

EmPowerIngUs

Innovation Transfer Network

PHILOSOPHY



URBACT



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Interreg

Knowing who you are working for with

Energy poverty cannot be addressed effectively without understanding the real living conditions of people affected by it.

"A household is not just the physical space; it is the house and the people who live in it."

When tackling Energy Poverty Cities need to understand not only housing conditions, **building performance** but also family members, incomes, **energy literacy**.

Not only monetary poverty; **Health, Comfort and Social exclusion** are also related to EP.

This means identifying different household, building and neighbourhood profiles and responding to them in ways that reflect real needs.

"Know them to provide them with they really need"

Policies are more effective when they are built around people, their homes and their daily realities.

Strong leadership and collaborative working approach

Any citizen centered project needs a **clear political mandate**, operational support and long-term ambition. Tackling energy poverty is not the task of one department alone. It requires a whole **cross-departmental and transversal approach**.

"Cities need to move beyond administrative silos and build a shared mission."

Trust between institutions, and meaningful engagement of local stakeholders is mandatory.

Leadership matters not only to start the process, but to sustain it and turn **isolated actions into a long lasting public service**.

KEY PRINCIPLES of an Energy Poverty Intelligence Unit

Proactively Creating Knowledge

There is often no reliable local data on energy poverty. Cities cannot rely only on existing statistics. Direct contact with citizens, practical observation and continuous learning can create new ways of understanding the problem.

An Energy Poverty Intelligence Unit **combines available "big data" with "small data"**: information gathered through local services, dialogue, outreach and fieldwork.

"Every intervention as an opportunity to improve understanding"

This makes energy poverty policy more precise, more preventive and more capable of reaching those who are too-often left unseen.

Finding the right mix of soft and hard solutions

There is no OSFA to energy poverty. Some households need advice, trust-building and support in understanding bills and habits. Others need small practical improvements. Some require deeper refurbishment, building-level interventions or neighbourhood-scale measures.

"An effective Energy Poverty Intelligence Unit connects needs and solutions."

Technical measures, retrofitting pathways and improved urban environments are more effective when joined with awareness raising, guidance, energy optimisation and social support.

The objective is **not only to reduce energy costs, but to improve comfort**, health, resilience and quality of life.

One-stop-shop approach

People work with people, not with institutions! This is why a **trusted, accessible and empathetic** point of contact is essential. In Getafe, this role was played by the **Healthy Homes Office**: a one-stop-shop that became the face, voice and helping hand of the city in addressing energy poverty.

Such a service must be easy to approach, respectful in communication and capable of **linking social, technical and practical support**. Its staff need not only knowledge, but also empathy and listening skills.

“There is no better engagement tool than building trust”

Without this **human interface**, even the best-designed strategy risks failing to reach those most in need.

Expect the unexpected and adapt

Energy poverty is complex, and innovation rarely follows a straight line.

“Cities must be prepared to learn, adjust and evolve.”

The EPIU experience showed that what began as a **strongly data and AI-driven** concept became, in practice, a more **community-driven and service-based model**.

That is not a failure of innovation, but proof of it. Good public practice is not rigid. It learns from obstacles, responds to reality and **improves through experience**.

An Energy Poverty Intelligence Unit should therefore be seen not as a fixed model, but as an **evolving process of understanding, support and action**.

OUR VISION

The EPIU concept has brought together cities that share a common need: to **reduce energy poverty through a people-centered, data-informed and integrated urban approach**, developed in Getafe and now being tested, adapted and transferred across Europe.

“Every person has the right to live in a healthy, comfortable and energy-efficient home”

Cities play a crucial role in making this possible. We also believe that **cities can learn faster and act more effectively when they work together**, exchange experience and adapt proven solutions to their own local realities.

OUR AIMS

 **Understanding energy poverty** – to improve how cities identify and understand visible and hidden energy poverty, gathering and exploit better quality data, local knowledge and engagement with residents.

 **Empowering cities to act** – to strengthen local public services, develop services and build partnerships that help households navigate energy challenges and access support.

 **Supporting citizens** – by developing, promoting and delivering tailored solutions at different scales that improve comfort, reduce vulnerability and contribute to a fair energy transition.

 **Cooperating** – to exchange experiences between cities, adapt proven methods and strengthen the long-term capacity of local governments to address energy poverty.

KEY ACTIONS of an Energy Poverty Intelligence Unit.

 **Promotion an awareness raising** – Bringing core principles and cities’ innovative solutions to institutions and decision-makers through events, websites, and social media.

 **Annual meetings** – to review cities’ accomplishments, discuss challenges, exchange knowledge and plan joint activities.

 **Biannual thematic conference** – to explore specific aspects of energy poverty and learn about new approaches and good practices.

 **Partnership building** – creating local and transnational cooperation between cities, experts, civil society, service providers and community organisations.

 **Testing and adaptation** – trying out promising approaches in different local contexts, learning what works and refining solutions accordingly.

 **Advocacy** – engaging decision-makers at all levels to strengthen recognition of energy poverty and build support for future replication and scaling-up.

Energy Poverty Intelligence Unit can support cities to:

 **Identify and understand energy poverty** through local data, profiling, direct contact with households and continuous learning;

 **Establish a trusted one-stop-shop** that offers information, guidance, referral, services and practical support;

 **Support households directly** through advice, optimisation of energy use, energy-saving kits and tailored assistance;

 **Improve homes and buildings** through audits, renovation pathways and targeted technical interventions;

 **Act at neighbourhood scale** through place-based improvements that reduce thermal discomfort and improve quality of life;

 **Build cooperation across sectors** connecting social, technical, urban and citizen centered approaches.

 **Raise awareness and reduce stigma** by communicating in ways that are accessible, respectful and empowering.

Energy poverty exists in many forms and in every type of city. However, **no city starts from the same position**, and no solution – even the Energy Poverty Intelligence Unit can simply be copy-pasted without being adapted to each city's local context and needs.

Any city can adopt this common roadmap in the fight against energy poverty that we share with the rest of Europe, starting by treating it as a **cross-cutting urban challenge** and to begin building **the knowledge, partnerships and services** needed to address it.

*“EmPowerIngUs project **results and tools** can support cities on this journey by helping them **understand, adapt and reuse the EPIU approach** in ways that fit their own context”.*

JOIN US!Develop your own Energy Poverty Intelligence Unit

OUR HISTORY

The EmPowerIngUs network was built on the experience of the [Energy Poverty Intelligence Unit](#) developed in **Getafe, Spain**, through the Urban Innovative Actions programme, which was later recognised as an **URBACT Good Practice**.

From this experience emerged a broader ambition: not only to continue improving the model in Getafe, but also to **transfer and adapt its methods in other European cities** through a shared learning process, demonstrating that the EPIU approach can be applied across Europe.

*“EmPowerIngUs has enabled and supported that transfer, while also helping to further evolve the **EPIU approach** itself.”*

OUR CITIES

EmPowerIngUs brings together the city of Getafe (Spain) and the transfer cities of Etterbeek (Belgium), Maia (Portugal), Pomorie (Bulgaria) and Trikala (Greece).

Together, our cities represent different climates, governance systems, building stocks and social realities. What unites them is a shared recognition that energy poverty is a major urban challenge and that addressing it requires new forms of public action, a combination of soft and hard solutions, and above all, cooperation.

Our shared knowledge is built from practice: city experience, local testing, cooperation with stakeholders, technical and social expertise, and the lessons learned from both success and difficulties.

OUR KNOWLEDGE

We want to share this knowledge and experience with you. If you are interested, visit the [EmPowerIngUs project website](#) and start building your own Energy Poverty Intelligence Unit. We support cities on this journey by helping them understand, adapt and reuse the EPIU approach in their own context.

We do not see the Energy Poverty Intelligence Unit as a finished product, but as a living model that grows stronger through use, exchange and adaptation. That is why we continue working on its evolution.

OUR CONTACTS

Interested to know more? Contact us for more information on how your city can start developing your own Energy Poverty Intelligence Unit:

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***"A home is much more than just a building.
It encompasses the entire built environment,
including the people who live within it."***



WATCH OUR VIDEO

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dWhXcDGnyZA>



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