and at the end of the implementation period, while the communication strategy of the Plan will remain active throughout its entire duration. *Action 4* will take place across the two annual cycles, ensuring continuity and coherence in the implementation process.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT IN THE IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

The members of the Urban Local Group (ULG) will be actively involved in the implementation of the IAP actions, according to their specific expertise and know-how. In addition, the implementation of the Plan will also involve other stakeholders joining the *Observatory on Social Isolation*—the key action of the IAP—which is designed not only as a continuation mechanism for the ULG but also as a collaborative platform that remains open to all actors wishing to contribute to the prevention and reduction of increasing social isolation.

INTEGRATION: ASPECTS INCLUDED IN THE IAP

TERRITORIAL INTEGRATION

The Municipality of Isernia is the lead partner of two major multi-annual territorial programmes—the *Piano Sociale di Zona* (Local Social Plan) and the *Internal Area Strategy Isernia–Venafro*—which involve numerous neighbouring municipalities. Within the framework of *Action 1 (Observatory on Social Isolation – OIS)*, opportunities will be explored to raise awareness among these municipalities regarding the themes of the IAP and, where possible, to involve them in the implementation of selected actions foreseen by the Plan.

MULTI-LEVEL GOVERNANCE

Efforts will be made to raise awareness within the Molise Region (Managing Authority for the relevant ESF+ and ERDF programmes) regarding the key themes of the IAP, so that these may be taken into account in the formulation of regional policies. In this regard, regional representatives will be invited to the communication and dissemination events foreseen under *Action 3*, as well as to the participatory focus groups and co-design workshops planned within *Action 1*.

ACTIVATION OF POTENTIAL ADDITIONAL FUNDING SOURCES

Within the framework of *Action 1 (Observatory on Social Isolation – OIS)*, a fundraising activity is foreseen, aimed at continuously monitoring funding opportunities (at regional, national, and European levels, as well as from private sources) that could support the sustainability of the Plan, the strengthening or expansion of the most effective actions, and the design and implementation of new initiatives.

SECTORAL INTEGRATION

Efforts will be made to progressively involve other municipal departments, in order to identify and activate increasing synergies between the IAP and other municipal policies, services, and projects.

IMPLEMENTATION

GOVERNANCE & PARTNERS

Participation in the APN “Breaking Isolation” and the development of Isernia’s strategy to prevent and counter the growing phenomenon of social isolation would not have been possible without the active involvement of the URBACT Local Group and the political support of Mayor Pietro Castrataro, Municipal Councillors Nicolina Del Bianco (European Programmes, Inner Area and Urban Area Strategy, Participatory Democracy) and Angela Perpetua (Policies for the Elderly, Education and Educational Policies), Municipal Councillor Nicolino Paolino, as well as the external consultants Stefania Bendato (Project Manager, ULG Coordinator and Communication Expert) and Celestino Manselli (Thematic Expert).

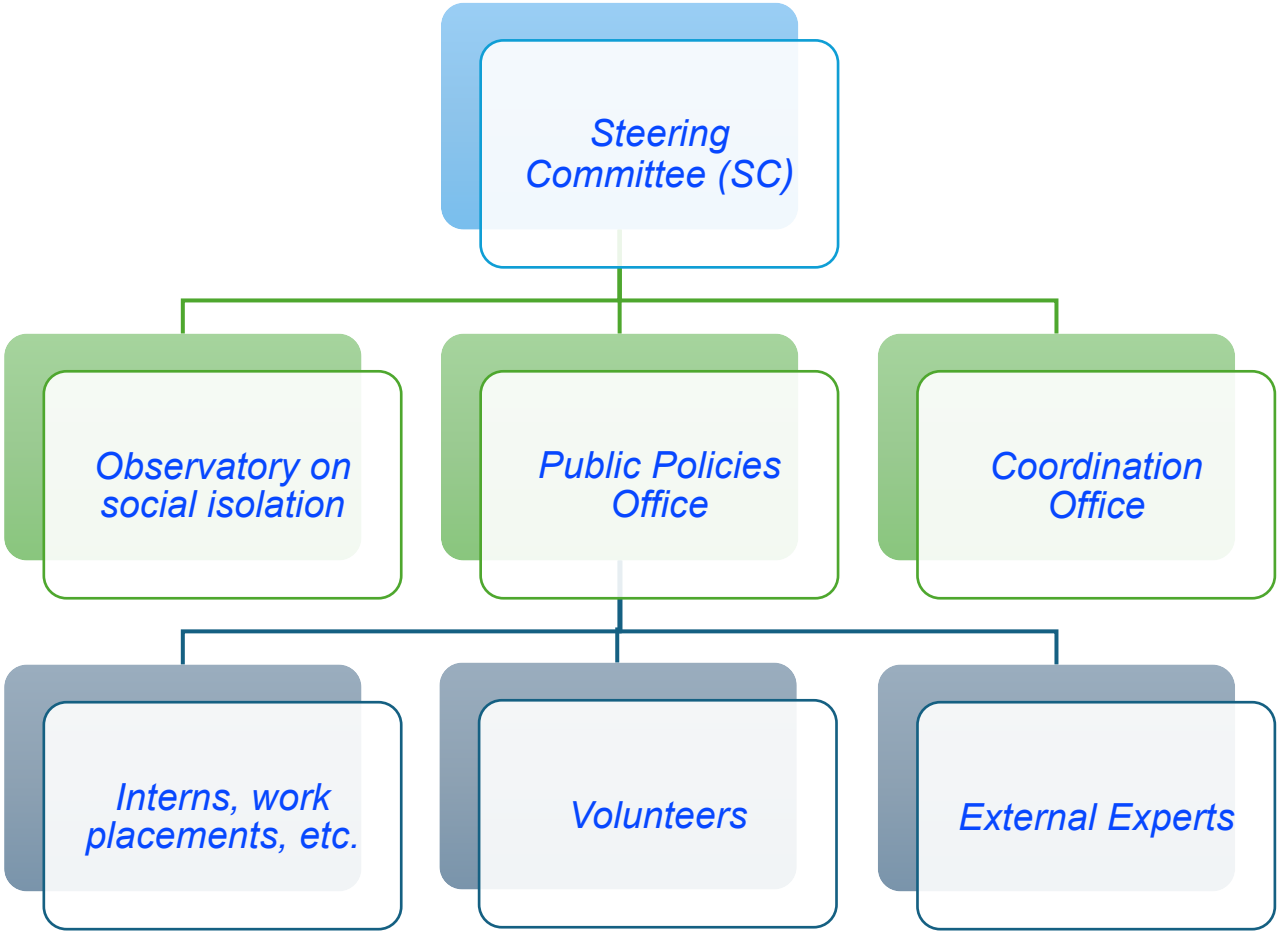
Equally crucial was the constant administrative and organizational support provided by the Secretary General (Giuseppe Bruno) and the Public Policy Office (Caterina Zacchia, Antonio Presutti, Angela Salso, Alessia Decini), together with the contribution of expertise and knowledge from the Social Services Office of the Isernia Territorial Area (Vincenzo Grande, Alessandra Cimino, Annamaria Di Palma). Federica Vinci (former Deputy Mayor) and Alessia Finori (former Project Coordinator) also contributed.

The supervision and monitoring of the Plan will be ensured by a Steering Committee (SC), composed of the Mayor, the two aforementioned Councillors, the Secretary General and a representative of the Public Policy Office. The SC will meet at least three times per year and will be supported in its work by the Observatory on Social Isolation (Action 1 of the IAP), which in practice represents the body ensuring the continuity and further development of the ULG.

The operational implementation and the administrative and financial management of the Plan will be entrusted to the Public Policy Office, also through the involvement of volunteers, interns, and external experts for more specialized activities (e.g., detailed project design and fundraising, communication and stakeholder management, monitoring and evaluation, etc.). In particular, it is advisable to identify specific expertise (detailed project design and fundraising, communication and stakeholder management) from the very beginning of the Plan (January 2026), in order to enable timely executive planning and scheduling of actions, as well as the launch of the IAP communication strategy.

IMPLEMENTATION

ORGANIGRAM



OVERALL COSTS & FUNDING

The estimated cost for the implementation of the Plan is **€20,000.00 for the entire two-year period**, and it will be fully covered with municipal funds through an allocation of €10,000.00 for each of the two years of the Plan.
Below is a summary of the total estimated cost for each of the Plan's Actions:

- **Social Isolation Observatory (SIO): €9.800,00**
- **Information / Training Workshops: €2.000,00**
- **Awareness-Raising and Information Events: €1.600,00**
- **Meetings for Families and Schools: €600,00**
- **Intergenerational Workshops: €2.000,00**
- **Thematic Socialization Days: €4.000,00**

Within the framework of Action 1 (Social Isolation Observatory), a systematic fundraising and networking activity is foreseen, aimed at constantly monitoring and analyzing funding opportunities that may support the sustainability of the Plan and the strengthening/expansion of those actions proven to be most useful and effective. This activity will also seek funding opportunities to implement additional actions, starting from some already identified within the ULG but requiring further exploration and additional financing (e.g. Community Facilitator Training Course; Relational Inclusion Laboratories enhanced by Artificial Intelligence; Pilot Center for the Promotion of Social Inclusion and Mutual Support).

OVERALL COSTS & FUNDING

The scouting of potential funding will focus primarily at the regional level, with particular attention to opportunities deriving from the PR FESR/FSE+ Molise 2021–2027, especially under FSE+ Priority 6 “A more social Molise through inclusion and social protection.”

Funding opportunities will also be monitored at the national level, both within the framework of EU cohesion policy (e.g. National Programme for Inclusion and Combating Poverty 2021–2027, National Programme Youth, Women and Work, National Programme Metro+) and within the main relevant national policies (e.g. social policies, family policies, support for non-self-sufficiency, youth policies, active ageing, immigrant inclusion, etc.).

European Territorial Cooperation Programmes (Interreg) and EU direct management programmes will also be carefully explored, particularly Erasmus+ and EaSI (Employment and Social Innovation). Special attention will be given to capacity-building and exchange programmes that enable ongoing cooperation with other European cities. In this regard, in addition to Urbact IV, opportunities offered by the European Urban Initiative (e.g. City-to-City Exchange, Peer Reviews) and by the CERV Programme – Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (e.g. Town Twinnings and Networks of Towns) will be examined.

Finally, the networking activity foreseen under Action 1 will also explore the possibility of acquiring contributions from private stakeholders (e.g. sponsorships, donations, provision of premises and equipment for the implementation of the Plan’s activities, etc.).

GLOBAL RISK ASSESSMENT

RISK	IMPACT	MITIGATION
INSUFFICIENT STAFF AND RESOURCES Insufficient staff, equipment, funding, etc. can hinder IAP implementation.	IAP may underperform and fail to achieve its expected results, at least partially.	Officially appoint a **Municipal officer in charge for IAP management and activate the SC.** Identify and involve since the beginning also **external experts and/or volunteers for fund raising, planning and management activities** that may contribute to IAP implementation and strengthening.
LOW STAKEHOLDERS ENGAGEMENT Failing to involve and keep motivated relevant Municipal departments and key stakeholders (e.g. ULG members, community groups, third sector, private sector, local relevant institutions, etc).	Lack of interest, lack of cooperation, resistance, especially within the same Municipality («silos») can hinder implementation.	Keep stakeholders constantly informed about IAP implementation. Identify and involve since the beginning **external expertise and/or volunteers for networking and communication activities.**

GLOBAL RISK ASSESSMENT

RISK	IMPACT	MITIGATION
LOW INTEREST OF THE TARGET GROUPS Inadequate level of interest and participation to the actions.	Actions may have delays, underperform, or even may be deleted.	Design and implement a sound **communication strategy** (also with external experts support). Inform and update regularly also **communication «multipliers»** (e.g. local press, TV, etc.). Start implementation with actions with more impact in terms of information and communication (e.g. Action 3 – event 1 as a sort of *« launch event »*). Pay a specific attention to the "**social stigma"** generally linked to loneliness in order to avoid it may represent an excessive obstacle to participation in IAP actions.
COORDINATION CHALLENGES. Difficulty in coordinating efforts across multiple departments, agencies, stakeholders, etc.	Fragmented and rushed implementation can result in errors, delays, overlaps, inconsistencies, or suboptimal outcomes.	Establish a **IAP Steering Committee (SC)** in charge of IAP supervision and general coordination. The SC should meet on at least 2 times per year) and should be supported also by external experts for **monitoring and evaluation activities** (track planning, progress, outcomes, assess issues emerging during implementation and take on time corrective measures, etc.).
POLITICAL INTERFERENCE/ CHANGE Changes in political leadership or priorities can modify or disrupt IAP implementation.	IAP may be underrated, altered, underfunded, and even abandoned due to shifting in political agenda / leadership.	Align IAP implementation period to the **current political mandate** and secure **wide consensus** especially on longer and more challenging actitivites as well as activities that could be repeated or extended beyond the IAP timeline (e.g. in neighboring municipalities).

IMPLEMENTATION

TIMELINE

The **Integrated Action Plan (IAP)** covers a **two-year period: 2026–2027**.

The **core action (Action 1)** will be active throughout the entire biennium and will generate valuable inputs for the **micro-design, implementation, and evaluation** of the other actions — for example, through **research activities, field surveys, participatory design, fund-raising, and networking initiatives**.

The remaining actions are distributed in a **logical and balanced manner** over the implementation period. Some of them (**Actions 2, 5, and 6**) will be carried out during **both years**, allowing the second year to benefit from the **lessons learned** during the first period.

At the end of the biennium, the Plan will be **updated and renewed** based on:

- the evaluation of the activities implemented and the results achieved;
- new ideas that have emerged and are considered promising;
- funding sources identified and concretely activated;
- synergies with the **Inner Area Strategy Isernia–Venafro** and the **Local Social Plan**;
- and the **priorities, objectives, and guidelines of the post-2027 European Cohesion Policy**.

In principle, the new Plan will follow a **timeline aligned with the next European Cohesion Policy programming period (2028–2034)**.

2025 The Action Plan is developed in collaboration with the Urban Local Group (ULG) and, by the end of the network's activities, is finalized and submitted for political approval.

2026
2027 During the initial months of the year, the governance model of the Plan is launched, along with a call for expressions of interest to participate in the OIS – Observatory on Social Isolation, which represents the core action of the Plan and remains active throughout its entire duration. Action 3 marks both the opening and closing of the Plan, with an initial launch event and a final dissemination event to present the results achieved. Throughout the implementation period, a communication strategy is also in place to support visibility and engagement. The remaining actions of the Plan are progressively initiated and implemented, with several of them running across both years of the biennium.

2028 An evaluation of the Plan will be carried out to support its updating and renewal within the framework of the new European Cohesion Policy programming period (2028–2034).

IMPLEMENTATION

TIMELINE

	AZIONE	2026												2027											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1	Observatory on Social Isolation (OIS)	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
2	Information and Training Workshops									■	■	■	■							■	■	■	■		
3	Community Information and Awareness-Raising Events				■	■	■	■														■	■	■	■
4	Meetings for Families and Schools									■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■								
5	bIntergenerational Workshops							■	■	■	■							■	■	■	■				
6	Thematic Days for Socialization						■	■	■	■		■	■	■	■		■	■	■	■		■	■	■	■

MONITORING & EVALUATION

Monitoring and evaluation are key activities to ensure constant oversight of the proper progress of both the individual actions of the Plan as a whole. In particular, monitoring aims to verify the achievement of the indicators associated with each Action (see Action tables) and to detect any deviations, in order to introduce corrective measures if needed. Evaluation, on the other hand, focuses more on the extent to which the specific and operational objectives of the various actions have been achieved, as well as on the overall impact of the Plan and its future sustainability (e.g. consolidation and scaling-up of implemented actions, launch of new actions, etc.).
Therefore, given the importance of these activities, from the early months of the Plan a **"Monitoring and Evaluation Plan"** will be defined. This will fall under the direct responsibility of the **Steering Committee**, supported for this purpose by the members of the **OIS (Action 1)** as well as by external experts.

Below are the key principles guiding the definition and implementation of the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan of the IAP.

Logical Framework
Create and regularly update the "Logical Framework" of the Plan (a document providing a clear and concise overview of basic assumptions, main risks and external conditions, inputs, outputs, expected results, indicators, etc.).

Context data and information
Systematically collect data and information to gain an increasingly in-depth understanding of both the initial problem (e.g. definition of a baseline) and its evolution over time.

Continuous monitoring
Implement a systematic data collection process using both quantitative methods and tools (e.g. questionnaires) and qualitative methods (e.g. interviews, focus groups, etc.).

Timing
Schedule intermediate evaluation steps, approximately on a quarterly basis, in order to promptly introduce corrective measures, where necessary, or improvements aimed at strengthening the efficiency and effectiveness of the Plan.

Stakeholder involvement
Actively involve in the monitoring and evaluation process first and foremost the members of the **OIS (Observatory on Social Isolation, Action 1 of the IAP)**, as well as other stakeholders (e.g. citizens, associations, professionals, etc.) who can contribute relevant perspectives and experiences.

Continuous learning
Establish mechanisms to ensure that the lessons generated through monitoring and evaluation activities are used not only for the implementation of the Plan but also for other relevant municipal policies. In addition, during the final evaluation phase, prepare a synthesis report on the key lessons learned from the Plan, including concrete recommendations on both the sustainability of the various actions implemented and possible new actions to be undertaken in the future to more effectively prevent and combat social isolation.

COMMUNICATION

OUR COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

The **Communication Strategy** of the Municipality of Isernia for the "Breaking Isolation" Project was expressed in the **Communication Plan**, through which the main actions and tools were defined. The communication actions that were carried out focused particularly on:

- Encouraging collective knowledge and awareness of the URBACT IV Programme and the activities of the "Breaking Isolation" Network;
- Promoting the content of the Project, emphasizing the objectives and benefits associated with its implementation;
- Enhancing the role of the URBACT Local Group (ULG) and the Municipality of Isernia by promoting a participatory approach and social initiatives supported by the local administration;
- Disseminating a coordinated image and consistent messaging to ensure the recognizability of the Network and its communication;
- Spreading information and visibility at local, national, and international levels.

The communication activities were designed according to the specific characteristics of the identified target groups. At the local level, the key audiences included citizens, administrators, stakeholders (such as NGOs, associations, and ULG members), and thematic experts. At the national and international levels, communication targeted other municipalities, relevant public institutions, the House Region (Managing Authority for ESIF), the URBACT Secretariat, the National URBACT Point, and other URBACT networks.

OUR PROJECT WEB PAGE

Amministrazione Argomenti Uffici Vivere Isernia Cerca

Progetto europeo URBACT IV- Breaking Isolation

Il Comune di Isernia partecipa come Project Partner al Progetto Europeo "Breaking Isolation" nell'ambito del Programma URBACT IV, programma europeo che supporta la promozione dello sviluppo urbano integrato e sostenibile e, in particolare, finanzia Network di città

VISIT OUR WEB PAGE: HTTPS://WWW.COMUNE.ISERNIA.IT/IT/PAGE/144271

OUR COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

The Project's communication activities were structured across two key phases, aligned with the overall timeline (January 2024 – December 2025):

- **Planning Phase (January 2024 – December 2024):** This phase included the development and revision of the Communication Plan, mid-term evaluation activities, and the creation of a dedicated web page for the project.
- **Implementation Phase (January 2025 – December 2025):** This phase encompassed the execution of communication activities, the organization of a local Dissemination Event to disseminate the results of the project.

From the outset, the Municipality of Isernia developed and launched a structured Communication Plan aligned with the project's overarching themes and objectives. This plan laid the groundwork for coordinated, inclusive, and effective communication.

To reach and engage local communities, the official social media channels of the Municipality (**Facebook** and **Instagram)** were actively used. Additionally, a **dedicated web page** was launched on the Municipality's institutional website.

Communication within the **URBACT Local Group (ULG)** was maintained through a **dedicated WhatsApp group**, ensuring fast and direct information sharing. A variety of **digital and printed materials** were produced to support outreach and visibility, including **project abstracts, flyers, and informative brochures**.

FROM OUR PRESS JOURNAL

- **November 28**

Article from **“IsNews”**

Read the article by clicking on:
Article

View the video by clicking on:
Video

isNews
è notizia

Isernia e la solitudine sociale: il Comune scommette sul progetto europeo per combattere l’isolamento (VIDEO)

28 Novembre 2023

È iniziata questa mattina la study visit alla presenza di esperti che supporteranno l’amministrazione. Vinci: “Potremo sperimentare e portare avanti nuove politiche per consentire alle persone di sentirsi meno sole”

OUR SOCIAL MEDIA

VISIT OUR INSTAGRAM PAGE: HTTPS://WWW.INSTAGRAM.COM/COMUNE.ISERNIA/
VISIT OUR FACEBOOK PAGE: HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/ISERNIACOMUNE

OUR COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Every project-related event, meeting, and workshop was communicated in a timely and engaging way. This included the production of **dedicated videos and photographic material**, which not only documented activities but also helped explain and promote complex project topics. **Mid-term reviews** were regularly carried out and accompanied by the publication of relevant articles on the official project web page.

To further increase public visibility, the Municipality invested in a **media relations campaign**, which resulted in:

- **15 articles** published online, highlighting the project's goals and progress;
- **13 videos** disseminated on web platforms by local and regional media outlets, enhancing visibility and outreach;
- **6 TV reports** (local and regional), showcasing the project to a wider audience.

Social media engagement was strengthened through the publication of **13 posts**, including **reels**, on the Municipality's Facebook and Instagram accounts. These posts significantly boosted community interaction and raised awareness around the project's themes.

The **video campaign** proved particularly effective, serving as a dynamic communication tool to involve citizens and stakeholders. The video content covered **ULG meetings**, **Transnational Network Meetings (TNMs)**, offering accessible insights and enhancing transparency.

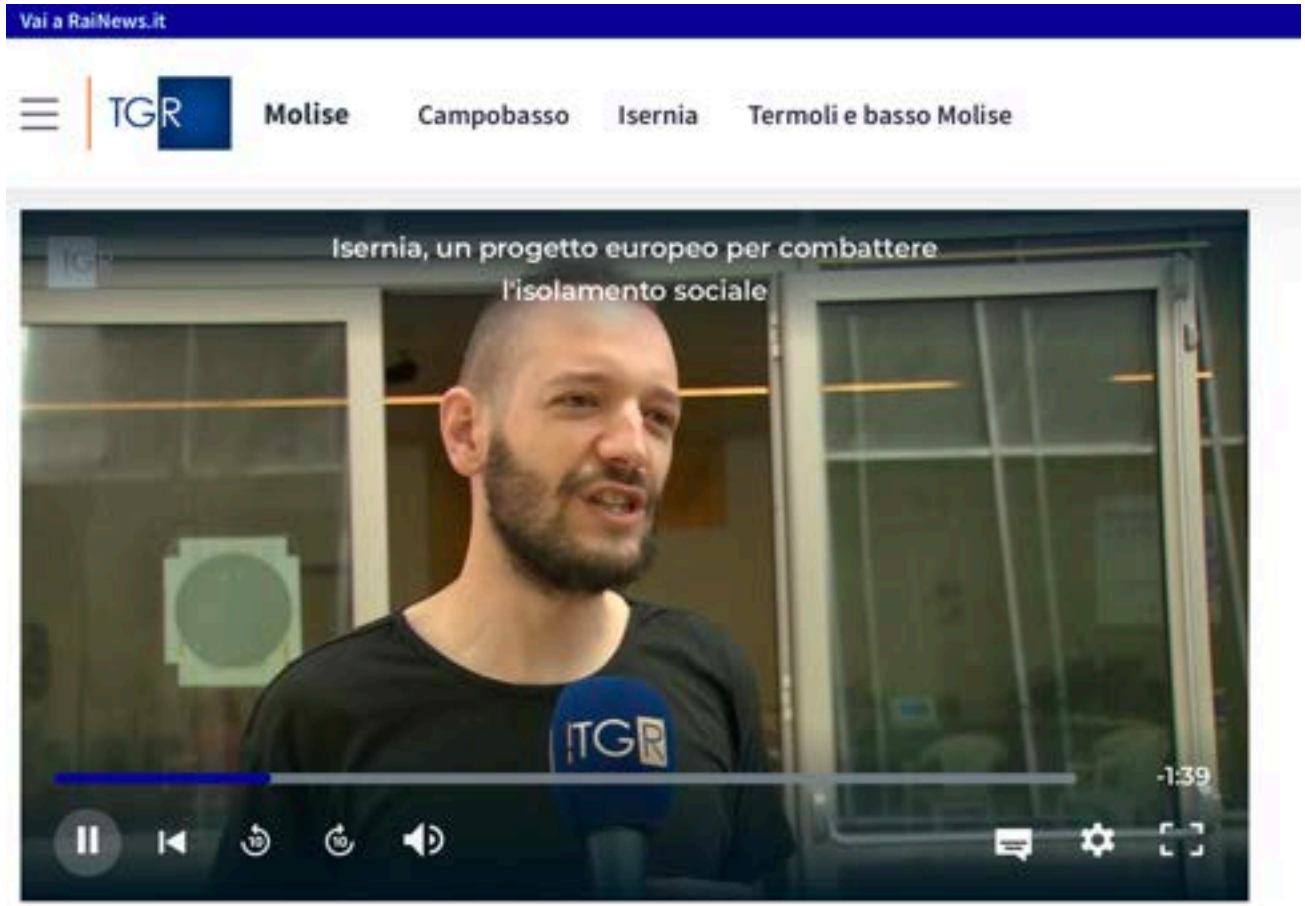
Thanks to consistent press outreach, the project achieved strong visibility and reached a broad and diverse audience. The availability of **clear and accessible documentation**, such as abstracts and flyers, also made it easier for new stakeholders and community members to understand and engage with the initiative—reinforcing its inclusive approach.

OUR FLYERS

BREAKING ISOLATION
URBACT IV
ULG
MEETING
PRESSO
COOPERATIVA SOCIALE "IL GECO"
4 SETTEMBRE 2024 ore 16:00
Viale dei Pentri, 159 - IS
IL GECO
SOCIETÀ COOPERATIVA SOCIALE
URBACT
Co-funded by
the European Union
Interreg

BREAKING ISOLATION
RIUNIONE
ULG
30
MAGGIO
ore 16:00-18:00
COOPERATIVA
L.A.I.
LAVORO
Corso Risorgimento 225
Isernia
URBACT
Co-funded by
the European Union
Interreg

FROM OUR PRESS JOURNAL



Isernia, un progetto europeo per combattere l'isolamento sociale

In città i partner del network "Breaking Isolation", provenienti da 9 Stati dell'Ue. Nel capoluogo sarà realizzato un centro d'aggregazione

FROM OUR PRESS JOURNAL

Isernia ospita i partner europei del progetto UrbAct - 29/11/2023

OUR COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

In synergy with the “Breaking Isolation” Project, the Municipality of Isernia also promoted **cultural, educational, and intergenerational initiatives** aimed at strengthening community ties and fostering active citizenship (es. Magnastoria). Particular attention was given to the involvement of **local associations, NGOs, and senior centers**, recognized as strategic partners in building a more inclusive and supportive local society.

Additionally, the Municipality enhanced the use of **digital tools and platforms** to foster inclusive communication, participation, and access to services—especially for the most vulnerable groups within the community.

All of these communication efforts directly supported the Project’s strategic objectives, which were:

- Raising public awareness and ensuring the visibility of the Project’s key messages, ULG activities, and deliverables;
- Promoting the URBACT Programme and the “Breaking Isolation” Project throughout its lifecycle and beyond;
- Increasing awareness of the issue of social isolation in the context of demographic trends;
- Sharing the work carried out by the Network and the Administration to combat social isolation;
- Disseminating the results of the Project, including the IAP and impactful interventions.

Through this structured, inclusive, and multi-channel communication approach, the Municipality of Isernia successfully laid the foundation for stronger local engagement, cross-border collaboration, and long-term impact in addressing social isolation.

COMMUNICATION PLAN – IAP IMPLEMENTATION (2026-2027)

As the Municipality of Isernia enters the implementation phase of its Integrated Action Plan (IAP) in 2026 and 2027, communication will play a key role in ensuring that the actions are visible, understood, and embraced by the local community.

Over the course of these two years, the Municipality will focus on communicating not only what will happen, but why it matters. The communication strategy will support the rollout of six actions. The communication plan will aim to make these actions accessible and engaging for all segments of the population. It will highlight opportunities for participation and promote a shared sense of belonging and inclusion.

Launch Phase
One of the first actions to be implemented will be a public launch event to officially present the Plan (action 3). A short video and a visually engaging brochure will introduce the Plan's goals, actions, and timeline. The event will be covered on social media and through local press, to reach as many people as possible.

Digital and Traditional Channels
Throughout the implementation period, the Municipality will maintain a steady communication flow using both digital and traditional tools:

- **Social Media (Facebook and Instagram)** will be used to share updates, stories, reels, and photos from ongoing activities. Posts will highlight voices from the community — participants, volunteers, and partners.
- **The Municipal Website** will feature a dedicated section for the IAP, with regular updates, a calendar of events, downloadable materials, and short articles summarizing key milestones and results.
- **Printed Materials**, such as flyers, posters, and brochures, will be distributed in schools, community centers, health clinics, and other public spaces — ensuring the message reaches people who may not be active online.

COMMUNICATION PLAN – IAP IMPLEMENTATION (2026–2027)

Communication by Action
Each of the six actions of the Integrated Action Plan will have its own tailored communication approach to ensure clarity, engagement, and visibility throughout the implementation period.

1. **Observatory on Social Isolation**
   The Observatory will regularly share clear and accessible updates on its findings through easy-to-understand infographics, brief reports, and summary videos. These materials will help the public and stakeholders grasp the scope and dynamics of social isolation in Isernia, fostering transparency and encouraging data-driven conversations.

2. **Information and Training Workshops**
   Workshops will be promoted widely through school networks, social services, and community organizations. Before and after each workshop, the Municipality will share invitations, reminders, and summaries using social media posts, newsletters, and short video clips that highlight key lessons and participant feedback.

3. **Public Awareness and Information Events**
   These events will be communicated broadly to maximize attendance and impact. The Municipality will create engaging promotional content such as posters, flyers, and social media campaigns. After the events, photo galleries, interviews, and video highlights will be shared to celebrate participation and reinforce the messages conveyed.

4. **Family and School Meetings**
   Meetings targeting families and schools will be carefully publicized through direct communication channels such as school newsletters, parent groups, and local associations. Post-meeting updates will include quotes, photos, and brief summaries to keep the wider community informed and engaged.

5. **Intergenerational Laboratories**
   The storytelling potential of these labs will be fully leveraged. The Municipality will produce short videos, photo stories, and personal testimonies that show the connections formed across generations. These narratives will be shared on social media and during public events to emphasize the value of inclusion and community bonding.

6. **Thematic Days for Socialization**
   Thematic outings will be promoted with vibrant, engaging content before the events, inviting broad participation. After each trip or day, multimedia stories—including photos, videos, and participant reflections—will be shared to illustrate how these experiences contribute to breaking social isolation and strengthening community ties.

COMMUNICATION PLAN – IAP IMPLEMENTATION (2026–2027)

Media Relations
The Municipality will strengthen its collaboration with local and regional media outlets. Press releases, interviews, and coverage of events will ensure that the project continues to gain visibility beyond social media. The goal will be to make social isolation — and the community's efforts to fight it — a public conversation.

Feedback and Monitoring
Feedback will be collected throughout the two years via surveys, interviews, and informal conversations. This will help assess how communication is perceived, what impact it's having, and where adjustments may be needed. A final communication report will be produced at the end of the cycle to reflect on achievements and lessons learned.

Final Remarks
Through clear, inclusive, and consistent communication, the Municipality of Isernia will support the full implementation of the IAP, ensuring that each action is visible, meaningful, and rooted in the local community. The ultimate goal will be to give people awareness and information and also a reason to get involved, to feel part of the process.

LET'S COME TOGETHER AND END ISOLATION

URBACT
Co-funded by the European Union
Interreg