BREAKING ISOLATION

ROMAN'S STRATEGY TO FIGHT SOCIAL ISOLATION

December 2025

URBACT

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ABOUT THIS STRATEGY

The Integrated Action Plan of the Municipality of Roman is the result of an extensive collaborative process carried out within the European URBACT network **Breaking Isolation**.

By joining this partnership, the Municipality of Roman had the opportunity to learn from the experiences of other small and medium-sized European cities, to test solutions, to explore good practices, and to adapt innovative ideas to the local context.

Over the course of three years of exchanges, dialogue, and experimentation, Roman succeeded in shaping its own strategy, designed to address the specific challenges of the community and to provide concrete solutions for reducing social isolation. This document presents both the story of this European collaborative learning journey and the city's action plan – a set of clear, innovative, and achievable measures intended to bring visible improvements to the lives of citizens.

The Integrated Action Plan also serves as a strategic framework for coordinating local interventions, facilitating collaboration between public authorities, social actors, non-governmental organizations, and citizens, with the aim of implementing sustainable, coherent solutions tailored to the real needs of the community.

The strategy is conceived as a dynamic tool, flexible enough to be adjusted and enriched according to the evolution of the community, the resources available, the level of citizen engagement, and the institutional and political support it receives. More than an administrative document, it represents a shared vision for a more inclusive, supportive, and connected Municipality of Roman.

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

CONTENT

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SOME BASIC DATA ON ROMAN

The Municipality of Roman is located in the north-eastern part of Romania, in Neamț County, within the historical region of Moldavia. The city has a strategic geographical position, at the confluence of the Moldova and Siret rivers, representing an important urban, economic, and transport hub in the area.

Over time, Roman has developed as a significant administrative, educational, and cultural center for the communities within its area of influence.

Extension: The Municipality of Roman is one of the oldest cities in Moldavia, with a history of 633 years, being first documented as early as the 14th century. The city has a population of 65,217 inhabitants (2024).
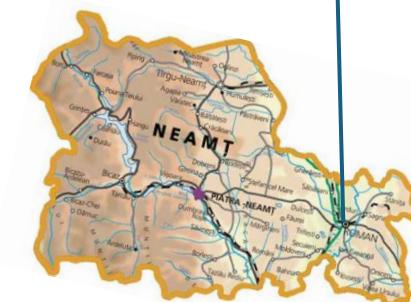
In the Municipality of Roman, there are **247 registered associations**, active in various fields such as social services, education, culture, sports, environmental protection, and support for vulnerable groups.

ROMAN AND SOCIAL ISOLATION

Social isolation is a condition in which a person experiences a long-term lack of social relationships both in quantity and quality'.

Social isolation in the Municipality of Roman manifests in various ways, affecting both individuals and entire groups within the community.

FOR SENIORS, isolation often arises from the loss of a life partner, distance from their children, or reduced mobility. Many live alone, with limited contact with neighbours or friends, and this lack of interaction leads to loneliness and emotional and physical health issues.

LOW-INCOME FAMILIES are affected by a lack of resources to participate in cultural or social activities, which amplifies the feeling of exclusion. These families often live in marginalized neighbourhoods where social spaces and community services are lacking.

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES face difficulties accessing infrastructure, services, and social activities, which limits their participation in community life. Stigmatization and physical barriers further increase their isolation.

YOUNG PEOPLE experience isolation when they cannot find educational, employment, or leisure opportunities. Many struggle with a lack of motivation, the migration of friends, or social pressures that push them to withdraw from community life.

FOR SINGLE PARENTS, isolation stems from the lack of time and resources to engage in social life

AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL, isolation is reflected in reduced participation in civic life and decision-making processes, lack of involvement in social or cultural events, and low trust in public institutions.

Differences between neighborhoods become more visible: some are better developed, while others are left behind, leaving residents feeling invisible and abandoned.

In conclusion, social isolation in Roman does not affect only a small group; it is a complex reality impacting seniors, young people, vulnerable families, people with disabilities, and marginalized communities. It weakens social cohesion and lowers quality of life, which is why combating it has become a strategic priority.

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RELEVANT STATISTICAL INDICATORS FOR SOCIAL ISOLATION IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF ROMAN

1. The total population of the Municipality of Roman
The Municipality of Roman had approximately 48,600 inhabitants in 2021, a significant decrease compared to the 1990s, reflecting a marked demographic decline and the weakening of traditional social networks.

2. The proportion of elderly population (65+ years)
Approximately 21–22% of the city's population consists of people over 65, a category at high risk of loneliness, social isolation, and dependence on social services.

4. Migration of young people and the active population
Many young people and working-age adults have left for larger cities or abroad, leaving behind elderly relatives or vulnerable individuals, which has increased the number of single-person households.

5. Share of people living alone
The number of single-person households is increasing, especially among the elderly, which implies a heightened risk of isolation, emotional vulnerability, and limited access to services.

6. Population distribution across neighbourhoods
Peripheral neighbourhoods such as Favorit, Muncitoresc, Petru Rareș, and areas with prevalence of social housing show higher levels of vulnerability, associated with poverty, limited access to services, and increased risk of isolation.

7. Poverty levels in the North-East region
The North-East region, where Roman is located, records some of the highest rates of poverty and social exclusion in Romania, which indirectly contributes to social isolation.

8. Limited access to healthcare and social assistance services
Although public services exist, some categories — particularly elderly people in peripheral areas — face difficulties in accessing medical care, increasing the risk of isolation and health deterioration.

9. Low level of digital skills
A significant proportion of the elderly population lacks adequate digital skills, limiting access to information, online communication, and digital public services, thus deepening modern isolation.

10. Level of civic and community participation
Participation in events organised by municipality and NGOs, community activities, or civic initiatives is relatively low, indicating a weak social network and limited community interactions, both essential for preventing isolation.

11. School dropout rate and youth vulnerability
Children and adolescents from vulnerable families are exposed to the risk of educational and social isolation, a phenomenon often associated with poor school performance, absenteeism, and social withdrawal.

12. Households without close family support
Many households—especially those consisting of older adults—do not have close relatives living in the city, which increases feelings of loneliness and dependence on public services.

SWOT ANALYSIS –
SOCIAL ISOLATION IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF ROMAN

1. STRENGTHS
- Well-developed educational and social infrastructure (schools, high schools, kindergartens, social centers).
- Active NGOs in the social field providing support for vulnerable groups, children, and the elderly.
- Existence of specialized public services: Social Assistance Department, day centers, family support services.
- Churches and parishes involved in social aid and community activities.
- Regular local events (festivals, cultural and sports activities) that can foster social participation.

2. WEAKNESSES
- Ageing population, with many elderly people living alone, especially in peripheral neighborhoods.
- Low digital skills among older adults, limiting access to online public services.
- Lack of modern community centers across all neighborhoods.
- Limited capacity of local social services due to insufficient human and financial resources.
- Segregated or marginalized residential areas with high levels of poverty and social exclusion.
- Low civic engagement and limited participation in community initiatives.

3. OPPORTUNITIES
- Availability of European funding (Regional Programme North-East 2021–2027, PNRR, and other EU social programs).
- Possibility of regional collaboration with NGOs, institutions, and universities.
- Growing national and European interest in mental health and social inclusion.
- Technological development — digital platforms, telemedicine, and community networks.
- Potential to organize community programs through partnerships between schools, churches, the municipality.
- Expansion of volunteer networks, especially among young.

4. THREATS
- Continuing migration of young people to larger cities or abroad, leaving many elderly without family support.
- Increasing economic and social polarization between central and peripheral areas.
- Rising cost of living, disproportionately affecting vulnerable populations.
- Digital overuse among children and adolescents, leading to self-isolation and reduced physical interaction.
- Higher risk of exclusion for persons with disabilities due to limited accessibility.
- External crises (economic shocks, pandemics) that exacerbate isolation.

THE BREAKING ISOLATION URBACT NETWORK

10 European cities from 10 EU countries, united to fight social isolation

TØNDER, DANEMARK

FÓT, HUNGARY

ROMAN, ROMANIA

SKOFJA LOKA, SLOVENIA

AGEN, FRANCE

POMBAL, PORTUGAL

BIJELO POLJE, MONTENEGRO

ISERNIA, ITALY

JUMILLA, SPAIN

SERRES, GREECE
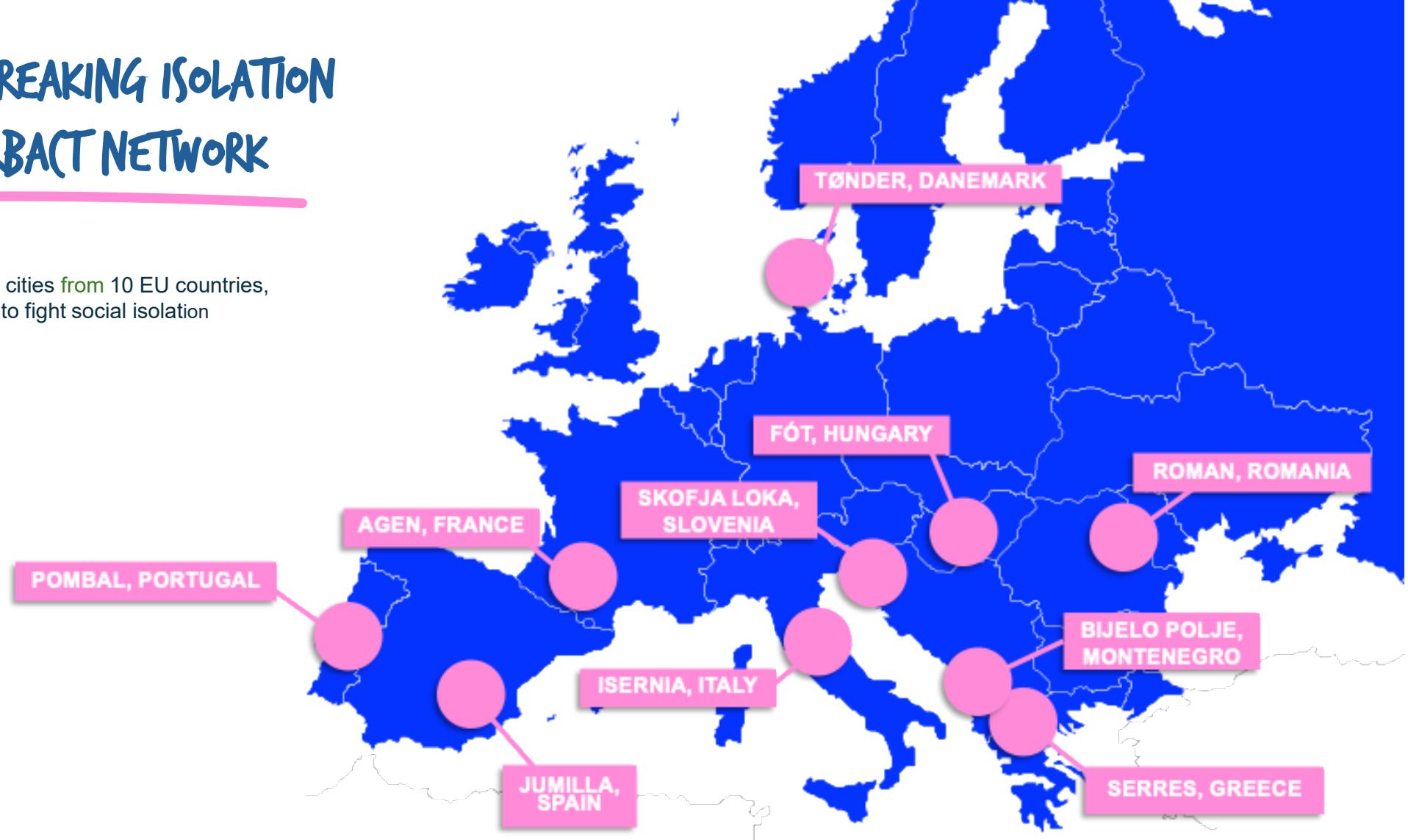
Why a European network? Social isolation is a growing issue everywhere, not just in one country, but worldwide. This means that everyone is impacted but it also means that potential solutions are eventually to be found everywhere. Solutions might lie not only in your own country but also in a faraway city somewhere across Europe. Started in June 2023 (until December 2025), the Breaking Isolation network brought together 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 ad hoc strategies to fight isolation.

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 serve as the most precious exchange and learning space for the network. Indeed, during those TNMs, each city presents the results of its 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). The 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 at 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 great opportunity to put together cities with different backgrounds but affected by an equal social problem such as social isolation

Study Visits to all Partners (LP + LE)
September to December 2023

Transnational meeting in Skofja Loka
(Baseline Study presentation)
13 -14 December 2023

Transnational meeting in Bijelo Polje
25 -26 February 2025

Communication plan Network Roadmap & Baseline Study

ULG meeting

Partners start setting Up their ULG
September-December 2023

STAGE 3,
PREPARING
IMPLEMENTATION
JAN –SEPT 2025

STAGE 2
PLANNING
ACTIONS
JAN–DEC 2024

3 quarterly
Network Reports

Webconference

ULG meeting

Transnational meeting in Agen
(Project Kick-off)
Early September 2023

Online transnational meeting

Transnational meeting in Roman
December 2024

Transnational meeting in Jumilla
8 - 9 April 2025

URBACT Summer
University
28 august 2023

Transnational meeting in Pombal
20-21 February 2024

Final IAP & network results

Webconference

ULG meeting

Online transnational meeting
June 2023

Online transnational meeting

URBACT City Festival
Spring 2025

URBACT Launch
Meeting (Online)
20 & 22 june 2023

Webconference

Online transnational meeting

Final transnational meeting in Agen
(Sharing, disseminating)
9 – 10 December 2025

Transnational meeting in Serres
17-18 April 2024

Transnational meeting in Tønder
11 - 12 June 2025

STAGE 1
ACTIVATION
JUNE-DEC 2023

Webconference

ULG meeting

ULG meeting

ULG Meeting

Study visit & trans. meeting
in Brussels
24-25 September 2024

ULG meeting

ULG finalizing IAP

Transnational meeting
in Isernia
18 – 19 June 2024

ULG meeting

Transnational meeting in Fót
23 - 24 September 2025

STAGE 4
NETWORK FINALE
OCT-DEC 2025

3 quarterly
Network Reports

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A LOCAL COLLABORATIVE ADVENTURE

The URBACT network represents, for the Municipality of Roman, an important opportunity for European and transnational cooperation, as well as for collaboration at the local level. By participating in this initiative, the city has the chance to learn from the experience of other European communities, to access best practices, and to develop more efficient and innovative public policies. For Roman, the network means not only the exchange of knowledge but also the possibility of applying concrete and sustainable solutions to the city's challenges, from sustainability and social inclusion to digitalization and economic development.

Special thanks are extended to the Roman Local Council, as the successful implementation of such a project depends not only on the technical team but also on the constant support of the local leadership.

The Municipality of Roman ensured the necessary administrative framework, providing both logistical and institutional support for the implementation of the project activities.

The direct involvement of Mayor Laurențiu-Dan Leoreanu and the expert team ensured efficient coordination of processes, participation in meetings, mobilization of local stakeholders, and the integration of the project's outcomes into the city's development strategies.

We also thank the NGOs that actively participated in meetings, provided support, and shared their experiences. Their involvement in discussions regarding the impact of actions to identify measures for socially isolated persons was essential for understanding the real needs of the community and for adapting the proposed solutions to the local context.

Through their openness to dialogue and collaboration, the young volunteers directly contributed to strengthening a more sustainable and better-connected URBACT network.

Our appreciation also goes to the members of **the URBACT Local Group** for their active involvement and valuable contribution to the development of the documents necessary for project implementation. Their creativity, innovative ideas, and willingness to collaborate were essential in carrying out the initiatives and identifying the most suitable solutions for the community.

Through their dedication and professionalism, the members of the URBACT Local Group contributed to transforming the project into a participatory and open process, tailored to the real needs of the Municipality of Roman.

All stakeholders involved in the project made valuable contributions to its implementation and to the development of the action plan. Through collaboration and active participation, local authorities, public institutions, the business sector, non-governmental organizations, schools, and citizens succeeded in creating together a participatory and open working framework.

Each brought different perspectives, expertise, and ideas, which complemented each other, ensuring a shared vision for community development.

Through dialogue, experience exchange, and the assumption of clear roles, all contributed to shaping practical and sustainable solutions, adapted to the real needs of the municipality.

ACTION PLAN ROADMAP

A COLLECTIVE JOURNEY

CHALLENGES (PROBLEM ANALYSIS)

WHAT? Define with your ULG the sub-challenges you wish to tackle amongst the 7 network's focus

WHEN? January to Feb. 2024

HOW? Context & problem analysis (Stories collective analysis) + stakeholder mapping

WHY? Making sure there is a collective understanding of the challenges and that those challenges are real (crucial/relevant) at city level.

↗ Cross analysis between cities

IAP ROADMAP

WHAT? Co-draft your IAP roadmap with your ULG. "Do we agree that this will be the path we will follow in order to co-create our IAP?"

WHEN? March-April 2024

HOW? IAP roadmap template + comparison with other cities

WHY? Making sure the path (roadmap) to follow in order to create the final IAP is clear for everyone.

↗ Comparison of IAP roadmap with the other cities

VISIONING & OBJECTIVES

WHAT? What do you wish to achieve? What would the future situation look like once the challenges are solved? What are our objectives?

WHEN? April-May 2024

HOW? Vision building + objectives' description

WHY? Making sure we have a clear idea of what we would like to achieve, in the end, through our IAP + defining clear and tangible objectives.

GENERATING IDEAS

WHAT? What could we do to achieve our objectives, to make our vision a reality? What can we learn from our peers? What inspiring practices could we transfer to our local context? What could we invent?

WHEN? June-December 2024

HOW? Idea generation and SSA reflections.

WHY? Developing as many ideas as possible in order to respond to the objectives.

↗ What are the ideas in the other cities?

EXPERIMENTING (TESTING ACTIONS)

WHAT? Could we experiment the most promising ideas in order to check whether they are relevant, feasible, worth developing? Can they really help solve our problems?

WHEN? June 2024-May 2025

HOW? Testing Actions (on the ground experimentations)

WHY? Trying out ideas to check whether they are Proof of Concepts or not, evaluating their effects on our problems.

↗ Peer to peer learning from other cities' test actions

REFINE/ADJUST/FINETUNE

WHAT? What do we need to adjust, refine, finetune? What should we correct to increase efficiency, impact, quality? What should we improve or re-develop, re-think?

WHEN? May-June 2025

HOW? Small Scale Actions (on the ground experimentations)

WHY? Trying out ideas to check whether they are Proof of Concepts or not, evaluating their effects on our problems.

↗ What are the learnings and adjustements in the other cities?

DRAFTING IAP

WHAT? Let's draft our Integrated Action Plan. What should we include into it? How does it integrate in the city policies (and beyond)? Is it realistic yet ambitious?

WHEN? July-September 2025

HOW? IAP drafting

WHY? From all the things we've learn, what is feasible, reachable, meaningful in order to respond efficiently to our initial challenges. What are the actions we will need to put in place?

↗ Reviewing and comparing with the other partner cities

FINALIZING IAP

WHAT? Is our IAP robust? Is our strategy (vision) yet enough reachable? Is it well integrated within the local politics and policies + regional and/or national ones?

WHEN? September-November 2025

HOW? Comparing local IAP with other cities' IAP, sharing the IAP locally for collective approval & support, securing political support

WHY? Are we sure our IAP is fine? Do we believe in it? Do we think it's both promising in terms of impact as well as reachable/feasible?

SPREAD/COMMUNICATE

WHAT? Let's inform the world about our IAP. Publicise, spread, share your IAP.

WHEN? December 2025

HOW? Local/regional/national press + social networks, locals news, etc.

WHY? Make sure, that at city level, people know about your IAP, about your wish to officially develop and implement participatory democracy.

INTEGRATED ACTION PLAN (IAP)

The Breaking Isolation network is an action-planning network of cities working to develop, each city, local strategies to combat social isolation, known as Integrated Action Plan (IAP). In order to build this IAP, each city in the network follows a collaborative process alongside local stakeholders who form the URBACT Local Group. This process begins with diagnosing 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. They then co-create ideas, adapt and transfer promising practices from the other partner cities and move into experimentation by testing these ideas locally to gather proof of concept. Finally, they evaluate, refine and adjust their approach before putting together a complete strategy.
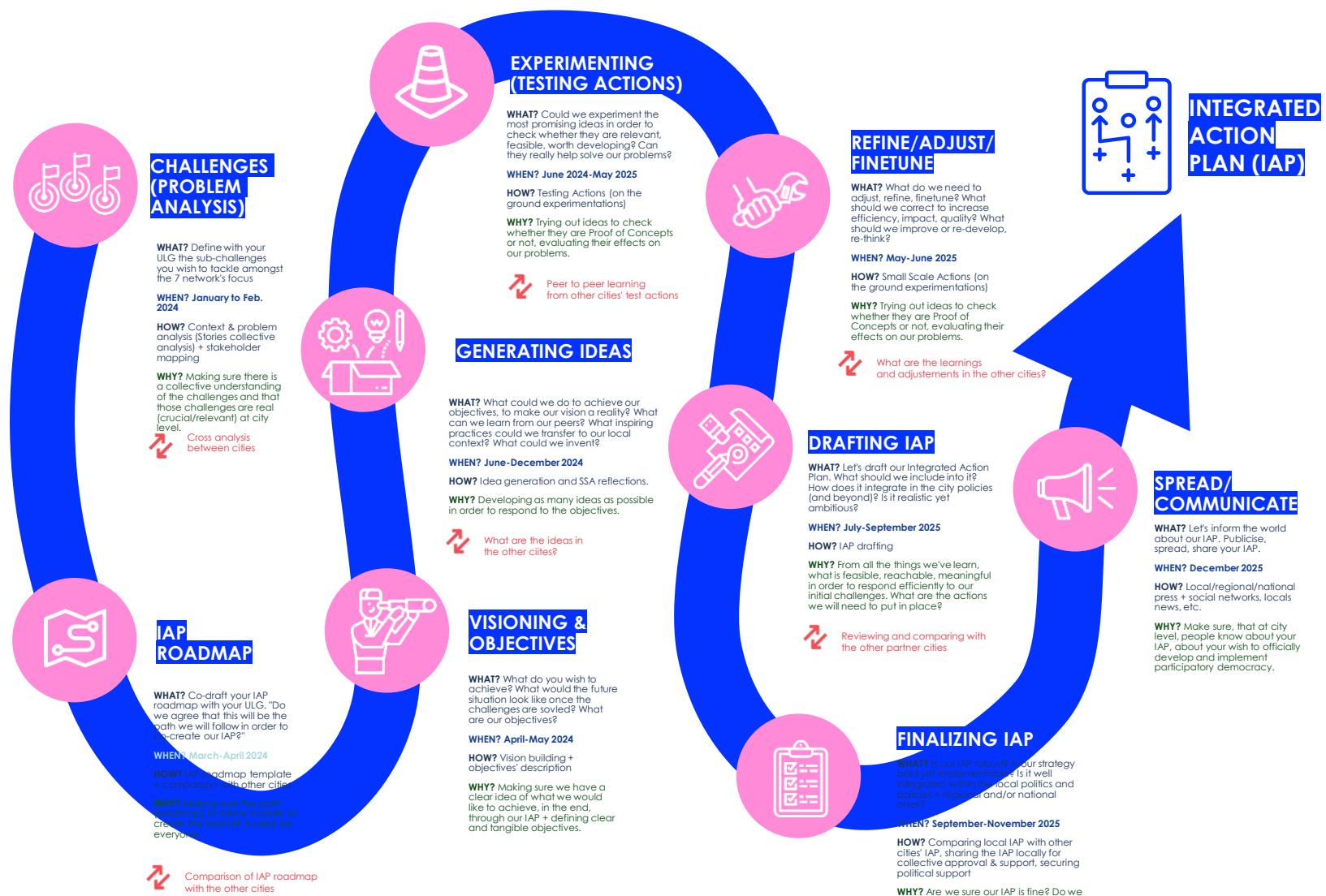
"LONELINESS AND THE FEELING OF BEING UNWANTED IS THE MOST TERRIBLE POVERTY."

– MOTHER TERESA –
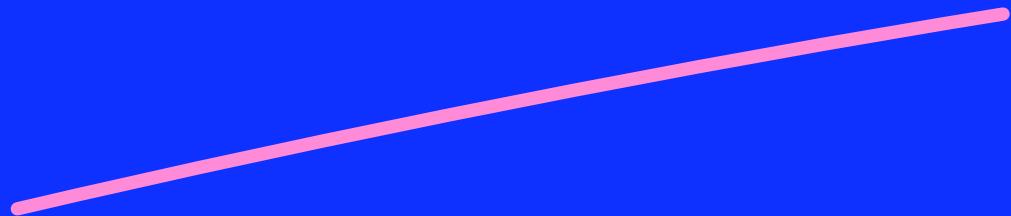
URBACT LOCAL GROUP

URBACT LOCAL GROUP

The Local Action Group (ULG – Urban Local Group) of the Municipality of Roman served as the main working structure within the URBACT **"Breaking Isolation"** project, bringing together key stakeholders from local administration, education, health, NGOs, and the community.

ROLE AND MISSION

The Roman ULG aimed to identify the factors that generate social isolation, assess vulnerable groups, and develop integrated interventions co-designed with community stakeholders. The group facilitated dialogue between institutions and citizens, contributing to a deeper understanding of the issue and to the creation of a shared vision for reducing isolation.

MAIN ACTIVITIES

The Local Action Group carried out regular meetings, participatory analyses, mapping of needs, and identification of at-risk situations within the community. It developed pilot project ideas, supported data collection, organized public consultations, and adapted at local level the good practices shared through the URBACT international network.

RESULTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

Through its activity, the ULG helped Roman formulate a coherent approach to addressing social isolation, raised community awareness, and strengthened collaboration between local institutions. The group generated practical solutions for elderly people, vulnerable youth, individuals living alone, and families facing difficulties, thereby enhancing the community's capacity to respond to social isolation.

COMMUNITY IMPACT

The ULG contributed to improving communication between the public sector and civil society, and laid the foundation of a local support network aimed at preventing social isolation. By engaging different sectors, the group promoted a participatory, inclusive, and sustainable approach that will continue to yield benefits beyond the project's duration.
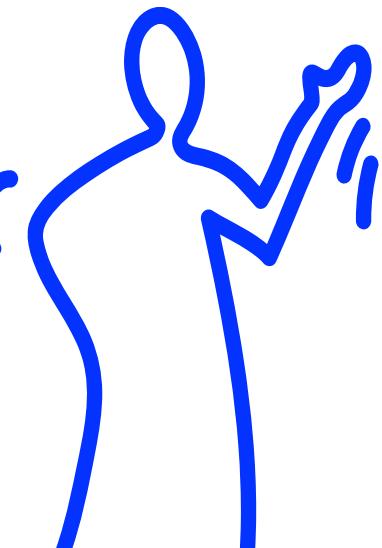
URBACT LOCAL GROUP

COMPOSITION

The group included representatives of the Roman City Hall, specialists from the Social Assistance Directorate, teachers, school counsellors, youth workers, NGOs active in the social and cultural sectors, community health workers, community leaders, members of religious organizations, and volunteers. This diversity ensured a multidimensional perspective on the issue.

COMPOSITION
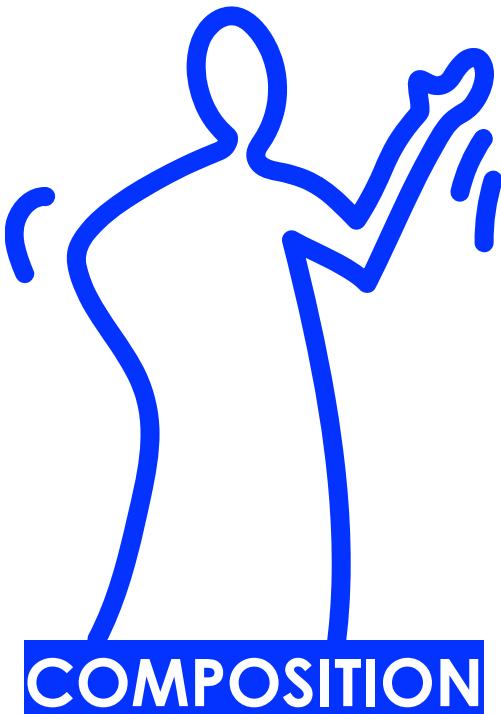
- Day care center for children at risk "Casa Copiilor"
- Residential Center for the elderly "Casa Bunicilor"
- Pacea Humanitarian Foundation
- Bishop "Melchisedec Ștefănescu" Foundation
- The Murialdo Foundation
- CENTER FOR SOCIAL SERVICES "CASA PÂINII"
- „ROMANIȚA" Complex of Residential and Day Services for Children
- Psychologist-psychotherapist Elena Chelmus
- Danubiana Technical College
- "PIONII ROMAȘCANI" CHESS SPORTS ASSOCIATION
- Associations of owners
- The charitable foundation - „Soul of an angel"
- „PetruTocanel" Cultural Association
- Association "Love and Hope, Help„
- Delfinul Center for children with autism – in Bacău and Roman
- Association "Women Matter„
- Association of children with physical disabilities

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"THE STRENGTH OF A COMMUNITY COMES FROM ITS ABILITY TO LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND."
– BAN KI-MOON
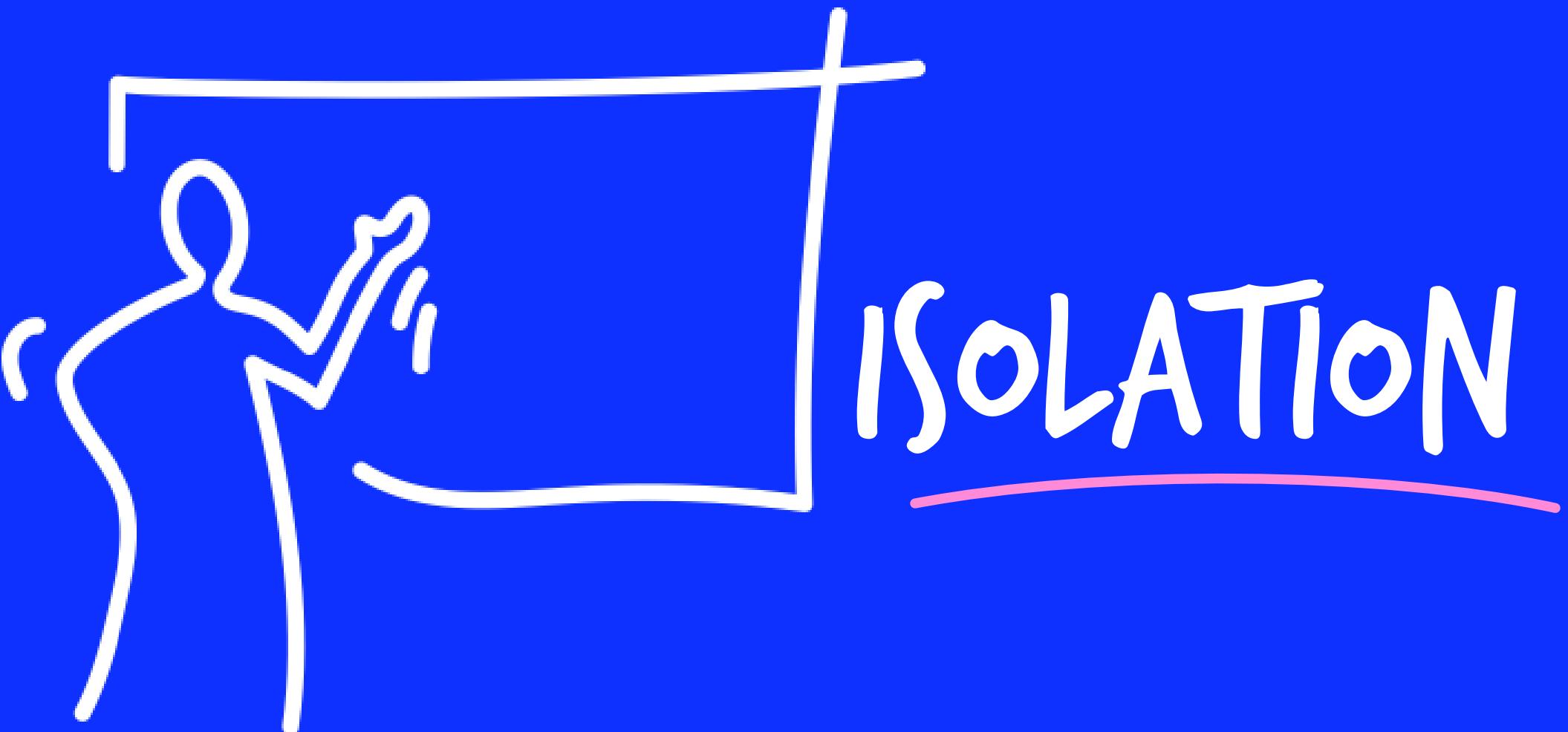
ISOLATION

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)

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).

DEATH OF A LOVED ONE (OR BREAK UP)

MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

PHYSICAL IMPAIRMENTS/ LONG ILLNESS

UNEMPLOYMENT/ RETIREMENT

POVERTY

INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

REMOTE LOCATION

ADDICTIVE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

ADDICTIONS TO DRUGS, ALCOHOL, GAMBLING

LACK OF SOCIAL SKILLS

BREAKING ISOLATION NETWORK – CHRISTOPHE GOULACHE

'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.

PROBLEMS CAUSED BY SOCIAL ISOLATION IN THE ROMAN COMMUNITY

Social isolation is one of the most complex and least visible social issues. It affects health, community participation, economic integration, and overall quality of life, with significant impact on individuals, families, and communities. In the municipality of Roman, as in many medium-sized cities, social isolation emerges from both demographic and socio-economic factors. Below are the main problems caused by social isolation.

1. Mental Health Problems

Isolation contributes to depression, anxiety, chronic stress, and persistent feelings of loneliness, deeply affecting emotional well-being and daily functioning.

2. Deterioration of Physical Health

Isolated often avoid medical services, leading to the worsening of chronic illnesses, reduced mobility, and an increased risk of accidents or self-neglect.

3. Decline in Quality of Life

Social isolation reduces motivation, interest in activities, and the sense of belonging, resulting in a lifestyle marked by apathy, withdrawal, and lack of perspective.

4. Economic and Employment Challenges

Isolation limits access to information and professional networks, reducing employment opportunities and increasing the risk of dependency on social assistance or long-term poverty.

5. Increased Social Vulnerability

Isolated individuals are more exposed to abuse, exploitation, violence, or neglect, as they lack support, do not seek help, and remain unnoticed by the community.

6. Negative Impact on Children and Youth

Isolation affects children's emotional and social development, lowers school performance, increases absenteeism, and encourages withdrawal or excessive dependence on digital environments.

7. Accelerated Aging and Loss of Autonomy

For older adults, isolation accelerates cognitive decline, reduces independence, and leads to emotional disorders, increasing the need for support and social services.

8. Weakening of Community Cohesion

Communities with a high number of isolated individuals become less cohesive, with reduced participation in public life, lower trust in institutions, and diminished solidarity across neighbors and generations.

9. Social Exclusion and Marginalization

Chronic isolation leads to the loss of social connections, weakening of social identity, and inability to participate in civic, cultural, or economic activities.

10. Excessive Dependence on Digital Interaction

For some citizens, the online environment becomes the only form of interaction, intensifying social anxiety, distorting human relationships, and reinforcing real-world isolation.

WHICH ARE THE BENEFITS?
FOR THE CITY OF ROMAN

1. A deeper understanding of social isolation
The project provided Roman with a clear analysis of the causes, vulnerable groups, and high-risk areas related to social isolation—information that had not been previously systematized or sufficiently documented.

2. Strengthened collaboration between institutions and the community
The Local Action Group created a stable working framework in which the local administration, NGOs, schools, healthcare providers, and community members collaborated, building long-term partnerships that extend beyond the project.

3. Development of a shared vision for reducing social isolation
Through meetings, consultations, and participatory processes, the community of Roman established a common understanding of how isolation should be addressed, supporting local strategic planning.

4. Creation of concrete, locally adapted solutions
The Local Action Group generated project ideas, services, and interventions tailored to neighbourhood's needs and vulnerable groups such as older adults, youngsters, and people living alone.

5. Access to international good practices
Roman benefitted from the experiences and successful models of other European cities involved in the URBACT network, allowing the city to adapt proven solutions to local realities.

6. Increased administrative and community capacity
Participants strengthened their skills in participatory planning, social assessment, service design, and social innovation—improving the city's ability to develop future projects.

7. Enhanced visibility of Roman at the European level
Participation in URBACT positioned Roman among the cities committed to social inclusion, opening new opportunities for collaboration and access to European funding.

8. Foundations for new policies and projects
The data, analyses, and solutions developed through "Breaking Isolation" can be integrated into local strategies or used to prepare projects under the North-East Regional Programme 2021–2027 or the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR).

9. Strengthened community cohesion
Participatory initiatives improved dialogue among citizens, institutions, and vulnerable groups, contributing to a more connected and supportive community.

10. A shift in the perception of social isolation
The project increased awareness that isolation is not merely an individual issue but a community-wide challenge requiring coordinated action.

"LONELINESS DOES NOT COME FROM BEING ALONE, BUT FROM BEING UNABLE TO COMMUNICATE WHAT MATTERS."

– CARL JUNG

VISION

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

...**every person**, regardless of age or social status, had someone by his/her side so no one might feel alone anymore. We envision strong social services, active community initiatives, and informal support networks capable of identifying vulnerable individuals early and offering timely assistance. In this way, emotional and social isolation could be prevented before it becomes a serious issue.

...**our community** became more united, opened, and supportive. We would be proud if the people of Roman were more actively engaged in the life of the city — participating in events, consultations, and shared activities. A community where residents recognize and embrace their role in helping vulnerable neighbours would be a truly connected and resilient community.

...**older adults** lived active and dignified lives, with access to dedicated programmes such as: day centers, cultural activities, and social or medical support. We would be happy to see Roman's seniors involved in intergenerational activities, where their experience is valued and where the bond between generations becomes a resource for the entire community.

...**children and young people** grew up in an environment where they feel supported, listened to, and respected. We would be proud if the city offered accessible programmes for personal development, educational support, extracurricular activities, psychological counselling, and volunteer opportunities — helping young people feel part of the community and giving them real prospects for the future.

...**the neighbourhoods of Roman** became vibrant, friendly, and inclusive spaces. We imagine a city where every area central or peripheral — includes meeting places, community spaces, modern parks, and local activities that encourage interaction and collaboration.

...**Roman became a model of good practice** for other cities — a city that succeeded in transforming loneliness into a culture of connection and participation. We would be proud if our experience inspired other communities in Romania or across Europe, demonstrating that through collaboration, empathy, and social innovation, we can build cities where every person matters.

5 CHALLENGES FOR BREAKING ISOLATION

The Municipality of Roman, like many European cities, faces significant challenges related to social isolation. Overcoming these challenges is essential for building a more united, inclusive, and resilient community. The main challenges identified include:

1) **Social isolation of vulnerable groups** – elderly people, low-income families, persons with disabilities, or young people without sufficient integration opportunities.

2) **Lack of attractive and accessible community spaces** – areas dedicated to meetings, dialogue, and common activities for citizens of all ages.

3) **Low civic participation** – a limited level of citizen involvement in decision-making and community activities.

4) **Differences between neighborhoods and social categories** – which can lead to community fragmentation and the creation of "islands of isolation."

5) **Limited access to digital tools and education for all** – which prevents part of the population from benefiting from the opportunities of digitalization and from connecting more easily with others.

IN ROMAN, WE WANT TO FOCUS OUR EFFORTS ON...

In Roman, we want to focus our efforts on making significant progress in breaking social isolation, considering this as one of the most important challenges for modern communities. The process began with a broad awareness campaign aimed at bringing citizens' attention to the reality of isolation and its impact on individuals and social cohesion. We set out to ensure that each person understands not only the causes and consequences of isolation, but also the shared responsibility of building an inclusive environment in which every resident is valued and supported.

An important objective was to transform Roman into a healthy, open, and welcoming environment, where citizens have the opportunity to meet, communicate, and share experiences. We wanted to develop practical and accessible tools available to the community to identify cases of isolation and provide support to those in need. These tools represent a starting point for creating a self-sustaining support network, in which ordinary people can become active agents of change.

After this awareness process, we aimed to strengthen community involvement and encourage collaboration with NGOs, local institutions, and relevant stakeholders. Their experience and resources complement citizens' efforts, offering support for more complex cases that cannot be addressed solely through individual solidarity. This collaboration between civil society, the administration, and the community creates a solid foundation for the development of sustainable policies and actions.

Ultimately, our goal is to build and strengthen a culture of solidarity and mutual care within the community, a culture in which every citizen feels they belong, knows their voice matters, and has the power to contribute to positive change. Through these efforts, Roman aspires to become a more united, friendlier, and more resilient city—an example of how social isolation can be overcome through collaboration, shared responsibility, and openness to diversity.

"BREAKING ISOLATION MEANS GIVING PEOPLE BACK THEIR PLACE IN THE COMMUNITY"
— AUDREY LORDE

STRATEGY

OUR STRATEGY IN ONE PAGE

[Challenge/Problem]

1. In the Municipality of Roman, vulnerable groups face social isolation, manifested through limited access to services, low civic participation, and a lack of support networks.

[Strategic objective]

Reducing social isolation and increasing the level of inclusion and active participation of vulnerable groups in the community life of the Municipality of Roman.

[Specific objectives]

Increasing community awareness regarding social isolation and its effects.

Improving vulnerable groups' access to social, educational, cultural, and digital services

Developing support and community solidarity mechanisms.

Stimulating the active participation of vulnerable people in community and civic activities

We need to reinforce a culture of mutual community care

[Operational objectives]

Organizing information campaigns in schools, neighborhoods, and public spaces.

Creating educational materials (leaflets, posters, digital guides).

Involving local media and social networks to promote the messages.

Creating a local registry of vulnerable persons, in collaboration with NGOs and social services.

Organizing courses and digital training workshops for the elderly and disadvantaged youth.

Establishing intergenerational volunteering and mentoring programs.

Creating a local network of volunteers and "inclusion ambassadors."

Establishing intergenerational volunteering and mentoring programs.

Creating a local network of volunteers and "inclusion ambassadors."

Encouraging public–private partnerships to support social initiatives.

[Actions]

1. Soul Connections Helpline for Seniors

I. INTERGENERATIONAL VOLUNTEERING NETWORK

2. Roman Community Garden

III. „Activează cartierul!"

3. Living Library

4. "Connected Roman" Platform

IV. NORTH-EAST SOCIAL LAB – MODEL PILOT IN MUNICIPIUL ROMAN

5. Community Café

II. PROGRAME DE SPRIJIN PSIHOLOGIC ȘI SOCIAL PENTRU PERSOANE IZOLATE

6. Neighbour's Day

II. Psychological and Social Support Programmes for Isolated Individuals

7. Inclusion Ambassadors

The strategy of Roman Municipality

URBACT

Co-funded by the European Union
Interreg

AN ACTION PLAN IS NOT JUST A LIST OF MEASURES, BUT THE PATH THROUGH WHICH WE TURN INTENTIONS INTO REALITY.

ACTION PLAN

1. The Phone That Drives Away Loneliness

WHAT IS IT? WHAT IS THE OBJECTIVE?

The **"Soul Connections Helpline for Seniors"** is a telephone line dedicated to elderly people facing loneliness and social isolation. Through this service, seniors can call for free to speak with a trained volunteer, while volunteers can identify vulnerable situations and refer them to social services. It is totally new in ROMAN.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE

- Create a free telephone line for seniors.
- Ensure a daily/weekly program of support and social conversations.
- Establish a network of trained volunteers to provide active listening and empathy.
- Identify and refer vulnerable cases to specialized social services by volunteers..
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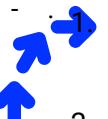
OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE

- Set up the technical infrastructure (phone number, small call center).
- Recruit and train volunteers and staff involved.
- Promote the service in the community (flyers, posters, announcements in churches, pharmacies, markets).

KEY STEPS

1. 1. Planning and obtaining approvals (City Hall, social services, NGOs).
2. 2. Purchase of technical infrastructure (phone, small switchboard, subscription).
3. 3. Create a conversation guide and a protocol for volunteers.
4. 4. Community promotion campaign (posters, local radio, social media).
5. 5. Official launch of the "Soul Connections" helpline.
6. 6. Continuous monitoring and evaluation of usage.

ACTION LEAD & PARTNERS

Co-lead: Town Hall experts
Active contributors: ULG members

Supporting partners: Health care centre, NGOs, etc.

COSTS & FUNDING

1. T**echnical infrastructure**
Dedicated phone, laptop – EUR 1,500 – Local budget
Telephone subscription – monthly subscription (12 months × 150 RON) – EUR 300
Conversation guide & protocol – drafted by psychologist / social worker (expert) – EUR 200
Promotion campaign – posters, leaflets, local radio, social media – EUR 200
Official launch – communication and information materials – EUR 150 – Local budget
Monitoring & evaluation – data collection, reports, periodic evaluations – EUR 150 – Local budget
ESTIMATED TOTAL: 2,350 euro

MONITORING INDICATORS & EVALUATION

1. Output Indicators (activity level)
- Total number of calls received by the helpline (monthly / annually).
- Number of calls answered (response rate).
- Number of unique older persons who used the helpline.
- Number of calls that required follow-up (referral to services, counselling, monitoring).

2. Outcome / Impact Indicators
- Percentage of callers reporting a reduction in feelings of loneliness after interacting with the helpline (via a short survey).
- Beneficiary satisfaction level with the service (score 1–5).
- Percentage of cases that received concrete support (referral to services, connection to social activities, volunteer visits, etc.).

RISK MITIGATION

1. Low usage of the helpline
Mitigation:Targeted information campaigns for seniors (local TV, radio, flyers, family doctors, churches, NGOs) and clear messages about anonymity and support.
2. Insufficient resources (staff, equipment, funding)
Mitigation: Realistic budgeting and resource planning, involvement of partners, efficient staff rotation, monthly monitoring of needs and adjusting resources.
3. Burnout, stress, or insufficient training of operators
Mitigation:Continuous training, weekly supervision, psychological support, rotation and regular breaks, clear procedures for complex cases.
4. Limited long-term impact (persistent loneliness)
Mitigation: Active follow-up, connecting beneficiaries to social services, clubs, community activities, volunteering opportunities; collaboration with local institutions; adapting the service based on beneficiary feedback and periodic evaluations.

2. Roman Community Garden

WHAT IS IT? WHAT IS THE OBJECTIVE?

The **"Roman Community Garden"** is a local initiative that creates a shared green space where vulnerable families, elderly people, and young people come together to grow vegetables and aromatic plants. Thus, the garden becomes not only a place for cultivation but also a meeting point between generations and social groups, reducing isolation and strengthening the spirit of solidarity.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE

- Create an accessible and attractive shared green space.
- Involve vulnerable groups and young people in practical gardening activities.
- Raise awareness about the benefits of healthy eating and community collaboration.

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE

- Identify and set up land for the community garden, flowerbeds on pavements or small plots within parks or along roads
- Recruit participants (vulnerable families, seniors, young volunteers).
- Provide necessary materials: tools, seeds, seedlings, water for irrigation.
- Leisure or educational group activities.
- Local meeting of elder people.

KEY STEPS

1. Establish partnerships (City Hall, schools, NGOs, residents' associations).
2. Select and prepare the land (cleaning, fencing, parceling).
3. Organize working groups (families + volunteers + coordinators).
4. Launch the project through a community planting event.
5. Periodically monitor activities and participant involvement.

ACTION LEAD & PARTNERS

Co-lead: Town Hall experts
Active contributors: ULG members.

Supporting partners: social services, volunteers, schools, local NGOs.

COSTS & FUNDING

Land for community garden	0	If public land is granted, cost may be zero;
Gardening tools (hoes, rakes, watering cans, gloves, etc.)	300 – 500 euro	Enough for 10–15 participants
Seeds and seedlings	100 – 200 euro	Seasonal vegetables, herbs, flowers
Natural fertilizers / compost	50 – 150 euro	Organic or locally sourced
Simple irrigation system (hoses, sprinklers, water storage)	200 – 400 euro	Small-scale, low-cost setup
Information panels / educational materials	100 – 200 euro	Signs, leaflets, basic guides

Total estimated cost: 750 – 2,450 €

MONITORING INDICATORS & EVALUATION

- Number of participants involved (families, seniors, young people).
- Cultivated surface and types of plants grown.
- Number of workshops and community events organized.
- Participant satisfaction level.
- Quantity of produce obtained and distributed.

RISK MITIGATION

1. Lack of suitable land or approval for its use
Mitigation: Identify multiple potential sites in advance; work closely with local authorities ; consider temporary or flexible spaces (flowerbeds, small allotments).
2. Low participation from beneficiaries
Mitigation: Conduct awareness campaigns, engage community leaders, schools, and NGOs; organize attractive events and incentives to encourage involvement.
3. Weather conditions affecting production
Mitigation: Plan seasonal crops, use greenhouses or protective covers and keep reserve seeds/plants.
4. Lack of resources for long-term maintenance
Mitigation: Plan budget and resources carefully, involve volunteers and partners, organize donation or resource-sharing initiatives.
5. Potential conflicts among participants regarding organization or product sharing
Mitigation: Establish clear rules and responsibilities, regular communication, conflict resolution procedures, and shared decision-making processes.

3. Living Library

WHAT IS IT? WHAT IS THE OBJECTIVE?

The **"Living Library"** is an interactive and innovative method of learning and social dialogue. Instead of regular books, people become "living books" who share their life stories and answer readers' questions.

Thus, participants can "borrow" a person for a 20–30 minute conversation, having the opportunity to directly learn about the real experiences of seniors, young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, people with disabilities, immigrants, or other vulnerable groups. **Readers (participants):** Students, young people, community members, and professionals interested in social dialogue and inclusion.

"Living Books": Seniors, young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, people with disabilities, immigrants, and other vulnerable groups.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE

- Organize "Living Library" events in schools, libraries, and community spaces.
- Involve vulnerable people (seniors, people with disabilities, disadvantaged youth) as "living books."
- Create safe and interactive contexts for dialogue between participants.
- Raise the visibility of real-life stories and the value of diversity.

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE

- Identify and select "living books" (people willing to share their experiences).
- Train volunteers as "librarians" and event moderators.
- Develop a good practice guide for running the activities.
- Organize at least 2–3 pilot editions per year.

KEY STEPS
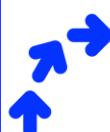
1. Select suitable locations (libraries, schools, community centers).
2. Recruit and train "living books."
3. Create the event calendar.
4. Hold dialogue sessions: readers "borrow" a person and have an open conversation.
5. Collect feedback from participants.
6. Publish conclusions and stories (brochure/local website).

ACTION LEAD & PARTNERS

Co-lead: Municipality staff
Active contributors: Citizens
Supporting partners: Any local NGOs, associations, Schools.

COSTS & FUNDING

Promotional materials (posters, leaflets, banners) – EUR 300
Sources: local printing houses, support from NGOs, sponsorships;
Questionnaires for impact evaluation – EUR 100
Sources: printed or digital forms; micro-grants or volunteer involvement;
Promotion campaign – EUR 500
Sources: social media, local radio, newsletters; sponsors or community funds;
Application development – EUR 1,000
Optional: low-cost app development or voluntary technical support;
Printed materials for campaign promotion – EUR 100–200
Sources: posters, brochures, leaflets; sponsorships from local printing houses.
TOTAL: EUR 4,100

MONITORING INDICATORS & EVALUATION

- Number of "Living Library" events organized per quarter (or semester or year).
- Number and diversity of "living books" involved.
- Number of "readers" participating at each event (or in one semester/year…).
- Participant satisfaction and feedback. OR number of participant who rated the initiative positive (or more than 6 or whatever measure you use)
- Number of partnerships created (schools, NGOs, libraries).

RISK MITIGATION

1. Reluctance of some people to participate as "living books"
Mitigation: Provide clear explanations of the concept and benefits, offer training and support, create a safe and welcoming environment, and start with volunteers already motivated to share their stories.

2. Low community interest during the first editions
Mitigation: Promote the event through schools, local NGOs, social media, and community networks; organize engaging introductory sessions;

3. Possibility of sensitive questions affecting participants
Mitigation: Prepare "living books" in advance on how to handle sensitive topics, allow them to set boundaries, and provide optional support or debriefing after the conversation.

4. Limited financial and logistical resources
Mitigation: Plan a realistic budget, seek partnerships with local organizations or sponsors, use community spaces, and involve volunteers to reduce costs.

5. Need for proper moderation to ensure respectful dialogue
Mitigation: Assign trained moderators for each session, establish clear ground rules, and intervene if discussions become inappropriate or disrespectful.

4. "Connected Roman" Platform

WHAT IS IT? WHAT IS THE OBJECTIVE?

"Connected Roman" – Digital Inclusion Platform is a local application where help requests are posted (e.g., "I need someone to accompany me to the hospital") and volunteers respond.

Activities: Single portal for community services, Quick Help" module, Connected Helpers" volunteer network, Events and activities promoted through the platform, Digital courses for users

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE

1. Develop a local digital application for "community help."
2. Facilitate access for vulnerable people to punctual support (e.g., shopping, accompanying to the doctor, household activities).
3. Create an active network of volunteers available to respond to community needs.
4. Increase citizen involvement in supporting those in difficulty.

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE

- Design and implement the platform's functionalities (user profile, needs list, volunteer responses).
- Test the application with a pilot group (seniors, NGOs, volunteers).
- Promote the platform through local information campaigns.

KEY STEPS

1. Set up the implementation team (City Hall, local IT experts, NGOs).
2. Develop the "Connected Roman" application.
3. Launch a promotion campaign ("Help a Neighbor, Help the Community").
4. Recruit volunteers and train them in using the platform.
5. Official launch of the application and initial real-life testing.
6. Monitor and optimize based on user feedback.

ACTION LEAD & PARTNERS

Co-lead: Town Hall experts
Active contributors: ULG members

Supporting partners: Associations, local NGOs, IT partners.
Communication friends: Neighbourhoods

COSTS & FUNDING

Software development (mobile application + website) – EUR 1,500
Sources: development carried out by IT volunteers; possible sponsorships;
Servers and technical support – EUR 500
Sources: hosting, maintenance and IT support; local budget or partner organisations;
Training for volunteers and users – EUR 1,200
Sources: workshops or online tutorials; funding from local authorities or NGOs;
Promotional materials (posters, leaflets, radio spots) – EUR 300
Sources: awareness campaigns; sponsorships from the local business sector or community funds.
Estimated total cost: EUR 2,500
Potential funding sources: the municipal local budget, sponsorships from IT companies, partnerships with NGOs, and community contributions.

MONITORING INDICATORS & EVALUATION

- Number of registered users on the platform (volunteers and beneficiaries).
- Number of help requests posted and resolved on a monthly basis (or evry year, etc – what is more appropriate for you).
- Average response time to requests.
- Beneficiaries' satisfaction level.
- Number of NGOs and institutions connected to the platform.

RISK MITIGATION

1. Lack of digital skills among some vulnerable groups
Mitigation: Organize digital literacy workshops, provide step-by-step guides, offer support through volunteers or helpdesks, and design the platform with a simple, user-friendly interface.
2. Low adoption rate of the platform at the beginning
Mitigation: Launch awareness campaigns, collaborate with local schools, NGOs, and community centers, and use testimonials from early users to encourage participation.
3. Technical or cybersecurity issues
Mitigation: Use secure and tested software, perform regular maintenance, provide IT support
4. Insufficient number of volunteers to respond to requests
Mitigation: Recruit and train more volunteers, create a flexible volunteer schedule, and involve partner organizations to share workload.
5. Need for constant management for updates and proper functioning
Mitigation: Assign dedicated staff for platform management, plan regular updates, and monitor usage to quickly identify and resolve issues.

5. Community Café

WHAT IS IT? WHAT IS THE OBJECTIVE?

The "Community Café" is an open dialogue initiative, organized as monthly meetings in a friendly public space (café, library, community center).It is innovative because it brings the administration closer to citizens, transforms dialogue into a relaxed and participatory experience, and creates a mechanism for continuous community consultation.or not) and people will be able to observe this "catalogue of activities".

Activities: Participants meet in small groups for short 5–10 minute conversations, moving between tables or themed "corners."

- Each participant can share a personal experience related to the community, daily life, or hobbies.
- Interactive boards where people write problems, ideas, or solutions for the community, followed by collective discussions.
- Tables dedicated to different themes (e.g., health, education, culture, volunteering), where participants choose the topic that interests them and discuss together.

Audience: Seniors / older adults, People living alone, People with disabilities, Immigrants / minority groups, Youth at risk / socially excluded groups, General community members, Local authorities representatives

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE

- Organize monthly public meetings in an accessible and friendly space.
- Facilitate direct dialogue between citizens and authorities.
- Identify real needs and collect community proposals.

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE

- Establish a fixed calendar of meetings
- Select and set up the venue (café, library, community center).
- Create a team of moderators to facilitate discussions.
- Promote events through local channels

KEY STEPS

1. Establish partnerships between City Hall, NGOs, and the local community.
2. Define priority themes for each meeting.
3. Organize the first pilot edition and collect feedback.
4. Implement a public reporting mechanism for conclusions.
5. Ensure monthly continuity and adapt the format to citizens' needs.

ACTION LEAD & PARTNERS

Co-lead: Town Hall experts
Active contributors: ULG members/associations.

Supporting partners: social services, volunteers, local NGOs, citizens, schools, doctors.

COSTS & FUNDING

Qualified staff – EUR 1,000
Suitable and accessible space – EUR 0–200
Sources: community centres, cafés or libraries; possible donation or local partnership;
Basic furniture (round tables, chairs, flipchart) – EUR 300
Sources: may be provided by the venue or borrowed from local partners;
Promotional materials (posters, leaflets, banners) – EUR 200
Sources: local printing houses, support from NGOs, community sponsorships;
Feedback and evaluation questionnaires – EUR 150
Sources: printed or digital forms; micro-grants or volunteer work.
Estimated total cost: EUR 1,850

MONITORING INDICATORS & EVALUATION

- Number of meetings organized per year.
- Number of participants at each meeting.
- Diversity of participants (citizens, NGOs, authorities, youth, seniors).
- Number of ideas/proposals collected and implemented.
- Participant satisfaction level.

RISK MITIGATION

1. Low citizen participation
Mitigation: Promote events through local media, social networks, schools, and NGOs; make meetings accessible in terms of location and schedule.
2. Lack of interest from authorities in applying proposals
Mitigation: Involve local authorities from the beginning, establish communication channels, provide structured summaries of proposals, and showcase previous success stories.
3. Potential tensions or conflicts during discussions
Mitigation: Assign trained moderators, establish clear ground rules for respectful dialogue, and use structured facilitation techniques to manage disagreements.
4. Lack of resources to maintain monthly continuity
Mitigation: Plan realistic budgets, seek sponsorships or partnerships, involve volunteers, and rotate responsibilities among participants.
5. Perception that meetings do not produce concrete results
Mitigation: Document and communicate outcomes of each meeting, follow up on proposals.

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6. Neighbour's Day

WHAT IS IT? WHAT IS THE OBJECTIVE?

"Neighbour's Day" is a community initiative organized at the neighborhood level, where residents gather in an informal and friendly setting to share meals, enjoy music and games, spend quality time together, and strengthen bonds by getting to know each other better. The event is also a valuable opportunity to reach out to isolated neighbors, regardless of age, encouraging them to participate, feel included, and reconnect with the community around them.

Activities:
Community meal, creating a pretext for spontaneous conversations and getting to know each other, "Conversation Corner" – informal meet-ups between neighbors, Ice-breaker activities, Personal visits to isolated neighbors for direct invitations, Creative workshops and cooperative games

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE

- Strengthen social ties and mutual support among neighbors.
- Involve isolated individuals, regardless of age, in community activities.
- Create a friendly and accessible setting for interaction across generations.
- Promote civic spirit and solidarity at the neighborhood level.

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE

- Organize the annual "Neighbour's Day" event in Roman's neighborhoods.
- Identify and mobilize vulnerable neighbors to actively participate.
- Develop a varied program: shared meals, music, games, activities for children and seniors.

KEY STEPS

1. Set the calendar and locations for the events.
2. Form an organizing team (City Hall, NGOs, residents' associations).
3. Promote the event through posters, social media, churches, schools.
4. Prepare the venues (tables, chairs, tents, stage).
5. Carry out activities: shared meal, workshops, music, games.
6. Collect participant feedback to improve future editions.

ACTION LEAD & PARTNERS

Co-lead: Town Hall experts
Active contributors: ULG members/associations.

Supporting partners: social services, volunteers, local NGOs.

COSTS & FUNDING

Logistics – sound system, materials for games and workshops – EUR 1,500
Promotional materials – posters, leaflets, banners – EUR 300
Food resources – food and beverages for the community meal – EUR 800
Qualified staff – EUR 1,000
Estimated total budget: EUR 3,600

Potential funding sources
• Local municipal budget (funds for community, cultural, or social activities)
• Private sponsorships (local companies, supermarkets, producers, restaurants)
• In-kind contributions (residents bringing food, borrowed furniture, free use of space)
• Partnerships with local businesses (print shops, sound system providers, tent suppliers)
• Community associations or NGOs involved in social cohesion

MONITORING INDICATORS & EVALUATION

- Number of events organized in neighborhoods.
- Total number of participants (including vulnerable individuals).
- Diversity of participants (families, children, seniors, people with disabilities).
- Participant satisfaction level (short surveys).
- Number of local partnerships involved.

RISK MITIGATION

1. **Low participation of** residents due to lack of interest or an inconvenient schedule.
Mitigation: broad and diversified communication, plus involvement of community leaders to mobilize residents.
2. **Lack of involvement from isolated neighbors:**
Mitigation: personal invitations delivered to their homes and support from volunteers to accompany them and facilitate integration.
3. **Insufficient logistical resources:** furniture, equipment, or appropriate space.
Mitigation: early planning and establishing partnerships to borrow or secure the necessary resources.
4. **Weak interaction between participants**
Mitigation: active facilitators and interactive ice-breaker activities to stimulate dialogue.
5. **Lack of continuity after the event:** the connections created during the event may not be sustained over time.
Mitigation: creating a community group and planning follow-up activities or periodic gatherings.

7. Inclusion Ambassadors

WHAT IS IT? WHAT IS THE OBJECTIVE?

"Inclusion Ambassadors" are local leaders and volunteers who support the integration of isolated seniors and children by providing emotional support, community activities, and access to services. They act as bridges between vulnerable people and the community, helping to reduce social isolation and strengthen solidarity.

Activities:
- Regular social visits by ambassadors to isolated seniors and children,
- Accompanying vulnerable individuals to community events to support their integration.
- Group walks or small outdoor outings to encourage socialization and build confidence.
- "Buddy system" activities – pairing an ambassador with a vulnerable person for ongoing support.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE

- Create a network of local ambassadors (teachers, priests, young volunteers, social workers).
- Identify and support seniors and children facing social isolation.
- Promote solidarity and inclusion at the community level.

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE

- Select and train Inclusion Ambassadors through courses on empathy, communication, and community assistance.
- Develop a reporting and monitoring system for identified isolation cases.
- Organize social and educational activities for vulnerable seniors and children.

KEY STEPS

1. Identify local leaders and volunteers who can become ambassadors.
2. Organize a training program (e.g., "How We Support Our Community").
3. Create a database of seniors and children at risk of isolation.
4. Implement home visits, community meetings, and intergenerational activities.
5. Collect feedback and adapt activities according to needs.

ACTION LEAD & PARTNERS

Co-lead: Town Hall experts
Active contributors: ULG members/associations.

Supporting partners: social services, volunteers, local NGOs.

COSTS & FUNDING

Identification of local leaders and volunteers – EUR 300
Training programme ("How We Support Our Community") – EUR 1,200
Creation of a database of seniors and children at risk of isolation – EUR 500
Home visits, community meetings and intergenerational activities – EUR 1,500
Feedback collection and adaptation of activities – EUR 300
Communication and information activities – EUR 300
Estimated total budget: EUR 4,100

Potential Funding Sources
- Local municipal budget (social inclusion, community development)
- Private sponsorships from local businesses
- In-kind contributions (volunteer time, donated materials, free venues)
- Partnerships with NGOs and community organizations
- Small community grants or local CSR programs

MONITORING INDICATORS & EVALUATION

- Number of ambassadors included in the network.
- Number of vulnerable people supported (seniors and children).
- Number of visits, meetings, and activities carried out.
- Beneficiary satisfaction level.
- Number of awareness campaigns implemented.

RISK MITIGATION

1. Lack of motivated volunteers to remain ambassadors long-term
Mitigation: provide regular training, recognition, and motivational incentives to maintain engagement.

2. Reluctance of some isolated seniors and children to participate in activities
Mitigation: build trust through gradual contact, personalized approaches, and support from familiar community members.

3. Insufficient financial resources to support initiatives
Mitigation: diversify funding sources through local budget allocations, sponsorships, and volunteer-based or low-cost activities.

4. Possible overload of ambassadors if the number of cases is high
Mitigation: distribute responsibilities evenly, recruit additional volunteers, and set realistic case limits per ambassador.

5. Difficulties in coordinating and monitoring activities at neighborhood level
Mitigation: establish a clear coordination structure, regular reporting, and simple monitoring tools to track progress.

8. Happy faces

WHAT IS IT? WHAT IS THE OBJECTIVE?

"Happy Faces" is an activity carried out by NGOs for children from disadvantaged families, offering them the chance to enjoy play, creativity, and new discoveries through clowns, face painting, and excursions. This initiative contributes to the social inclusion of children, reduces the feeling of marginalization, and creates positive memories.

Activities – Organizing playful animation sessions - Invite clowns, entertainers,
Face painting and creative art workshops
Thematic discovery activities - educational discovery corners
Excursions and outdoor adventures - treasure hunts, nature walks, or team challenges.
Social inclusion activities

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE

- Provide recreational and educational experiences for children from disadvantaged families.
- Promote social integration through play and creative activities.
- Stimulate children's imagination, curiosity, and self-confidence.
- Create positive contexts for interaction between children and volunteers.

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE

- Organize shows and animations with clowns.
- Hold face painting workshops and creative activities.
- Organize excursions and educational visits outside the city.
- Involve volunteers in play and coordination activities.

KEY STEPS

1. Establish partnerships between NGOs, schools, and the community.
2. Select beneficiary children from disadvantaged families.
3. Plan the program of activities (shows, workshops, excursions).
4. Secure logistics and necessary resources.
5. Carry out the "Happy Faces" activities on a regular basis.
6. Collect feedback and evaluate the impact on children.

ACTION LEAD & PARTNERS

Co-lead: Town Hall experts
Active contributors: ULG members/associations.

Supporting partners: social services, volunteers, local NGOs.

COSTS & FUNDING

Materials for face painting   150 – 300
Logistics for excursions (transport, tickets, food) 600 – 1,500
Venues for activities (schools, parks, community centers)   0 – 500
Total Estimated Budget: 750 – 2,300 €

Overall Funding Possibilities
- NGO budget (core funding or project-based funds)
- Sponsorships from local businesses (transport companies, shops, event providers)
- Donations from community members or local fundraising events
- Partnerships offering in-kind support (free venues, discounted tickets, donated materials)

MONITORING INDICATORS & EVALUATION

- Number of children participating.
- Number of shows, workshops, and excursions organized.
- Level of active participation of children.
- Positive feedback from children, parents, and volunteers.
- Level of social integration observed as a result of the activities.

RISK MITIGATION

1. **Lack of funds to support regular activities**
Mitigation: diversify funding sources through local grants, private sponsorships, donations, and partnerships with NGOs.
2. **Low participation due to families' reluctance**
Mitigation: build trust through direct communication, involve social workers, and offer clear information about safety and benefits.
3. **Logistical problems (transportation, children's safety)**
Mitigation: ensure organized transport with trained staff, conduct safety briefings, and prepare emergency procedures.
4. **Lack of volunteers to coordinate activities**
Mitigation: recruit volunteers through schools, NGOs, and community campaigns, offering training and recognition incentives.

"INTEGRATED ACTIONS CREATE REAL CHANGE ONLY WHEN INSTITUTIONS, THE COMMUNITY, AND PEOPLE WORK AS ONE SYSTEM."

INTEGRATED ACTIONS

I. INTERGENERATIONAL VOLUNTEERING NETWORK

WHAT IS IT? WHAT IS THE OBJECTIVE?

The initiative consists of developing and implementing integrated psychological and social support services for individuals facing social isolation, loneliness, emotional vulnerability, or difficulties in managing social relationships.

Specific activities:

support groups for older adults; counseling for individuals affected by loss or stress; mobile sessions in neighbourhoods (within micro community centers).

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE

- Increasing access for isolated individuals to psychological counseling and social support services.
- Developing the emotional, social, and interpersonal skills of beneficiaries.
- Improving the community's capacity to identify and intervene in cases of social isolation.
- Creating a support network that connects public institutions, NGOs, medical services, and volunteers

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE

Organizing regular individual and group psychological counseling sessions.
Creating a home-visit program for older adults, people living alone, or those with reduced mobility.
Implementing thematic support groups (anxiety, loss, social adaptation, interpersonal relationships).
Training volunteers and professionals to identify and report cases of social isolation.
Conducting local campaigns on mental health, loneliness, and access to support.

KEY STEPS

- Identifying beneficiaries through community networks, public institutions, family doctors, schools, and NGOs.
- Developing an individualized intervention plan for each person.
- Organizing counseling sessions (individual and group).
- Activating the volunteer network for home visits and emotional support.
- Creating and coordinating support groups.
- Carrying out information campaigns in neighborhoods, schools, and community centers.

ACTION LEAD & PARTNERS

Co-lead: Town Hall experts
Active contributors: ULG members/associations.

Supporting partners:
- **Local schools and high schools** – recruitment of young volunteers.
- **Local NGOs** (charity, culture, youth).
- **Cultural institutions** (Municipal Library, House of Culture).

COSTS & FUNDING

1. **Personnel (psychologists, social workers, project coordinator)**
   - *2 psychologists × 6,000 lei/month × 12 months = 144,000 lei*
   - *1 social worker × 5,000 lei/month × 12 months = 60,000 lei*
2. **Operational costs (materials, supplies, logistics)**
   - *Materials for group activities (stationery, educational materials, etc.) = 12,000 lei*
   - *Furnishing and equipping the counseling space (furniture, equipment) = 35,000 lei*
   - *Software applications, licenses, psychological assessment tools = 15,000 lei*
3. **Information and communication campaigns**
   - *Posters, brochures, multimedia materials, social media = 25,000 lei*

Sources of funding:

PNRR – Health / Social Component
URBACT / other European programmes
Local budget of the Municipality of Roman

Sponsorships and private funding
National non-reimbursable grants

MONITORING INDICATORS & EVALUATION

Quantitative Indicators
- Number of volunteers recruited.
- Number of intergenerational activities delivered.
- Number of beneficiaries supported.
- Total volunteer hours.

Qualitative Indicators
- Volunteer satisfaction.
- Beneficiary satisfaction.
- Perceived reduction of social isolation.

RISK MITIGATION

1. **Low volunteer participation**
Mitigation: strengthen recruitment and offer flexible schedules and incentives.
2. **Poor coordination between institutions**
Mitigation: set clear roles, written agreements, and regular coordination meetings.
3. **Difficulty identifying isolated beneficiaries**
Mitigation: collaborate with community actors and conduct targeted outreach.
4. **Volunteer burnout**
Mitigation: monitor workload, rotate tasks, and provide support mechanisms.
5. **Safety risks during home visits**
Mitigation: apply safety protocols, conduct visits in pairs, and ensure supervision.

II. Psychological and Social Support Programmes for Isolated Individuals

WHAT IS IT? WHAT IS THE OBJECTIVE?

Activate the Neighborhood!" is an urban and community programme designed to revitalise public spaces in the neighbourhoods of Roman through cultural, recreational, and educational events. The action aims to mobilise residents, promote intergenerational interaction, and reduce social isolation by regularly activating squares, parks, pathways, and other community gathering spaces.

Specific activities
•Support groups for the elderly; Counseling for individuals affected by loss or stress;
•Mobile sessions in neighborhoods (via micro-community centers).

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE

•Organizing regular individual and group psychological counseling sessions.
•Creating a home-visit program for older adults, people living alone, or those with reduced mobility.
•Implementing thematic support groups (anxiety, loss, social adaptation, interpersonal relationships).
•Training volunteers and professionals to identify and report cases of social isolation.
•Conducting local campaigns on mental health, loneliness, and access to support.

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE

•Organise at least 10 community events per year across different neighbourhoods.
•Activate at least 5 public spaces through temporary interventions and events.
•Engage a minimum of 300 participants annually.
•Implement diverse monthly activities (cultural, sports, artistic, educational).

KEY STEPS

• Identify suitable public spaces and assess community needs in each neighbourhood.
• Co-create the annual activity calendar with the ULG, schools, NGOs, and groups.
• Implement events: workshops, performances, projections, games, creative activations.
• Communication and promotion across neighbourhoods and municipal channels.

ACTION LEAD & PARTNERS

Co-lead: Town Hall experts
Active contributors: ULG members/associations.

Supporting partners:
•**Local schools and high schools** – recruitment of young volunteers.
•**Local NGOs** (charity, culture, youth).
•**Cultural institutions** (Municipal Library, House of Culture).

COSTS & FUNDING

Personnel costs (most relevant)
Psychologist / psychological counsellor (e.g. 2 psychologists / 10 months ≈ **EUR 3,200**)
Social worker / community facilitator (e.g. 1 person / 10 months ≈ **EUR 1,500**)
Organisation of support groups (materials, logistics) (4–6 groups ≈ **EUR 1,500**)
Thematic workshops / intergenerational activities (6–8 workshops ≈ **EUR 2,000**)
Educational and informational materials – **EUR 1,000**
Total: EUR 9,200
Information and communication campaigns
Posters, brochures, multimedia materials, social media = 25,000 RON

Funding Sources:
•PNRR – Health / Social Component
•other European programmes
•Local budget
•Sponsorships and private funding

MONITORING INDICATORS & EVALUATION

Quantitative Indicators

- Min 50 individuals identified as being in a situation of social isolation
- Min 40 beneficiaries included in psychological and social support programmes
- Min 120 individual psychological counselling sessions delivered
- Mini 6 support groups organized
- Mini 8 thematic workshops for socialisation and personal development

Qualitative Indicators

- Improvement in beneficiaries' emotional well-being, assessed through pre- and post-intervention questionnaires
- Reduction of feelings of loneliness and social isolation among beneficiaries
- Increased levels of self-confidence and social interaction skills
- Higher levels of beneficiary satisfaction with the services provided

RISK MITIGATION

1: Low beneficiary participation
Mitigation: Information campaigns; collaboration with family doctors, schools, churches, and volunteers.
2: Lack of financial resources
Mitigation: Diversification of funding sources and submission of European project proposals.
3: Lack of available specialists
Mitigation: Partnerships with private practices.
4: Insufficiently protected confidentiality
Mitigation: Clear procedures, staff training, compliance with GDPR legislation.
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III. Activate the Neighborhood!" – Urban Animation and Community Events Programme

WHAT IS IT? WHAT IS THE OBJECTIVE?

"Activate the Neighbourhood!" is an urban and community programme designed to revitalise public spaces in the neighbourhoods of the Municipality of Roman through the organisation of cultural, recreational and educational events. The action aims to mobilise residents, promote intergenerational interaction and reduce social isolation by periodically activating squares, parks, walkways and other community meeting spaces.

Specific activities: Support groups for elderly people; counselling for individuals affected by loss or stress; mobile sessions delivered in neighbourhoods through micro community centres.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE

•To revitalise underused public spaces through cultural, recreational, and community activities.
•To increase residents' participation in neighbourhood social life.
•To promote intergenerational interaction and social inclusion.
•To support community identity and local sense of belonging.

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE

•Organise at least 10 community events per year across different neighbourhoods.
•Activate at least 5 public spaces through temporary interventions and events.
•Engage a minimum of 300 participants annually.
•Implement diverse monthly activities (cultural, sports, artistic, educational).

KEY STEPS

• Identify suitable public spaces and assess community needs in each neighbourhood.
• Co-create the annual activity calendar with the ULG, schools, NGOs, and groups.
• Implement events: workshops, performances, projections, games, creative activations.
• Communication and promotion across neighbourhoods and municipal channels.

ACTION LEAD & PARTNERS

Co-lead: Town Hall experts
Active contributors: ULG members/associations.

Supporting partners:
•**Local schools and high schools** – recruitment of young volunteers.
•**Local NGOs** (charity, culture, youth).
•**Cultural institutions** (Municipal Library, House of Culture).

COSTS & FUNDING

 Personnel (psychologists, social workers, project coordinator)
 2 psychologists × 6,000 RON/month × 12 months = EUR 18,000
1 social worker / 12 months = EUR 10,000
Materials for group activities
(stationery, educational materials, etc.) = EUR 2,000
Software applications, licences, psychological assessment tools = EUR 3,000
Information and communication campaigns
(posters, brochures, multimedia materials, social media) = EUR 2,000
TOTAL: EUR 35,000

Funding Sources:
•Local budget
•Public–private partnerships / sponsorships

MONITORING INDICATORS & EVALUATION

Quantitative indicators:
• Number of individuals identified as being in a situation of social isolation;
• Number of counselling sessions delivered;
• Number of volunteers involved;
• Number of home visits carried out.

Qualitative indicators:
Improvement in emotional well-being (psychological assessments before/after the intervention);
Level of beneficiary satisfaction;
Reduction in feelings of loneliness;
Increased social participation of beneficiaries.

RISK MITIGATION

1. **Low beneficiary participation**
Measures: Implementation of information campaigns; collaboration with family doctors, educational institutions, churches, and volunteers to identify and mobilise beneficiaries.
2. **Lack of financial resources**
Measures: Diversification of funding sources and submission of project proposals to access European funds.
3. **Shortage of available specialists**
Measures: Establishment of partnerships with private practices and other specialised service providers.
4. **Insufficient data confidentiality protection**
Measures: Establishment of clear procedures, staff training, and strict compliance with personal data protection legislation (GDPR).

IV. The North-East Social Lab – Pilot Model in Roman

WHAT IS IT? WHAT IS THE OBJECTIVE?

The North-East Social Lab is a pilot initiative in Roman aimed at testing and implementing innovative approaches to social inclusion, community activation, and the reduction of social isolation among vulnerable groups. The lab serves as a space for collaboration between local authorities, social service providers, volunteers, and community members to co-create and deliver tailored interventions.

Specific actions:
- Prototyping solutions for mobility, community interaction, and autonomy for elderly people;
- Organizing a "North-East Social Innovation Summit" in Roman.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE

- Reduce social isolation among elderly people, individuals with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups.
- Increase access to integrated social, educational, and cultural services.
- Promote intergenerational activities and community engagement.
- Strengthen local partnerships and institutional collaboration.

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE

- Train local stakeholders and volunteers for social intervention programs.
- Organize community activities and support groups.
- Provide mobile counseling and outreach services in underserved neighborhoods.
- Implement micro-urban interventions to improve public spaces and mobility.

KEY STEPS

- Needs assessment and mapping of isolated individuals.
- Development of intervention plans (social, educational, cultural).
- Recruitment and training of personnel and volunteers.
- Implementation of activities (counseling sessions, community events, micro-interventions).
- Monitoring, evaluation, and adaptation of activities.

ACTION LEAD & PARTNERS

Co-lead: Town Hall experts
Active contributors: ULG members/associations.

Supporting partners:
Local social service providers, schools, churches, NGOs, universities, volunteer

COSTS & FUNDING

- **Operational Costs:** materials, logistics, counseling spaces, software – 6000 euro
- **Communication:** posters, brochures, social media campaigns – 2500 euro
- **Funding sources:** municipal budget, European project grants, private partnerships

Funding Sources:
- Local budget
- Public–private partnerships / sponsorships

Linkage with the regional level:
- **Regional Innovation Strategy (RIS3 North-East)** – priority area: social and community innovation;

MONITORING INDICATORS & EVALUATION

Quantitative Indicators

- Number of beneficiaries identified as isolated
- Number of counseling sessions
- Number of volunteers involved
- Number of home visits

Qualitative indicators

- Beneficiaries' satisfaction
- Improvement in emotional well-being (pre/post assessments)
- Reduction in feelings of loneliness
- Increased social participation

RISK MITIGATION

1: Low participation of beneficiaries
Mitigation: Conduct information campaigns; collaborate with family doctors, schools, churches, and volunteers.

2: Lack of financial resources
Mitigation: Diversify funding sources; submit proposals for European projects and grants.

3: Shortage of available specialists (psychologists, social workers)
Mitigation: Establish partnerships with private practices; provide additional training; collaborate with universities.

4: Insufficient protection of confidentiality
Mitigation: Implement clear procedures; train staff on privacy; ensure compliance with GDPR legislation.

5: Volunteer turnover
Mitigation: Motivate and recognize volunteers publicly; offer continuous training.

"THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A PLAN BEGINS WHEN EVERY SMALL STEP IS TAKEN WITH CONSISTENCY AND EVERY ACTOR EMBRACES THEIR ROLE IN CREATING CHANGE."
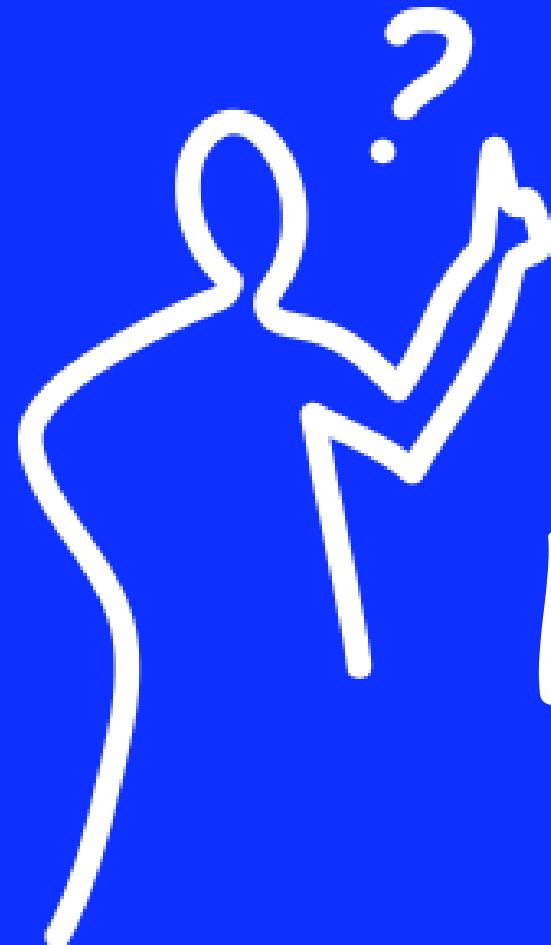
IMPLEMENTATION

The proposed actions are aligned with the development strategies of the Municipality of Roman

The Integrated Action Plan developed by the Municipality of Roman within the URBACT Breaking Isolation project is grounded in the existing local strategic documents, ensuring coherence, complementarity, and continuity between the project's objectives and the city's development directions. The proposed actions aim to reduce social isolation, improve access to services, revitalize public spaces, and strengthen community participation, and are directly aligned with the following local strategies and policies:

1. The Sustainable Development Strategy of the Municipality of Roman

- The IAP contributes to the objectives related to social cohesion, reducing vulnerabilities, and improving the quality of life in the city's neighborhoods. The actions focused on social activation, small-scale urban rehabilitation, pedestrian mobility, and increasing safety in public spaces are aligned with the strategic directions in the fields of "Social services and social inclusion" and "Integrated urban development."

2. Integrated Urban Development Strategy (IUDS) / General Urban Plan

- The proposed interventions comply with the principles of the Integrated Urban Development Strategy (SIDU) regarding balanced territorial development, the regeneration of areas with a potential risk of exclusion, and the improvement of urban connectivity.
- The actions included in the IAP support the creation of an accessible urban network, designed with a focus on vulnerable users (elderly people, persons with disabilities, parents with young children).

3. Social Inclusion and Social Services Strategy

The IAP strengthens the local objectives for preventing and combating social isolation through:
– community activities,
– the development of integrated services (social, cultural, educational),
– facilitating access to information and support.
The actions focused on training local stakeholders and fostering community mobilization are aligned with the strategic directions regarding interinstitutional cooperation and local partnerships.

4. Local Youth and Education Strategy

- The interventions aimed at creating meeting spaces, intergenerational activities, and non-formal educational programs are complementary to the existing measures for increasing youth engagement.

5. Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP)

The IAP actions related to accessibility, pedestrian circulation, vulnerable-group-friendly public transport, and improving connections with underserved neighborhoods are directly aligned with the objectives of the Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP).

The small-scale infrastructure measures (urban micro-interventions) support active mobility, reducing the physical isolation of neighborhoods.

CONCRETE ACTION PLAN –
Reducing Social Isolation in the Municipality of Roman

1. Developing social and community infrastructure

The municipality of Roman aims to strengthen its social infrastructure by modernizing and expanding community centers in neighborhoods such as Favorit, Muncitoresc, Petru Rareș, and 1 Mai. These centers will become multifunctional spaces where educational activities, counseling sessions, and programs for older adults can take place. At the same time, improving public spaces—parks, pavilions, and communal meeting areas—will stimulate social interaction and community life. Day centers for seniors, located in key areas of the city, will offer recreational activities, counseling, and health programs designed to reduce loneliness and dependency.

2. Support programs for older adults and vulnerable individuals

To address the isolation of vulnerable groups, Roman will expand the program "No Elder Alone," which includes home visits, emotional support, and emergency alert devices. A mobile community assistance service, led by a multidisciplinary team, will intervene in disadvantaged neighborhoods, identifying at-risk cases and facilitating access to social and medical services.

3. Reducing digital isolation

To overcome digital barriers, free courses will be offered to older adults, focusing on mobile phone use, accessing online public services, and video communication with family members. Free Wi-Fi zones and coworking spaces will be created in peripheral and vulnerable areas, while the municipal library will function as a digital hub. The "Roman Connect" program, supported by IT volunteers, will provide personalized digital assistance to those with limited technological skills.

4. Programs for children, adolescents, and families

To reduce social isolation among young people, after-school centers will be set up in vulnerable neighborhoods, offering educational support, counseling, and recreational activities. Digital self-isolation will be addressed through themed school meetings, offline clubs—such as theatre, reading, robotics, and sports—and stronger parental involvement.

Integrated services to prevent school dropout, including mentoring, counseling, social scholarships, and free transport, will help maintain young people in education and strengthen their social connection.

5. Strengthening community participation and volunteering

Citizen involvement will be encouraged through the "Roman Solidarity" volunteer network, training young people and adults to support social initiatives and community activities such as home visits or organizing events. Participatory budgeting will allow residents to propose and vote for projects aimed at reducing social isolation. Recurring community events—Neighborhood Day, local fairs, intergenerational activities, and educational festivals—will foster a more active and connected city.

6. Improving access to services

To better meet the needs of vulnerable groups, public transport will be optimized with improved routes to peripheral areas. Integrated health and psychological counseling services will offer screening for depression and anxiety, particularly among seniors. Administrative procedures will be simplified, and mobile service counters will be deployed in marginalized neighborhoods to facilitate access to documents and essential services.

7. Awareness and information campaigns

The community will be informed through anti-isolation campaigns using posters, media spots, and social media messages promoting empathy and mutual support. Existing social services will be publicized through printed and digital guides distributed in neighborhoods, at family doctors' offices, and in churches. Local media will play an important role in promoting initiatives, success stories, and community engagement opportunities.

GOVERNANCE & PARTNERS

The implementation of the Breaking Isolation project is based on a multilevel governance structure that ensures effective coordination between the local, regional, and national levels, as well as coherent integration with relevant European policies (social cohesion, inclusion, sustainable urban development).
To ensure effective coordination, the strategy proposes a multi-level working structure.

1. Local Level – Operational Governance
The Municipality leads implementation through a dedicated project coordinator and an operational team responsible for delivering activities, logistics, monitoring, and reporting.
The URBACT Local Group (ULG) – composed of NGOs, schools, social services, community leaders, volunteers, and church representatives – acts as the main co-creation and consultation body, contributing to the design of actions, testing pilot measures, and providing continuous feedback.
A key innovation is the involvement of **Inclusion Ambassadors**—trusted community figures such as teachers, priests, youth leaders, and social workers—who identify isolation risks at neighborhood level and act as intermediaries between vulnerable individuals and institutions.
Coordination is maintained through monthly meetings, semi-annual progress reviews, and an open communication channel where citizens can report isolation cases.

2. Regional Level – Strategic Support
Regional authorities (e.g., County Council, Regional Development Agency) contribute by:
- aligning project activities with regional strategies on social inclusion, education, and urban development,
- offering access to regional networks and expertise,
- supporting dissemination of results to other municipalities.
- Their involvement enhances the project's strategic relevance and ensures broader impact.

3. National Level – Policy Support
National institutions such as the Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Family, Ministry of Education, and the National Authority for the Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Children and Adoptions support the project by:
- ensuring alignment with national policies and standards,
- providing methodological guidance, data, and good practices,
- helping scale and promote project achievements.
- This level strengthens legitimacy and facilitates replication in other cities.

4. European Level – URBACT Integration
The project uses the URBACT framework for participatory governance, good practices from the Lead Partner city, and peer learning across the network. This level strengthens know-how transfer and continuous improvement of local actions.

OVERALL COSTS & FUNDING

For the implementation of the strategy to combat social isolation, the Municipality of Roman requires a sustainable financing approach that combines public resources with support from the private sector and external partners.

In order to ensure the continuity of the activities initiated under the URBACT project **"Breaking Isolation"**, the Municipality of Roman proposes maintaining and expanding support services for isolated individuals through a clear plan of costs and funding sources.

1. PERSONNEL

The Municipality of Roman will ensure the human resources necessary to carry out counselling and community mobilisation activities, such as:

These professionals will continue to provide direct support to beneficiaries and organise activities at community level.

👉 **Estimated total personnel cost: EUR 70,000**

2. OPERATIONAL AND LOGISTICAL COSTS

These include the materials required for group sessions and community activities (stationery, educational materials, equipment for micro community centres), the set-up and maintenance of counselling spaces, as well as software applications and psychological assessment tools. The objective is to maintain a high professional standard of services and to facilitate beneficiary participation.

Examples:
- Materials for group activities and community interventions
- Logistics (counselling spaces, utilities, basic equipment)
- Transport for mobile interventions and home visits
- Software applications, licences, assessment and monitoring tools

👉 **Estimated total operational cost: EUR 40,000**

3. COSTS FOR COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES AND MICRO-URBAN INTERVENTIONS
- Organisation of community activities, support groups, and local events
- Prototyping and implementation of micro-urban interventions (mobility, accessibility, public spaces)
- Intergenerational activities and community activation

👉 **Estimated total activities cost: EUR 20,000**

Through this mixed financing strategy, the Municipality of Roman aims to ensure the continuity and effectiveness of activities after the end of the project, extend benefits to as many citizens as possible, and strengthen the local support network for people experiencing social isolation.

OVERALL COSTS & FUNDING

. 5. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND CAPITALISATION
- Data collection, surveys, qualitative and quantitative evaluations
- Progress reports and final evaluation
- Capitalisation of results and their integration into local policies

👉 Estimated total M&E cost: EUR 6,000

5. COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COSTS

To maintain community engagement and promote the available activities, awareness-raising and information campaigns will be organised through posters, brochures, multimedia materials and social media. These actions will ensure continuous information for beneficiaries and the wider community, as well as their active
- Awareness and information campaigns
- Communication materials (posters, brochures, digital content, social media)
- Workshops, public meetings and dissemination events

👉 Estimated total communication cost: EUR 4,000

TOTAL BUDGET: EUR 140,000

POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES

The Municipality of Roman intends to combine several funding sources to ensure the sustainability of these activities.

Available resources
- Contributions from the local budget (partial coverage of personnel, space and logistics costs)
- Use of existing public infrastructure (community centres, library, cultural spaces)
- In-kind contributions from partners (volunteering, expertise, spaces, equipment)

Funding sources and cost coverage mechanisms
- Local municipal budget – main source for launching and stabilising activities
- European funds (PNRR – social/health component; ESF+; other relevant programmes)
- European grants and projects submitted by the local authority or partners
- Public–private partnerships, sponsorships and private funding
- Regional and national programmes aligned with RIS3 North-East – social and community innovation

Funding structure (adapted and realistic)
- Local budget: ~20%
- European funds (PNRR, ESF+, CERV, other programmes): ~60%
- Public–private partnerships / sponsorships: ~20%

This structure enables: the rapid launch of priority actions, reduces dependence on a single funding source, and ensures flexibility in implementation.

URBACT

GLOBAL RISK ASSESSMENT

The implementation of public policies involves translating strategic objectives into concrete actions and measurable outcomes. While this process is essential for achieving desired results, it is often accompanied by challenges and risks that can affect the effectiveness of interventions.

1. **Social Risk** – Reluctance of isolated individuals to participate in activities – **High Level**
   Description: Vulnerable persons (seniors, children, disadvantaged families) may refuse the offered support or avoid involvement in community activities due to lack of trust, fear, or prior negative experiences.
   Impact: Reduced efficiency of activities and inability to reach a significant number of beneficiaries.
   Mitigation Measures: Awareness and information campaigns, involvement of Inclusion Ambassadors, conducting individual home visits, and organizing activities that help build trust.

2. **Institutional Risk** – Lack of coordination among involved actors – **Medium Level**
   Description: The City Hall, NGOs, schools, and other partners may act in a fragmented manner, without a common framework for planning and cooperation.
   Impact: Duplication of efforts, inefficient use of resources, and poor or scattered outcomes.
   Mitigation Measures: Establishing a local advisory council, organizing regular coordination meetings, and designating a coordinator within the City Hall responsible for monitoring and harmonizing activities.

3. **Financial Risk** – Insufficient financial resources for implementation – **High Level**
   Description: The activities planned in the Action Implementation Plan (AIP) may not be sustainable in the long term due to limited financial capacity.
   Impact: Interventions remain one-off or pilot projects without continuity, and the results achieved are not consolidated, particularly after the end of funding periods, into sustainable services and public policies.

Mitigation Measures: Integrating key activities into existing social services, prioritizing low-cost interventions and using public infrastructure, securing an annual contribution from the local budget, and utilizing European funds and private partnerships as complementary sources.

4. **Logistical Risk – Lack of accessible community spaces – Medium Level**
   Description: The community lacks adequate locations for hosting activities (community centers, green spaces)
   Impact: Decreased participation and lack of meeting spaces for vulnerable groups.
   Mitigation Measures: Renovating and utilizing existing spaces (schools, libraries, parks) and establishing partnerships with local institutions to make rooms available.

5. **Technical Risk** – Issues related to digital platforms – **Low Level**
   Description: Platforms or other digital tools may be difficult for elderly persons to use.
   Impact: Vulnerable groups remain excluded from accessing digital services.
   Mitigation Measures: Organizing offline digital literacy courses, providing support from volunteers, and designing simple applications.

6. **Sustainability Risk – Volunteer burnout and declining interest – Medium Level**
   Description: Involved volunteers and NGOs may disengage due to lack of resources and recognition for their efforts.
   Impact: Weakening of the community network and reduction in the number of activities.
   Mitigation Measures: Creating a public recognition program, offering symbolic incentives (training, certificates, access to events), establishing a clear volunteer management system, or setting limits on volunteer workload.

7. **Cultural and Attitudinal Risk**
   Description: A "not my problem" mentality or lack of openness from some citizens towards vulnerable individuals.
   Impact: Decreased levels of solidarity and community engagement
   Mitigation Measures: Civic education campaigns, involvement of opinion leaders and churches, school programs, teacher training, administrator training, and other long-term strategies.

8. **Risk of Unintended Exclusion** – **Medium Level**
   Description: Activities designed for inclusion can sometimes indirectly exclude certain groups (e.g., persons with disabilities, ethnic minorities).
   Impact: Reinforcement of marginalization instead of its reduction.
   Mitigation Measures: Continuous consultation with vulnerable groups during the activity planning stage and adapting spaces and programs to ensure accessibility.

9. **Communication Risk**
   Description: Citizens are not sufficiently informed about activities, or messages do not reach isolated individuals.
   *Impact*: Low participation and limited results.
   Mitigation Measures: Using multiple communication channels (online, local radio, neighborhood posters, home visits).

10. **Risk of Excessive Dependence on Volunteering**
    Description: Activities rely almost exclusively on volunteers, which can generate instability.
    Impact: Programs may be interrupted due to a lack of human resources
    Mitigation Measures: Combining volunteering with the involvement of public institution staff and paid support (e.g., community coordinators).
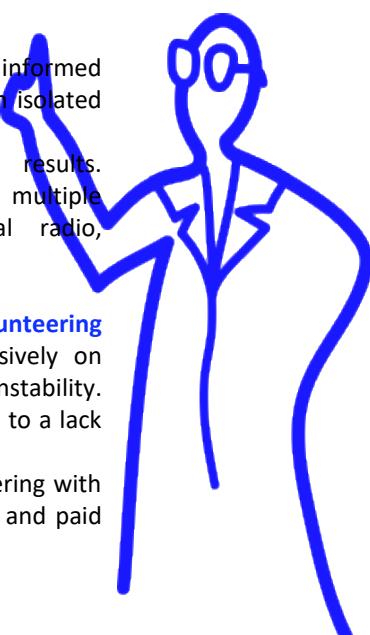
GLOBAL RISK ASSESSMENT

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

1. Social Risk – Reluctance of isolated persons to participate in activities
Description: Vulnerable people (seniors, children, disadvantaged families) may refuse support or avoid involvement in community activities.
Impact: Activities lose effectiveness and a large number of beneficiaries remain unreached.
Mitigation: Awareness campaigns, involvement of Inclusion Ambassadors, individual visits, small friendly activities that gradually build trust.

2. Institutional Risk – Lack of coordination among involved actors
Description: The City Hall, NGOs, schools, and other partners may work in a fragmented way, without a common plan.
Impact: Duplication of efforts, wasted resources, weak results.
Mitigation: Establishment of a local consultative council, regular meetings, appointment of a coordinator from the City Hall.

3. Financial Risk – Insufficient financial resources for implementation
Description: Activities cannot be sustained in the long term due to lack of funds.
Impact: Projects remain punctual and disappear after funding ends.

Mitigation measures: Diversification of sources (EU funds, private sponsorships, local donations), creation of a local fund for inclusion.

4. Logistical Risk – Lack of accessible community spaces
Description: The community lacks enough suitable locations for activities (community centers, green areas).
Impact: Participation decreases, and vulnerable groups have no place to gather.
Mitigation: Renovation of existing spaces (schools, libraries, parks), partnerships with local institutions to provide rooms.

5. Technical Risk – Issues with digital platforms
Description: The "Connected Roman" platform or other digital tools may be difficult for seniors to use.
Impact: Vulnerable groups remain excluded from digital services.
Mitigation: Digital literacy courses, support from young volunteers, simplified application design.

6. Sustainability Risk – Volunteer fatigue and decreasing interest
Description: Volunteers and NGOs involved may give up if resources and recognition are limited.
Impact: Weakening of the community network and reduction of activities.
Mitigation: Creating a public recognition program for volunteers, small incentives (training, certificates, access to events), volunteer rotation to avoid overload.

7. Cultural and Attitudinal Risk
Description: The mentality of "it's not my problem" or the lack of openness of some citizens towards vulnerable people.
Impact: Decreases the level of solidarity and community involvement.
Mitigation: Civic education campaigns, promotion of success stories, involvement of opinion leaders and churches.

8. Risk of Unintentional Exclusion
Description: Activities designed for inclusion may sometimes indirectly exclude certain groups (e.g., people with disabilities, ethnic minorities).
Impact: Strengthening of marginalization instead of reducing it.
Mitigation: Continuous consultation with vulnerable groups in activity planning, adapting spaces and programs for accessibility.

9. Communication Risk
Description: Citizens are not sufficiently informed about activities, or messages do not reach those who are isolated.
**Impact:** Low participation, limited results.
Mitigation: Use of multiple communication channels (online, local radio, posters in neighborhoods, home visits).
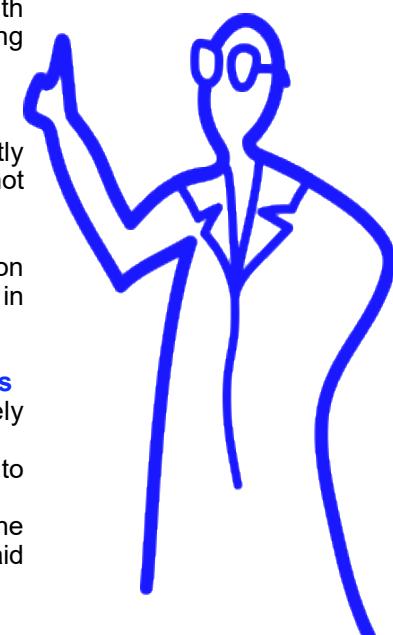
10. Risk of Overdependence on Volunteers
Description: Activities rely almost exclusively on volunteering, which can lead to instability.
Impact: Programs may be interrupted due to lack of human resources.
Mitigation: Combining volunteering with the involvement of public institution staff and paid support (e.g., community coordinators).

ABOUT IMPLEMENTATION

TIMELINE

The communication campaign with the healthcare centre proved to be very useful when testing the digital boards and the social isolation awareness messages, so we decided to pursue an agreement with the administration of the centre to help in the communication campaign we are planning throughout the entire implementation of the IAP.

Our primary objective is getting the IAP ready and completed so it can be fully implemented in 2026. By the end of 2026 we should be able to see if the IAP is being well received among the citizens, as well as Determine whether there are early signs of effectiveness, giving us enough information to evaluate if the IAP needs to be modified or not for the following year, until we reach a more stable and functional version of the IAP between 2028 and 2029.

2025

PLANNING AND PREPARATION
- Establishment of the Local Action Group and setting up the activity calendar.
- Identification and training of volunteers/Inclusion Ambassadors.
- Launch of the awareness campaign on social isolation.
- Logistical preparation for pilot activities (spaces, partnerships, materials).

2026

LAUNCH AND PILOT TESTING
- Launch of the "Soul Connections Helpline" for seniors.
- Organization of the first edition of "Neighbour's Day" in pilot neighborhoods.
- Opening of the first Community Café as a dialogue space.
- Implementation of the Happy Faces activity for children from disadvantaged families.
- Creation of the network of Inclusion Ambassadors and first interventions in neighborhoods.
- Starting the activity: Activate the Neighborhood!" – Urban Animation and Community Events Programme
- Starting Social Lab North-East – Pilot Model in Roman

2027

EXPANSION AND CONSOLIDATION
- Expansion of the "The Phone That Drives Away Loneliness" service and monitoring of its activity and calls;
- Organisation of additional editions of "Neighbourhood Day" in different areas of the city;
- Launch of the "Connected Roman" digital platform for support requests and volunteering activities;
- Organisation of the first Living Library sessions to stimulate dialogue and reduce prejudice;
- Development and operationalisation of the Intergenerational Volunteering Network;
- Development of the North-East Social Lab – Pilot Model in the Municipality of Roman.

2028

INTEGRATION AND MATURITY
- Development of the Community Garden as a permanent space for socialization and local production.
- Establishment of a functional network of Inclusion Ambassadors across all neighborhoods.
- Expansion of the Community Café with monthly thematic meetings.
- Strengthening of the "Connected Roman" platform through senior digital training.
- Creation of annual community events around "Happy Faces" and "Neighbour's Day".
- Starting Psychological and Social Support Programs for Isolated Individuals

2029

MONITORING AND EVALUATION
- Systematic evaluation of the results and impact of all actions, based on qualitative and quantitative indicators, and adjustment of interventions according to lessons learned;
- Gradual integration of key initiatives (Soul Connections Helpline, the Connected Roman platform) into the permanent structures and services of the municipality;
- Formalisation of roles, procedures and coordination mechanisms for community activities;
- Ensuring financial sustainability through recurring budget allocations and the development of local co-financing mechanisms;
- Strengthening institutional capacity and local partnerships to continue and expand the programmes;
- Documentation, dissemination and promotion of good practices at local, national and European level.

MONITORING & EVALUATION

The monitoring of the IAP is a crucial aspect of the project itself, mainly because we want this project to have solid feedback on the results produced and, most importantly, people's opinions and involvement in the activities promoted.

Baseline and Ongoing Data Collection

So far, preliminary baseline data have been collected through initial testing activities, providing insight into public awareness of social isolation. This data serves as a foundation for measuring progress. By implementing a structured monitoring plan and reinforcing it through targeted communication channels, we can actively encourage individuals to engage in initiatives that combat social isolation.

Monitoring and Evaluation of Upcoming Activities

Monitoring and evaluation of the Integrated Action Plan (IAP) is an essential tool to ensure the efficiency and relevance of the activities planned for the coming years. The main goal is to track the tangible impact of the proposed measures on reducing social isolation, increasing participation, and enhancing community cohesion, while providing continuous feedback to adjust the plan as needed.

What we monitor:

Community participation and engagement – number of people involved in community activities, support groups, counseling sessions, and intergenerational events.

Progress in social isolation levels – through surveys, interviews, and pre/post psychological assessments.

Quality and effectiveness of services provided – through beneficiary feedback, participant satisfaction, and partner organization reports.

Volunteer and local partner activity – their involvement in project implementation, hours of volunteering, and types of activities carried out.

Progress toward operational and strategic objectives – implementation of micro-urban interventions, accessibility of public spaces, neighborhood connectivity, and increased access to integrated services.

Where we want to go:

- Increase community awareness of social isolation and motivate citizens to participate in support activities.
- Achieve a measurable reduction in social isolation among vulnerable groups through targeted activities and integrated services.
- Strengthen the local network of partners, NGOs, volunteers, and public institutions, capable of continuously responding to community needs.
- Implement sustainable mechanisms for community support and impact monitoring, allowing for replication of best practices.

Monitoring and evaluation methods:

Periodic reports – each involved organization/partner will submit semi-annual reports detailing activities carried out, number of beneficiaries, resources used and observed results.

Coordination and evaluation meetings – face-to-face meetings between associations, volunteers, and authorities at least once or twice a year to share experiences, analyze progress, and adjust the plan.

Direct surveys and assessments – conducting questionnaires and interviews with beneficiaries to measure satisfaction, engagement, and changes in perception of social isolation.

Monitoring quantitative and qualitative indicators – number of identified isolated individuals, number of counseling sessions, participation in community activities, satisfaction levels, and increased social participation.

Annual progress report – a summary of all results and conclusions, presenting achievements and planning actions for the following year, including proposals for adjustments or new activities.

Communication channels and continuous feedback – using local networks, social media, newsletters, and local radio to inform the community about activities and encourage ongoing feedback.
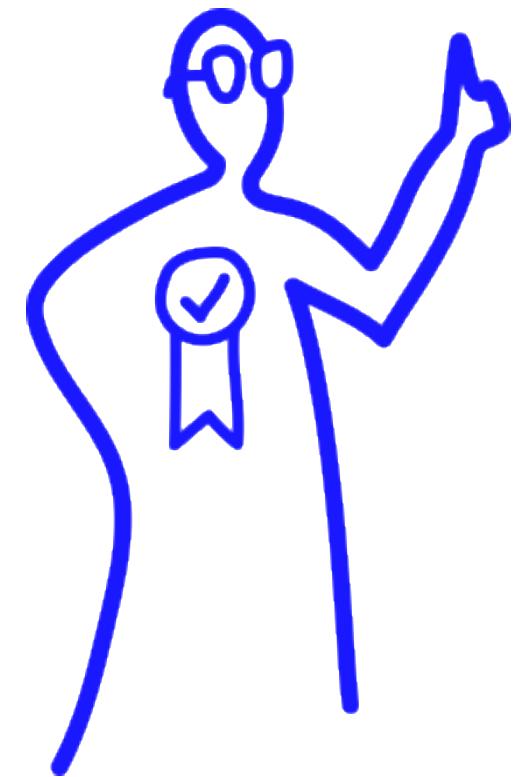
LET'S COME TOGETHER AND END ISOLATION

— BY CONNECTING PEOPLE AND THE COMMUNITY, WE BREAK ISOLATION AND BUILD TOGETHER AN INCLUSIVE AND ACTIVE ROMAN —