



Ecos da Alta

End of year report; PBL Team 3

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Executive Summary

Ecos da Alta was born from a shared intuition: that the generational gap in Lisbon's old bairros is not just a matter of time, but of missed connection. Our team set out to close this gap - not through charity or performance, but through co-creation, memory, and care.

From the beginning, our approach was rooted in Human-Centered Design and informed by systems thinking. During our exploration phase, we realized that the problem wasn't simply elder loneliness, but something more complex: a systemic lack of recognition, continuity, and space for dialogue between youth and elders. This reframing became the foundation of our ideation process, where we explored how storytelling could serve not only as a method of communication, but as a tool of reweaving community.

The result was a series of intergenerational storytelling workshops in Alta Lisboa, designed and carried out in collaboration with Per 11. These sessions became moments of gentle disruption - inviting youth to listen, draw, and ask questions; inviting elders to share, reflect, and reclaim their voices. The culminating exhibition at Quinta Alegre, aligned with Per 11's 25th anniversary celebration, made the private stories public, transforming memory into shared cultural recognition.

Our impact did not rest in numbers, but in the shifts we witnessed - subtle yet significant. Elders who were initially quiet opened up with warmth and laughter. Youth who were reluctant at first found themselves curious, expressive, and proud of what they created. Community leaders who had met many short-lived outside initiatives told us this one was different: it felt rooted, reciprocal, and repeatable. We left behind more than memories - we left behind a framework. A low-barrier, easy-to-replicate method that community partners like Mauro and Gil can reuse in future programming. What we created is not only sustainable in Alta Lisboa, but scalable across communities seeking similar forms of intergenerational connection.

Finally, the project offered an unexpected internal impact: the recognition that how we worked mattered as much as what we did. Trust, fairness, and mutual care within our team allowed us to adapt, pivot, and ultimately deliver something meaningful - even when things didn't go as planned.

In the end, Ecos da Alta was not about solving a problem. It was about revealing value - in stories, in people, and in relationships too often left unheard. The stories live on. The materials remain. And the model is now in the hands of those who can carry it forward.



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Introduction

Ecos da Alta - The bigger the room, the further the echo travels. The name symbolises the lasting impact of a shared memory. Echoes are more than just echoes of the past, they are ripples of change that spread through societies when stories are told, heard, and most importantly understood. Through shared narratives, we create lasting connections where memory becomes movement, and heritage becomes a path to change. The elder's voice's won't fade, but instead shape new perspectives of the coming generations. Through these echoes, we don't just preserve the past - we create repercussions that shape the future.





Part I - The Project

Chapter 1. Inspiration

Inspiration: From Curiosity to Connection



The origins of Ecos da Alta lie not in a single idea, but in a collective curiosity marked by a deeply human question: what holds communities together - and why do some bonds seem to fade while others echo through time? Our team began the project with an open-ended exploration of social challenges in Lisbon - brainstorming around diverse topics such as ocean pollution, housing inequality, and youth disconnection. As our ideation unfolded, we recognized a unifying undercurrent: the decline of community ties and the invisible walls separating generations. The majority of us have previously experienced the power of living in a vibrant community, and have thus felt how significant it is for well-being. Could the lack of this explain the last decades general decline in well-being and happiness, despite increases in living standards?

This realisation sparked our exploration phase. During our first brainstorming sessions, we engaged in divergent thinking, casting a wide net of potential causes. Yet, a recurring theme emerged - loneliness and disconnection. Research revealed this was particularly evident between the elderly and youth, who experienced the highest rates of loneliness, both reporting having no clear path or role. Affected by the same issue, we wanted to combine these groups for mutual benefit. Although it was not clear to us at the time, structured frameworks and active dialogue slowly made us realise our deeper concern was not loneliness per se, but the absence of shared spaces and stories - a diminishing sense of belonging. Our research pivoted toward this insight, framing our central question: "How might we make young and elderly people in Lisbon build a connection over something, enhancing and continuing a sense of community?" This was more than a prompt; it became our compass.



The Research Process: Iteration, Immersion, and Insight

Our research strategy developed in layers, beginning with secondary research. We distributed topics across the team, investigating loneliness among elders and youth, the socio-demographics of Lisbon's barrios, and relevant initiatives. Academic and policy literature revealed alarming figures: nearly 30% of youth reported feelings of isolation due to urban pressures and digital lifestyles (EU, 2023), while elders often faced emotional displacement linked to the loss of work, family proximity, and neighborhood cohesion (Karger, 2021). Although there was a lack of availability to Lisbon-specific secondary research, we found it fair to assume that the population of Lisbon was no exception from the general EU data. This assumption was backed up by our visit to the Freguesia de Misericórdia, with elders struggling to adapt to touristy dense neighborhoods.

Our secondary research revealed that initiatives like GER-AÇÕES and Pedalar Sem Idade showcased the transformative potential of intergenerational interaction, though they largely focused on relationships between elders and young children. Adolescents remained the "invisible middle" - overlooked in both policy and practice. We believed loneliness to be the central barrier to community, and secondary research reinforced this assumption. It seemed logical to identify loneliness itself as the main issue, and we did not realise how our own bias led us to tunnel vision. However, as we moved beyond data and into dialogue, this framing began to unravel.



One elder told us, "Loneliness isn't about the number of people around you, it's about not having a role anymore."

While secondary research gave us scope, it lacked texture. Recognizing this gap, we turned to primary research to understand the lived realities of both groups. Our interviews with elders in the park revealed a more nuanced picture. While some described feelings of solitude, others stated that loneliness was not merely about being alone, but about not feeling valued. One of the elders, Mr. Ferreira, lamented the lack of spaces for gathering, and Nicolas Morais, fondly remembered the community spirit of his long career in banking. Another elder told us that loneliness is not about the number of people around you, it is about not having a role anymore. Their insights were not abstract - they were personal, and often painful. We learned that elders missed more than company; they missed roles, recognition, and rituals. These insights redirected our thinking. Rather than treating loneliness as the disease, we began to understand it as a symptom of deeper disconnection; a loss of intergenerational relationships, of community spaces that foster belonging.



We had an interview with Professor Ana Maria, whose insights into intergenerational psychology were invaluable. She warned of the unique difficulty in bridging adolescents and elders - two groups often self-absorbed or overlooked - but also described the transformative potential of projects that honored both autonomy and contribution. She emphasized the importance of mutual benefit: youth thrive when given autonomy, while elders need to be listened to and seek purpose through telling their stories. Both need to feel like they both gain and bring value. From this came a powerful realization: storytelling could be the meeting ground - a bridge between generations.



Stakeholders: From Contact to Collaboration

As our network evolved, so did our understanding. One of our earliest stakeholders, Pedro from Dona Ajuda, exposed us to their model grounded in redistribution and volunteerism. The elders who volunteered expressed that the activity worked as a meeting place. In contrast to the retired elders in the park, these elders had replaced their social place of work with Dona Ajuda. However, there was an absence of youth engagement, which the elders stated they would benefit from. Their absence in Pedro's vibrant but age-specific space sharpened our desire to create a project that converge generations rather than separate them.

Our turning point came in an interview with Raquel from the Aga Khan Foundation. Her expertise in sustainable community-building deepened our commitment to bottom-up design. Raquel emphasized how the state efforts to modernise social housing had unintentionally dismantled the tight-knit barrios of old Lisbon. Raquel's emphasis on working within existing community structures helped us identify key stakeholders, such as Mauro at Associação Per 11, who we had also heard about from Ana Luisa. Finally, we were ready to let go of our tunnel vision. Loneliness, we came to see, stems from the absence of connection, not just company. It is rooted in invisibility, in being unheard or unremembered. Thus, we reframed our design challenge - not to "reduce loneliness", but to restore community. We chose to target the conditions that foster connection, dignity, and purpose - addressing the causes, not just the consequences.

In the following months, Mauro became a pivotal ally. We spent some time with the people at Per 11 to better understand how their community worked. Through meetings with Mauro and Gil, engaging with their communities we became further motivated to bring our outsider perspectives to what they had already created - a vibrant community hub. These



interactions reshaped our project from a theoretical intervention into a human-centered process. We were no longer just researchers; we were listeners, facilitators, and bridge-builders. After Christmas, Mauro shared his association's own emerging plan to document the untold stories of Lisbon's slums. With his trust and enthusiasm, we joined forces with Per 11 and other neighborhood leaders, integrating our project into a broader, ongoing initiative supported by the Gulbenkian Foundation. His openness to collaboration - and the creation of a parallel initiative seeking to document stories of Lisbon's slums - validated our project's relevance and created an opportunity for co-creation rather than intervention. It was here that our concept became real. Our partnership with Mauro, Gill and Per 11 allowed us to co-design storytelling sessions with youth and elders, including drawing, writing, and guided conversations.

Ultimately, what began as a conceptual inquiry evolved into a purpose-driven movement. Through careful listening, iterative learning, and genuine engagement with our stakeholders, we concluded that fostering intergenerational connections is not just about reducing loneliness - it is about honoring stories, co-creating meaning, and building a resilient sense of community. Our inspiration lies not in solving a problem, but in amplifying echoes - of voices, memories, and mutual understanding - that might otherwise be lost.

A Reflective Process: Thought Development and Team Growth

Our journey was not linear, and our team logbook captures the process of reflection and redirection. We encountered early challenges in stakeholder outreach and refining our research questions. At times, we had to revisit our assumptions and reframe our approach. These reflections did more than guide our project; they bound us together as a team. Our commitment to Human-Centered Design (HCD) meant we continuously asked: are we still aligned with the people this is for? Through co-design sessions, feedback loops, and prototyping, we ensured our direction remained responsive and community-rooted.

Ultimately, our "research phase" was not a phase at all - it was a continuous act of reflection. There were constant shifts between the research and exploration phase based on our findings and continuous iteration. It took place in offices, parks, gymnastics class, and in front of the television. It unfolded in conversations, confessions, laughter, and drawings. It taught us that change does not begin with solutions, but with stories.





Chapter 2. Ideation

Ideation: from Insights to Intentions

The ideation phase marked a pivotal transition in our project, moving from listening to shaping, from exploration to creation. Guided by the principles of Human-Centered Design (HCD) and influenced by Duncan Green’s emphasis on systems thinking and complexity, we approached ideation as an iterative, non-linear, and reflective process. We weren’t designing a product to be consumed, but a process to be co-created, something that could resonate meaningfully with both youth and elders as active participants.



Reframing the Problem

The start of our journey into ideation is not definitive. Instead, we moved fluidly between inspiration and ideation, constantly re-evaluating our assumptions. Initially, we were anchored in the belief that “loneliness among the elderly” was the primary issue to address. But by the end of our research phase, it became clear that loneliness was not a root cause, but a symptom – what Duncan Green would frame as an outcome of deeper systemic disconnects.

We also recognized our own tendency to impose linear thinking on what was, in reality, a deeply complex and interconnected challenge. To challenge that bias, we returned to our research and grouped our findings thematically, focusing on emotional needs, structural factors, and cultural norms.

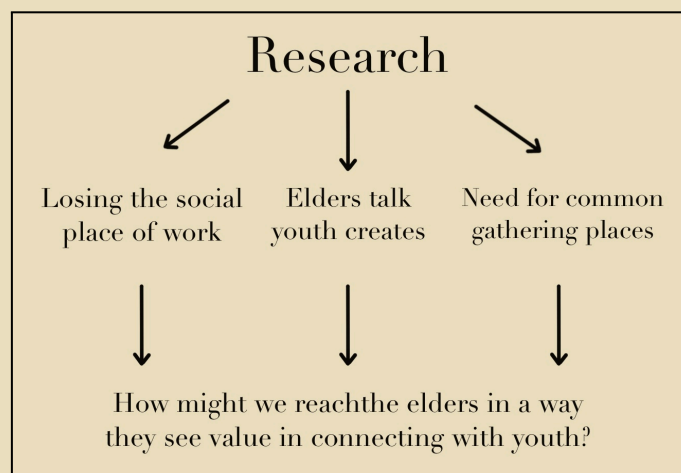


Fig. 1: Reframing based on Insights



Using the HCD “How Might We...” framework, we generated divergent questions based on these insight clusters. Out of this large pool of questions, it quickly became clear to us that we wanted to focus precisely on the intergenerational gap:

Our central question became: “**How might we reach elders in a way that they see value in connecting with youth?**” This question exposed a key power imbalance: elders were often positioned as passive recipients of social programs, while youth were perceived as disengaged. We aimed to disrupt that narrative by designing a process rooted in mutual agency, where both generations contributed actively.

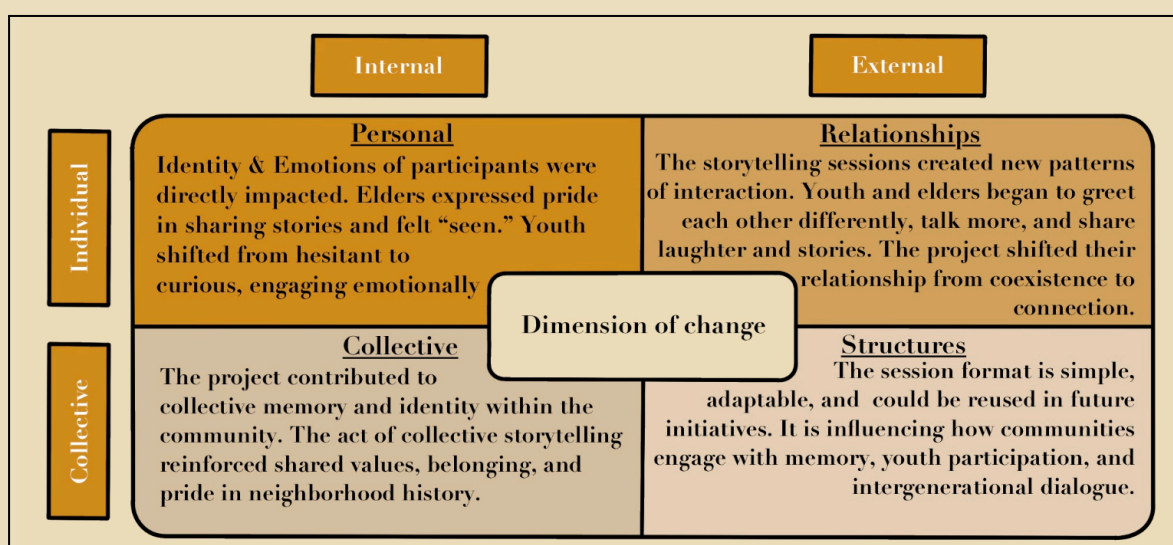


Fig. 2: Dimensions of change

Design Principles and Ideation Tools

We then proceeded to brainstorm, whilst focusing on four aspects:

- **Why** is it important
- **Who** is it for
- **What** social/cultural factor shapes this problem
- **Which** stakeholders are involved

Using tools such as the Fast Idea Generator, we experimented with inversion, amplification, and differentiation techniques.

Rather than converge on one “best idea,” our brainstorming sessions, guided by Ana Luisa, were designed to surface multiple possibilities, each with its own strengths and constraints. For example, through inversion, we imagined youth interviewing themselves



about how they perceive aging, then comparing these reflections to elders' lived experiences. Another idea, amplified through scale, proposed a neighborhood-wide campaign of public memory boards. While imaginative, these concepts proved either misaligned with our core values or impractical. Our team highly valued fostering an intergenerational connection, having youth interview themselves would defeat the purpose of understanding different generations. While public memory boards seemed to lack sustainability and impact in our eyes.

Still, one idea persisted: a youth-produced docu-series capturing the untold stories of Lisbon's elders. It captured our commitment to creativity, visibility, and legacy. Most importantly, it placed both youth and elders in roles of creators and contributors, not subjects or spectators.

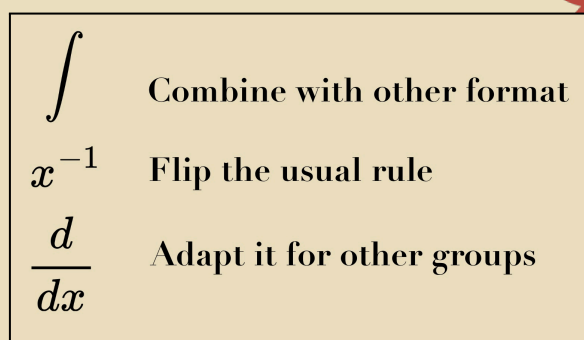


Fig. 3: Visual summary of the fast idea generator



Pivots and Parallel Paths:

In December, we committed to the docu-series concept as it was an interactive idea that could be preserved and viewed by future generations. Among the many ideas we explored, it was the one that most effectively combined youth engagement with storytelling in a format that could outlive a single event. It gave young people a creative role while honoring elders by preserving their narratives in a dignified, lasting, and shareable format.

We believed that digitizing these stories would create a lasting impact and extend the project's reach beyond the sessions themselves. In this sense, it struck a meaningful balance between emotional resonance and practical feasibility.

However, as we began prototyping, tensions surfaced. Some team members viewed storytelling as the end goal; others saw it as a vehicle for something larger. Rather than suppress this divergence, we leaned into it, and in doing so, preserved an alternative path:



live interactive storytelling sessions between youth and elders. This fallback concept ultimately became our final implementation.

This decision point was a critical juncture. It reflected our willingness to stay open, adapt, and let the project evolve alongside the ecosystem it was embedded in.



From Storytelling as an Output, to Storytelling as a Process

As we began low-fidelity prototyping of both concepts, something shifted. We realized the sessions themselves were already facilitating powerful moments of connection and recognition. Initially, the idea was to use the sessions to collect material for the docu-series. But after conversations with Mauro and deeper team reflection, we recognized that the sessions *were* the intervention.

Our vision evolved: storytelling was no longer just a means to an end, it became the outcome. Listening, drawing, and questioning were not just preparatory activities; they were the change we wanted to see. These practices fostered empathy, recognition, and shared meaning in real time.

This shift signaled a deeper norm change: elders are not relics of the past, and youth are not detached observers of the present. Both are agents of continuity and renewal, each with something to learn, something to teach, and something to create, together.

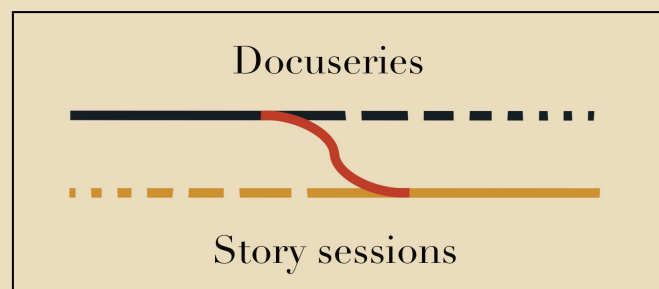


Fig. 4: Timeline of the Ideas



System Thinking Applied to Ideation

Throughout our ideation, we repeatedly asked ourselves: “What system are we working within?” This forced us to structure our thoughts: we defined four main axes defining our system. We came up with a structured system analysis, a sanctuary for our project:

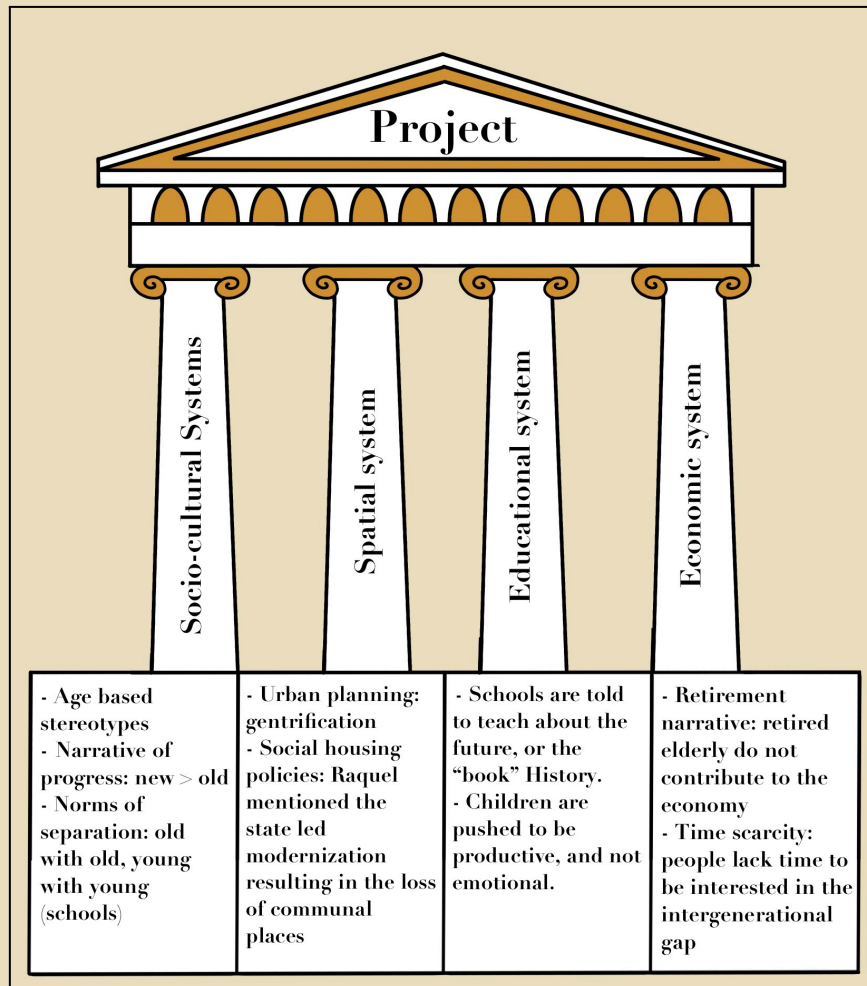


Fig. 5: Visual representation of our system analysis
“The systems temple”

We were not creating a tool or service, but trying to shift the conditions that normalised intergenerational disconnect. Our sessions aimed to highlight the emotional, the cultural and the spatial distance between generations.

We also considered scalability and sustainability, not in the sense of replicating an identical session, but in creating a framework, a set of prompts, a format, a spirit that could be reused and reimagined by others. That is, perhaps, the clearest sign of meaningful design: when something you created becomes useful beyond your own hands.



Our ideation phase was a journey of reframing, mapping power, and embracing complexity. It was finding the balance between guiding, and being guided. Guided by Human-Centered Design and enriched by the insights of *How Change Happens*, we moved beyond loneliness as a problem needing to be solved, toward the Idea of storytelling as a practice of creating connections. Not everything went as planned but in that unpredictability lay the true heart of human-centered design.



Chapter 3. Implementation

If ideation was where our project took its first breath, implementation was where it found its voice.

We did not aim to simply deliver an intervention. We wanted to spark a shift - subtle but real - in how stories are shared, how generations relate, and how memory is honored in everyday spaces. To do that, we needed more than a plan. We needed presence, patience, and partnership.

Building Roots Before Actions

Before designing anything, we embedded ourselves in the rhythms of Per 11, a neighborhood association at the heart of Santa Clara. Led by Mauro, Per 11 became more than a partner - it became our entry point into a living community. We spent time where the youth played, where the elders gathered, and where daily life unfolded. Rather than begin with our agenda, we began with a question: What matters to you?



We were careful of not invading, recognising that our outsider perspective may fall short in bringing a project of benefit. In early meetings, we therefore focused on getting to know the rhythm of their place. We played football with the children, spoke with the teenagers, and

with Mauro we discussed both what was going well and what struggles they were facing. After continuous proactiveness, Mauro opened up to the idea of collaboration, highlighting



they could indeed benefit from a new perspective, as it can be easy to get stuck in the same rhythm.

Through Mauro, we connected with Gil, who led activities with Per 11's elderly ladies. They had their own space to sew, do gymnastics, and have diverse workshops. As an effort to connect with the elders despite the language barrier, we decided to join one of their gymnastics classes - a weekly highlight for many. There, we could test the waters for elder's willingness to share their stories from the past. With full trust in Gil, and interest in us young, new, faces - they did not hold back, and multiple excitedly expressed their interest.

Getting to know the place and the people, we realised this would be a feasible community to create a project with - not because it was easy, but because the foundations for openness and mutual interest were already present. The youth were regularly engaged in after-school activities, the elders had established routines and social spaces, and most importantly, there were respected community leaders, like Mauro and Gil, willing to listen and co-create. The relationships we built weren't side notes - they were the infrastructure. They made it possible for our project to be grounded in trust and aligned with local realities. The community wasn't just available; it was alive, structured, and looking for new ways to connect.

Why a Storytelling Session?

We knew from our research that connection cannot be forced - it must be invited. Thus, we focused on a simple but powerful goal: bring youth and elders into a shared space where stories could flow freely and creativity could flourish. Initially we pitched our idea of the docuseries, where the session would work as a tool for the youth to gain understanding of the elder's stories. Mauro and Gil were enthusiastic, sharing that it aligned with a newly founded initiative Per 11 were working on with Per 7 and 9, partly funded by the Gulbenkian association. Together, they aimed to collect the stories, and preserve them through artworks, a podcast, and a big festival exhibition next year. He invited us to join their next meetings to deepen our understanding of the past barrios and the role of the associations. We were introduced to Susana from Quinta Alegre, a community cultural space tied to the area's past, as well as multiple interns working with the associations. We learnt a lot from their insights. Additionally, the fact that a parallel initiative with a similar



aim as us, created by people within the community, showed us that we were on the right track to identify the needs of the people.

However, as time passed we realised that their style of doing things did not align with how we wanted to implement our project. Coming as outsiders, we were especially focused on letting our project be formed by the people - something we felt like their suggestions sometimes lacked. We weren't after performative interaction; we wanted something genuine, something slow and human. Thus, we left the idea of the docuseries. With multiple digital solutions developing with funding from Gulbekian, we realised that our strengths would better contribute with a well developed session. Ideally, the broader outcomes can be part of their big preservation of the stories - but the sessions could be a significant first step.

The storytelling session we designed wasn't about information transfer. It was about presence. About being seen and heard. The elders, once relocated from the city's historic slums, carried stories that rarely had a place. The youth, growing up in the aftermath of that urban transformation, rarely had a chance to ask. This session had the potential of crossing these paths.

The Session in Motion

Held in early April, the workshop gathered four elderly women - Margarida, Rita, Carmo,



and Patrocínia - together with a group of children and adolescents from Per 11. The format was designed with care: prompts in Portuguese, plenty of creative materials, and a flexible structure with room for reflection to encourage drawing, writing, and questions. We spoke with a primary school teacher for insight on how to keep the children engaged. By allowing both writing and drawing, we

accustomed the session to different age groups. To make the elders comfortable, Gil advised us to brief them and provide them with guiding questions. We chose prompts where they would be inclined to reminisce about happy memories, as we wanted the kids to visualise the close-knit community ties that were in place. To facilitate the session, we



worked around the language barrier by getting help from the interns. We briefed them before the session, allowing everything to flow nicely.

At first, the interaction was cautious. But as the elders spoke, stories took shape: of games in the alleyways, neighbors who felt like family, and the bittersweet memory of communities reshaped by time. Slowly, the children responded - with art, with questions, with curiosity. And something shifted. For a moment, the gap between past and present didn't feel so wide.

We monitored the session, took pictures, and wrote down a synopsis of the elder's stories. When the workshop ended, we asked for feedback from the participants, both directly and through the community leaders and interns. Feedback from participants confirmed the emotional impact: children engaged more deeply as the elders spoke, and elders expressed joy and pride in sharing their histories.

The Exhibition: Sharing the Impact

We didn't want this to be a project that stayed within four walls. Thus, we worked with Susana to prepare a public exhibition at Quinta Alegre, timed to coincide with the 25th anniversary of Per 11 on May 31st. The symbolism was clear: stories that were once



hidden would now be central - displayed in a space the community was reclaiming as its own. Quinta Alegre works as a space connecting the different barrios of Alta Lisboa. However, Susana expressed that many in the community were intimidated by the Palace - feeling like they did not belong in such a space. Thus, the anniversary was not just

great timing with the Per 11 community being present - it could hopefully work as empowerment, helping the people reclaim their belonging at the palace.

The exhibition featured a collage: portraits of the four elders surrounded by the children's illustrations. The portraits had a smiling, colourful version in front, with a more serious version as a shadow. The black-and-white in the shadows symbolized memory and loss;



the colour symbolized resilience and presence. While not forgetting the past, the smiles represent contentment for how everything turned out. Alongside this, we created a pamphlet capturing the stories shared during the session and introduced our process.¹

As visitors walked through the exhibition, reactions ranged from emotional recognition to joyful surprise. For many, this was the first time they had seen local elders framed not as recipients of help - but as storytellers, as knowledge-bearers, as protagonists.

Closing the Loop: A Framework for the Future

Throughout implementation, we were reminded again and again: this work is not about finishing something. It's about starting conversations that outlive us. During the exhibition, Gil highlighted that they aim to do more similar workshops, but often lack time and creativity.



Fig. 6: Timeline Implementation

- Recognizing the interest from Per 11 and other stakeholders in continuing storytelling initiatives, we developed a replicable framework. This includes: Session templates
- Prompt suggestions
- Documentation tips
- Exhibition planning guides



¹ Pamphlet in appendices



The goal is simple: to make it easier for others to keep collecting and sharing the echoes of Lisbon's old neighborhoods. Because there are always more stories to be told - and more people who deserve to hear them.

Chapter 4. Measuring Impact

What does this project actually aim to do? A question that often is frightening and requires you to step outside of the river and see how it is flowing, where it is going, what impact it will have, how to measure this impact effectively, and critically assess it. It may seem like a straightforward question but it quickly gets complicated when looking at details. The project is enhancing intergenerational connection through storytelling and co-creation. As the project is about the emotional involvement of the participants and their level of engagement, something you can not quantify, measuring the impact requires a qualitative approach. Big swads of data were also not possible to be acquired, the amount of participants were limited intentionally. This approach has enabled us to identify five key dimensions (and a bonus one) where we evaluate the indicators in order to measure our impact effectively.

- Stakeholder engagement
- Youth involvement and satisfaction
- Elder involvement and satisfaction
- Co-created outputs
- Sustainability
- (On PBL)

Stakeholder Engagement

The first dimension of impact measurement is stakeholder engagement - a cornerstone of our project's execution. From the outset, we knew that working within a community unfamiliar with, and often wary of, external initiatives required more than polite outreach. Our key stakeholders were both the community leaders and the residents themselves - the very people we aimed to support through connection and storytelling, the people that made up the project.

The community leaders expressed skepticism with outside-led projects, many of which arrived with good intentions, but left without leaving roots. Too often, they said, these initiatives listened too little, acted too quickly, and departed too soon. We were determined



to do things differently - to become participants in a process, not facilitators of a moment. We wanted to avoid that and make a positive, sustainable change. It demanded trust, consistency, and humility.

Our objective, then, was clear: to be genuinely included in their ecosystem. We sought not just permission to operate, but a place within their structure—to be invited to planning meetings, to be added to internal communication channels, and most importantly, to be both told things and heard. Our indicator for success was simple but meaningful: were we present in key discussions? By these measures, we succeeded - regularly attending meetings, being included in their WhatsApp group, gaining access to internal documents, collaborating in decision-making, and becoming active contributors to the shared work of community-building.

We were welcomed into the inner workings of the community's organizing space - both physically and digitally. Being added to the WhatsApp group with community leaders, Quinta Alegre, and Gulbenkian was more than just logistical; it was a signal of trust. This group was where long-term projects were discussed - initiatives that would continue well beyond our departure. Our inclusion meant we weren't seen as outsiders with a temporary idea, but as collaborators contributing to something ongoing.

We were invited to multiple meetings: some to present our concept, others to deepen our understanding of the surrounding communities alongside additional stakeholders, and many focused on coordinating the practical details of our project. These partners didn't just tolerate our presence - they engaged. They asked questions, offered ideas, and helped us navigate local dynamics to make our final objective achievable.

That first phase - being embraced by the stakeholders and integrated into their operations - was crucial. But equally important was the second phase: ensuring that our project's outcome was valued, and appreciated enough to be featured in a meaningful public way.

For Per 11's community event on the 31st of May, our goal was to ensure that the creative outcomes of the storytelling session - drawings, photos, and transcribed memories - were prominently displayed. The event was the perfect opportunity to showcase the intergenerational collaboration, and we set our success indicator accordingly: our work being displayed visibly, and positively received - especially by the elders and youth who had co-created it.



We monitored this in two simple but powerful ways: where the exhibition was placed, and how people interacted with it. The collage and printed stories were installed at the entrance to Quinta Alegre, where everyone passed through. And the reactions spoke for themselves. Elders stopped to smile at their portraits, some telling Mauro they “felt like celebrities.” A few hugged us. One kissed us on the cheek. Children pointed at the drawings and photos, laughing and nudging each other - delighted to see themselves not just included, but celebrated. An overall positive sentiment was associated with the collages; one group of youth asked if they could keep the collage and hang it back at Per 11, unbeknownst that was already the plan.

Stakeholder feedback was warm and sincere. Mauro and Gil told us that both elders and youth had enjoyed participating - and not just in the moment, but in a way that sparked energy for future activities. They shared that while they often lacked time or creative resources to start new initiatives, this kind of collaboration - with ideas and tools brought from the outside but shaped with the community - had real value. Our presence gave space for something new to emerge, but in a way that felt organic, not imposed.

This, to us, was the ultimate sign of success: not just being allowed in, but leaving something behind that others wanted to carry forward.

Youth Involvement and Satisfaction



The second dimension of our impact measurement focused on the involvement and emotional engagement of the youth during our storytelling session. Our objective was not only to involve them as participants, but to create a space where they felt curious, inspired, and connected - both to the stories being shared and to the people telling them.

We defined success through a combination of qualitative indicators: Did they listen attentively? Did they ask questions? Were they drawing with care and detail? Just as importantly - did their posture, facial expressions, and energy shift over the course of the session? These subtle signs became our most valuable monitoring tools. Additionally, Mauro gathered verbal feedback from them, as a trusted adult they are open with.

At first, the outlook was uncertain. Due to a miscommunication in preparation, the children arrived with no prior knowledge of the activity. Their initial reaction was understandably lukewarm - some were disengaged, others confused. But instead of pushing through with rigid facilitation, we adapted. We brought out juice and cookies (a small touch, but one that



Mauro later confirmed was very well received) and introduced the activity gently. With support from Per 11's interns, who shared the prompts in Portuguese and created a smoother dialogue between generations, the tone of the session began to shift.

At the start, the drawings were tentative - minimal color, little detail, quiet focus. But as the elders' stories unfolded, we began to see change. Children leaned in. Eyebrows raised.



Smiles appeared. Slowly, they began to ask questions: "Where did that happen?" "What games did you play?" Their drawings became more vivid. What began as passive listening transformed into active, creative engagement.

We observed a clear progression throughout the session - from guarded observation to animated involvement. The youth didn't just hear stories - they began to feel them. They responded not just with crayons, but with curiosity. If we were to

do a session again a possible solution to make the beginning more effective could be to include an icebreaker activity.

To understand the lasting impact, we followed up with Mauro in the days that followed. He shared that the youth had continued to talk about the activity, often referring back to what they'd heard or drawn. Some said they felt they better understood the elders' pasts, and saw their community in a new light.

We also witnessed the most visible sign of success during the Per 11 community event at Quinta Alegre. When the youth arrived, they greeted the elders not with formality, but with hugs. The exhibition became not just a display, but a shared point of reference - a conversation starter, a memory, a bridge.

The connections sparked during the session had taken root. At that moment, the community didn't look divided by age. It looked like one big family.

Elder Involvement and Satisfaction

While youth engagement was a vital part of our impact, it was only one side of the story. Equally important was ensuring that the elders - as storytellers and memory-keepers - felt



heard, respected, and genuinely connected. We knew it was important for them to feel like they brought value. Our objective was for them to experience a sense of inclusion and intergenerational connection, sparked by the opportunity to share their lived experiences.

To measure this, we focused on the depth and ease of their storytelling: how freely they spoke, how long they chose to talk, whether they began to offer more personal or reflective insights, and how much prompting was needed to keep the conversation flowing. These soft but meaningful indicators guided our understanding of their comfort and satisfaction.

Before the session, some uncertainty was visible. The elders weren't entirely sure what to expect, and their early responses were brief and literal. But we had anticipated this hesitation. With a gentle briefing beforehand and the careful use of guiding questions, we created a space that felt safe and respectful. Slowly, the dynamic began to shift.

As the session progressed, something clicked. The questions from the youth became more frequent, and recognising their word held value, the elders began to open up - expanding on memories, laughing between stories, and smiling as they watched the children sketch what they heard. The storytelling became more fluid, less dependent on prompts. The time between questions stretched as the elders found their rhythm, and the atmosphere in the room turned light and warm.

By the end of the session, the elders didn't just seem comfortable - they seemed proud. They expressed their appreciation directly, telling us how much they had enjoyed sharing their histories and watching the youth respond creatively. They spoke with Gil afterwards, who forwarded their comments to us. They noted that the drawings gave them a sense that their stories were not just being heard, but understood - translated into color, shape, and imagination.

The emotional resonance of the experience became even more visible weeks later, during the May 31st exhibition at Quinta Alegre. As they stood in front of the collage, now displayed at the heart of the community event, their faces lit up. One elder turned to us and said, smiling, "We are all equal. Even with different languages, it's all about love." It was a simple sentence, but it encapsulated everything we hoped to achieve: a shared human experience, unburdened by status, age, or formality.

Feedback from Mauro and Gil confirmed this. They shared that the elders felt not only heard, but honored. Seeing their photos and stories presented so visibly and respectfully



gave their contribution a sense of permanence - proof that their words had become part of the community's shared narrative.

In the end, this was our real measure of success: not just stories told, but stories that found a home - and storytellers who felt celebrated for having told them.



Co-Created Outputs

The fourth dimension we used to assess our impact was the output itself - what remained after the stories were shared and the room was cleared. We didn't set out to create polished artwork or a polished product. Our aim was to facilitate a co-created output that captured the essence of the session: something born from collaboration, shaped by memory, and capable of being reflected back to the community with meaning.

Our initial goal was simple: that each young participant would translate what they heard into a drawing or text, to visualise and internalise the stories. The deeper objective was to generate something tangible that could serve as a point of reflection - proof that this wasn't a fleeting encounter, but an experience that left its mark.


We gauged success not just by counting drawings, but by watching the care, curiosity, and attention that unfolded through the act of creation. These weren't judged as artistic pieces but valued as individual contributions to a collective narrative. Each one represented a moment of listening, an act of imagination, a response to a voice from another generation.

The exhibition on May 31st at Quinta Alegre became the culminating space for this shared output. Positioned at the entrance, the collage stood as both a welcome and a statement: this is our story, told together. We watched as families paused to take it in, as youth pointed proudly to their contributions, and as elders recognized their words reflected in unfamiliar forms. What was created in a quiet session weeks earlier became a focal point of public celebration.

This output - humble in material but rich in meaning - did more than showcase what had happened. It wasn't just about running a session, it was about what was created through that session and how it lived on afterward. It extended the impact, anchoring the project in space and memory. This showed us that the work had a real impact. The fact that it was proudly displayed, appreciated by the public, and emotionally meaningful for the participants means that the reaction to the co-created outputs became an important indicator of success.



Sustainability



The fifth dimension used to measure the impact of our project was sustainability. Given the short-term nature of PBL and the fact that we were entering a long-standing community space as outside contributors, it was important to us that our work would not disappear the moment we left. As outsiders entering a longstanding community space, our responsibility was not to implement a new, permanent program, but to contribute something that could blend into what already exists and continue evolving beyond us. That's why our final measure of impact focused not just on what we did, but on what could be done again.

Rather than building a program that needed our ongoing presence, we designed a storytelling framework simple enough to be picked up and reshaped by others. It relied on minimal materials, guided prompts, and a focus on active listening and co-creation - making it light, flexible, and replicable. At the close of the project, we formally shared this framework with Per 11, as well as with interested stakeholders in the broader Alta Lisboa network. The intention was clear: this doesn't end here.

The elders involved in our session were briefed about this continuation, and expressed both understanding and enthusiasm. As Gil told us, many of them see value in sharing more stories and look forward to future opportunities to engage with the youth. By participating once, they've already lowered the barrier for participating again. There were also elders who expressed interest, but that could not join our session.

Moreover, our initiative has become part of a wider cultural movement: the ongoing initiative between associations like Per 11, Quinta Alegre, and the Gulbenkian Foundation, which is supporting long-term work across Alta Lisboa's bairros. While modest in scale, our project was a living example of how small, intimate moments of connection can support broader structural goals - turning abstract ideals of inclusion and cultural memory into something visible and felt.

Community leaders like Mauro and Gil confirmed that they saw lasting value in our format. They appreciated not only the outcomes but also the ease with which the session could be adapted - especially in a context where time and resources are limited. As they continue their work, our materials, process, and documentation remain at their disposal - not as a manual, but as a starting point. And so, while our project may have taken place over just a few months, the relationships, tools, and experiences it helped generate are built to remain. We did not come to fix, complete, or lead - we came to offer something that could continue to grow in the hands of the community itself.



On PBL Holistically

This final reflection wasn't something we had planned to write about - but like many of the most meaningful parts of our project, it emerged naturally, unforced - it became a small unexpected outcome of the project. After our storytelling session and while preparing the exhibition, another PBL group approached us with a surprising request: they had heard about what we'd done in Alta Lisboa and asked if they could learn from our framework in their own project. What struck us wasn't just their interest, but how easily the model seemed to travel. We shared our insights, our structure for the session, and the approach we used to spark authentic dialogue across generations. It was humbling to see that something crafted specifically for one neighborhood could resonate beyond its borders. It affirmed what we had hoped from the beginning: that the value of this work doesn't end with us.

In that moment, sustainability became more than a theme. It became a reality. Not through formal replication, but through inspiration, adaptation, and relevance. Our work, born from the stories of a single community, can live on as a tool for others - a simple method to reconnect people and place, wherever that may be needed. And we believe it is needed, elsewhere too.

Another unexpected question came our way: "How do you work so well as a team?" At first, we laughed - because we hadn't seen ourselves as exceptional. We hadn't followed a formal method. What we had done was trust each other, communicate openly, and allow each person to lead where their strengths shone. We supported one another through moments of confusion and frustration. We gave space, we gave feedback, and perhaps most importantly, we gave each other the benefit of the doubt.

That question made us realise something often overlooked: the internal dynamics of a team shape the external impact of a project. Our collaboration wasn't perfect, but it was grounded in care and purpose. That foundation made everything else - research, sessions, frameworks, partnerships - possible.

So while the session may be over, and the exhibition closed, something continues to circulate: a framework that lives beyond place, a story that lives beyond time, and a way of working that, if anything, we now appreciate even more.





Part II. The team

Introduction

Our team is composed of five individuals who, over time, have developed into a cohesive and enduring unit. Despite our diverse backgrounds, personalities, and working styles, we have built a strong foundation of trust, collaboration, and mutual respect. What truly sets our group apart is the genuine connection we've cultivated, one rooted in openness, empathy, and shared purpose of fostering better connection of those near and around us.

From the beginning, we had a natural inclination to forming personal connections before diving into academic collaboration. By prioritizing friendship and understanding, we created a safe and inclusive space where all members, whether more introverted or extroverted, felt comfortable expressing themselves.

This openness laid the groundwork for a collaborative culture where ideas could flow freely, disagreements could be addressed constructively, and every member felt equally valued and heard.



Each of us brings a distinct personality and working style, contributing to a vibrant and dynamic team environment. Nicodème, who is French and German, studies data science, is both analytical and creative. He brings a strong technical skill set along with a unique perspective shaped by his bicultural background. Nora, originally from Spain and studying economics and business management, has a thoughtful and structured approach, often grounding our discussions with practical insights. Gaspard, who is French and Dutch, studies economics and politics, contributes an intuitive understanding of complex systems combined with strong analytical and quick thinking skills. Hannah, from Norway and also studying economics and politics, adds a people-oriented and empathetic mindset, often helping to mediate different viewpoints and propose solutions catering to all needs of the group. Hillary, from Canada and studying international relations and politics, is naturally decisive and excels at seeing the broader picture, helping to guide the group toward clarity and cohesion.

Together, we represent a rich blend of academic disciplines and cultural backgrounds. This diversity has allowed us to approach problems from multiple angles and has enriched the





depth and quality of our collaboration. It has also enabled us to challenge and refine each other's thinking in productive ways.

Throughout the course of our project, we continued to nurture our group dynamic by regularly checking in on how we worked together, making space to share both frustrations and successes, and adjusting our approach when necessary. There were times when the whole group experienced a collective dip in energy or motivation, and other times when individuals were managing personal challenges outside the project. In both cases, we made a conscious effort to hold space for one another, sometimes by stepping back, sometimes by stepping up. We found ways to work both *with* and *around* these fluctuations, always respecting each other's capacity and ensuring no one felt left behind. Importantly, we committed to resolving any tension or disagreement internally, through open and honest dialogue. No matter what was happening behind the scenes, we consistently presented ourselves to the class and to Ana Luisa as a cohesive, united team, because that's what we genuinely were.

At times, our natural creativity and enthusiasm, as well as our ability to build on each other's ideas, made it difficult to work in a structured way or plan far in advance. This challenge became especially apparent when we were developing our research plan and trying to commit to a fixed direction. However, instead of letting this slow us down, we learned to balance our spontaneous energy with flexibility and pivotal moments. Over time, we refined our process, defined our goals more clearly, and used our collective passion to guide our work forward with greater focus and intention.

Ultimately, our strength lies not only in our complementary skills and perspectives but also in the strong personal bonds and shared values that underpin our collaboration. We are all empathetic individuals with a strong desire to support and uplift those around us. This quality not only helped us build a respectful and inclusive group dynamic, but it also influenced the development of our project itself. By staying rooted in empathy and open communication, we have remained aligned in our goals and committed to each other throughout the process.

Our time working together has been a meaningful journey of both academic and personal growth. We have learned how to lead, how to listen, how to challenge one another constructively, and how to adapt. Most importantly, we have done all of this while remaining true to our shared commitment to collaboration, trust, and mutual respect.





Our Journey Together

This year's Project-Based Learning (PBL) experience has been a transformative and enriching journey for our team. Early in our PBL journey, once Hillary arrived in Lisbon, we kick-started what we jokingly called "*PBL bonding activities*", baking in our shared kitchens, playing silly children's games, and spending time together outside formal meetings. What began as lighthearted fun quickly turned into the foundation of our strong group dynamic. These moments helped us laugh together, break the ice, and form authentic friendships. Over time, this connection became the core of our working culture, so much so that other teams often saw us as a model of teamwork.

Each member's personality added something essential to this dynamic. Nora (INFJ) is task-oriented and practical; Hillary (INTJ) offered focus and strategic clarity; Hannah (ENFP) grounded us with target-oriented guidance and empathy; and Nicodème and Gaspard (both ENTPs) contributed with creativity, feasible execution, and idea generation. This diversity of perspectives and temperaments helped us collaborate fluidly, balancing creativity with direction and reflection with action.

Group Rules and Their Natural Evolution

At the beginning of the project, we created a detailed set of ground rules to ensure accountability, structure, and conflict resolution. Key rules included:

- All decisions would be implemented collectively, regardless of initial individual support.
- Decisions were to be made by majority vote; in the case of a tie, a preselected person had the final say.
- Conflict resolution was tiered: start within the group, address the individual, escalate to the group, and only then involve faculty.
- We committed to respectful, non-violent communication and active listening.
- Common sense and human decency were expected.
- Punctuality and communication responsibilities (e.g., replying within 24h) were agreed upon.

Initially, we referred to these rules regularly. But as mutual trust grew, we began following them more instinctively than formally, they became more of a loose guideline rather than a strict policy. The structure faded because we no longer needed it, open communication



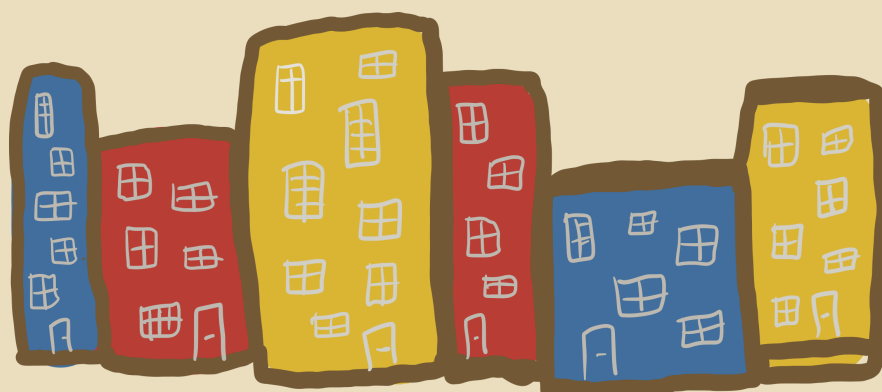
and mutual respect had become habits. Disagreements were rare and resolved easily through non violent conversation. Responsibility was self-regulated, and everyone contributed consistently without needing much external enforcement.

Collaboration in Action: Skills and Growth

Rather than focus solely on deliverables, we prioritized how we worked together. Our team developed across three key dimensions of intelligence: practical, social, and emotional.

- Practical intelligence showed in our ability to divide work efficiently, adapt to changes, and organize meetings and materials. Nora often brought structure, while Hillary ensured progress toward long-term goals.
- Social intelligence was evident in our strong interpersonal chemistry. We listened actively, encouraged each other, and created space for quieter members to contribute. Gaspard often fostered an open environment for the team, encouraging all members to participate and share their thoughts. Nicodeme's creative side allowed for all ideas to be incorporated in some way.
- Emotional intelligence emerged through moments of stress and fatigue. We were flexible with one another, checked in regularly, and created a judgment-free space to express frustration, uncertainty, or new ideas. Hannah showed much empathy to all group members - during moments of frustration for the group, her emotional intelligence allowed us to progress quickly with little tension or conflict.

Our weekly meetings on Wednesdays were central to this growth. Though originally designed for task updates, they naturally expanded into longer, more personal conversations where we connected, laughed, and shared stories about our cultures and experiences. This balance between structure and spontaneity became one of our greatest strengths.





What Made Us Work: Behaviours and Outcomes

Our collaborative success was rooted in intentional behaviour. Everyone took ownership of their responsibilities and communicated transparently. We didn't rely on a leader to delegate or enforce tasks, initiative was shared across the group.

Rather than avoiding conflict, we welcomed open discussion. Feedback was offered in real-time and received with maturity. Decision-making was efficient because we trusted each other's judgment and respected diverse approaches. When we faced uncertainty, especially when refining the project direction, we used brainstorming sessions to converge on shared goals rather than pushing individual agendas.

Our multidisciplinary backgrounds were not just complementary; they were essential. Nicodème's data mindset brought clarity to logistics and design. Nora and Gaspard grounded discussions with business and policy awareness. Hannah ensured social sensitivity, and Hillary helped frame our vision. This blend of perspectives allowed us to identify gaps, challenge assumptions, and elevate the overall quality of the work.

Importantly, our emotional commitment to the project, fueled by shared values and mutual encouragement, sustained us through difficult phases. We were not just a team delivering a product. We were a group with a shared mission: to create intergenerational experiences that inspired learning and pride in community.

Conclusion



Ecos da Alta was never just about storytelling - it was about creating the conditions for stories to matter. What began as a simple idea evolved into a shared process of listening, imagining, and co-creating across generations. Through close collaboration with community leaders and a commitment to Human-Centered Design, we helped foster new connections in Alta Lisboa - between youth and elders, past and present, memory and meaning.

The impact of this project lives on in the relationships built, the drawings and portraits exhibited, and the storytelling framework we left behind - ready to be reused, reshaped, and expanded by others. It reminded us that sustainable change often starts with small acts of recognition, and that trust and co-creation are the heart of any meaningful intervention.



This project also taught us the importance of prototyping boldly - testing ideas early, embracing imperfection, and learning by doing. Some of our most valuable breakthroughs came when we let go of fixed outcomes and allowed the process to guide us. That flexibility helped us adapt when things didn't go as planned - and opened up unexpected possibilities we couldn't have foreseen at the start.

Above all, this PBL journey became a space of academic growth, social connection, and deep personal development. We learned how to lead and listen, to plan and pivot, and to build something greater than ourselves. Our team didn't just complete a project - we became a community. A group grounded in shared values, mutual respect, and a belief that empathy and collaboration can drive real change.

What we leave behind is not just a framework, but a reminder - that connection is a choice we can keep making, one story at a time.

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Appendices

Framework for Intergenerational Storytelling Sessions

Purpose

To create a relaxed, creative, and meaningful space where elders and youth connect through stories, memories, and artistic interpretation. The session is about sharing, listening, and co-creating, not about performance or pressure.

Session Objective

- Encourage elders to share everyday stories in a safe and appreciative setting.
- Invite youth to interpret those stories through drawing or writing.
- Build intergenerational connection through curiosity, empathy, and creativity.
- Both groups gain the feeling of mutual benefit, and that they both bring value to the interaction
- Produce shared outputs that can be remembered, reflected on, or optionally shared.

Duration

There is no fixed duration — the session should flow naturally based on energy, engagement, and comfort. As a rough guide, sessions can last between 1.5 to 2 hours including setup and informal reflection.





Materials Needed

- Chairs and tables arranged in a relaxed, inclusive setup
- Paper, pens, colored pencils, markers, crayons
- Printed guiding questions
- Light snacks
- Optional music in the background (quiet and calming)
- Printed signs or verbal instructions to remind:
“There are no wrong drawings or texts; just do what feels right and how you understand the stories.”

Participants

- The number of participants can vary depending on the context.
- No more than **5 elders should be telling stories** during one session — this keeps it manageable and focused.
- The group of youth can range widely from **ages 4 to 16**:
 - Younger children tend to **draw**.
 - Older children and teens may choose to **write** or annotate.
- Elders can also be invited to **draw or sketch** parts of their story if they wish — this helps make the activity more collaborative and allows them to stay involved while youth interpret.

Preparation and Briefing

- **Youth should be briefed beforehand**, especially older ones, to explain the purpose of the session: “You’ll be listening to stories from people who have lived in your neighborhood for a long time. You’re invited to draw or write whatever stands out to you, what you imagine, what you feel, what you find interesting.”
 - The youth are often dependent on remaining a feeling of autonomy to be engaged
- **Elders should also be briefed gently**:
“This is a relaxed space where you can share memories — nothing too personal if you don’t want to. The youth will listen and respond with drawings or short texts. There’s no pressure, just a chance to connect.”
 - The elders need to be listened to, and to be confident in their insights being wanted and valued.

Suggested Flow (Informal and Flexible)

1. Arrival and Welcome (15 min)

Light snacks, informal greetings, maybe music. Everyone finds their spot.



Facilitators welcome the group and remind them that it's informal — no right or wrong way to participate.

2. Storytelling + Interpretation (45–60 min)

Elders take turns sharing stories based on guiding questions. Youth draw, write, or quietly listen as they feel comfortable. Encourage interaction: youth can ask questions, elders can show pictures or sketch something if they like.

3. Informal Reflection and Sharing (15–30 min)

Invite anyone who wants to share their drawing or thoughts to do so. No one is required to share. Some may just want to observe. Keep it gentle, humorous, and low-pressure.

Challenges and How to Handle Them

Challenge	Response
Youth unsure what to do or hesitant to start	Use snacks and calm explanations to make it friendly. Let them watch a bit first. Reinforce “there are no wrong drawings.”
Elders unsure what to share	Start with simple questions like “What games did you play as a kid?” or “What was your neighborhood like?” Allow them to skip anything they don’t feel like answering.
Differences in age among youth	Let them express in their own way — drawing for younger ones, writing for older ones. Don’t force any specific format.
One side dominates the session	Facilitator can gently invite others to share or pause for questions. It’s okay if some are more active — the goal is comfort, not equality of airtime.

Optional Follow-Up

- If appropriate, the materials can be shared in a small internal display, or used in other community activities.
- Ask participants afterward if they’d like to do it again or continue the conversations another day.
- If drawings are saved, consider giving a copy back to participants as a keepsake.



Pamphlet

Ecoss da Alta -
Quanto maior a sala, mais longe o eco viaja.



Somos uma equipa de cinco estudantes internacionais que estudam em Lisboa neste ano. Durante o nosso tempo aqui, nós tentamos conhecer a história dos vizinhos da Alta de Lisboa. Nós percebemos que não só as pessoas dos bairros tinham histórias que eram novas para nós, como muitas também eram desconhecidas para a comunidade.

Com a intenção de fomentar algumas dessas conversas, nós organizamos uma sessão para contar as histórias, onde os mais velhos e os jovens se encontram. Juntos, eles são os Ecoss da Alta.

O nome simboliza o impacto duradouro de uma memória compartilhada. Os ecoss são mais que apenas ecos do passado, são ondas de mudança que se espalham pelas sociedades, em que as histórias são contadas, ouvidas e, mais importante, compreendidas. As narrativas partilhadas dão origem a conexões duradouras, onde a memória se torna movimento e a herança torna-se num caminho para a mudança. Partilhando as suas histórias, as vozes das pessoas mais velhas não desaparecerão, mas em vez disso, irão moldar novas perspectivas das gerações vindouras. Através dos ecoss, nós não só preservamos o passado - nós criamos repercussões que moldam o futuro.

Histórias



CARMO



Naquela época, trabalhava e ajudava os meus pais sempre que podia. Nos meus tempos livres, fazia compras no mercado, preparava o jantar, e esse era o meu dia — simples e completo.

Depois da escola, concentrava-me nos meus trabalhos de casa. Não havia muito tempo para mais nada, mas arranjavamos sempre um tempinho para atirar pedrinhas, uma brincadeira que adorávamos e praticávamos com frequência. Durante as férias, os meus pais continuavam a trabalhar, enquanto eu ficava em casa. Não fazia grande coisa durante esses períodos, mas lembro-me da paz que havia.

Nessa altura, todos tinham uma boa relação com os vizinhos — pessoas bondosas e solidárias que tornavam o dia a dia mais leve.

Uma das minhas melhores recordações é de há treze anos, quando vim para Lisboa trabalhar. Sou natural do Norte de Portugal, de Castelo Branco. Mudar-me para a cidade foi um grande passo, e nunca o esquecerei.



RITA



Eu vim de Angola e vivia numa casa grande e quadrada, rodeada por um jardim lindo. Havia um pequeno lago cheio de peixes e uma horta de que cuidávamos.

A escola ficava a cinco quilómetros de casa. Depois das aulas, preparava o almoço e ficava em casa. Não fazia grande coisa — aquelas tardes eram tranquilas e silenciosas.

Costumávamos sentar-nos em círculo e cantar, correr, brincar à corrida de sacos e saltar. Todos brincavam juntos — ricos ou pobres, todos cantávamos como um só. Havia alegria naquela simplicidade. Durante as férias, brincávamos o dia todo.

As minhas melhores recordações serão sempre da infância. Não tínhamos muito que fazer, mas éramos felizes.



PATROCÍNIA



Eu vivia numa casa pequena e, há cerca de vinte anos, mudei-me para uma casa perto da Quinta Alegre. A vida era atarefada — trabalhava durante o dia, fazia as compras e, à noite, fazia as tarefas domésticas. No dia seguinte, tudo recomeçava.

Eu ajudava a minha mãe com os animais — cuidando das galinhas e dos porcos. À noite, depois de tudo terminado, sentava-me e fazia os trabalhos de casa. Não tínhamos férias. Mesmo durante as férias, ficávamos em casa a ajudar os nossos pais. As nossas férias eram feitas de trabalho.

No entanto, costumávamos brincar muito às pedrinhas. Um dos nossos jogos preferidos era a cabra-cega, em que alguém tinha de encontrar os outros com os olhos vendados. As nossas bonecas eram apenas pedras, mas tínhamos imaginação, e isso bastava.

Naquela época, ajudávamo-nos muito. Tenho memórias maravilhosas dos nossos vizinhos e, até hoje, mantemos contacto.

As minhas melhores recordações são de quando tinha 18 ou 19 anos — conheci o meu marido. Ele não sabia dançar, mas dançamos juntos na mesma. Eu adorava dançar.



MARGARIDA



Lembro-me de uma casa, um pátio onde costumávamos jogar, as nossas mascotes, e o ritmo diário do trabalho. Quando chegava a casa da escola, fazia os meus trabalhos de casa, regava as plantas, e ajudava a limpar a casa. Depois da escola, eu costumava ajudar os meus pais e cuidava da nossa horta.

Naquela época, não havia férias, e mesmo se houvesse, nós ficávamos em casa, ajudando os nossos pais. Mas, todas as crianças, nós costumávamos sentar-nos em círculo, jogando e cantando juntos. Algumas vezes, saltávamos à corda ou colhíamos flores para dar às pessoas.

No passado, os nossos vizinhos eram como família. Eles eram quem recorria quando tinha um problema — sempre amáveis e dispostos a ajudar.

