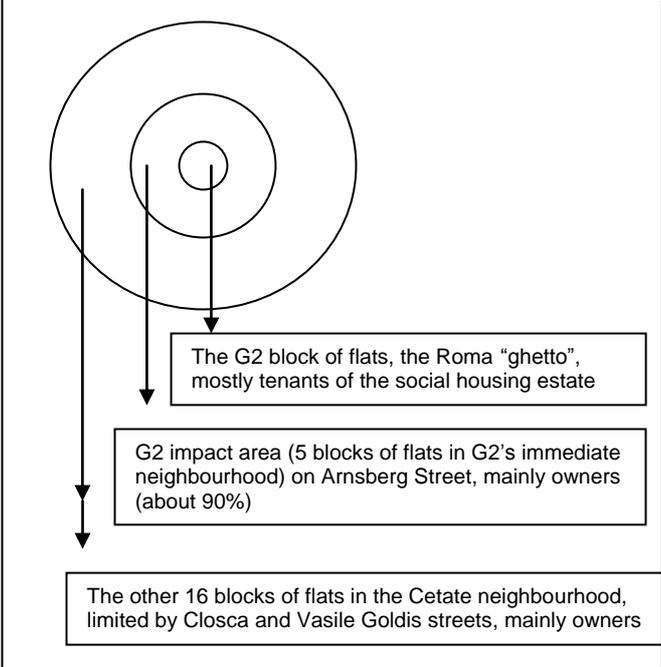


Alba Iulia, Romania

BACKGROUND INFORMATION	
PROJECT TITLE	<i>Legături între regenerarea urbană și planificarea spațială – NODUS (NODUS Alba Iulia)</i> Linking Urban Renewal and Regional Spatial Planning – NODUS Case study title: Gaining consent for change
Beneficiary	AIDA – The Alba Iulia Association for Intercommunity Development, a registered NGO of public utility, representing the interests of 3 urban communities, 8 rural communities and Alba County Council (http://www.albaiulia-aida.ro/)
Duration of project	21/04/2008 – 25/05/2010; duration: 24 months
Member State	Romania, Centre Region (NUTS 2), Alba County (NUTS 3)
Geographic size	Alba Iulia Municipality: 72 000 (MUA); 66 000 (ESPON); 66 000 (Alba Iulia Municipality); the project area was Cetate (Citadel) Neighbourhood (Platoul Romanilor) located in the west part of Alba Iulia close to the historical city centre, with a population of circa 9 700 inhabitants and an area of 94.14 ha
Funding	Total budget of NODUS Alba Iulia: €30 000 (1 st phase: €6 000, 2 nd phase: €24 000), of which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ERDF: 85% - National budget: 13% (as approved by the Managing Authority) - Private contribution: 2% (provided by the local budget of Alba Iulia Municipality)
Operational Programme	ROP Regional Operational Programme, Romania Priority axis 1: Support to sustainable development of urban growth poles; Priority axis 3: Improvement of social infrastructure CCI nr : 2007RO161PO001
Managing Authority	The Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism (http://www.mdrlpl.ro) – National System of First Level Control ¹ – acted as Managing Authority in coordination with the Centre Regional Development Agency (www.adrcentru.ro)
Cohesion Policy Objective:	Convergence
Main reason for Highlighting this case	The case concerns 22 blocks of flats called Cetate (Citadel) neighbourhood within the NODUS URBACT II project. It was the first time in Romania in which a detailed, complex survey had been applied on a neighbourhood scale.

¹http://www.mdr.ro/userfiles/manual_control_prim_nivel.pdf

	 <p>It was the first time that an action plan had been implemented which was based on clear rules and procedures that had been publicly debated and agreed by the beneficiaries, including Roma people. The project involved target groups in the identification of problems and possible solutions in a pre-determined deprived area. Thus, citizens directly participated in the public decision-making process affecting their area, bringing concrete benefits and visible results to their neighbourhood – a more liveable, cleaner, better maintained and safer area, including a playground and less car parking. The project also improved the city's image, and may lead to the dissemination in Romania of the "Alba Iulia – NODUS method". AIDA Alba Iulia – the Alba Iulia Association for Intercommunity Development – also used this project to define key aspects that link urban regeneration with aspects of spatial planning that can reduce spatial segregation in the development of the area.</p>
Key contact person	<p>Crenguța Raluca Man, NODUS Project Manager Public Relations Coordinator, Alba Iulia Association for Intercommunity Development (AIDA) – Str. Bucovinei Nr. 6, Alba Iulia, Romania, http://www.albaiulia-aida.ro/ crenguta_man@yahoo.com, Tel. +40 727 349 443</p>
Keywords/Tags	<p>Regional governance, spatial and strategic planning, urban regeneration, community participation, Roma community</p>

1. PROJECT DESCRIPTION	
Overall objective / goals	<p>The Alba Iulia case study was part of the larger URBACT II project <i>NODUS – Linking Urban Renewal and Regional Spatial Planning</i>, which involved seven European partners (3 cities and 4 regions). NODUS proposes a perspective and a method to link spatial and strategic planning with interventions in marginalised, deprived areas so as to influence regional development and fight spatial segregation. NODUS's main goal was to develop a series of recommendations to improve the coordination of area-based urban regeneration policies with regional or metropolitan planning. It takes into account the relationships between urban regeneration and those sectorial policies that have a spatial impact and are designed at regional or metropolitan level, such as housing or transport infrastructure, and the fact that these different policy elements</p>

	<p>are defined by different agencies often belonging to different administrative levels. The NODUS project's specific objectives were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To clarify the particular needs or concerns of the city in relation to the URBAN working group; ▪ To identify, mobilise and validate what the city really had to offer to the project in the form of good practice, existing tools, site visits, policies and other experience; ▪ To ensure that this knowledge was reflected in the NODUS baseline study during the development phase and in the Local Action Plan produced during the NODUS implementation phase; ▪ To disseminate the findings of the project to a wider local audience; ▪ To mobilise the political and institutional support required to ensure that the Local Action Plan leads to real change. <p>Alba Iulia's general objectives in NODUS were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To elaborate a medium and long-term Local Action Plan for a selected deprived area, namely the Cetate neighbourhood, in order to strengthen social cohesion locally; ▪ To support the coordination of urban regeneration policies with spatial planning ones; ▪ To stimulate and "regenerate" the attitude and mentality of citizens regarding the life of the city they are part of; ▪ To stimulate the citizens to participate actively in public decisions and urban regeneration processes. <p>The specific objectives defined, based on a sociological study of the selected deprived area, were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To improve knowledge regarding the quality of life to form a basis for local residential policies; ▪ To identify a participatory model for data collection at the neighbourhood level in deprived areas, with the help of statisticians, sociologists and volunteers; ▪ To stimulate the involvement of the tenants in the management and maintenance of common (condominium) spaces; ▪ To identify measures for intervention in segregated residential areas by minimising the negative aspects and maximising the positive effects.
<p>Description of activities</p>	<p>I. Project definition and application (pre-approval period)</p> <p>Development of the project's documentation about Alba Iulia and the Cetate neighbourhood, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pre-identification of the problems facing the area and the challenges to be analysed and finding possible solutions – management of a poor community situated in the vicinity of the city's most valuable heritage asset ▪ The relationship with local policies, especially the reorganisation of the urban planning system and the involvement of inhabitants in decisions regarding their areas; ▪ Willingness to define, adopt and implement a local action plan for the targeted area ▪ Expected learning from the project <p>II. Phase 1 – Development Phase (April 2008-August 2008): Baseline study – State of the art: strategic/spatial planning and local urban regeneration areas and policies. Activities of Phase I included the establishment of the working group, followed by the development and application of a framework and a methodology, respecting the project philosophy and the diversity of the seven partners (representatives of 3</p>

	<p>regions and 4 cities).</p> <p>Alba Iulia participated as a working group member in the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Collecting relevant experience and literature; ▪ Agreeing to the project outline and completing questionnaires on delimiting supra-local areas, defining the concept of “deprived area”; ▪ Elaborating the “four-stage approach” methodology, linking the supra-local spatial strategic planning with the local area-based intervention activities of the public sector, as a framework for the implementation phase. The four stages are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stage 1: exploring a multi-actor governance model for larger urban areas to organise the policies and strategic responses for the different types of deprived areas; Stage 2: identifying and selecting deprived areas, according to the aims and strategic approach towards urban renewal, based on territorial analysis across the larger urban area, building bridges between the deprived areas and the dynamic ones; Stage 3: identifying renewal interventions supporting effective social inclusion in the perspective of urban integrated regeneration Stage 4: monitoring the external effects of the interventions and determining how their effects could be handled on the regional level, promoting territorial balance. <p>III. Phase 2 – Implementation Phase: Case studies/best practices and Policy and Technical recommendations (September 2008 – June 2010), elaborated through comparison of case studies/best practices.</p> <p>The NODUS Alba Iulia project included the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establishment of the Alba Iulia URBACT Local Support Group (ULSG), consisting of 23 people including elected officials such as Alba Iulia’s Mayor, a group of eight volunteers from the deprived area, the nearby neighbourhood owners’ associations, the local police, representatives of the schools frequented by the “ghetto” children, the specialised education centre, the local electricity company ENEL, independent sociologists and UNICEF volunteers; - Identification and selection of the deprived area in Alba Iulia was done through a subjective approximation, based on the opinions of specialists, local stakeholders and the ULSG. The small deprived area (Cetate neighbourhood) includes a restricted community of citizens (living in 22 blocks of flats, among which is G2 “Turtledove”,² which is social housing belonging to the municipality and is perceived as a Roma minority “ghetto”. This was considered a pilot zone having a significant impact on the development of the city and on the other micro areas in the neighbourhood, which is centrally located in the vicinity of the historical citadel Alba Carolina. - Elaboration of a sociological study (using a community-based process). The data collection was organised in three steps: research to collect data at the apartment level; data from the inhabitants based on a questionnaire and focus groups; and interviews with the institutional representatives. The research included the following steps /activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Gathering information from the owners’ associations and elaboration of a database on the socio-demographic
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² Turtledove (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Turtle_Dove) nickname given to the G2 estate tenants coming from the symbol of the migration, as the Roma minority is considered “non-settled”.

	<p>characteristics of the residents;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Quantitative research: 240 questionnaires (of which 120 applied in the G2 building and the others applied on a representative sample); ○ Qualitative research, in accordance with the differences observed after the quantitative research: 9 interviews with institutional representatives and 3 focus groups, among which 2 with inhabitants of G2 and 1 with the presidents of the other buildings' owners' associations; ○ Elaboration of the social map for the spatial analysis of the deprived area; ○ Elaboration of the written document of the sociological study; ○ Presentation and the debate of the sociological report with the ULSG. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Elaboration of the Local Action Plan, focused on one building, G2 - Organisation of periodic debates and information meetings with key stakeholders <i>in situ</i> (media representatives were invited to attend a number of meetings)
Recipients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The local community of the Cetate neighbourhood, representing about 9 700 inhabitants (of whom 1 478 children under 18 years old) living in 4 873 apartments in 107 buildings (blocks of flats built before 1989) - The Roma minority living in G2 (about 324 people, among whom 100 children under 18 years old living in 105 one-room apartments).
Mainstreaming of gender equality and non-discrimination	<p>From the very beginning the NODUS project envisaged a strong emphasis on non-discrimination, anti-segregation and effective participation, as well as gender equality, given that vulnerable groups generally and especially Roma are reticent and not involved in public debates. The participation approach was inclusive, aiming to collect data, to identify the problems and propose solutions <i>with</i> them, not <i>for</i> them!</p> <p>During the implementation of the NODUS "4-step methodology" special attention was given to single mothers living in the G2 building and to schoolchildren.</p>
Intended outputs and results (as foreseen by the project when it was first approved)	<p>The definition and adoption of a local action plan (<i>Master Plan for Intercommunity Transport for the Next 7-10 Years</i>)</p> <p>To set up an URBACT Local Support Group (ULSG), to draft a Local Action Plan with the participation of several local stakeholders.</p> <p>The city of Alba Iulia expected the following final results from its participation in the URBACT network:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Transfer of relevant best practices learned from other project partners in urban planning into Alba Iulia's integrated strategy; - How to plan and to arrange a poorly-organised area from a transport system point of view at a county level; - How to organise and keep an accurate database with relevant social and demographic indicators; - How to exploit the cultural and historic heritage to the advantage of the whole region designated by AIDA members; - How to combine and meet the needs of workers with the needs of entrepreneurs and the educational system.
2. POLITICAL AND STRATEGIC CONTEXT	
National and regional framework for implementing	<p>In Romania the EU approach to integrated development plans has been well received. However, at the local level there have been strenuous attempts and serious initiatives to shift from the area-based and</p>

<p>ERDF-funded urban development projects</p>	<p>integrated approach to more infrastructure-related schemes.</p> <p>Linking the ERDF Regional Operational Programme (ROP) <i>Priority axis 1: Support of sustainable development of growth poles</i> to other projects and initiatives represented an opportunity to engage with a number of local authorities to ensure that the needs of disadvantaged people and deprived areas are considered in the development of integrated urban development plans to be supported in the 2007-2013 programming period. For example, the PHARE Project <i>Strengthening Capacity and Partnership Building to Improve the Roma Condition and Perception</i> (part of the Multiannual PHARE Programme 2004-2006) and its implementing authority, the Romanian Government General Secretariat, aimed to promote the social inclusion of the Roma minority by strengthening the capacity and competency of public institutions at the national, regional, county and municipality level to work with Roma representatives to solve specific problems faced by Roma communities.</p> <p>The cross-cutting issue was to ensure that EU Structural Funds available for Romania are accessed and effectively used by the relevant local authorities to address the Roma groups' needs, at the same time influencing strategic/spatial planning and local urban regeneration policies.</p>
<p>The planning context</p>	<p>The spatial planning framework in Romania refers to the national, regional and local spatial policies governed by Law no. 350/2001 on Territorial and Urban Planning.</p> <p>At national level, the Romanian central government establishes priority programmes, national directives and sectorial policies. The specialised authority within the government is the Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism (MDRT).</p> <p>The national territorial planning framework is the National Spatial Territorial Plan (PATN), including six approved sections: Section I – Transportation Networks, Section II – Water, Section III – Protected Areas, Section IV – Settlement Network, Section V – Natural Risk Areas, Section VI – Touristic areas. Section VII – Education Infrastructure and Section VIII – Rural Areas are currently under approval.</p> <p>For specific areas such as metropolitan, intercommunity (such as AIDA) and regional zones (comprising parts or entire administrative units: communes, towns or counties) – a Zonal Spatial Territorial Plan (PATZ) should be elaborated for the entire area and approved by the respective commune, town or county in order to be formally adopted.</p> <p>In Romania the 8 regions (NUTS II level, including several counties) are only statistic units, not administrative ones.</p> <p>At the county level (NUTS III) there is the County Spatial Territorial Plan (PATJ).</p> <p>At the local level, local councils coordinate and are responsible for the spatial urban planning carried out at the administrative-territorial unit area. This should be coordinated with the documents approved at national, county and zonal level, as well as with other sectorial strategies whenever the case. Documentation elaborated at local level includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The General Urban Plan (PUG) is the main spatial planning document at the administrative unit level, being the legal base for all the spatial development programmes and in line with the local development strategy (socio-economic). It has to be updated every 5-10 years. - The Zonal Urban Plan (PUZ) ensures the correlation between urban development and the General Urban Plan for a defined area, and is compulsory for the central and protected areas. - The Detailed Urban Plan (PUD) is elaborated for smaller areas, respecting the provisions of the adopted PUG and PUZ.

	<p>The PATN is financed from the national budget. The PATZs, PATJs and PUGs are financed from local budgets. PUZs and PUDs could be financed by public authorities or by private actors interested in a specific areas development.</p> <p>The local /regional planning context. In the last decade the political and administrative efforts to create a legislative framework dedicated to urban renewal have had limited results, among which there is legislation in force to build new housing for young people (under 35 years) and to sustain investment in energy-efficient buildings (involving the creation of partnerships between interested local administrations and owners' associations).</p> <p>Since January 2007, as an EU Member State, Romania has promoted spatial and urban reorganisation. In this respect, the 2007-2013 ERDF ROP for Romania provides for projects under <i>Priority axis 1: Support of sustainable development of growth poles</i>. This axis is the linear descendant of the URBAN I and URBAN II programmes of the 1994-9 and 2000-6 rounds of the EU Structural Funds. Capital cities with a growth potential elaborate geographically integrated urban development plans covering three areas of intervention:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Rehabilitation of the public urban infrastructure and improvement of urban services, including urban transport; b) Development of a sustainable business environment; c) Rehabilitation of social infrastructure, including social housing and improvement of social services <p>The programming documents point out as a must the participation of citizens and local actors in the elaboration of the integrated plans. Moreover, they emphasise the need to address the social inclusion of ethnic minorities, with particular emphasis on the Roma.</p> <p>All administrative territorial units, especially the smallest ones, are challenged by attracting funds for urban renewal (physical regeneration and physical infrastructure investments). This is particularly difficult as there is no national strategy for the regeneration of deprived urban areas, for two main reasons: it is hard to find cofinancing without national support and implies new local taxes on each household.</p> <p>In order to access supranational funding (i.e. European Structural Funds, international programmes and donors) for urban renewal and local integrated development, groups of territorial administrative units establish inter-municipal cooperation. This is the case in small cities (e.g. AIDA), and also in metropolitan areas, as is the case of the potential growth poles.</p>
3. IMPLEMENTATION	
3.1. PROJECT DESIGN AND PLANNING	<p>NODUS Alba Iulia Project start and main idea</p> <p>The AIDA territorial units discussed a series of medium and long-term interventions in the deprived areas in order to improve the quality of life of their inhabitants, to increase accessibility and to better socially connect with the local development centres / areas in the framework of a strategic development plan at the intercommunity level. The Municipality of Alba Iulia was designated as an urban action area. The document analysis highlights spatial and social segregation as one of the main problems faced by Alba Iulia.</p> <p>In order to stem rising urban insecurity, AIDA – Alba Iulia Association for Intercommunity Development – a partner in the URBACT NODUS project, chose to lead a pilot project in one deprived neighbourhood of Alba Iulia, carrying out a detailed sociological and statistical study that was followed by initiatives defined jointly with inhabitants.</p> <p>As in other Romanian cities, post-1990s urban development valorised</p>

peri-urban areas, which led progressively to the rise of two extremes, with rich residential areas alongside zones with very insecure living conditions. Alba Iulia lacked an essential element needed to find solutions to the rising impoverishment of certain neighbourhoods: reliable and targeted data about these neighbourhoods. As part of the URBACT NODUS project, which focused on multi-territorial development, AIDA Alba Iulia decided to make the problem of spatial segregation a priority and to involve in a participatory process the local, deprived community, collecting data and proposing concrete solutions.

NODUS Alba Iulia needs assessment research and analysis

The Municipality of Alba Iulia opted for a sociological study of the quality of life and the degree of satisfaction of its inhabitants, which would help the local community to identify its problems in the perspective of renewal, and would further three specific objectives:

- increasing the degree of satisfaction of inhabitants towards their neighbourhood
- improving the quality of life standards of children and women
- improving community relations with the local administration and other authorities' representatives

The three-month sociological survey was carried out by a mixed team of experts in urban sociology from the Quality of Life Research Institute (part of the Romanian Academy from Bucharest) and professional statisticians who worked together with the pilot area's inhabitants to collect concrete indicators, to identify the community's problems and to propose possible solutions.

Project selection

AIDA Alba Iulia was one of the four initial partners of the URBACT NODUS project, together with Generalitat de Catalunya, Spain (the lead partner), Regione Emilia Romagna, Italy and Samorząd Województwa Mazowieckiego (Self-government of Mazovia Region), Poland.

The URBACT NODUS project was submitted to the URBACT Secretariat and selected in a regular call for proposals on the basis of the formal proposal on content quality and compliance with the overall strategy and specific aims of the URBACT II operational programme.

The municipality selected Cetate as the target area, as it contained one of the concentrations of Roma in block G2, a block of flats built in the 1970s in a social housing estate, with about 325 inhabitants. Cetate is part of a mixed community close to the historical citadel. It is important to mention that on the estate's external boundaries, the ground floors of the blocks are given over to shops, banks and other commercial uses suited to a town centre. G2 is located in the middle of the area.

Risks considered in the design and selection process

During the quality check of the URBACT NODUS project, no risks were identified. Challenges were however identified regarding the diversity of the seven partners' systems and spatial planning approaches.

The main risks regarding the selection of Cetate related to the ethnic mix and cohabitation/segregation problems as well as to maintaining common space. Another risk related to the different social statuses of inhabitants (most Romanians, even poor ones, own their apartments and keep the public space cleaner). These issues were live throughout the project implementation and were carefully considered by the project team.

Project sustainability, exploitation of results and transferability

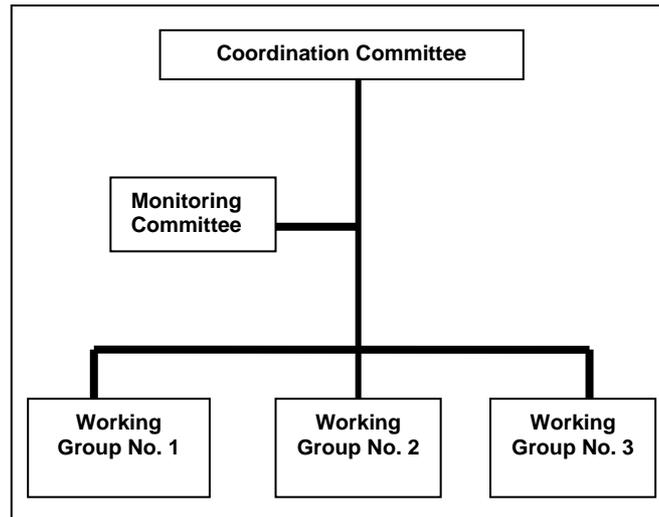
The project's theoretical framework integrates sustainability into all the spatial plans: every single proposal must take its external effects into

	<p>consideration and must assess all its impacts whenever they occur.</p> <p>As regards transferability, the NODUS Alba Iulia area-based intervention method, as developed within the project, is considered viable for use in similar deprived areas in Romania, and perhaps elsewhere. One of these areas, the Lumea Noua (New World) neighbourhood, houses the largest concentration of Roma in Alba Iulia (1 200 out of a total of 1 500 inhabitants). This, the main Roma community in Alba Iulia, lives in a “rural type”, poor, single-storey housing area. Another URBACT project, CoNet, is under way in this area.</p> <p>http://urbact.eu/en/projects/disadvantaged-neighbourhoods/conet/partner/?partnerid=232</p> <p>EU support and the added value for the project in being supported by ERDF</p> <p>Without the EU financial support and the exchange of experiences among the European partners, NODUS Alba Iulia’s visible outcomes would not have been possible.</p> <p>Involvement of other EU funds</p> <p>The NODUS Alba Iulia project was financed by the ERDF and national/ local budgets. There was no funding from other EU sources.</p>
<p>3.2. MANAGEMENT, MONITORING AND EVALUATION SYSTEM</p>	<p>Management system and management process of the project</p> <p>Upon the approval of the URBACT NODUS project, Alba Iulia set up a small management system. It mainly involved coordination between the AIDA’s NODUS project manager and Alba Iulia Municipality’s Head of Community Projects Service.</p> <p>Selection of the project manager</p> <p>The project manager was appointed by AIDA. She has had significant experience in previous European projects implemented by AIDA.</p> <p>Management structure and task attribution</p> <p>The project manager ensured that the provisions and perspectives of the association’s strategic planning document were taken into consideration. She now manages the CoNet community project in the Lumea Noua neighbourhood.</p> <p>Alba Iulia Municipality’s Head of Community Projects Service ensured the support, involvement and commitment of the municipality throughout the project’s implementation.</p> <p>Steering process</p> <p>The project was steered by the AIDA project manager together with the Municipality’s Head of Community Projects Service. Both were in regular contact with the Centre Region Development Agency and the central Managing Authority.</p> <p>NODUS Alba Iulia also benefitted from an URBACT Local Support Group (URBACT LSG) comprising elected officials, including the mayor of Alba Iulia, a group of eight G2 volunteers, the nearby neighbourhood owners’ associations, the local police, representatives of the schools frequented by G2 children, the specialised education centre, the local electricity company ENEL, independent sociologists and UNICEF volunteers.</p> <p>The URBACT LSG took part in various meetings organised during the project’s implementation, and acted as an extended project steering group.</p> <p>Monitoring process</p> <p>The project involved the establishment of a Monitoring Committee, composed of the following members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - representatives of the G2 community

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - representatives of the G2 impact area owners' associations - representatives of the Local Community Police - representatives of School No. 6, which is in the area, and of the other schools in Alba Iulia providing inclusive education. These schools' strategy is to build inclusive communities through special projects, in-school and after-school activities involving parents and continuous vocational training (http://scspecalba.scoli.edu.ro/) <p>Their role was to monitor the project's implementation in relation to the development process in the selected deprived area.</p> <p>As regards the entire NODUS Alba Iulia project, a number of reports (five in total during the project's implementation) were submitted to the Centre Regional Development Agency and the central Managing Authority.</p> <p>These reports, showing the financial and quantitative progress of the project's implementation, were mandatory for interim payments.</p> <p>Evaluation process</p> <p>At URBACT NODUS project level an ex-post evaluation is envisaged.</p> <p>At NODUS Alba Iulia project level an evaluation procedure was carried out by the Centre Regional Development Agency.</p> <p>As regards the Cetate neighbourhood including the G2 target area, there were several evaluation sessions, carried out by the Coordination Committee (URBACT LSG) and independent evaluators. These were more informal and participatory, involving citizens as well as other local interested actors (the school, the electricity company, etc.), but located outside the intervention area.</p> <p>Monthly evaluation sessions were conducted by the team of sociologists between December 2009 and May 2010, when the project ended. Prior to each meeting, evaluation forms (identifying common space maintenance issues and each apartment's payments for rent, expenses and electricity) were filled for all G2 apartments with the help of trained operators. During the evaluation meetings, findings were debated with the participants, and responsibilities were discussed. Monthly meetings of the project team discussed documents and tracked the achievement of the planned activities.</p> <p>So far (almost two years after the project's formal end), the initial results still persist, owing also to external efforts and support to the local community. However without another external project to continue NODUS, it is very likely that community participation and commitment will be lost, in the opinion of the AIDA Manager, and the team of sociologists.</p> <p>Project continuation challenges</p> <p>The management system of NODUS Alba Iulia project is still present in community and tries to involve different community members in other initiatives, such as the ROMA-RE targeted employment project, to keep the impetus alive, but the community does not participate in these as "a unit".</p> <p>One reason is the tensions between the few (15) flat owners in block G2 and the majority (90) of tenants, who have different approaches vis-à-vis the common spaces and condominium maintenance, which are much more visible since the project ended.</p> <p>EU funds cooperation</p> <p>As previously mentioned, no other EU funds were involved in the NODUS project, so the issue of management team organisation and cooperation of funds is not relevant.</p>
<p>3.3 GOVERNANCE: PARTNERSHIP,</p>	<p>Partnership composition and functioning</p> <p>The NODUS project partnership involved three levels of co-ordination, as</p>

**PARTICIPATION
AND
EMPOWERMENT**

presented below:



Level 1. The Coordination Committee (the URBACT LSG) comprising:

- the mayor of Alba Iulia
- eight community volunteers from block G2
- the G2 neighbourhood owners' associations
- representatives of the schools frequented by G2 children
- representatives of School No. 6 and of schools providing inclusive education (specialised education centre)
- the local electricity company ENEL
- independent sociologists and UNICEF volunteers of the G2 impact area owners' associations
- representatives of the local community police

Level 2. The Monitoring Committee comprising:

- representatives of the community of the G2 block of flats
- representatives of the G2 impact area owners' associations
- representatives of the local community police
- representatives of School No. 6 and of schools providing inclusive education

Level 3. Three Working Groups for specific concrete activities such as sanitisation of the G2 block of flats, cleanliness, etc.

Despite their different roles each of the three levels were directly interested in improving the situation in the area. Below some "primary interests" of the various actors:

- The municipality, as the owner of block G2 and the co-financing body, played the coordination and leadership role. It also had an interest in the revitalisation and urban regeneration process as part of the local development strategy;
- ENEL, the local energy company, was interested in solving the problem of historical debts (under the project umbrella part of the G2 inhabitants debts was written off and the remainder re-scheduled) and in gaining the cooperation of G2 tenants;
- The neighbouring owners associations was interested in reducing criminality and improving the cleanliness of the entire area;
- The schools and the police were interested as local community agents;
- The independent experts and UNICEF were interested in applying / contributing to a real local laboratory and practice.

To sum up the tasks and co-responsibilities in the urban regeneration process of the G2 area, the monitoring committee was the initiator of the participatory process from the community side.

The coordination committee (URBACT LSG), the monitoring committee and the working groups implemented the participatory process. The monitoring committee and the independent evaluators were responsible for the post-implementation evaluation.

Practice and many studies have revealed that participation in community development initiatives depends largely on the trust that people have in the municipality and urban services (schools, police, energy companies, local and community police, etc.). From this perspective, NODUS Alba Iulia built a number of interconnected bridges among the G2 community and public and there is no doubt that the most important actors were the G2 residents and tenants. The eight G2 volunteers participated throughout the sociological study, collecting data, animating and providing the required information. In the second phase, they participated in the elaboration of the Local Action Plan and got the agreement of the all the inhabitants to implement it. After the NODUS project, they were equally involved in implementing the local plan and monitoring related activities.

The participatory approach of the project was to work with the G2 residents as a unitary group in order to increase the group's relevance. This was eventually beneficial, and it was perceived as a strong and unique voice of the community. However, during the process, particular aspects of the involvement, motivation(s), participation(s) and linkages of different groups were identified, as presented below.

Children were approached both at schools and in the G2 area (as family members and near the block of flats, in their playground), by teachers and sociologists. They were very receptive and eager to participate, providing information as necessary. The potential benefits played an important role in attracting them, but as there were too few places at the summer camp, a contest was organised to identify the finalists. Teachers evaluated the schoolchildren's behaviour based on marks and attendance. Monthly scorecards were made out for each G2 schoolchild. At the end of the school year the teachers themselves received recommendations for their pedagogic grades from the Alba Iulia Education Territorial Inspectorate. One young teacher is also taking part in the summer camp on the Black Sea.

Single mothers living in block G2 were most interested in the "promotion" of their children, besides the improvement of the living standards of their apartments, so their participation was continuous and sustained at all meetings, and they collected data, took part in the working groups and verified their children's school reviews. They were in contact with the teachers and took part in school activities after classes. As almost all these women have only studied till the 4th class and are unemployed, they were also interested in completing at least 8 classes and benefiting from better opportunities. They were encouraged to join the "second chance" and "continuous training" programmes implemented by the inclusive schools and the Alba Iulia Local Employment Agency. Another programme that the NODUS team believes should be further developed is one on family planning, to continue the work of the Roma health mediators.

G2 residents were known as "electricity stealers", and the Energy Company ENEL collaborated with the municipality, project team and residents to cut their debt by half and introduce a payment schedule for each apartment. Alleviating this burden gave a boost to the entire community, and since then all apartments have provided accurate electricity meter readings. The eight volunteers also regularly check the information and track the electricity bills and payments.

The Local Support Group (URBACT LSG) played a crucial role in coordinating and conducting the community process. The community representatives were very proud of the direct involvement of the mayor, Mr Mircea Hava (Vice-president of the Democrat Liberal Party), who took part

combines spatial/strategic planning with urban renewal and allows for supra-local level planning. If external effects across the city boundaries necessitate it, the integrated approach should be extended to the city-region level, while areas for intervention should be selected within this broader perspective.

Another aspect highlighted by NODUS Alba Iulia regards the relations between the groups/communities – in this case the G2 community, its impact zone and the Cetate neighbourhood. Among all these actors there are historical as well as new conflicts and animosities. The sociological study revealed the different problems and conflicts at the project area level (parking areas, green areas, safety, noise and difficulties finding a job), at the block of flats level (weak community, apartments abandoned by people migrating abroad, street dogs, noisy neighbours and children, inappropriate garbage collection) and at the G2 and household level (atomised and poor community, unclear legal status of some apartments, lack of interest in maintenance of public space, precarious and hazardous living conditions, cleanliness). A “Citizens’ Agenda” of Cetate neighbourhood was developed on this basis, with the aim of building cohesion and participation in the community and jointly fighting the problems identified, targeting two main aspects:

- What should be changed from the population’s perspective, and
- The citizens’ potential to participate and expectations regarding the municipality

This agenda was followed by 11 recommendations, related to: focused and balanced actions at the whole area level, diversification of the action instruments, clear rules and procedures, monitoring and evaluation, non-discrimination, community participation and partnership, good practices and visibility.

The URBACT LSG adopted the study recommendations and the Local Action Plan developed with the participation of the G2 community and volunteers (only for the G2 block of flats) focused on six specific objectives, implemented by the responsible actors as identified.

Despite the participative process and concerted actions and a much cleaner environment, protest demonstrations against the Roma minority still occur. Problems were also reported related to crime (one man was arrested for troubling public order and there was a “potential suicide of a 14-year-old girl” both living in G2). Also, until similar projects are implemented, each month the evaluation records of the G2 apartments are more and more difficult to complete. Children are still very active, mainly at school.

Furthermore NGOs and population groups should be involved in the area programmes and the outcomes should be monitored. This means a “second integration”: local area based actions become integral parts of larger scale, regional development strategies.

These “next generation” integrated policies will also enable the more sophisticated and controlled use of social mix ideas in urban renewal.

If we are speaking of new approaches used to communicate and disseminate the project’s on-going work and results to the community involved in the pilot project, yes, there are relevant ones, because they adapt the “sophisticated renewal planning techniques” to very “unskilled” people / vulnerable groups with visible results, even taking a short perspective.

Techniques of mainstreaming and wider application to urban renewal and local planning had already been used by this project’s actors in other projects and initiatives.

All project activities carried out within the selected deprived area were

	<p>challenging. It is not only in problematic and vulnerable communities that the availability of relevant data constituted a huge challenge, if not a problem. The G2 community as well as the other owners' associations involved understood that providing information and contributing would help them in justifying their requests to the municipality. A negative impact of the community's transparent participation could, no doubt, jeopardise the entire organisational construction and support.</p> <p>Also a fake participation of the municipal leaders and the mayor, or failure to keep their promises, could stop the project at any time, if it was the case.</p> <p>Finally, the lack of transparency could lead to mistrust and wrong interpretations.</p> <p>One finding in the case of NODUS Alba Iulia is that without real participation the process may lose its effectiveness in the long term. Another is that partners should be real, representative actors, and the negotiation process should be carried out throughout the implementation.</p> <p>A final finding refers to the need for external, neutral and objective facilitation (in the case of NODUS Alba Iulia this was carried out by the team of sociologists). Without this, despite the local proximity, the cooperation and participation bridges could not have been build.</p>
<p>4.3. THEMATIC FOCUS</p>	<p><i>Local empowerment and public participation</i></p> <p>The project shows the validity and benefits of empowerment and public participation in urban planning, local development and neighbourhood regeneration. Its potential transcends the local sectors and communities and impacts on the quality of the strategic planning and urban regeneration, and should be reflected at the regional level (more competitive regions in a longer perspective).</p> <p>At the community participation level, spatial and strategic planning can be real and not theoretical for most people. Despite operating with different concepts and instruments, participation can effectively improve the "degree of citizenship" and compliance with agreed rules.</p> <p>In this context, the realism and concreteness of the Local Action Plan (elaboration, adoption and enforcement) targeting six simple specific objectives stating clear actions, was easy to understand and implement by each person responsible:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Electricity supply and payment 2. Information and monitoring 3. Cleanliness and changing the environment 4. Maintenance and toolkit 5. Clarification of the legal status of all apartments 6. Activities for improving children's lives <p>All objectives are short-term ones (2010) and reflect the participation and agreement of the G2 community. All proposed actions are quantifiable and identify responsibilities, resources, deadlines and success indicators. The Action Local Plan was achieved almost 100%.</p> <p>As a general rule, the municipality provided the material resources whenever required, participated in the implementation together with the G2 and other responsible local actors. The monitoring committee verified and reported to the URBACT LSG. UNICEF volunteers also took part according to their tasks together with the school, local police, ENEL and social services. After all activities were finalised, a press release was issued and disseminated via the media and public meetings at the city hall and in the community with the participation of all actors.</p> <p>The condition of effective and continuous support is a must. That is why</p>

	<p>it is a key objective of the Municipality of Alba Iulia to continue with a follow-up project at the community level. Demotivation could lead to a situation that is even worse than at the start.</p>
5. FUNDING	
	<p>Total budget: €30 000 (1st phase: €6 000, 2nd phase: €24 000), of which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ERDF: 85% • National budget: 13% (as approved by the Managing Authority) <p>Private contribution: 2% (provided by the local budget of Alba Iulia Municipality)</p>
6. PROJECT ASSESSMENT	
6.1. FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY	<p>AIDA and Alba Iulia Municipality showed a strong commitment in continuing the NODUS approach and outcomes. Besides submitting another URBACT project in March 2012, isolated follow-ups were implemented, albeit mainly at the city level, not for the G2 neighbourhood.</p> <p>However, the team of sociologists and UNICEF volunteers managed to continue the links with the community by providing incentives to the G2 tenants until September 2011, targeting the whole community and actors, not only certain groups of people.</p> <p>The community views continuation as critical as without the support of the local authorities, the partnership will eventually collapse.</p>
6.2. TRANSFERABILITY	<p>Not as yet.</p> <p>The project financed only the URBACT NODUS umbrella. This included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participation in the three working meetings organised by other partners (in Barcelona and Amsterdam in 2008 and in Bologna in April 2010) - Organisation of a meeting with all working group members in Alba Iulia (January 2010) <p>The partnership approach as developed under the URBACT NODUS project is effective and transferable to many situations, where critical factors and critical mass aspects are relevant. Also, a key factor for “guaranteeing” its best practices is the careful selection of the intervention area, of the partners (too many could represent an important danger and too few are not representative at a territory level, being a small community, neighbourhood or city).</p> <p>The time factor is of major importance, as the participatory approach is time-consuming. As a consequence this approach cannot be applied to crises, despite having a conflict-preventing element.</p> <p>To a certain degree, this approach was transferred to other potential recipient areas within the AIDA territory.</p>
6.3 ISSUES AND PROBLEMS	<p>1. At the municipality / AIDA Intercommunity Association level:</p> <p>Cities like Alba Iulia do not have access to any data at all. This lack of information should not be seen as strange in Romania, where the regional</p>

	<p>administrative level has a weak and short existence. Thus, while the national administrative level takes bigger territorial units into consideration when producing statistical data, local authorities (or, at least, those interested in producing these data) focus on those variables based on their interest and use the quantitative units in terms of their own convenience, making it very difficult to adapt these for use at a supra-local level.</p> <p>2 At the intervention area level:</p> <p>Not all residents, inhabitants and tenants have the same community-orientated interests. For some, receiving other benefits or leaving the partnership might be an option. For instance the proximity of the area to the historical citadel is irrelevant for many of them, and the interest of the municipality in its restoration and the allocation of funds to it harm the decision-makers' credibility.</p> <p>3 At partnership level:</p> <p>The Jensen Tuckman theory (1966) of forming, storming, norming and performing stages applies here as well. For the purposes of this pilot project, the partners only initiated a potential partnership, but each interested actor should understand that the exercise should be understood and equally applied by all partners, otherwise there is only formal and short-term activity.</p> <p>All three issues mentioned were only partially solved during the project implementation, and showed their potential, but none was 100% overcome.</p>
<p>6.4 PROJECT OUTPUTS & RESULTS</p>	<p>The main outputs of the URBACT NODUS project were Local Action Plans, good practices and policy recommendations, based on the methodology developed with all seven partners' involvement.</p> <p>Through the NODUS project, Alba Iulia municipality identified both from the statistical and the sociological points of view the detailed characteristics of the deprived area and the community that lives there. It is the first time in Romania that such a detailed, complex survey has been applied at neighbourhood scale, and not at city level. Moreover, although problematic communities, with a large Roma population can be identified in Romania, this is the first time an action plan based on clear rules and procedures, publically debated and agreed by the beneficiaries, has been implemented. All the actions in the renewal plan are based on the participation of the target community, who assumed responsibility for all the successes and failures</p> <p>The Local Action Plan proposes integrated urban regeneration through community participation. The urban regeneration project is defined as "a collective project, which correlates multiple aspects of urban development and different scales of intervention, conducted at several levels of intervention: punctual, in the neighbourhood with problems, related to logic overall development of the city and many areas of intervention – economic, social, environmental and regional policy". The Alba-Iulia Local Action Plan will focus on renewing the governance of the regeneration area (Cetate neighbourhood), highlighting the roles of the population involved in the project, and of the local authorities.</p>
<p>7. CONCLUSIONS: KEY SUCCESS FACTORS AND LESSONS LEARNED</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The approach of the NODUS project can bring about real changes even in the most deprived and vulnerable communities; - The community implementation phase developed a series of innovative instruments which are beneficial for the community itself, as well as for scientific research, such as: (a) the "block association fiche", a synthesis of the monthly apartment evaluation forms, agreed by all G2 households, which states the situation regarding improvements and participation, and is

	<p>completed, verified and kept by the community actors; and (b) a system of rewards and penalties in the implementation and monitoring of Local Action Plan activities, which was proposed and implemented by the community. According to this system, the rewards were public thanks at the local meetings and penalties meant the withdrawal of the coordination task;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local public authorities, despite their leading roles, are partners and should act as such, transparently, as was the case in the NODUS Alba Iulia project, where the responsible people from AIDA and Alba Iulia Municipality were present on the spot, participating and answering questions throughout the process. The community reacted positively to seeing the Mayor and other officials working “shoulder to shoulder” with them; - The structures established under NODUS aiming to support, implement and monitor the project activities (URBACT LSG / Coordination Committee, Monitoring Committee and the Working Groups) should be enforced and publicly promoted; - Intervention areas / pilot areas / communities should have not only problems, but also potentials, in order to be successful and overcome problems; - As in the case of NODUS, facilitators should be present, to understand the actors and their needs, without identifying and/or proposing solutions. Many of the community participation projects/ activities do not include enough resources for the external, objective facilitation of the internal process; - The central/regional level (as applicable) should identify, support, cofinance and “market” local successes.
8. FURTHER INFORMATION	
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AEIDL has been contracted by the European Commission in 2012 in order to provide examples of learning practice in urban development supported by the European Regional Development Fund during the 2007-2013 programming period (contract reference 2011.CE.16.0.AT.035). The views expressed by AEIDL remain informal and should not under any circumstance be regarded as the official position of the European Commission.