LEAP POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

CONTENT

Document prepared by Cluj Cultural Centre

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1. INTRODUCTION

The list of policy recommendations and proposed actions in this document is the result of a process coordinated by the Cluj Cultural Centre within the LEAP project, during June-August 2020.

About the project

The LEAP project aims to conduct a comprehensive, multi- and inter-disciplinary assessment of the needs and opportunities for young people (aged 10-24) in the Cluj metropolitan area, guided by an ecosystem view and oriented towards future initiatives stemming from the results of the assessment. LEAP consists of a complex and interconnected process involving literature review, qualitative research, quantitative research, mapping of stakeholders, consultations with stakeholders and policy recommendations. The project results will serve as a base for a ten-year strategy to support youth well-being in Cluj-Napoca and its metropolitan area. The project is implemented in partnership by the Department of Public Health and the Department of Political Sciences of the Faculty of Political, Administrative and Communication Sciences, Babeș-Bolyai University, PONT Group and Cluj Cultural Centre, with the financial support of Fondation Botnar. More details: http://leapcluj.ro

Approach to identifying policy recommendations

The aim of this LEAP phase is to propose policy actions and interventions based on the findings of the research, the systemic gap report of the study and the input of relevant stakeholders. The process leading to this document included various stakeholders through an online questionnaire (53 respondents - from 39 NGOs dealing with children and youth, 12 from public institutions, 2 private companies) and through online consultations meetings. During the series of online consultations, conducted in four thematic groups (Health, Learning, Agency and Enabling Environment) and engaging 55 stakeholders, a list of measures to address systemic gaps was drafted, which was analysed, summarized and completed by the expert groups working in the LEAP Study.

Connected documents

- **Systemic Gaps Report**

- **Stakeholder Engagement Report**

2. POLICY AND ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of the stakeholder consultations, we have structured a list of **possible solutions to the identified systemic gaps** in the 4 main areas of the LEAP Youth Well-being framework, namely (I) Health, (II) Learning, (III) Agency and Development and (IV) Enabling Environment. The solutions are either specific for a specific domain (eg health, education) or **integrated measures**, addressing two or more domains, and presented mainly under the Enabling Environment chapter.

The types of recommendations formulated are both **policy recommendations**, which we suggest to be adopted and implemented by local or national authorities and **proposed actions (**programmes, projects or pilot actions) that the consortium of stakeholders may initiate or scale-up.

I. HEALTH

SG1.1 Insufficient and Ineffective Health Promotion, Health Education and Disease Prevention

The measures aimed at promoting health and preventing disease among children and youth are inefficient, due to a major emphasis placed on curative efforts - treatment is prioritized over prevention. This comes as a result of minimal efforts in the field of health education (healthy nutrition, mental health, sexual education, early education etc.) targeting children, adolescents, young people, as well as their parents and teachers.

P1.1.1 Prioritize health inside the youth ecosystem

Ensure that strategies at metropolitan and city level list youth health promotion as a priority and address it accordingly through proper actions (including resource allocation), and implementation and evaluation mechanisms.

Proposed actions:

■ Develop a local action plan addressing youth wellbeing for 2020-2030;
■ Include the 2020-2030 youth wellbeing action plan in the new Metropolitan Strategy 2020-2030.

Supporting actions:

■ Evaluate the previous Youth Strategy (Cluj City Development Strategy 2014-2020) from the perspective of health promotion, education and disease prevention and publish a report on existing initiatives and programmes in this field;
■ Give visibility to the health priority in all future strategic actions at the city and metropolitan level;
■ Engage the youth community and expert groups on health in local decisions and actions;
■ Develop interdisciplinary working teams;
■ Implement multi-sectoral interventions.

Stakeholders: Cluj-Napoca Municipality, Cluj Metropolitan Area Intercommunity Development Association (ADI ZMC), Cluj Civic Imagination and Innovation Centre (CIIC), County Directorate of Public Health, Cluj County School Inspectorate, Regional Centre for Public Health, Academia (medicine, public health, psychology etc.)

P1.1.2 Digital platform with science based information for youth health

There is an acute need for accurate, structured and curated information on the topic of youth health, which is accessible for and easy to understand and apply by the community of youngsters, complemented by support in finding specialized help and services. The ownership and management of the platform will have to be assumed by a central coordinating body supported and endorsed by the local authorities. The Health Digital Platform will be part of an integrated information platform for youth that should be a priority action of the next city/metropolitan strategy.

Proposed actions:

■ Provide centralized and up-to date information on health and health services (call-centres, initiatives and programmes, support institutions and organisations) under one platform created and managed by a validated and endorsed consortium;
■ Create call-centres dedicated for youth counselling (make visible on the platform all existing services of this kind and create new services for specific health areas where youth have difficulty reaching out (psychological support, substance use, sexual health etc.);

Supporting actions:

■ Create a digital application and a dedicated short phone number to access health services and connect with specialized health professionals;
■ Collect and present information on existing health services accessible through phone or through different digital platforms;
■ Develop new health communication channels (social media, apps, health sections in youth publications etc.), support existing ones;
■ Connect and integrate complementary services provided by different stakeholders in this area.

Stakeholders: Cluj-Napoca Municipality, ADI ZMC, County Directorate of Public Health, Cluj Youth Federation, Cluj County School Inspectorate, Regional Centre for Public Health, Academia (medicine, public health, psychology etc.), health-related NGOs

P1.1.3 Involve youths in designing information campaigns for prevention

Health promotion and prevention campaigns which target the young population can best address this targeted audience if youths are actively involved in designing, implementing and evaluating these initiatives. Organized and informal groups of young people need to be connected to communicators within the system of public health services, health professionals, policy makers and analysts, psychologists and social workers to address issues like healthy diet, physical activity, mental health, substance abuse, etc., to find the common language and relevant communication channels that efficiently reach the young population.

Proposed action:

■ Integration of this type of consultation processes in the development stages of the health promotion programs currently carried out by public and private institutions: Regional Centres of Public Health, County Public Health Directorates, Children's Palace, Red Cross.

Supporting actions:

■ Design a methodology to involve young people in developing health related initiatives and campaigns according to their interests and skills - creating different working groups (following insights from www.diypes.eu project);
■ Create a Task Force (stakeholders, representative bodies of young people) to develop an action plan for consultations on prevention and information campaigns in the topic of health;

- Analyse the current needs and resources / opportunities;
- Empower youth organisations to train facilitators and mobilise youth to participate in consultations- ensuring representativeness and diversity.

Stakeholders: Cluj County School Inspectorate, Cluj County Directorate for Sports and Youth, Students' Cultural House, Cluj, School Students Council Cluj, University Student Councils: Babeş- Bolyai University (UBB), Technical University of Cluj-Napoca (UTCN), University of Medicine and Pharmacy Cluj-Napoca (UMF), University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine of Cluj-Napoca (USAMV), Art and Design University of Cluj-Napoca (UAD), NGOs/civil society

SG1.2 Rudimentary collaboration between local actors of health promotion and health education

When initiatives are indeed present, they mostly lack an integrative vision on the health of children and young people in the metropolitan area. Integration should manifest itself in the range of partners involved, the overall framework for behavioural change, as well as in the desired outputs and outcomes.

P1.2.1 Healthy food system in schools

Both the research (quantitative and qualitative) and the stakeholder consultation process identified the need for addressing the *healthy food system in schools* - topic, however it is crucial to analyse existing pilots, initiatives and ongoing programs at national level, like: *Milk and corn, Fruit in schools, A hot meal*, and align them with any new policy decisions and initiatives that will be developed. There is a big challenge in identifying the best way to attract resources for these types of programmes, given the fact that the material-financial needs for implementation are high: costs of food, transport, etc. or the establishment of school canteens: landscaping, staffing, etc.

Proposed actions:
- assess the existing food programmes in schools;
- develop nutrition programmes in schools;
- collaborate with local producers in the metropolitan area.

Supporting actions:
- develop local partnerships between schools, local producers' associations and other relevant stakeholders.

Stakeholders: OurCluj Initiative, Wello, School of Public Health/UBB, Cluj County School Inspectorate

P1.2.2 Local partnerships to support, develop and adjust to real needs the publicly funded medical services in educational institutions

Based on consultations and assessment a multisectorial approach should be used to develop a system through which young people can receive, regardless of their housing status, free medical services in educational institutions.

Proposed actions:
- Involve academic staff and master students to compensate the lack of psychologists in schools;
- Collaborations between schools and universities to assess the wellbeing of students and provide primary information;
- Involve local stakeholders in offering health support through Youth centres, health education

programmes in schools;
- Develop a referral system for young people whose mental or physical condition may be improved through culture and sports activities - arts on prescription, sports on prescription.

Supporting actions:
- assess the number of real beneficiaries of the school psychological counselling to determine the need for complementary services;
- conduct assessment of human resources involved in delivering youth-friendly health services.

Stakeholders: schools, universities, cultural and sports organisations

SG1.3 Inequalities in accessing health and health services

The public health system is characterized by a difficult access to medical services, which are often inadequate to young people's needs. Social determinants (education, socio-economic status etc.) influence greatly the ability to access health services, especially for vulnerable and marginalized groups.

P1.3.1 Dedicated health support mechanisms for vulnerable groups

Although young people as an age group are vulnerable in terms of available infrastructure, access to health education and awareness, that is hardly a homogenous community. Within the age group targeted by the study there are different groups that require differentiated assessment and communication in the topic of health: children and youth whose mother tongue is not Romanian (who have difficulties in communicating with doctors), young people with disabilities and those with chronic diseases, a.o.

Proposed actions:
- Programme for volunteer translators/interpreters for non-Romanian speakers that need medical services
- Involve the Universities in providing free health services to all students who do not have a Cluj ID
- Program for the integration of children with autism in schools
- Health promotion and access to medical services to young people in Pata Rât
- Integrated support mechanisms for families with children with disabilities

Supporting actions:
- Mapping the existing health support programmes for vulnerable groups and increasing their visibility through the digital platform
- Assessing the accessibility to health services and adequate health infrastructure in neighbourhoods and rural areas of the metropolitan area.

Stakeholders: health institutions, schools, universities, local organisations

II. LEARNING

SG2.1 Discrepancies between education needs and school offer

Education needs to be dynamic: as societies adapt to fast-paced global changes, education needs to change as well, in order to respond to them. The Romanian educational system DOES NOT seem capable of doing so. There is no consensually agreed upon set of social values that all instructors adhere to; in turn, this is problematic in the creation of future democratic citizens. There is no substantial overlap between knowledge acquired in school and the practical skills that the labour market requires.

P2.1.1 Curricula for sensitive topics and inclusion (vulnerable groups, minorities, mental health etc.)

Given the huge gap between the school training and the life skills young people need for individual and community well-being, high quality educational programmes are needed for sexual health, mental health, interpersonal communication, intercultural competences (accommodating diversity of gender, ethnicity, race etc.), civic education etc.

Proposed actions:
- Developing curricula on these topics to be trained in schools as optional courses;
- Teacher training on the respective topics;
- Develop a standard for social inclusion and an inclusion auditing process for schools;
- Introduce social inclusion officers in schools.

Supporting actions:
- Documenting existing curriculums and enhancing them;
- Revised civic education curriculum;
- Endorsing the new curricula by local consortia of stakeholders to encourage schools in the Cluj Metropolitan area to implement them as optional courses;
- Improve the pedagogical module taught to future teachers in the university;
- Training and counselling for teachers in life skills, programmes for teachers' well-being.

Stakeholders: Cluj County School Inspectorate, schools, local organisations
*Process owner: to be identified (could be the future Cluj School Network or the future Education Cluster)

P2.1.2 Education network to support scaling up and replication of good educational practices

To ensure that good practices are multiplied and scaled up to systemic mechanisms benefitting the entire youth population a strong and well connected ecosystem is needed. Actors within this ecosystem should work together, complementing and strengthening each other's actions.
Local authorities need to endorse and support ecosystem initiatives such as the Education Cluster and the Cluj School Network.

Proposed actions:
- Develop the Cluj School Network;
- Develop the Education Cluster;

- Develop metropolitan frameworks to support these and other similar initiatives (financially, politically etc.);
- Develop "school branches" of the well-performing schools from the city centre in the neighbourhoods and metropolitan area;
- Yearly budget allocation for the key projects of the ecosystem;
- Connect local universities with the metropolitan schools and develop joint programmes.

Supporting actions:
- Local public administrations to be part of the network/cluster and endorse its initiatives.

Stakeholders: local public administrations, Cluj County School Inspectorate, Schools, New Horizons Foundation, Transylvania College (Education Cluster), Cluj Cultural Centre (Cluj School Network), local public administrations, universities, OurCluj Initiative, local organisations

P2.1.3 Ecosystem partnership for a career counselling system

The gap between the educational system and the work market should be urgently addressed and a joint effort from all concerned actors is thus needed. Leadership of such efforts can reside with network initiatives such as the Cluj School Network, the Education Cluster and various business clusters.

Proposed actions:
- Framework for transectorial collaboration for a career counselling system - a joint work programme of the educational and business sector in Cluj (including a manifesto and a step by step roadmap for implementation);
- Pilot actions and ongoing assessment of the progress;
- Training for teachers on career counselling;
- Metropolitan programme for corporate and NGO internship for pupils.

Supporting actions:
- Increase opportunities for career advice and their visibility;
- Include optional courses for students to allow experimentation with a wide range of skills;
- Internship programme for the 11th grade high school students;
- Giving visibility to careers that are not trendy or widely sought for;
- Map out the existing internship projects and connect them with one another and with business networks and associations.

Stakeholders: Cluj County School Inspectorate, Transylvania College (Education Cluster), Cluj Cultural Centre (Cluj School Network), New Horizons Foundation, local public administrations, business clusters, existing career initiatives (eg. Danis Foundation, Careers' Market - Târgul de Cariere, Youth Hive)

P2.1.4 Improving the quality of the pedagogical training in university

The gap between the school programmes and the actual life skills signals that new approaches in both teaching and learning are needed. For a systemic change to be possible educators need to acquire new skills and learn new methods to teach and design learning activities.

Proposed actions:
- Improving the university program in Pedagogy;
- Providing internship opportunities for pedagogy students in programs for children and young people offered by NGOs that do things differently;
- Provide in-service pedagogical training (upskilling) for teachers.

Stakeholders: Cluj County School Inspectorate, Babeș-Bolyai University - Faculty of Psychology, universities, ecosystem initiatives such as the Education Cluster and the Cluj School Network

P2.1.5 Metropolitan vision for education

Given the acute crisis of the current educational models, in order to make a difference in a centralised system a metropolitan vision and a strategy for education to mobilise the entire ecosystem around desired transformation is key. Local public administrations and stakeholders in the metropola need to work together on a common project.

Proposed actions:
- Local administrations to adopt a Memorandum on how education should look like in the metropola;
- Define several pilot actions or projects in the metropola and implement them;
- Replicate or scale when ready.

Stakeholders: local public administrations, OurCluj Initiative, New Horizons Foundation, Cluj School Network, Cluj Education Cluster, local organisations, universities, ADI ZMC

P2.1.6 Action plan for digitalization in schools at the metropolitan level

Young people have been heavily affected by the sudden relocation of the school classes from the school environment to the online milieu due to the COVID-19 crisis. Schools, teaching staff, pupils and their families need support in accessing and adequately using digital technologies for education purposes, especially since ITC may provide in the future solutions for compensating the inequalities in the education system.

Proposed actions:
- Develop a digitalization action plan for education;
- Prepare and pilot online and hybrid education models;
- Tech literacy courses for teachers, students and families;
- Investments for access to technology-facilitated education.

Stakeholders: local public administrations, Cluj County School Inspectorate, ICT clusters, New Horizons Foundation, local organisations and initiatives

SG2.2 Inequality in opportunities and access and urban-rural discrepancies

The inequalities in the Romanian educational system are substantial and persistent. A combination of various processes such as the uneven development of communities, aspects related to school financing and human resourcing and a less than optimal approach to inclusive education contribute to an overall picture characterized by visible disparities. Moreover, there are important equity issues, as students' achievements are markedly influenced by the socio-economic status of their families. There are structural problems rooted in discriminatory practices and inadequate infrastructure that impact mainly the young people with disabilities and the Roma.

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P2.2.1 Pedagogical support for rural schools

The quality of education in the rural areas of the metropolitan area is impacted by a variety of factors, including the limited pedagogical competences of the teachers. Teaching jobs are often occupied by locum tenens, teachers are often commuting from the city and/or have to teach children of different grades at the same time. Systemic interventions to increase the quality of teaching skills of the educators are needed. The urban-rural discrepancies are also visible in terms of infrastructure and, in particular, in access to adequate digital equipment and technologies.

Proposed actions:
- Local partnership to encourage university students to make pedagogical practice in the rural areas;
- Funding programme/Incentives for organisations developing non-formal educational activities in the rural area;
- Adapted teacher training programmes for rural educators;
- Provide schools (teachers and children) in the villages with the adequate technologies and connectivity.

Stakeholders: local public administrations in the rural areas, schools, Cluj County School Inspectorate, universities, New Horizons Foundation, local organisations and initiatives

P2.2.2 Programmes to encourage school attendance and increase learning opportunities for disadvantaged groups

School dropout rates are higher in rural areas, while opportunities for extra-curricular activities and community engagement are fewer. There are limited efforts to accommodate the needs of the young people with disabilities. Roma adolescents and youth face daily and structural discrimination. Joint efforts of existing educational, cultural and civic organizations along with the local authorities and schools may result in increased opportunities for underprivileged children and youth.

Proposed actions:
- Educational caravans and mobile labs in rural areas;
- Reading programs / clubs for preschoolers in rural areas;
- Food programme in schools to encourage attendance, in partnership with local producers;
- Early interventions and other programmes for preschoolers;
- Joint activities for youth with different abilities and from all social and ethnic backgrounds to increase cohesion;
- Improved facilities (in public spaces, schools, youth centres, institutions) to accommodate special needs;
- Special programs and interventions designed for the Roma community.

Stakeholders: local public administrations in the rural areas, Cluj County School Inspectorate, ICT clusters, New Horizons Foundation, local organisations and initiatives

III. AGENCY AND EMPOWERMENT

SG 3.1 Inhibitors and catalysers of agency

There is a lack of connectors and connector-type entities to facilitate working relationships between young people and decision-makers, between young people and organizations that may involve them and mechanisms that encourage their community involvement and participation in decision-making.

P3.1.1 Cooperation mechanisms in the field of youth through a wide connection of stakeholders

While there is a wide range of stakeholders who are working in the field of youth there is a lack of cooperation between these actors. One aspect identified in the process is the need for a bundled network of people from various organisations who become de-facto interfaces of those entities on youth-related issues, people as connectors and facilitators between these actors (youth workers) who are not affiliated to any specific stakeholder, and supporting internal information system.

Proposed actions:
- Creating and enhancing a network of urban and metropolitan community facilitators with youth workers involved who have the role of connecting people, organisations, initiatives enhancing organic and horizontal cooperation;
- Maintaining an updated and openly accessible database of stakeholders from the urban and metropolitan area mapping their activities, contact information and possible challenges they experienced and solutions they provided through their activities;
- Developing a network of contacts, persons nominated from a wide range of stakeholders as a single contact point in relations to youth-related efforts (including from various authorities, companies, NGOs, academic organisations and other public institutions from within the city, the metro area or from wider areas if interested in the youth-related efforts of the Cluj Metropolitan Area);
- Consolidation of the work of networks of youth organisations as key actors of agency.

Supporting actions:
- The creation of new (or the enhancement of an existing) internal platform and information system enhancing the connection between stakeholders, connectors and decision-makers providing a rapid and well curated flow of vital information regarding youth issues;
- Capacity building for community facilitators in fields of network development, communication, facilitation, and ideation.

Stakeholders: all institutional stakeholders, networks of youth organisations, local public administrations and metropolitan decision-makers

P3.1.2 Collaborative youth ecosystem gathering stakeholders from key domains: school system, local public administrations, business environment, NGO sector

The need to connect existing initiatives and raise their capacity to benefit young people in Cluj by developing joint actions and synergies is of utmost importance. Actions enabling the transition from single initiatives to an ecosystem approach are required.

Proposed actions:

- Enable a strong cooperation framework for youth stakeholders;
- Enable metropolitan-level cooperation in the youth field - coordination among local public administrations in the metropolitan area regarding youth priorities (eg. through ADI ZMC), partnerships and consortia of stakeholders to extend their activities in the entire metro area;
- Stakeholders to agree on a joint list of priorities and an action plan;
- Yearly planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation;
- Task Force to ensure the coordination of the initiative;
- Advocate for installing Youth Consultative Bodies within local administration and other key institutions;
- Advisory Board to support the work of Youth Consultative Bodies.

Supporting actions:

- Build on OurCluj initiative;
- Use action planning and implementation models (from LAYOUTH project);
- LEAP stakeholder database development.

Stakeholders: OurCluj initiative, Cluj County School Inspectorate, local public administrations, local organisations, Cluj Youth Federation, Cluj School Network, Educational Cluster

SG 3.2 The lack of recognition of agency and engagement

There is a need of promoting existing recognition and certification mechanisms and the development of new forms of pursuing and recognizing the community involvement, participation and the acquisition of life skills, forms that are widely accepted by community members and organizations in general.

P3.2.1 Certificate for youth training and volunteering programmes to be recognized by employers and universities

As youth participation is still limited and its importance underestimated, systems to acknowledge and reward community engagement of youth have the potential to encourage more young people to become active citizens. Credits earned by engaging in such activities would be recognised by universities and employers.

Proposed actions:

- Develop a system and a certificate for youth training, volunteering and community engagement, integrating all youth initiatives in the Cluj Metropolitan area;
- Endorsement of the certificate by local public administrations, universities and main business clusters and associations;
- Creation of a system and platform managing the learning and recognition process.

Supporting actions:

- Map and involve existing models, such as The Duke of Edinburgh Award or Timișoara West University;
- Award programme for youth initiatives.

Stakeholders: local youth initiatives, local public administrations, universities, organisations

P3.2.2 Involve youth in real-life projects in the metropolitan area

Youth should be regarded not only as beneficiaries of the policies and actions of the municipality and other stakeholders, but rather as active and resourceful agents for community building. Young people should be consulted and directly involved in city projects.

Proposed actions:
- Small investment projects of the municipality carried out by mixed teams of youth and practitioners;
- The municipality or other big actors are to invite youths to consultations and projects as equal actors in collective undertakings;
- Youth action plans and youth funds in all municipalities;
- Metropolitan level project models which are scalable in all metropolitan municipalities.

Stakeholders: local public administrations, Cluj County School Inspectorate, schools, local organisations

SG 3.3 Participation of young people in decision-making

There is a need in strengthening existing mechanisms and developing new mechanisms for youth participation in local decision-making on the issues that directly concern them in both personal and social life.

P3.3.1 Mechanisms for youth empowerment and participation in decision-making

While opportunities for youth participation in decision making exist, they are not yet relevant at the city level. Systems empowering youth need to exist in all institutions where young people are the main beneficiaries -such as schools and universities - but also on other public bodies.

There is a local youth council under preparation and an active pool of teachers at local level who form a group of extracurricular activities through which they engage young people in things outside of school. There is a need to endorse the development of this support system and to integrate all existing initiatives and resources in the process of officially creating a local or metropolitan youth council or consultative body.

Proposed actions:
- Create a Youth Council at the city and the county level;
- Create a local strategy for youth empowerment/participation in decision making;
- Conducting a structured dialogue process and including it on the local public agenda;
- Consolidating and widening the frame in which youths have real decision power (Participatory Budgeting, Com'on Cluj, a representative in the school Board);
- Youth will be consulted and involved in the design of their dedicated spaces and their respective programme (Design of urban spaces, be them addressed specifically to youth or to the general population, needs to take into account the needs and requirements of children and young people - for instance considering accessibility and safety, and the child's eye level view);
- Organize living lab programmes for youth;
- Create youth shadow decision-making roles - youth mayor for a day, youth principle for a day etc.;
- Local support for scaling and replicating successful involvement mechanisms (ex. Innovatory, The Local Youth Council);

- Participatory planning processes where youth can seriously engage in offering solutions to local challenges;
- Encourage organizations that have decision mechanisms (juries, contests etc.) to develop youth versions of these mechanisms;
- Integrating in the school curriculum of diverse programs and products (cultural, social etc.) that encourage youths in decision making (role-playing);
- Enhance the metropolitan governance, metropolitan-level cooperation in the youth field (through ADI ZMC or any other form);
- Supporting Roma youth participation, promoting equality of chances and inclusion of Roma youth in the process of relevant policy and decision making, including special consultations with representatives of the Roma community and participatory planning processes with Roma youth.

Stakeholders: local public administrations, Cluj County School Inspectorate, schools, local organisations, Cluj County School Inspectorate (concerning the design of spaces in schools)

IV. ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

SG4. 1 Urban and social infrastructure

The current infrastructure of the city and the metropolitan area do not meet the needs of young people in terms of self-development, expression, and social interaction. There is an overall lack of safe, inclusive and accessible spaces where they can participate in non-formal activities of their choice, socialize, self-organise and receive professional support.

P4.1.1 Network of youth community centres in schools and in other vacant spaces in all neighbourhoods of the metropolitan area

The lack of spaces dedicated to youth and their activities of choice has been one of the most frequent problems mentioned by young people (during the qualitative study) and stakeholders (during consultations). Youth centres providing free access to a wide range of activities - educational, vocational, cultural, sports, social activities, that would complement the in school educational programme and offer professional support and counselling are seen as the most suitable solution. While dedicated Youth Centres with a complex multifunctional infrastructure and programme are desirable, facilitating access to youth programmes in all neighbourhoods is seen as priority. In this respect, opening up schools in the neighbourhoods outside the school hours as well as other community spaces across the city for youth "centres" are proposed short term actions.

Proposed actions:
- build one (ideally more) multifunctional Youth Centre:
- open existing spaces for a permanent youth programme in each neighbourhood (time sharing or space sharing): a. schools (time sharing, after school hours and during weekends), b. other spaces such as public cinemas, former heating plants in the neighbourhoods (space sharing).

Supporting actions:
- Assessment of possible spaces in schools;
- Mapping of appropriate existing spaces (for youth activities only or for youth activities in multidisciplinary spaces);
- Consultations with stakeholders (space representatives, young people, existing initiatives);
- Research on the existing legal base for opening schools to non-school related youth activities;
- Local Council Decision to create youth centres in schools;
- Administrative Decision to allocate youth centre activities in identified spaces in all neighbourhoods of the city;
- Creating a network of stakeholders to coordinate the youth centres' programme;
- Multi-stakeholder initiative/pilot project; Official endorsement of the initiative, pilot project (with clear and endorsed action plan and funding map) aimed at the coordination of the development of this network;
- Allocation of funds for the implementation of the pilot project.

Stakeholders: Cluj-Napoca Municipality, Cluj County School Inspectorate /Ministry of Education, Coordinating/Implementing structure - to be identified (Cluj School Network, Cluj Youth Federation, Youth Department of the Cluj-Napoca Municipality)

P4.1.2 Integrated Youth Information System (including online information platform)

Although in Cluj-Napoca youth has multiple opportunities for formal, non-formal education and community participation, young people report being disoriented and find information of interest hard to find, select and process. The absence of a coherent information service also creates an unbalanced access to youth programmes, certain communities of young people being overloaded with participation offers while others lack information. The creation of an Integrated Youth Information System should be one of the key priorities of the Cluj-Napoca Municipality in the area of youth. The plan regarding the funding, personnel, structure of such an initiative will have to be made by the local decision making authority and validated by the identified stakeholders.

Proposed actions:
- Create an integrated online platform providing youth with: certified information on areas of interest (health, psychology, nutrition, technology, etc.), structured information on available youth centres, services and participation opportunities;
- Develop a strategic plan for dissemination of key information through public channels;
- Provide access to city information systems (public transport displays, city advertising spaces, community media).

Supporting actions:
- Collecting information on existing platforms for displays and information and dissemination at the city level:
- Budget allocation for the development and maintenance of the information system.

Stakeholders: Cluj-Napoca Municipality, Cluj Youth Federation, private funding structures, local organisations

P4.1.3 Integrated Youth Workers programmes

A recurring need signalled both by young people and stakeholders consulted is that of professionals that work in guiding, facilitating, mediating, connecting young people with the opportunities in their environment and help them in navigating the information and choices presented to them. Youth workers with specialised roles in this respect are needed in schools - as counsellors, mediators, in youth centres - as facilitators and animators, in connecting roles between schools, universities and the job market, a.s.o.

Proposed actions:
- Youth worker certification programme in Cluj;
- Developing a network of youth workers with varied sub-specialisations;
- Pilot programme for enrolling youth workers in key institutions;
- Integrated digital platform for youth - to enable the work of connectors;
- Provide an action plan for the employment of certified youth workers in every school, in all youth centres and in given public institutions (eg Department for Health, Youth Department within the Cluj-Napoca Municipality, etc.), in a given timeframe;
- Establish a dedicated Youth Department within the Cluj-Napoca Municipality and ensure the employment of certified youth workers.

Supporting actions:
- Mapping and connecting existing youth workers to seed the network;
- Mapping relevant initiatives to seed the programme;
- Create support frameworks to enable existing youth workers to transition from project based work to permanent contracts.

Stakeholders: Cluj County School Inspectorate, local organisations, Cluj Youth Federation, Cluj-Napoca Municipality

SG 4.2 Urban living

The urban context provides a challenging environment for children and youth well-being in terms of mobility, housing, and urban design. Child and youth friendly public spaces are limited. The crowded spaces and intensive traffic impact the quality of life of young people.

P4.2.1 Co-design with youth new transport routes to facilitate their access to learning and leisure

Urban mobility is one of the areas of concern for all the inhabitants in Cluj-Napoca and the Metropolitan area, and youth are largely affected by mobility problems. On one hand measures to increase the use of public transport by young people are necessary, on the other hand new connections should be made so that young people are encouraged to spend time outdoors benefiting from the nature surrounding the city.

Proposed actions:
- Co-design with youth new public transport and bike routes to facilitate their access to the main interest points in the city and the metropolitan area (schools, universities, youth centres, sport facilities, cultural facilities, green areas etc.);
- Increase city accessibility for people with disabilities (access paths, ramps, type of pavement, audio and tactile signs for city orientation etc.);
- Pilot project on metropolitan routes to encourage outdoor activities;
- Improvements in the current services for youth in the public transport system (expand the school public transport service, expand night public transport, increased frequency of buses in weekends in the Metropolitan Area).

Supporting actions:
- Study on the mobility needs of young people;
- Mapping the interest areas;
- Information and awareness campaigns addressing the youth.

Stakeholders: Cluj-Napoca Municipality, CTP - Public transport company, Other stakeholders - Tourism department, Tourism Cluster, Cluj Guided Tours, Remarkable Romania (CCC)

P4.2.2 Encourage biking through infrastructure and ease of access

Young people are interested in using cycling as a means of transport. Appropriate infrastructure is required to ensure the safety and security of bike use in the city and between villages in the metropolitan area and the city.

Proposed actions:
- Mapping of bicycle routes (existing infrastructure in the city, biker-parks, tourist-routes);
- Awareness and information campaigns (for all actors in traffic about mutual respect and safety rules);
- Involving young people in the design of the urban plans for green city and public transport.

- Supporting actions:
- Studying and integrating the Cluj-Napoca Municipality's plans for extension of the cycling infrastructure in the development of the initiative;
- Collecting and analysing information and data on existing initiatives at the city level, such as the ClujBike -renting system and the local Critical Mass.

Stakeholders: local public administrations, ADI ZMC, associations promoting biking, Cluj Youth Federation, local organisations

P4.2.3 Involve youth in urban mobility projects aimed at cultivating safe and sustainable mobility behaviours

Shifting toward a green mobility city greatly relies on the adoption of alternative mobility behaviours from young people. At the same time, individual and collective responsibility towards safety and mutual respect needs to be encouraged and cultivated at a young age.

Proposed actions:
- Awareness, information campaigns and educational programmes about mobility;
- Incentive programs to encourage green transport (free-bike card);
- Youth-led Patrols around schools.

Supporting actions:
- Creating an available and visible platform with up to date information about existing policies, mobility projects and initiatives.

Stakeholders: CIIC (Cluj Civic Imagination and Innovation Centre), local public administrations, Cluj County School Inspectorate, local organisations, Policy Department

SG 4.3 Support systems and mechanisms

There isn't any clearly defined institutional and policy framework for youth in place at urban and metropolitan level. Frameworks to connect young people with initiatives at national, European and global level are limited. Problems stem, on one hand, from the deficiencies of the national legal framework and, on the other hand, from the limited expertise in building local ecosystems involving all relevant stakeholders.

P4.3.1 Dedicated Youth Strategy and Funds to support youth initiatives

A strong policy addressing youth priorities is needed at local and metropolitan level. While the Cluj-Napoca development Strategy 2014-2020 included a dedicated Youth Strategy, such documents do not exist at metropolitan and suburban level. Co-designing these strategies with the young people and a central-level endorsement of the resulting policies and programmes by the local authorities are key. Furthermore, support for the implementation of strategic measures and of youth initiatives needs to be firm and consistent.

Proposed actions:
- Co-designing and adopting of dedicated Youth Strategies at local and metropolitan level;
- Coordinating priorities and action plans of the strategies for youth of the municipalities in the metropolitan area;
- Local Councils and County Council to dedicate special funds for youth initiatives;
- Task Force for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the youth strategies;

- Creating a Funding Action plan/taskforce - local public and private donors to coordinate efforts to ensure firm and consistent allocations and youth friendly procedures for funding schemes (including financial support for schools from local companies);
- Transparency and traceability of the youth-dedicated budgets (e.g. school budgets, local funds for youth, participatory budgeting for youth);
- A coherent framework for enabling youth initiatives to work in/with schools, including a Cooperation Agreement between Our City Governance, the Cluj School Inspectorate and the local public administrations in Cluj-Napoca and the metropolitan area.

Supporting actions:
- Evaluation of the previous City Strategy from the youth perspective;
- Using existing resources for programme development, such as the research on youth needs and opportunities (LEAP) and build the evidence base (research) for monitoring the way in which policies and programmes address youth needs;
- Conducting a structured dialogue process and including it on the local public agenda;
- Map and connect existing initiatives and funding opportunities.

Stakeholders: local public administrations, ADI ZMC, Our Cluj Initiative, Cluj Youth Federation, CIIC (Cluj Civic Imagination and Innovation Centre), private donors, Cluj County School Inspectorate, local organisations

P4.3.2 Complement youth-dedicated programmes with programmes for teachers and parents

In all their endeavours young people need support and endorsement from adults in their lives, mainly parents and teachers. Intergenerational gaps and the inheritance of relation patterns that often position young people and adults on opposite sides or in hierarchical relations make the implementation of measures in support of child and youth well-being difficult. Initiatives that work on youth-adult relations and build common grounds for constructive collaboration are needed and currently lacking.

Proposed actions:
- Develop adult information and education programmes to facilitate constructive relations between youth and adults;
- Integrate special actions dedicated to teachers and parents in all major youth-dedicated policies and programmes;
- Socializing events in schools, with teachers, parents and youth discussing topics of interest for youth and the wider community.

Stakeholders: Our Cluj Initiative, local stakeholders, schools, Cluj County School Inspectorate

P4.3.3 Capacity building for the youth ecosystem

In order to increase the quality of the services and build better support mechanisms for youth, we should address the needs and challenges of those who are offering this support at the city and metropolitan level and strengthen the institutional capacity of existing stakeholders. Furthermore, as shown by the stakeholder mapping process, there are areas of expertise not covered by existing stakeholders.

The main actors identified through the stakeholder mapping process all reported limited expertise in building local ecosystems based on inter-disciplinary collaboration. Moreover, the stakeholder engagement process revealed that the activities of most of the identified institutional actors was significantly affected by the crisis triggered by the Covid-19. The level of resilience of these organizations greatly influences their response to the pressure of the growing needs for support by their target group, an issue which needs awareness and strategic approach.

Proposed actions:

- develop organizational capacity through training programmes and networking activities in key areas competences (evidence based interventions, advocacy, sustainability, cooperation etc.);
- facilitate development of new stakeholders and extension of competences of existing stakeholders in areas where currently there is a high need but limited number of actors and actions;
- identify services that need to be scaled / replicated and develop an action plan to address the gaps in the support mechanism;
- develop financial mechanisms for organizational development;
- programme for exchange of experience and know how transfer from experienced NGOs to new / inexperienced NGOs and initiatives and resource sharing among stakeholders;
- capacity building for organizations to enhance international cooperation mechanisms including measures to support young people in taking part in cross-border mobility actions;
- capacity building for NGOs and institutions to widen access and improve service for disadvantaged groups of young people, including the Roma, other minorities and those with special needs.

Stakeholders: local public administrations, local organizations, public and private donors

P4.3.4 Equal access of the Hungarian community and high-level integration of Hungarians and Romanians into the same urban ecosystem

While being an organic part of the city's life, young members of the Hungarian community have various limits of access to all opportunities in the city. Organisations formed and managed by members of the Hungarian community lack the capacity in providing the same opportunities in an inclusive way. At the same time, other organisations from the local community lack the knowledge and capacity to provide access at the same level as they do for the majoritarian community.

Finally, there is a relatively low level of interaction between youths from the Romanian and Hungarian community because of language barriers and mostly cultural differences. This is also due to a small number of bridging organisations and initiatives which provide a permanent connection and interaction between young members of the Romanian and Hungarian community. Those who do, they lack the resources and capacity to provide full accessibility for both Romanian and Hungarian youths to their programmes, services and offers.

Proposed actions:

- Support projects which enable the practical interaction of young people from the Romanian and Hungarian communities, including physical and virtual meeting spaces which enhance dialogue and cooperation;
- Enable the exchange of information and the build-up of awareness about specific habits and cultural behaviour using visualisation, humour and other creative solutions;
- Deploy specific measures and initiatives providing the elimination of cultural and language barriers in accessing specific services, events and activities;
- Encourage and support the efforts of organisations from the Hungarian community to extend and consolidate their audiences within the Romanian community and the organisations from the Romanian community to reach out to Hungarian audiences through additional specific measures;
- Create the opportunity for young people having Romanian as their mother tongue to learn Hungarian at different levels of proficiency.

3. POLICY & ACTION PRIORITIES

*Based on the options of the stakeholders consulted through an online poll, priorities have been identified from the full list proposed above. The ranking is based on the number of votes of each proposal. They are presented below in two categories: **A. domain specific priorities** and **B. Overall priorities.***

A. Domain specific priorities:

I. HEALTH

- (H1) P1.2.1 Healthy food system in schools;
- (H2) P1.3.1 Dedicated health support mechanisms for vulnerable groups;
- (H3) P1.1.1 Prioritize Health inside the youth ecosystem.

II. LEARNING

- (L1) P2.1.2 Education network to support scaling up and replication of good educational practices;
- (L2) P2.1.1 Curricula for sensitive topics and inclusion (vulnerable groups, minorities, mental health etc.);
- (L3) P2.1.3 Ecosystem partnership for a career counselling system;
- (L4) P2.2.2 Programmes to encourage school attendance and increase learning opportunities for disadvantaged groups.

III. AGENCY

- (A1) P3.3.1 Mechanisms for youth empowerment and participation in decision-making;
- (A2) P3.2.2 Involve youth in real-life projects in the metropolitan area;
- (A3) P3.1.2 Collaborative youth ecosystem gathering stakeholders from key domains: school system, local public administrations, business environment, NGO sector.

IV. ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

- (E1) P4.1.1 Network of youth community centres in schools and in other vacant spaces in all neighbourhoods of the metropolitan area;
- (E2) P4.3.2 Complement youth-dedicated programmes with programmes for teachers and parents;
- (E3) P 4.3.1 Dedicated Youth Strategy and Funds to support youth initiatives;
- (E4) P4.2.3 Involve youth in urban mobility projects aimed at cultivating safe and sustainable mobility behaviours;
- (E5) P4.1.3 Integrated Youth Workers programmes.

B. Overall priorities:

(1) P3.3.1 Mechanisms for youth empowerment and participation in decision-making;
(2) P3.2.2 Involve youth in real-life projects in the metropolitan area;
(3) P1.2.1 Healthy food system in schools;
(4) P1.3.1 Dedicated health support mechanisms for vulnerable groups;
(5) P1.1.1 Prioritize Health inside the youth ecosystem;
(6) P2.1.2 Education network to support scaling up and replication of good educational practices;
(7) P2.1.1 Create curricula for sensitive topics and inclusion (vulnerable groups, minorities, mental health etc.);
(8) P4.1.1 Creating a network of youth community centres in schools and in other vacant spaces in all neighbourhoods of the metropolitan area;
(9) P4.3.2 Complement youth-dedicated programmes with programmes for teachers and parents;
(10) P4.3.1 Dedicated Youth Strategy and Funds to support youth initiatives;
(11) P3.1.2 Develop a collaborative youth ecosystem gathering stakeholders from key domains: school system, local public administrations, business environment, NGO sector;
(12) P4.2.3 Involve youth in urban mobility projects aimed at cultivating safe and sustainable mobility behaviours;

(13) P4.1.3 Integrated Youth Workers programmes.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR KEY STAKEHOLDERS

In this section we present an overview of all policy and action proposals to enable various stakeholders an easier navigation through the recommendations. We also summarize here the main actions recommended to key stakeholders: local public administration, donors, youth organisations, County School Inspectorate, NGOs addressing children and youth.

Systemic Gaps / Policy and Action Proposals *(priority proposals in green)*	Stakeholders' Roles
I. HEALTH **SG1.1. Insufficient and Ineffective Health Promotion, Health Education and Disease Prevention** •P1.1.1. Prioritize health inside the youth ecosystem •P1.1.2. Digital platform with science-based information for youth health •P1.1.3. Involve youths in designing information campaigns for prevention **SG1.2. Rudimentary collaboration between local actors of health promotion and health education** •P1.2.1. Healthy food system in schools •P1.2.2. Local partnerships to support, develop and adjust to real needs the publicly funded medical services in educational institutions **SG1.3. Inequalities in accessing health and health services** •P1.3.1. Dedicated health support mechanisms for vulnerable groups	**Local authorities:** initiate: P.1.1.1, P1.1.2 support: P1.1.2, P1.2.1, P1.3.1 enable: P1.1.3, P1.2.2. **Donors:** initiate: P.1.1.1 support: P1.1.1, P1.1.3, P1.2.1, P1.3.1 enable: P1.2.2. **Health Institutions** initiate: P1.2.2., P1.3.1 support: P.1.1.1, P1.1.2, P1.1.3, P1.2.1 **County School Inspectorate:** initiate: P1.2.1 support: P.1.1.1, P1.2.2. enable: P1.2.2, P1.1.3, P1.3.1 **Universities:** initiate: P1.2.2. support: P1.1.2., P1.3.1 **Youth organisations:** initiate: P1.1.2, P1.1.3 contribute: P.1.1.1, P1.2.2., P1.3.1 **NGOs:** initiate: P1.1.2, P1.1.3 contribute: P.1.1.1, P1.2.1, P1.2.2., P1.3.1
II. LEARNING **SG2.1. Discrepancies between education needs and school offer** •P2.1.1. Curricula for sensitive topics and inclusion (vulnerable groups, minorities, mental health etc.) •P2.1.2. Education network to support scaling up and replication of good educational practices •P2.1.3. Ecosystem partnership for a career counselling system •P2.1.4. Improving the quality of the pedagogical training in university •P2.1.5. Metropolitan vision for education •P2.1.6. Action plan for digitalization in schools at the metropolitan level	**Local authorities:** initiate: P2.1.5 support: P2.1.2, P2.1.6, P2.2.1, P2.2.2 enable: P2.1.1, P2.1.3 **Donors:** initiate: P2.1.2, support: P2.1.1, P2.1.3, P2.1.4, P2.1.6, P2.2.1, P2.2.2 enable: P2.1.5 **County School Inspectorate:** initiate: P2.1.1, P2.1.5, P2.1.6 support: P2.1.2, P2.1.3, P2.1.4, P2.2.1, P2.2.2 **Universities:** initiate: P2.1.4

SG2.2. Inequality in opportunities and access and urban-rural discrepancies •P2.2.1. Pedagogical support for rural schools •P2.2.2. Programmes to encourage school attendance and increase learning opportunities for disadvantaged groups	support: P2.1.1, P2.1.2, P2.1.3, P2.1.5 contribute: P2.1.6, P2.2.1 **Youth organisations:** initiate: P2.1.1, P2.1.3 act/support: P2.1.2, P2.1.5, P2.2.1 contribute: P2.1.4, P2.1.6, P2.2.2 **NGOs:** initiate: P2.1.1, P2.1.2, P2.2.2 act/support: P2.1.3, P2.1.5, P2.1.6, P2.2.1, contribute: P2.1.4
III. AGENCY **SG3.1. Inhibitors and catalysers of agency** •P3.1.1. Cooperation mechanisms in the field of youth through a wide connection of stakeholders •P3.1.2. Collaborative youth ecosystem gathering stakeholders from key domains: school system, local public administrations, business environment, NGO sector **SG3.2. The lack of recognition of agency and engagement** •P3.2.1. Certificate for youth training and volunteering programmes to be recognized by employers and universities •P3.2.2. Involve youth in real-life projects in the metropolitan area **SG3.3. Participation of young people in decision-making** •P3.3.1. Mechanisms for youth empowerment and participation in decision-making	**Local authorities:** initiate: P3.1.2, P3.2.2, P3.3.1 enable: P3.1.1., P3.2.1. **Donors:** initiate: P3.1.2 support: P3.1.1., P3.2.1., P3.2.2, P3.3.1 **County School Inspectorate:** initiate: P3.2.2, P3.3.1 support: P3.1.2 enable: P3.1.1., P3.2.1. **Universities:** initiative: support: P3.2.1., P3.3.1 **Youth organisations:** initiate: P3.1.1., P3.1.2, P3.2.1., P3.2.2 act/support: P3.3.1 **NGOs:** initiate: P3.1.1., P3.1.2, P3.2.1., P3.2.2 act/support: P3.3.1
IV. ENABLING ENVIRONMENT **SG4.1. Urban and social infrastructure** •P4.1.1. Network of youth community centres in schools and in other vacant spaces in all neighbourhoods of the metropolitan area •P4.1.2. Integrated Youth Information System (including online information platform) •P4.1.3. Integrated youth workers' programmes **SG4.2. Urban living** •P4.2.2. Encourage biking through infrastructure and ease of access •P4.2.3. Involve youth in urban mobility projects aimed at cultivating safe and sustainable mobility behaviours **SG4.3. Support systems and mechanisms** •P4.3.1. Dedicated Youth Strategy and Funds to support youth initiatives •P4.3.2. Complement youth-dedicated programmes with programmes for teachers and parents; •P4.3.3. Capacity building for the youth ecosystem •P4.3.4. Equal access of the Hungarian community and high-level integration of Hungarians and Romanians into the same urban	**Local authorities:** initiate: P4.1.1., P4.1.2., P4.2.2, P4.3.1, P4.3.4. support: P4.1.3, P4.2.3, P4.3.2, P4.3.3 **Donors:** initiate: P4.3.1 support: P4.1.1., P4.1.2., P4.1.3, P4.2.2, P4.2.3, P4.3.2, P4.3.3, P4.3.4. **County School Inspectorate:** initiate: P4.3.2, P4.3.4. support: P4.1.2., P4.2.3, P4.3.1 enable: P4.1.1., P4.1.3, P4.2.2, P4.3.3 **Universities:** support: P4.1.2., P4.2.3, P4.3.3, P4.3.4. enable: P4.2.2, P4.3.1, P4.3.2 **Youth organisations:** initiate: P4.1.1., P4.1.2., P4.1.3, P4.2.3, P4.3.2, P4.3.3, P4.3.4. act/support: P4.2.2, P4.3.1 **NGOs:** initiate: P4.1.1., P4.1.3, P4.2.3, P4.3.2, P4.3.3, P4.3.4.

LEAP

ecosystem	act/support:P4.1.2., P4.2.2, P4.3.1

In brief, the main expectations from the key stakeholders are to act at multiple levels to initiate new policies and strategic frameworks, to support either financially or through initiatives, projects and services the needs of the adolescents and young people and to enable, where necessary, each other's efforts. Synergies among actors are urgent in order to make a shift from a flawed and unequally developed youth serving sector to a collaborative and high performing ecosystem, able to ensure through reliable frameworks and actions the well-being of youth in Cluj-Napoca and its Metropolitan area.

Cluj-Napoca municipality is invited to take the lead and coordinate with **local authoritie**s in the metropolitan area in order to develop a dedicated Youth Strategy for the 2020-2030 period and allocate the necessary support for its implementation, both in financial terms and administrative capacity. A Youth Department or at least a qualified youth worker should be employed in local public administrations and be in charge of the strategy implementation and youth programmes. There is a sense of urgency to create a network of youth centres, mechanisms for youth participation in decision making and also for actively including the young people in city projects, from urban planning, to community actions and innovation.

Grant-makers (international and local donors, companies) and enabling organisations and institutions such as the Cluj County Directorate for Sports and Youth are invited to participate in the design of the strategies for youth and act in synergy to ensure that key priority areas are coherently and adequately addressed. Support is needed to catalyse the appearance and growth of organisations/initiatives in areas less covered by existing stakeholders and the capacity development of the local players. They are also called to facilitate a sustainable and collaborative ecosystem.

The Cluj County School Inspectorate as the representative authority of the Ministry of Education at county level has a key role in defining and endorsing local strategies and programmes. It is invited to take an active part in the design and support various actors in the implementation of projects meant to overcome the shortcomings of the educational system by providing youth with life skills, career counselling, access to new technologies and tools and tips for health and well-being.

Recommendations suggest that **universities in Cluj-Napoca** involve consistently in shaping an enabling environment for youth not only in the framework of university-related programmes, but also in relation to primary and high school students. They are invited to support with academic knowledge strategic projects of the youth ecosystem and involve in career guidance programmes.

In order to increase the impact of their work**, local organisations working with and for children and youth** need to act more strategically, and focus their programmes on agreed priorities and underserved groups. Working together and creating cooperation frameworks, including joint tools such as youth workers' standards, certification systems for volunteering and participation are seen as urgent. Furthermore, **youth organisations** are invited to take the lead in co-designing and coordinating mechanisms for the participation of children and youth in decision making, integrated information systems, new services and youth centres.