



# Interdisciplinary study

**on young people's needs  
and opportunities assessment  
in Cluj-Napoca**



# Dear readers,

The following pages are summarizing the findings of the project titled “Inter-disciplinary study on young people’s needs and opportunities assessment in Cluj-Napoca”. The project has been implemented between January and August 2020 by a team composed of the Departments of Public Health and Political Science within the Faculty of Political, Administrative and Communication Sciences (FSPAC) of the Babeş-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca, Romania, Cluj Cultural Centre and PONT Group.

The project originated in the initial discussions that the Fondation Botnar have catalysed in Cluj-Napoca on the topics of health and wellbeing for young people in the second half of 2019. In the meantime, the involvement of the Fondation Botnar for the adolescents and youth in the Cluj Metropolitan Area has matured and is now branded as OurCluj.

The objective of LEAP has been to conduct a comprehensive, multi- and inter-disciplinary assessment of the needs and opportunities for young people in the Cluj Metropolitan Area, guided by an ecosystem view and oriented towards future initiatives stemming from the results of the assessment.

What you will read in this report summarizes a compendium of knowledge on the needs of adolescents and youth in the Cluj Metropolitan Area, as resulted from stakeholder mapping, qualitative and quantitative research and stakeholder consultations, as well as policy recommendations which could be implemented in order to address the identified challenges. To facilitate implementation, we grouped them in four

main domains: health, learning, agency and enabling environment.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought significant challenges for the whole of our society. When the pandemic started, our project was already underway, and it had to be adjusted in order to address the challenges imposed by lockdown measures. Almost half a year into the pandemic, we are realizing how important wellbeing is for us all – the more so for adolescents and youth.

The report presents actionable items, in the form of policy proposals, activities and initiatives, and it is our hope that they will be taken forward to implementation by all relevant stakeholders in the Cluj Metropolitan Area.

Such a complex effort would not have been possible without the great deal of support from many people and institutions. We are grateful to the Fondation Botnar for providing the funding for such an endeavour, as well as the continued support during project implementation. Our gratitude also goes to the – literally – thousands of people who have contributed to the project with their input and guidance: participants in the qualitative and quantitative research, and stakeholder consultations, as well as members of the Project Advisory Board.

We hope that our work will contribute to advancing the OurCluj initiative, and we are looking forward to seeing the contributions that a healthy, active, engaged, and empowered youth will have for the Cluj Metropolitan Area in the coming months and years.

**The LEAP Team**

# The study process

The LEAP project unfolded during January 27 – August 30, 2020 and used a rapid participatory assessment methodology to identify needs, gaps and opportunities of the young population (10-24 years old) living in the Cluj Metropolitan Area.

## Context

**The Cluj Metropolitan Area.** The Cluj Metropolitan Area (CMA) is one of the eight largest metropolitan areas from Romania and has a population of 411.379 inhabitants out of which 324.276 live in Cluj-Napoca and the rest in 17 communes surrounding the city. Cluj county encapsulating this metropolitan area ranks, among the 41 Romanian counties, as the eighth in population density and as the third county in urban population density. During the past recent years, Cluj-Napoca has been a place of experimentation and innovative approaches, setting the trends regionally and nationally in the areas of youth engagement and urban innovation with a focus on young people. The CMA, together with other 7 Romanian metropolitan areas, account for over 70% of the firm profit of the country, 70% of the GDP, while they concentrate 50% of the country's population and generate new jobs and registers the fastest rates in population growth. Cluj-Napoca – and, by large, the CMA – is home

to several growing independent initiatives targeting young people (such as the European Youth Capital in 2015).

**Young population living in the Cluj Metropolitan Area.** Out of the total number of people living in Romania, the those aged 10-24 represent 16% of the total population, more precisely 3.28 million, 48.4% being represented by young men and 51.6% by young women. In Cluj, in 2016, the reported number of adolescents aged 10 to 14 was 31959 (16403 boys and 15556 girls), with 19823 living in urban areas and 12136 living in rural ones. For the age group 15 to 19, a number of 31336 adolescents was reported (15939 boys and 15397 girls), their distribution being more accentuated in the urban area 18560, compared to the rural area (12776). For the 20 – 24 age group, the report mentioned a total of 34830 youths (17705 male and 17125 female), a big proportion having an urban residence 21628, compared to 13202.

# Overall approach

The main goal of the LEAP project was to collect the widest possible array of perceptions vis-à-vis youth development in the Cluj Metropolitan Area, through different methods.

The research design focused on assuring the highest possible participation of all stakeholders, while maintaining an interdisciplinary approach. To answer the project objectives the project design included eight activities:

- 1. Reviewing international, national, and local scientific literature**, to identify and define priority areas in the field of adolescent and youth wellbeing. The end result is a set of four defined priority areas – Health, Learning, Agency, Enabling Environment – that should be targeted in local initiatives addressing wellbeing of youth living in the Cluj Metropolitan Area.
- 2. Stakeholder mapping** of all actors engaged in activities with and for the youth. The end result is a database allowing easy access to detailed information about all organizations implementing youth programs in Cluj Metropolitan Area; a report that provides an overview of the database development process which contains information about stakeholders in the Cluj metropolitan area, respectively presents the database and the main results drawn from the analysis of the information collected.
- 3. A quantitative study** consisting of 4 surveys on adolescents, youth, parents and teachers totalling 1127 respondents (out of which 125 were adolescents – 10 to 17 years old, 531 youth – 18 to 24 years old, 371 parents and 100 teachers). The end result is a detailed report on how adolescents, youth, parents and teachers perceive various issues connected to the 4 main topics of the study: health, learning, agency and enabling environment. The databases are also available for further analysis.
- 4. A qualitative study** consisting of online individual written interviews with adolescents aged 10 to 14 (N=63), online focus group discussions and online World cafe discussion with adolescents aged 15 to 17 (N=28) and with youths aged 18 to 24 (N=36). The end result is an in-depth analysis of adolescents' and youths' perceptions of wellbeing, of the problems they face, of the solutions they envision and of the actors they consider relevant for their wellbeing.
- 5. Systemic gaps identification**, a facilitated process based on the preliminary results of the needs and opportunities assessment conducted in the previous stages of the project, that resulted in a list of systemic gaps, illustrating the main structural problems affecting adolescents and youth.
- 6. Stakeholders engagement** took place at various stages within the project and consisted in (1) an online survey exploring the view of institutional actors on the needs and opportunities of youth (53 respondents - from 39 NGOs dealing with adolescents and youth, 12 from public institutions, 2 private companies), (2) a series of online consultations focusing on identifying measures to systemic gaps, conducted in four thematic groups and engaging 55 stakeholders and (3) an online poll (40 participants) to enable the prioritization of policy and action proposals.
- 7. Policy analysis** looking at existing strategic frameworks at local, regional, national, European and global level in the field of youth and in the field of health, learning, agency and enabling environment with a special effect on youth but also study cases about practical solutions adopted by cities with similar profiles.
- 8. Policy recommendations** were formulated by a group of experts based on the 150 identified necessary measures addressing systemic gaps that stakeholders proposed with during consultations. The result is a report proposing policy actions and interventions within the four areas of Health, Learning, Agency and Enabling Environment, including a list of policy and action priorities, and recommended actions for the main categories of stakeholders.

# The leap quadrant

LEAP considers this research from the perspective of the wellbeing of young people, or how an urban and metropolitan area can enable the personal health, learning process, and having agency in a supportive urban environment for youth.

OBJECTIVE WELLBEING			
HEALTH	LEARNING	AGENCY	ENABLING ENVIRONMENT
<p><b>Individual and social determinants of health</b> Individual characteristics and stress; Home environment; Peer groups; Legislative issues; Community health</p> <p><b>Health promoting and health risk behaviours</b> Eating; Exercise; Sleep patterns; Substance use; Injuries and inter-personal violence; Sexual behaviour</p> <p><b>Health problems</b> Communicable and non-communicable diseases Mental health Sexual health</p>	<p><b>Academic achievement</b></p> <p><b>School environment</b> Peer relations; Teacher-student relation; Gender/Ethnic equality; Education libraries; Digital tools and solutions</p> <p><b>Non-formal education</b> Soft skills: creativity, collaboration, problem solving, communication; Recognition</p> <p><b>Future of work</b> Vocational training</p>	<p><b>Supportive relations/ autonomy support</b> Home; School; Peer groups; Community; Social and professional networks</p> <p><b>Opportunities for social-cultural-civic engagement</b> Culture; Civic engagement; Free time; Sports; Volunteering; International outlook</p> <p><b>Participation and Leadership</b> Participatory processes; Youth organizations (formal and informal); Leadership support</p>	<p><b>Infrastructure</b> Youth centres, information points and hubs; Play and leisure; Housing infrastructure; Learning and working environment; Mobility and transport</p> <p><b>Community services</b> Health/Social services; Educational services; Youth Information Systems</p> <p><b>Policy framework</b> Youth Rights; Youth funding; Strategy, action plans and other policies</p>
SUBJECTIVE WELLBEING			
Life satisfaction		Affective balance	

The LEAP quadrant represents the working framework that has been used in the LEAP project to identify priorities for action for the young population living in the Cluj Metropolitan Area. At the core of the quadrant stands the wellbeing concept. Wellbeing is viewed as the balance point between the psychological, social and physical resources an individual has and the psychological, social and physical challenges that individual faces<sup>1</sup>.

In adolescents and youths, wellbeing was defined as „... a dynamic state that is enhanced when people can fulfil their personal and social goals. It is understood both in relation to objective measures, such as household income, educational resources and health status; and subjective indicators such as happiness, perceptions of quality of life and life satisfaction.”<sup>2</sup>

Objective and subjective indicators of adolescents’ and youths’ wellbeing have been used internationally to identify needs-gaps-and-opportunities for adolescents and youth development and to assess cities and communities’ abilities to respond to adolescents’ and youth’s needs. After screening, listing and comparing objective and subjective wellbeing indicators used in adolescents and youth wellbeing assessment tools, used for adolescent friendly cities and communities development, used in global actions aiming to improve young people’s lives and in initiatives targeting city resilience we identified four main priority areas that we focused in LEAP: Health, Learning, Agency and Enabling Environment.

These four areas – represented below - together with Subjective Wellbeing - shaped the project activities. For each of these four areas, the following pages will offer a working definition, previous local initiatives and results, youths’ and stakeholders’ perceptions, systemic gaps, policy recommendations and priorities for action.

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<sup>1</sup> Dodge, R., Daly, A., Huyton, J., & Sanders, L. (2012). The challenge of defining wellbeing. *International Journal of Wellbeing*, 2(3), 222–235. <https://doi.org/10.5502/ijw.v2i3.4>

<sup>2</sup> Statham, J., & Chase, E. (2010). *Childhood wellbeing: A brief overview*. Loughborough: Childhood Wellbeing Research Centre

# Health



## 1. Definition

The working definition of health used in LEAP shares WHO's view of health as "a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity", "the extent to which an individual or group is able to realize aspirations and satisfy needs and to change or cope with the environment" and „a resource for everyday life, not the objective of living; it is a positive concept, emphasizing social and personal resources as well as physical capabilities". Consequently, in the LEAP project we focused on three components of health: general health status (e.g., communicable and non-communicable diseases), social determinants of health (e.g., individual characteristics, family environment, peer culture, community support) and health protective and health risk behaviours (e.g., dietary patterns, physical activity, sexual behaviours, interpersonal violence).

# 2. Participants' perspectives

## 2.1. ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTHS' AGED 10 TO 24

### 2.1.1. Quantitative study results

The health component of the survey aimed to capture adolescents' and young people's self-assessed status of health and to inquire about their general approach of guarding their physical and mental wellbeing.

**General health.** 66% of the young respondents (18-24 years) say that being healthy is important/very important for them and two thirds of youth have a favourable assessment of their present state of health. Among both adolescents and youth, 94% of respondents say they do not have any chronic diseases. However, 29% of adolescents and 23% of youth suffer from allergies. Frequent sleeping problems are reported by 16% of adolescents and 24% of youths.

**Health care services access.** Respondents have been asked whether they needed, at some point, to spend a night in the hospital. The percentages of those giving an affirmative answer are 48% among adolescents and 58% among youths.

#### Health protective and health risk behaviours.

■ **Nutrition.** 77% of youth and 72% of adolescents are sometimes worried about their body image, weight or eating habits. To address their concerns, the young people make changes in their eating habits (eat less, eat healthier food, give up on sodas and sugary drinks, cook their own food instead of buying processed food), start to exercise regularly, go to psychological counselling, or use a nutritionist's advice. adolescents mentioned sports and talking to their parents about their concerns. 59% of adolescents and 48% of youth say they exercise regularly.

■ **Healthy sexual behaviours.** 95% of adolescents say that in their school there are no sex education classes and 80% of them consider that such classes should be organized in schools. As for youth, 96% of them say schools should accommodate sex education classes. 71% of youth are sexually active. A disquieting finding is that 19% of youth do not use any means to protect themselves from contracting a sexually transmitted disease. For preventing an unwanted pregnancy, using a condom is the most frequently reported method (39%), followed by the use of oral contraceptives (12%). 14% of youth do not use any contraceptive method. The internet stands out as the most frequently used source of information on sex and contraception among youth. Friends are also relatively important in staying informed on the two subjects. Nearly one third of youth consult a gynecologist for advice on sex (31%) and guidance on contraception (32%).

■ **Mental health.** We also asked the young respondents whether they are sometimes concerned about their moods, mental health and anxiety and whether they talk to somebody when these issues become worrisome for them. While the percentages of those reporting to worry about these three issues are rather high (57% to 68%), the reassuring information is that most youth discuss their distress with someone.

■ **Substance use and protection from injuries.** Smoking seems to be a widespread habit among youth and also alcohol consumption appears to be a routine for many of the young people. What also stands out is the very high percentage of respondents who say they never wore a helmet while riding the bicycle (76%).

This section revealed that although being healthy is highly valued by most young people, some of the actual behaviours that part of them report do not reflect a strong concern for their own health. In particular, smoking, alcohol consumption and the lack of precaution in their sexual life could be worrisome topics. On the positive side, very few adolescents and youth say they have chronic diseases and most youth who have concerns about their emotional wellbeing have someone to discuss their problems with.



## 2.1.2. Qualitative study results

In the qualitative study of the LEAP project, through online written interviews (with 62 adolescents aged 10 to 14) and through online focus group discussions (with 28 adolescents aged 15 to 17 and 36 youths aged 18 to 24) we explored how adolescents and youths living in the CMA **define health** and what **problems, solutions and drivers of change** they perceive for six health related topics (Mental Health, Sexual Health, Interpersonal Violence, Substance use, Nutrition, Physical activity).

### Health definitions

- **Adolescents aged 10 to 14** described health in terms of “absence of disease” but also in terms of “peacefulness”, “internal equilibrium” and “mental balance” and related a good health status to healthy eating, being physically active, spending time in nature, being mentally balanced, having positive social interactions, playing and having appropriate hygiene.
- **Adolescents aged 15 to 17** described health using words such as “equilibrium”, “peace of mind”, “mental health”, or the “health of our soul” and underlined the interaction between physical health and mental health. Participants from this age group, perceived their health to be influenced by a combination of physical activity engagement, eating patterns, sleeping patterns, substance use, schedule overload and absence of transversal skills.
- **For youths aged 18 to 24**, health ranged from a state defined by “the lack of diseases” to a “a physical and mental state allowing one to achieve goals and carry out desired activities”. This age group tended to focus more on mental health issues than on physical health issues in their definitions of health. The relation between the individual and the society was underlined as a relevant health determinant together with substance use and the quality of social relations.
- **In-depth definitions.** For each of the six health related topics, participants offered complex definitions mentioning many times the concept of equilibrium and balance in defining health but also underlying that all six topics interrelate in order to ensure one’s health status. For each topic, definitions focused on behaviours, cognitions and emotions; included examples of health-related problems (e.g., sexual transmitted diseases, depression, obesity); and detailed patterns of health protective and health risk behaviours.

### Problems. Solutions. Drivers of change.

**Problems.** Participants perceived the young population to go through problems such as emotional struggles, mood swings, depression, anxiety, confusion, low self-esteem and high levels of stress. Substance use was reported as a highly risky coping mechanism used frequently and recklessly by the young population. Sexual behaviour was also reported as risky through the early age onset of sexual interactions, multiple sexual partners and the absence of using contraceptive measures. Interpersonal violence was present in participants’ everyday lives beginning with primary school and resulting in social exclusion, trauma, self-neglect, dysfunctional interpersonal relations and self-doubt. Unhealthy dietary patterns and a descending trend of physical activity engagement were reported as present in the young population. For each health problem, participants detailed health determinants at the following levels: the family environment, the peer group, the school environment, the community, the system and culture.

**Solutions.** To address the youths’ health problems, for each of the six health related topics, participants generated various and numerous solutions that were grouped in:

1. Online and onsite *health education classes* that: a. use apps, online platforms and social media; b. are delivered inside but also outside the school context; c. engage adolescents but also parents, professors and community members; d. involve peer-to-peer education; e. benefit from specialized trainers (e.g., nutritionists, sports’ trainers, psychologists) with a positive and appropriate attitude towards youths
2. Frequent *events* (e.g., festivals, raising awareness campaigns) engaging the Cluj youth community together with specialists, age appropriate trainers and people with “real health related life stories” (e.g., victims of abuse, people who went through and addiction)
3. Available, affordable and accessible community *health services* (e.g., online platforms, apps, call lines, school medical offices, school psychological counselling, nutrition clubs, youth friendly gyms) that offer individualized health care through inter-disciplinary collaboration
4. Individual and community *mentality change* through 1. Reshaping how adults see mental health and sexual health, bullying and substance use; 2. helping the community perceive the seriousness of youths’ health problems; 3. de-stigmatizing help seeking behaviours; 4. helping youths reconsider their perspectives on sexual relations and on how to integrate nutrition and physical activity in their lives

**Drivers of change.** Besides viewing themselves and their peers as the main drivers of change, participants saw as drivers of change parents, professors and various stakeholders (psychologists, doctors, priests, sexologists, nutritionists, sports' trainers, therapists delivering animal assisted therapy, public health practitioners, social assistance, police officers, representatives of the municipality and of local administration, representatives of the ministry, from the Public Health Directorate and from the County School Inspectorate, NGOs' representatives, representatives of the main universities and colleges, local producers and local farmers, freelancers, artists, entrepreneurs and youth organization representatives).

## 2.2. STAKEHOLDERS' VIEWS

Overall, approximately three quarters of the respondents of our questionnaire (representatives of 53 institutions/NGOs/companies) consider that the available health services are inadequate. Barely 5% of respondents evaluated the quality of public health services available for adolescents and youth as being very good, while 5% consider

it very bad. Most stakeholders mentioned inequality as being a major problem for young people in the Cluj Metropolitan Area, creating large discrepancies between types of access to all kinds of services, including health and health education. Main health problems mentioned by stakeholders:

- Absence of health education and of education for health promoting behaviours;
- Unhealthy lifestyle presence (e.g., smoking behaviours; low physical activity engagement; unhealthy dietary patterns; sleep patterns problems; alcohol consumption; unprotected sex) and peer pressure as a determinant;
- Bullying in schools and unprepared adult response to violence;
- Infrastructure gaps for healthy behaviours promotion: sports' facilities, cafeterias, green space availability;
- Absence of school health care (and dental care) services in rural areas;
- Absence of family support for adopting a healthy lifestyle.

# 3. Stakeholder mapping

Despite its importance to the problems of young people in the Cluj Metropolitan Area, health is associated with the smallest group of stakeholders. It is a vital area of wellbeing, but underdeveloped when it comes to stakeholders. It includes small actors, with a low budget, most often with private status and in the form of an association; usually very specialized. With headquarters in the municipality, the set of stakeholders is extremely fragmented, with frequent operational problems (staff, financing, know-how), depending on the environment in which it operates. According to our observations, stakeholders serve mainly the middle class, the socially excluded and those in rural areas have difficulty accessing services and benefiting from the activities offered. Typical programs: camps for

adolescents with diabetes or care for people with cancer. The sub-areas of sex education and nutrition are not covered, though there are some positive and well-defined examples on the issues of sexual abuse (against women) and the issue of drug abuse. Thus, we have 20 stakeholders as an object of support / help activity for those in serious situations, and 8 stakeholders on the issues of improvement of the health of the population.

Overall, the ecosystem of stakeholders working towards the direction of LEAP Health is underdeveloped, fragmented, with small actors and operating on a small budget - most likely when they get funding. It offers few opportunities, although the problems are many.

# 4. Systemic gaps

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

The measures aimed at promoting health and preventing disease among adolescents 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 adolescents, adolescents, young people, as well as their parents and teachers. Causing factors: lack of human resources to engage in health promotion, health system (de)centralization and over-medicalization of the health system.

## 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 adolescents 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. Causing factors: lack of supporting entities, leadership, and of evidence and evidence-based decision making.

## 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. Causing factors: lack of patient pathways, low levels of health literacy, out-of-pocket payments.

# 5. Policy recommendations

## 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.

## 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.

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.

### **P1.1.3. Involve youths in designing information campaigns for prevention**

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, adolescents's Palace, Red Cross.

### **P1.2.1. Healthy food system in schools**

The research and the stakeholder consultation process identified the need for addressing the healthy food system in schools, 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.

Proposed actions:

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

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

A multisectoral 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.

### **P1.3.1. Design dedicated health support mechanisms for vulnerable groups**

There are different groups that require differentiated assessment and communication in the topic of health: adolescents 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;
- Program for the integration of adolescents with autism in schools;
- Health promotion and access to medical services to young people in Pata Rât.

## **6. Priorities for action**

- (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**

# Learning



## 1. Definition

For the purpose of the current assessment, we have used a broad understanding of the general field of learning, covering a multitude of dimensions. Accordingly, the research components examined aspects related to adolescents's and youth's academic achievement, school environment, non-formal education, as well as issues referring to young people's transition from education and training to the labor market.

# 2. Participants' perspectives

## 2.1. ADOLESCENTS' AND YOUTHS' PERSPECTIVES

### 2.1.1. Quantitative study results

The survey included a section on education covering the perceptions that adolescents, young people, teachers and parents have on the current features of the local educational system from Cluj-Napoca and the Cluj Metropolitan Area.

**School satisfaction.** Most adolescents describe a school context characterized by positive interactions between teachers and students: 89% say that in their school students get along well with most teachers, 91% that most of their teachers treat them fairly at school and 86% report having receptive teachers that listen to students when they have something to say.

**Motivation to study.** A majority of adolescents agree that putting a lot of effort in school is worthwhile: 82% think their determination will help them get into a good high-school or university, whereas 66% agree that their effort increases their chances to find a job. 84% of adolescents and 80% of youth aspire to attain higher education levels (BA, MA or PhD degrees).

**Future of work.** 39% of the young respondents agree or completely agree on the usefulness of school training for their actual or future job and 18% appreciate the impact of school in boosting their confidence in decision-making. At the same time, 56% believe the contribution of school to their preparedness for adult life was modest, whereas 15% say that school has been a waste of time.

A third of the youth point to an incongruity between the formation delivered by the local educational establishments and the requirements of the labour market. The percentages of teachers and

parents that find the training not adapted to the job market are comparatively higher (35% and 51% respectively).

**Equal chances.** We asked our respondents whether in their opinion schools in Romania offer equal chances to all adolescents. The young respondents are most critical about the ability of schools to ensure equal chances, with 80% of them saying this happens 'to a small extent' or 'to a very small extent/at all'. Parents are also skeptical (74% provided an unfavourable assessment), whereas teachers appear more optimistic, with only 37% arguing that schools do not offer equal chances.

**Needed changes.** From **parents' perspective**, the main school-level problems are the lack of funds (35%), the unsatisfying conditions in the classrooms (34%) and the poor equipment of school laboratories (31%). Teachers referred to: lack of funds (38%), poor laboratory equipment (34%), high number of students from very poor families (31%) and students' poor results (30%). Teacher-parent communication issues are reported by 24% of teachers and 20% of parents. In addition, 25% of parents highlight the lack of well-trained teachers in the schools where their adolescents are enrolled, whereas 20% of teachers point to the lack of tenured instructors in their school. 28% of parents contest the idea that teaching is high quality, and about a quarter of them disagree that their adolescents are happy at school and enjoy school beyond school results.

Although embedded in one of the most affluent regions of Romania, the local educational landscape from Cluj and its surroundings replicates some of the enduring deficiencies that characterize the educational system at large. Among these, the most notable are the perceived lack of harmonization between the preparation provided by the educational system and the labour market and the perception that schools fail to ensure equal opportunities for all adolescents. Specific school-level problems pointed by parents and teachers are largely related to lack of resources (funds, labs equipment), yet also refer to the human resource (lack of tenured teachers, lack of well-trained teachers).

## 2.1.2. Qualitative study results

Participants discourses on the topic of education referred to school overload, work force and future orientation, life-skills education, professor-student relation, school counselling and school infrastructure.

**Adolescents aged 10 to 14.** For participants of this age group, school related activities covered a high amount of their daily schedule. Problems meet in the school environment, referred to bullying and also to school overload. Stress at school was caused by either a high amount of homework, a high amount of information and too little time to study, low academic achievement and unfair punishment due to some of the students that misbehaved during classes. Adolescents ask for changes in

1. the school curricula: have classes that are highly interactive, focus on life skills that youths need, address the educational needs of students, engage students in school and class related decisions and have practical classes;
2. the class schedule: less time for studying in class and for homework and would have larger time for spontaneous activities and for social interaction;
3. the school infrastructure: build large green and open spaces, but also spaces allowing for cultural activities, lunch area with good and free food, sport facilities, closets for school bags, shops for students, and equip the school with modern technology infrastructure

**Adolescents aged 15 to 17.** Participants from this age group reported the need for

- Life-skills and of career orientation. Participants suggest that schools should support students to identify their passions and talents and should prepare them for life and for the future of work through classes focused on entrepreneurial mechanisms, motivation and personal development, time management, online presence, career guidance and health education.
- Ongoing and free classes for professors. Professors' aggressive and authoritative attitudes and discrimination from teachers due to the grading system employed by each individual teacher, due to the fact that some teachers have preferred students and they treat other students with less attention, and due to the

fact that they intend to freely express their opinions in class, and this is not appreciated/encouraged by teachers. To overcome this, participants proposed ongoing and free classes for professors focused on: child/adolescent psychology; Communication & interaction with students; Innovative/ interactive/ updated teaching methods, adapted to the needs of the students; Personal development.

- Psychological counselling. Although this need was stringent for some students, repeated breaches of psychologist-student confidentiality, counsellors' stigmatizing attitude and limited counselling schedule, were barriers in accessing school counselling services.
- Appropriate school infrastructure and cleanliness. Participants reported poor status of their classes and their benches, poor hygiene and cleanliness of bathrooms and classrooms.

**Youths aged 18 to 24.** Talking about the educational system, young people focused on changes in teaching styles, the lack of future perspectives and objectives, as well as the lack of support regarding labour market integration in the field they have graduated.

- To better integrate students in the labour market youths suggest career counselling at the end of high school and later during college years and better collaboration between universities and the local administration, for the latter to attract more investors in the industry fields in which universities prepare graduates.
- To offer better future orientation, youths insisted on the introduction of new courses focusing specifically on building life skills, such as time management, speaking in public, effective use of technology, communication & feedback, motivation and personal development, education regarding public services available to access free of charge and health, financial, political and civic education. Participants mentioned that the educational system emphasizes skill not needed in the 21st century and that the school/college curriculum should be adapted to the requirements of the industry and the current market.
- The issue of life-long learning programs for the teaching staff suggests an in-depth and complex issue of the educational system in Romania and leads back to the training of teachers and the quality of the teaching act. Youths described teachers' inability to adapt to new generations in terms of teaching styles and methods. Therefore, they insisted

on continuous training for professors focused on Digitalization, Communication & interaction with students, Leadership, Time management, New teaching methods/ interactive teaching methods, adapted to the needs of the students, Learning how to be a mentor or a coach for students.

due to problems of internet and technology accessibility, and teachers' lack of preparedness for on-line teaching.

Main education related problems mentioned by stakeholders:

- Poor quality of education, lack of relevance of educational content and teaching methods for cultivating the knowledge and skills needed in life, rigidity and lack of relevance of the school assessment system, lack of transdisciplinary approaches;
- Social inequalities - the need for inclusive education, insufficient integration of vulnerable young people and lack of opportunities to have common educational experiences with other young people;
- Lack of free, quality educational activities, accessible to all;
- The schools offer a poor-quality education in the fields of art / culture / creativity, physical / sports education, civic education;
- Lack of contact between the university and pre-university environment in the city;
- Lack of collaboration between the educational and business environment; lack of entrepreneurial education and vocational guidance in school;
- The large number of students who intend to pursue a college and a career abroad.

## 2.2. STAKEHOLDERS' VIEWS

When asked to mention the most important problems that adolescents and youth in Cluj face, respondents mentioned that the education system is too theoretical/abstract and insufficiently rooted in everyday life and that competences are not adequate for entering the labour market. Although the quality of educational services offered to young people was considered inefficient by most of the respondents, education was also listed as an opportunity that Cluj can offer its youth. Yet, schools and universities with high ratings, and good educational infrastructure are concentrated in the city centre, this generating a big difference in the quality of education between the schools in the centre and those in the periphery and in the rural area.

The respondents also mentioned the most important problems generated by the COVID-19 pandemic likely to have an impact on adolescents and youth. Among these, one of the most frequently mentioned is the temporary transition to online schooling that was not equally successful for all,

# 3. Stakeholder mapping

Education has a compact and strong group of stakeholders (concerning the impact, budget, staff and know-how ), bringing together over a fifth of the total number of stakeholders. Specific to Cluj, it is represented by large universities and state schools in addition to a few with private status. Entities that facilitate scientific activities or deal with non-formal education are connected to this hard core.

The LEARNING department presents a great diversity (ethnicity, specialization, size), but it is dominated by national universities and colleges. The profile of the activities offered is mainly determined by the formal institutions and the official curriculum and not by the alternative or complementary ones - we have 128 stakeholders with activities closely related to professional and scientific life. Most stakeholders organize or facilitate the acquisition of knowledge taught in universities or



schools, based on the “official” curricula. As an illustration, 166 projects were carried out on typical issues directly related to studies, education, qualification, skills, abilities and talent. On the other hand, the digital tools and solutions area is completely uncovered.

Overall, this ecosystem is functional, diverse, more accessible to those excluded, but clearly dominated by formal state actors. It offers many opportunities, but the context of the pandemic has created new needs (access to online school, hardware, know-how, time management), and the area of digital tools and solutions is totally uncovered.

## 4. Systemic gaps

### 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. Causing factors: lack of a coherent set of values permeating education, failure to equip youth with life skills in school, adolescents and youth are not included in decisions made about their education.

### 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. Causing factors: geographic and development barriers (school infrastructure, the quality of teaching, student performance and the rates of school dropout), socio-economic barriers (inequalities at the family level), cultural-ethnic barriers (ethnic minorities’ limited access to learning in own language, inadequate systems for the inclusion of students with disabilities and special educational needs, discriminatory discourses and practices). Often, cultural, ethnic, and socio-economic barriers reinforce each other, potentially leading to marked discrimination and inequity.

## 5. Policy recommendations

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

High quality educational programmes are needed for sexual health, mental health, interpersonal communication, intercultural competences (ac-

commodating 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.

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

Actors within this ecosystem should work together, complementing and strengthening each other's actions.

Local authorities need to endorse and support ecosystem initiatives.

Proposed actions:

- Develop the Cluj School Network and 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.

### **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.

Proposed actions:

- Framework for cross-sectoral 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.

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

The gap between the school curricula 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:

- Providing internship opportunities for pedagogy students in programs for adolescents and young people offered by NGOs that do things differently;
- Provide in-service pedagogical training (up-skilling) for teachers.

### **P2.1.5. Metropolitan vision for education**

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.

Proposed actions:

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

### **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.

### **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 need to teach adolescents of different grades at the same time. Systemic interventions 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 adolescents) in the villages with the adequate technologies and connectivity.

### **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;
- Food programme in schools to encourage attendance, in partnership with local producers;
- Reading programs / clubs for preschoolers in rural areas;
- 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.

# 6. Priorities for action

- (L1) P2.1.2. **Education network to support scaling up and replication of good educational practices**
- (L2) P2.1.1. **Create 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**

# Agency



## 1. Definition

We define agency as the sum of actions taken by young people, individually or collectively in their smaller and bigger environments. No matter where having agency takes place (home, school, through peer groups or in various other social and professional networks), young people's actions induce change in their communities and has an effect on the urban society in general.

Agency covers three specific areas, including the supportive environment for action and autonomy, and the opportunities for social-cultural-civic engagement. Agency takes a specific form of action through youth participation, or the involvement of young people in decisions which have a direct impact on them.

# 2. Participants' perspectives

## 2.1. ADOLESCENTS' AND YOUTHS' PERSPECTIVES

### 2.1.1. Quantitative study results

In this section we explore the values, norms and social behaviours that adolescents and youth have in comparison to those of their parents and teachers, the two most important agents responsible for transmitting values and norms to the youth.

Data shows that the youth and the adolescents are committed to good citizenship, most of them considering that a good citizen respects the laws, votes in all elections, works hard, helps others and is civically engaged. They reject the idea that good citizenship means party membership, which reflects a broader feature of the Romanian citizenry, namely the lack of trust in political institutions. In a nutshell, both adolescents and youth seem to have been effectively socialized into democratic politics from the point of view of civic and political participation.

Tolerance towards various minority groups in society is a complicated issue in most recent democracies. However, its importance cannot be stressed enough, especially in the context of increasing popularity of illiberal democratic forms of government. The youth of Cluj seem to be empathetic towards people with disabilities and deprived people, with more than 70% of them considering that they do not have sufficient rights, as opposed to about 20% among parents and teachers. By far, the largest difference in support for disadvantaged groups across categories is in the case of the LGBT community; more than 65% of the youth consider them as having insufficient rights, in comparison with their parents and teachers, among whom only about 10-15% think similarly. Results suggest that there is indeed a process of intergenerational change at play in Cluj: young people are certainly more supportive of granting more rights to a host

of different underprivileged categories. For example, 47% of the youth consider that homosexuality is always justified, in comparison to less than 15% among parents or teachers. Overall, the youth hold liberal values, many more of them considering prostitution, abortion, and euthanasia as justified than their parents or teachers.

Institutional trust is one way in which respondents position themselves vis-à-vis the political system. Trust in government, parliament and political parties are very low, and support is below 10% for most of them. The youth place much higher trust in nongovernmental organization than parents and teachers, which is probably a consequence of them having been involved in student organizations and having volunteered for various social causes. It is also interesting to note that almost 70% of teachers trust the educational system while the corresponding numbers among the youth and parents are around 30%. The army and the church are two of the most trusted institutions in Romania, but the church is on a decreasing trend, most apparent in the case of the youth.

Romania is a religious country, with the largest majority of people identifying themselves as Orthodox and religious. The data clearly suggests a decreasing trend in both inner religiosity and church attendance among the youth. Younger people are much less religious than their parents or teachers, which suggests a secularizing trend. It is possible that this secularizing movement is also connected to higher support for liberal values, yet the data does not allow for testing this correlation.

### 2.1.2. Qualitative study results

The topic of agency was represented in the qualitative study results by three sub-topics: supportive relations, volunteering opportunities and self-change.

**Personal change and community engagement.** Regardless of age, participants felt that the key to improving wellbeing was personal change fol-

lowed by volunteering in supporting their peers to overcome problems.

- Participants aged 10 to 14 considered that changing themselves towards accepting others, helping others and learning how to communicate and collaborate with others can make a difference. Lifestyle changes and caring for the surrounding environment were also considered as self-empowering actions.
- Youths aged 15 to 24 perceived themselves as the main actors of change. Volunteering was also mentioned as a means through which they can improve the society. However, poor dissemination of volunteering opportunities and the stigma associated with “working for others for free” (i.e. as a volunteering activity) that participants mentioned suggests that the culture of volunteering is not well understood, and that youth could benefit from a description of the intangible benefits brought by the engagement in volunteering work. NGOs were perceived as a vector of change, through lobbying and advocacy activities that would have a larger impact in society.

**Supportive relations.** Regardless of age, supportive relations were perceived as a determinant for both the happiness and health status of the young population.

- *Adolescents* aged 10 to 14 valued - in their social network - the presence of good communication and the absence of conflicts, the trust that they can have in their family and friends, kind, caring and supportive attitudes that exist in their social network. Interaction with family, with friends and with colleagues have the same importance for participants of this age group. The problems they face in their social network were the presence of conflicts or arguments with the family members, the absence of parental support and peer bullying. These adolescents reported adults' and peers' behavioural changes as a main solution for their happiness and health, with a focus on an increase in collaboration and cooperation between people, cultivating kindness and acceptance, and lower self-centred attitudes.
- *Participants* aged 15 to 24 valued support and trust received from their social network, were also valued by, together with positive feedback and appreciations. For this age group, the family environment and the peer group were the most important determinants of wellbeing.

**Parental support.** The *family environment* was perceived as contributing to youths mental health

struggles by imposing fear, reducing youths' autonomy and freedom of choice, expressing high expectancies, not being educated to offer their adolescents a proper mental health education, not having time and skills to offer their adolescents the proper support and minimizing their mental health concerns. Problems in the home environment were seen as a trigger for substance use, as youths consume them to forget bad life experiences and problems at home or when they have no one who can listen and understand. Sexual health problems were perceived as triggered by the absence of sexual education in the family environment as parents avoid speaking about sex, create an uncomfortable atmosphere around sex and approach it not from a health related perspective but from a religious one. Participants expressed that bullying is present in the family environment, through psychological pressure due to parents' high and unrealistic expectations towards their adolescents, but also through physical violence. The family environment was also perceived as the start in building healthy patterns of eating and physical activity. In participants' perception, the family environment is the place where adolescents should get their health-related education and health related behaviours. To improve health in youths, participants recommend that parents should 1. become educated to support their adolescents, offer them a healthy childhood, healthy advice, inform their adolescents on mental health and that mental health education should start at an early age in the family environment; 2. stop considering sex a taboo subject and should inform their offspring from an early age on sexual health related topics, to help their adolescents have healthy sexual relations, avoid unwanted pregnancies and STDs and be able to openly ask for help when needed; 3. transform home in the most secure environment to ensure optimal child development. This means not only the absence of domestic violence, but also the absence of parental pressure regarding school achievements and life achievements and the presence of parental support when the child meets bullying situations; 4. gain more appropriate info on healthy eating and should also meet child's knowledge on healthy eating; 5. motivate their adolescents to engage in physical activity and to offer from an early age a model of being physically active. Moreover, they suggested that every parent should be trained in being a parent.

**Peer support.** The *peer culture* contributes to mental health struggles through the pressure of being cool in order to be socially accepted. Thus, to be accepted in a group, adolescents and youths try to impress by creating a false self-portrait. At the same time, substance use facilitates peers' acceptance, being able to integrate easier in a group, to

be perceived as cool and to receive appreciation. It seems that the peer group is most influential when it comes to the to sexual risk behaviours, as it promotes that is cool to start sexual life from an early age, that is cool to have multiple sexual partners, it promotes a focus on the sexual component of an intimate relation instead of the emotional component and a focus on pleasure with the avoidance of protective measures. The peer group is also influential for adolescents' eating patterns, as it is difficult to resist eating fast-food if everyone in the peer group eats unhealthy. Changes in the peer culture and in peers' behaviours and attitudes were perceived as fundamental to youths' wellbeing improvements.

**Community support.** Besides receiving support from parents and peers, community support was perceived by participants as important in improving youths' wellbeing. Participants consider that community stakeholders should collaborate in order to implement projects online and onsite, in the community and in schools in order to increase the accessibility and quality of health services, to increase educational opportunities for sexual health, to reduce drug availability, to monitor and punish violent acts, to increase healthy food accessibility and to improve infrastructure for physical activity. At the same time, all these actors together with the all the community members should lower the pressure they put on the young population and should change their attitudes toward youths to act for youths and not against them.

## 2.2. STAKEHOLDERS' VIEWS

Most survey respondents considered that adolescents are insufficiently involved in making decisions in relation with their own needs. Cluj lacks spaces and opportunities where adolescents and youth from different backgrounds and socio-economic contexts could interact, and form strong civic social values and acquire democratic value driven behaviours. Main problems stakeholders mention regarding the opportunities for participation and self-determination of young people:

- The city offers a large number of extracurricular opportunities - cultural, educational, civic, leisure, etc., but access to them is uneven (centre-periphery, depending on social affiliation);
- The possibilities for adolescents and young people to participate in decision-making regarding their lives are limited (at the city level, in schools, in the family);
- Very limited opportunities to acquire basic life skills - self-confidence, emotion management, relationship management, etc. and for career - creativity, critical thinking, responsibility, collaboration;
- Low training of community actors to adequately accommodate young volunteers;
- Limited capacity for self-organization of young people in action groups and to represent their interests;
- Large number of events and programs in which young people can participate, but insufficiently adapted to their needs, lack of synergy between different initiatives for adolescents and young people.

# 3. Stakeholder mapping

Enabling Environment gathers the largest group (44.4% of the total), and is bimodal – meaning the vast majority of stakeholders work around state institutions (local government and related departments) and/or around NGO federations, which have gained influence and notoriety in the last decade. It shows clear signs of development and professionalism, and the actors accumulate a consistent baggage of experience, know-

how and have an extensive network. Most NGO actors focus on community issues (185 projects), sports (62), culture / cultural consumption (111) and civic engagement (55), in symbiosis with political actors.

Overall, AE presents the hard core of the stakeholder map, well institutionalized, integrated and with many international relations.

# 4. Systemic gaps

## SG3.1. 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. Causing factors: missing connectors at the level of people (there are no connector or community navigator type of jobs), systems (lack of strategies, vision, and adequate information systems), and organisations (stakeholders lack the necessary competences to guide young people).

## SG3.2. The lack of recognition of agency and engagement

There is a need to promote 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. Causing factors: there are no local standards in youth participation/engagement, there is little demand for validation mechanisms, employers and universities demand soft and life skills but do not have acknowledgment mechanisms of previous experience.

## SG3.3. Participation of young people in decision-making

There is a need to strengthen existing mechanisms and to develop new mechanisms for youth participation in local decision-making processes, especially related to issues that directly concern them in both personal and social life. Causing factors: low level of outreach towards new and unconnected groups of young people, lack of innovation and capacity in using different mechanisms for engagement and participation, lack of intergenerational connectivity and collaboration.

# 5. Policy recommendations

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

Given the limited cooperation between local stakeholders, there is a need to form a network of people from various organisations who act as interfaces of their entities on youth-related issues. Youth workers taking up the role of facilitators and connectors between these actors and a supporting information system are also required.

Proposed actions:

- Network of community facilitators and youth workers with the role of connecting people, organisations, initiatives and enhancing horizontal cooperation;
- Database of stakeholders and activities;
- Network of resource people for youth-related work to act as key network nodes in the ecosystem;



- Support and strengthen networks of youth organisations.

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

There is a 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 (e.g. through ADI ZMC), partnerships and consortia of stakeholders to extend their activities in the entire metro area;
- Youth Consultative Bodies within local administration and other key institutions;
- Advisory Board to support the work of Youth Consultative Bodies.

### **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.

### **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.

### **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.

Proposed actions:

- Create a Youth Council at the city and county level;
- Create a local strategy for youth empowerment/participation in decision making;
- Consolidate and widen the frame in which youths have real decision power (Participatory Budgeting, Com'ON Cluj, a representative in the school Board) and support for scaling and replicating successful involvement mechanisms (ex. Innovatory, The Local Youth Council);
- Youth to be consulted and involved in the design of their dedicated spaces and their respective programme (Design of urban spaces needs to take into account the needs and requirements of adolescents 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;
- Encourage organizations that have decision mechanisms (juries, contests etc.) to develop youth versions of these mechanisms;
- Integrate 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.

## 6. Priorities for action

**(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. Develop a collaborative youth ecosystem gathering stakeholders from key domains: school system, local public administrations, business environment, NGO sector**

# Enabling environment



## 1. Definition

We define an enabling environment as a supportive, rich and varied institutional design, private and public space, tailored to the physical and emotional needs of its inhabitants, where risks are minimised and well managed, and everyday experiences support human wellbeing. Young people need nurturing communities and proper institutional frameworks to fulfil their individual potential for development, but only through mechanisms, which facilitate a sense of belonging and responsibility can they become agents of social change.

In the context of LEAP, we examined the enabling environment from the perspective of infrastructure, community services and policy framework. In terms of the main components necessary for an enabling environment for youth we identified the following: co-designed and co-managed spaces and opportunities for learning, work, play and leisure, youth centres, information points and hubs; accessible housing infrastructure; good quality services for mobility and transport; quality health-, social and educational services; Youth Information Systems, proper frameworks for Youth Rights, Youth funding, Youth Strategy, action plans and other policies.

# 2. Participants' perspectives

## 2.1. ADOLESCENTS' AND YOUTHS' PERSPECTIVES

### 2.1.1. Quantitative study results

In this section, we focused on 4 inter-related dimensions of the enabling environment. First, we gathered evaluations of the infrastructure that the city offers, including perceptions of safety. Second, we assessed adolescents's views of their families and the amount of time spent doing things within the family. Third, we inquired into how adolescents and young people spend their free time. Fourth, we touched upon issues of discrimination.

**Safety.** In terms of safety, the reassuring finding is that more than 50% of respondents in each sample reported always feeling safe in their neighbourhood. The not so reassuring piece of news is that more than 30% among youth and adolescents only feel safe sometimes, and less than 10% never feel safe. While being generally safe, Cluj seems to have at least a perception problem from its youngest inhabitants concerning fear of assault, which should be addressed.

**Infrastructure.** The most problematic areas of the city's infrastructure are the lack of parking spaces, of bicycle paths and social housing. Barely 5% of the youth consider that the parking infrastructure is adequate in Cluj. Overall, the least performing sector of Cluj is social housing, a matter of great concern in the context of a booming estate market and inflated property prices. All three categories of respondents – youth, parents, teachers - consider that the city has adequate socialization facilities and cultural venues. The highest praise for infrastructure goes to sectors of activity that are not offered by the city but by private companies, such as the hospitality or the fitness industry. Public transport and public parks and green spaces are evaluated as good by more than 50% of respondents in each category.

**Social interaction.** In terms of interaction with other family members, eating together is the most frequent family activity, but only about 50% of adolescents mentioned that their parents talked or listened to their opinions on a daily basis. More worrying is the fact that almost 15% of adolescents said that they did not spend any single day with their parents doing fun stuff in the last month. Arguments within families are frequent, especially when it comes to the relationship between parents and their teenage adolescents. The data suggests that parents should perhaps devote more time to their adolescents, especially doing activities that are beneficial for the adolescent's development, such as fun stuff or listening to them and their ideas

The ways in which adolescents and youth spend their free time are indicative of certain global problems that may have local solutions. On the one hand, adolescents seem to prefer to spend their free time doing solitary things, such as watching movies or listening to music. It is worrying that almost no adolescents spend time at youth clubs. Socialization in youth clubs is very important for acquiring social skills and for creating social values, such as solidarity and trust. When we asked the youth the same questions, we found out that they prefer going out with friends, shopping and doing sports. Conversely, spiritual activities such as praying or meditating/doing yoga are not preferred, with almost 50% of the youth never engaging in them.

This section would not be complete without discussing discrimination, a pervasive feature in many interaction contexts. Discrimination is a problem in many recent democracies, because of pre-existing cleavages onto which new roots of discrimination grow. Among those situations in which respondents considered that they have been often discriminated, sex, faith, economic situation and age have been mentioned most frequently. It is noteworthy that the percentage of those feeling discriminated based on sex is almost the double of any the other three (19%), thus making sex the most often encountered type of discrimination.

## 2.1.2. Qualitative study results

**Adolescents aged 10 to 14 years old.** For the age group 10 to 14 years old, the Enabling Environment topic was extensively assessed through online written interviews (n=62). Participants were asked to describe the area they live in, the problems they face, what they would change in the area where they live and how an adolescent friendly city should look like.

- **Living area.** When describing the area where they live, most participants expressed positive feelings, by using words such as “beautiful”, “amazing”, and “wonderful”. Nature (e.g., parks, water, forest, trees) was the most frequent element mentioned by participants as present in their area, followed by stores (food stores, food market, restaurants, pharmacy, malls), leisure and play infrastructure, public institutions (school, church, hospital, the municipality), building blocks, transport related items (bus station, highway) and cultural items. Participants appreciated most the availability of green spaces followed by the availability of spaces for social interaction, the quietness of the area, closeness to sports’ facilities, to transport facilities, to the city centre and aspects related to cleanliness and clean air.
- **Problems.** The problems that adolescents faced in the area where they lived were crowdedness and intense car traffic, feelings unsafe, cleanliness, difficulty of transportation and the absence of playgrounds
- **Changes.** Participants envisioned the following solutions, to address the problems facing in the area where they live: (1) availability of infrastructure for play and leisure (sports facilities such as a football and basketball playgrounds, bicycle trail, gymnastic hall, box hall, ping-pong table; play areas age adapted; green parks; aqua parks or swimming; parks for animals); (2) availability of infrastructure for culture (e.g., bookstores, cultural centre for youths, cinema); and (3) renovation of buildings (e.g., renovating the exterior of houses and of building blocks, renovating the school and renovating the entire neighbourhood), of roads (e.g., asphaltting and illuminating the streets) and of green spaces (e.g., plant trees, build green spaces). Participants expressed that an adolescent friendly city should have the following 1. characteristics: should be clean (unpolluted and without garbage but also with clean and renovated buildings), without crowdedness/

traffic, technologically evolved, full of color and light, safe, beautiful and small; and 2. facilities: green spaces, age adapted playgrounds, with a lot of sports facilities, including a pool, relaxation areas/parks, freely available toys and books, available arts’ classes such as dancing, painting, singing, sports classes, free museums, high quality shopping area that includes child adapted restaurants and stores and should offer space for adolescent – animal interaction. Several participants envisioned a centre for adolescents comprising the above-mentioned facilities.

**Youths aged 15 to 24.** The Enabling Environment topic was explored indirectly during online focus group discussions (with 13 adolescents aged 15 to 17 and 20 youths aged 18 to 24) and through an online World cafe session focused on health (with 31 participants aged 15 to 24)

- **Adolescents aged 15 to 17** manifested concerns regarding public transportation, play and leisure infrastructure and access to services and activities. Traffic congestion was an important issue for these adolescents. Participants proposed new regulations for public transport, including priority hours for students and workers in the morning. In addition, they proposed the promotion of bike use throughout the city, along with an increase in the rights of people who use bikes. A need for more green spaces better equipped for play and leisure but also for study activities was expressed.
- **Youths aged 18-24** highlighted the importance of access to services that might contribute to an increased wellbeing. Participants mentioned improvements in access to health services and the need to understand how the health system works. Access to cultural events was also approached with the suggestion to relocate/re-distribute the cultural events (which take place most often in the city centre) to the other parts/neighbourhoods of the city as well. Infrastructure problems referred to housing and traffic and congestion. To solve the issues of high rent prices and large differences in rent prices participants offered the solutions of an online portal where people interested could find places to rent and all the postings to be checked by the public local administration as part of the local policy to improve housing. Another solution was to revitalize the neighbourhoods and make them more appealing, to increase the wellbeing of people who live in the area. Participants view traffic congestion solved through a metro line, the introduction of differentiated travel hours for pensioners, and the extension of the Cluj Bike system to the metropolitan area of

Baciu and Floresti. Informants also mentioned the need for more green spaces around their neighbourhoods and for the city hall to invest in more cultural events/festivals.

- Accessibility, availability, affordability and visibility of youth health services were strongly debated by youths aged 15 to 24 (n=31) during the online World cafe session focused on health. These debates resulted in rich information on how to improve community services to address mental health, sexual health, nutrition, physical activity, substance use and interpersonal violence in the young population living in the Cluj Metropolitan Area.

## 2.2. STAKEHOLDERS' VIEWS

Infrastructure ranks the worst among the three types of public services evaluated by the stakeholders in our questionnaire, with almost 60% of respondents considering it insufficient/inefficient, followed by education and then by health. One of the most important problems that adolescents and youth in Cluj face, according to the respondents, is that the city is too crowded, which means that the traffic is increasingly problematic, and pollution is on the rise. Moreover, the city does not have sufficient interaction spaces (public youth cen-

tres) where adolescents and youth from different backgrounds and socio-economic contexts could interact and form strong civic social values and acquire democratic value driven behaviours.

Problems caused by a poor quality of the infrastructure are faced much more by those living in the metropolitan area, especially in terms of transport, which is less developed than in the city, and there is a danger for segregation from the perspective of access. Overall, stakeholders reported that Cluj offers a better cultural and educational infrastructure than in the rest of the country, but these are insufficiently adapted to the needs of adolescents and young people. Other problems mentioned by stakeholders:

- limited green spaces, although the city is surrounded by nature, access possibilities are limited;
- the paucity of infrastructure and services needed to adopt health-friendly behaviours (gyms / sports fields, school canteens);
- housing - large inequalities in housing quality; the high cost of living in Cluj-Napoca;
- reduced access to accurate, systematized information regarding youth opportunities;
- lack of coherent/strategic approach of the youth sector.

# 3. Stakeholder mapping

19 percent of the total number of stakeholders focus mainly on activities related to leisure and information, community development. It is an ecosystem dominated by private actors and operates autonomously in grassroot mode, and mainly through close links with several large actors who also have the functions of brokers. The ecosystem is developing dynamically, the actors are relatively well integrated into the system and they are the most inclusive category of stakeholders. It basically presents an active side of the local civil society, with an impact on the lives of the people in the Cluj Metropolitan Area, and also on politics. The

big actors mediate between the political and social areas. The issue of leisure (infrastructure and organization) is addressed by 222 projects.

Enabling Environment through the prism of the stakeholders presents a sphere in full expansion (based on the year of their establishment), sufficiently diverse, which meets many requirements / needs from young people. However, the sub-areas related to housing, rights, strategies that solve the typical problems (housing, work environment, transport) of those excluded are not sufficiently covered.

# 4. Systemic gaps

## 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. Causing factors: lack or improper configuration of proper and accessible spaces for meeting points (free, inclusive, evenly distributed across neighbourhoods), creative activities and a missing youth perspective on urban development projects and effort.

## SG4.2. Urban living

The urban context provides a challenging environment for adolescents and youth wellbeing in terms of mobility, housing, and urban design. Adolescent and youth friendly public spaces are limited. The crowded spaces and intensive traffic impact the quality of life of young people. Causing factors: limited mobility and access, unaffordable housing, lack of autonomy, crowded urban spaces

## SG4.3. 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. Causing factors: lack of youth workers and systematically provided youth services, no clear strategic framework addressing adolescents and youth in local policies, lack of dedicated financial support mechanisms

# 5. Policy recommendations

## **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). While dedicated Youth Centres with a complex multifunctional infrastructure and programme are desirable, facilitating access to youth programmes in all neighbourhoods is seen as a priority.

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).

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

The absence of a coherent information service creates a disbalanced 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.

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).

#### **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.

#### **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);
- Pilot project on metropolitan routes to encourage outdoor activities;
- Increase city accessibility for people with disabilities (access paths, ramps, type of pavement, audio and tactile signs for city orientation etc);
- 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).

#### **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.



### **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).

### **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.

Proposed actions:

- Co-design and adopt dedicated Youth Strategies at local and metropolitan level;
- Coordinate 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;
- Create 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);
- Framework for enabling youth initiatives to work in/with schools: Cooperation Agreement between Our City Governance, the Cluj School Inspectorate and the local public administrations.

### **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 adolescents and youth wellbeing 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.

### **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.

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;

- offer 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;
- support to enhance international cooperation capacities for organisations, including measures to support young people in taking part in cross-border mobility actions.
- support 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.

#### **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, because of language barriers and mostly cultural differences.

Proposed actions:

- Projects that enable interaction between Romanian and Hungarian communities, including physical and virtual meeting spaces;
- Exchange of information and awareness about specific habits and cultural behaviour using visualisation, humour and other creative solutions;
- Measures and initiatives to eliminate cultural and language barriers in accessing specific services, events and activities;
- Support 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;
- Create the opportunity for young people having Romanian as their mother tongue to learn Hungarian at different levels of proficiency.

## **6. Priorities for action**

- (E1) P4.1.1. Creating a 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. Develop integrated youth workers' programmes**

# Subjective wellbeing

## Special considerations



## Definition

Life satisfaction and happiness are terms usually used in both the lay and scientific language, to refer to the subjective dimension of wellbeing (Warner, 2013)<sup>1</sup>. Subjective wellbeing is actually a self-reported measure of wellbeing and comprises a cognitive component - through evaluations of one's satisfaction with life in general and with specific areas of life (e.g., work, social relations) - and an emotional component - through the presence of positive and negative affect (e.g., optimism) (Diener et al., 1999)<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Warner, S. K. (2013). The Wellbeing Index: A Landscape of Worldwide Measures and the Potential for Large-Scale Change. Master of Applied Positive Psychology (MAPP) Capstone Projects. Retrieved from [http://repository.upenn.edu/mapp\\_capstonehttp://repository.upenn.edu/mapp\\_capstone/46](http://repository.upenn.edu/mapp_capstonehttp://repository.upenn.edu/mapp_capstone/46)

<sup>2</sup> Diener, Ed; Suh, E.M.; Lucas, R.E.; Smith, H.L (1999). "Subjective well-being: Three Decades of Progress" (PDF). *Psychological Bulletin*. 125 (2): 276–302. doi:10.1037/0033-2909.125.2.276

# Youths' Perspectives

In the LEAP project, adolescents' and youths' perspectives on subjective wellbeing were identified through two simple questions -- "What is happiness for you?" and "What makes you happy?" – questions integrated in the online written interviews (n=48; age group 10-14 years old) and in the online focus group discussions (n=33; age group 15-24).

- Adolescents' aged 10 to 14 defined happiness in terms of "a state of equilibrium", "a state of peace", "ability to engage in activities" and "complete physical health". Participants' answers to what makes them happy clustered in four topics: social interaction, interaction with nature, activities and internal states. Internal states such as feeling joy, feeling relaxed, smiling, laughing, feeling good, feeling safe, inner peace, inner harmony but also relational harmony were related to participants' happiness. Time spent with family and friends was the main factor related to participants' happiness followed by time spent in nature through walks, nature trips, climbing trees, breathing fresh air, watching the sea. Activities such as playing, engaging in cultural activities (such as drawing, dancing, singing, reading, playing instruments or creating any kind of art) and engagement in religious activities (such as going to church), were mentioned as relevant to happiness. Having freedom, being healthy, being successful and receiving gifts were also related to happiness.
- Adolescents aged 15-17 concentrated their definitions of happiness around words such as „stability" and „support". Participants' answers to what makes them happy clustered in six main themes. They emphasized the importance of family and friends for their happiness, viewing the quality and extent of social relations with peers as highly relevant for their happiness. Access to resources was viewed as a prerequisite of wellbeing and as a means for them to be able to engage in the activities

and the hobbies that they enjoy. They related mental health status to happiness, with a focus on the negative impact that lack of self-trust and high anxiety levels, as well as lack of understanding and support from parents has on their happiness. The liberty to decide for oneself was a central pillar of happiness and the presence of nature and of natural environments was viewed as an enabler of happiness. The effective use of technology and a healthy attitude towards technology were also reported as relevant for adolescents' happiness.

- Youths aged 18 to 24, when defining happiness, used words such as "the absence of any discomforts", "balance", "stability", "consistency" and "peace". One definition of happiness incorporated the concept "energy" that we all take from the places we live and highlighted the fact that the neighbourhoods and the countries we live in have a great impact on our happiness. For youths aged 18-24, happiness was influenced by a wide variety of factors, from accessibility and quality of educational and health services, to financial resources and developmental opportunities. Six main happiness drivers have emerged from the data. The first refers to happiness as a product of both the immediate environment (family and friends), but also of the larger, more distant environment, such as the youth's neighbourhood. The second driver referred to mental health as highly influencing happiness, with a specific focus on social anxiety and social pressure. A common happiness driver also noted by participants was related to their personal and financial satisfaction. In addition, they mentioned social relations and the social environment as important for their happiness, with a highlight on their ability to help themselves and others. Finally, a common aspect that subjects agreed upon was that getting out of their comfort zone was a major positive source of personal development and happiness.

# Complementary Data

Two complementary studies on subjective well-being of young people were conducted during the same period as LEAP by two of the partners involved in this research.

- In a survey conducted by the Cluj Cultural Centre in May-June 2020 to assess Art consumption and its connection to wellbeing during the Covid-19 pandemic, the young people aged 14-30 living in Romania reported an increase in negative feelings such as 'upset', 'hostile', 'alert', 'nervous' and 'afraid', while before the pandemic their general state tended to be more positive ('inspired', 'determined', 'attentive' and 'active'). The psychological state before the pandemic for most of the young people was generally good and the health state for half of respondents was excellent. More than 70% of respondents continued their activities and studies online. Consuming different types of art, social contact with loved ones and sleeping have been the most frequent coping strategies of respondents during the pandemic. Art is becoming more meaningful for young people, especially due to its ability to make them 'feel better' and to 'connect them with their memories'.
- The Happy City Survey conducted by PONT in May-June 2020 in Cluj-Napoca and 7 other European Youth Capital title-bearer cities

asked young people about their overall perception of the city including their needs and action in general but also about their special challenges in the context of the COVID-19 epidemic crisis. When asked about how they, as youngsters, could help Cluj, 19% answered "supporting local businesses and causes", 16.2% answered "compliance with the law" and 15.1% "involvement". There was a significant decrease between the usual situation and the situation during the pandemic regarding the following aspects, from a scale from 1 to 10: overall sense of personal happiness from 8.3 down to 6.3, perception of the happiness of the city from 8.1 down to 5.3, and the sense of proactiveness from 8.4 down to 7.3. The sense of overall safety, neighbourhood safety, sense of fairness and the sense of unitedness maintained their levels in both situations. The indicators "clean" and "accessible" registered an increase in value in the situation during the pandemic (from 7.9 to 8.4 and from 7.2 to 7.9). Top 3 post-pandemic concerns were related to resuming physical connections with friends/family (52%), resuming social and development activities (participation in events, parties, meetings etc. - 43%), and taking care of their own health/family members (30%). Overall, 92% of youngsters believe Cluj has managed the COVID-19 situation effectively.

# Stakeholder mapping overview

A distinct activity in the LEAP research was a stakeholder analysis related to the needs and opportunities of the youth in the Cluj metropolitan Area. The purpose of the stakeholder mapping activity was to identify those actors that have or may have an impact on LEAP's objectives in the future. The map thus created ("list", "inventory" of stakeholders) is practically a database with organizations and institutions whose activity is directly related to the fields of health, education and welfare in general. In total, we identified a number of 721 stakeholders.

## THEME AND AREA OF USE

The database is a type of cadastre, an inventory of the main local actors - stakeholders, with formal status - that have or can have an impact on the specific problems of the young population in the Cluj metropolitan area (hereinafter CMA, which includes the city of Cluj-Napoca and 19 nearby communes (Aiton, Apahida, Baci, Bonțida, Borșa, Căianu, Chinteni, Ciurila, Cojocna, Feleacu, Florești, Gilău, Gârbău, Jucu, Petreștii de Jos, Săvădisla, Sânpaul, Tureni, Vultureni). The map also contains some attributes that characterize this population and can be used as a tool to identify and contact future stakeholders. Stakeholders in the database have or can have a role both in defining or regulating the law and developing public policies that address specific issues and through direct contribution to solving the identified issues. The list is not statistically representative, but is relevant to this social field.

The end result is a database allowing easy access to detailed information about all organizations implementing youth programs in Cluj Metropolitan Area; a report that provides an overview of the database development process which contains information about stakeholders in the Cluj metropolitan area, respectively presents the database and the main results drawn from the analysis of the information collected.

## RESEARCH METHODS AND DATA SOURCES

The approach was empirical. The following methods were used: recording and systematization of secondary and public data through desk research methods, analysis of statistical data, informal discussions, respectively collection of information from the position of observer. Investigation period: March-May. Throughout the research, the deontological 4 norms in force, respectively the ESOMAR standards as well as the GDPR were strictly observed. The confidentiality of the data and of the persons with whom it was discussed is guaranteed and protected by the law in force in accordance with the provisions of Directive CE / 95/46, transposed by Law no. 677/2001, as well as the provisions of Directive 2002/58 / EC on the processing of personal data and the protection of privacy in the electronic communications sector, transposed by Law no. 506/2004. 5

# MAIN FINDINGS

As expected, there is a significant number and diversity of stakeholders (different profiles and types depending on the legal status, object of activity, size, budget available, target group, nature of the activity).

A large part of the stakeholders are small actors, their power and influence is low, they most likely work with small staff, they do not have constant and/or visible activity, they operate depending on the financing opportunities, on small projects.

Although the population of stakeholders has a great variety, there is a marked inequality between the actors, their sphere can be characterized as extremely asymmetrical and concentrated around several influential nodes. On the one hand, we can observe the group of the "big ones", i.e. those small number of stakeholders who have a large or very large budget, with power and influence, respectively well institutionalized and professionalized. On the other hand, we can speak of the very large group of those with a small budget, with a weak influence and dependent on the environment in which they operate.

Large stakeholders are in fact brokers who contribute to the production and trading of know-how, expertise, information. Being in the centre determines the structure of the social field in which the stakeholders operate, the relations between the stakeholders. In some cases, they are also direct or indirect financiers.

Likewise, there is a considerable asymmetry between stakeholders who are state actors (here

we refer to the local administration that has the role of developing-applying public policies, such as town halls, directorates, departments, agencies) and NGOs. Political parties represent another well-defined group - node. There is therefore an imbalance at the level of stakeholders between state actors and social actors that are organized and operate at the grassroots level.

Universities and schools are another power pole weakly opposed by organizations that represent the interests of pupils or students and that could contribute to the presentation, theming and solving of specific problems of young people.

Geographically, the city of Cluj concentrates most stakeholders. There is an almost absolute inequality between the centre of Cluj and the rest of the localities. Thus, the very local and specific problems of the rural environment are very poorly represented or not at all.

Depending on LEAP priorities and subcategories, we have identified a very small number of stakeholders related to health issues - in the context of the pandemic this is a problem in itself - and the learning field is clearly dominated by state universities and prestigious schools - all located in the city centre. In fact, the structural inequalities between the national colleges in the centre and the other schools in the periphery are the source of some problems faced by young people who come from families with a weaker socio-economic background. The activity of "classic" and influential NGO stakeholders focuses rather on the fields of enabling environment (leisure, rights) and agency and engagement (culture, sports, professional relations, information). In total, we identified five types (clusters) of stakeholders.

# Overview of the policy framework on youth

When looking at policies addressing the needs of young people regarding their learning, health, agency and the supporting environment, one needs to have a double approach. **First, there is a wide range of general policies in the domains addressed by this research.** They however do not always address youth and their specific needs and conditions. There are however also some which go into these details. **Second, there is a growing layer of dedicated youth-related policies on global, European, national and local level** (with a notable missing layer of regional youth-related policies because of a weak regional institutional background within the Romanian law). There is a smaller range of policies which do have both approaches.

However, this duality poses a threat, too. As it is also considered a special domain within various global, European, national and local frameworks, youth tends to be considered less as an overarching horizontal priority as a generation exactly because the argument goes towards the fact that the dedicated policies shall solve the special issues of young people, while in practice they not necessarily do. The biggest effect of this situation can be measured in the financial allocation associated with these policies. In Ro-

mania, youth-related measures and actions are massively underfinanced.

For a city aiming to develop and implement youth-related policy frameworks in the future, there is also a wide array of sources for inspiration in practical models and solutions developed by peers, notably cities with similar size or profile around Europe. A complementary focus on European practical models in a correlation with existing policies at European level provide a good recipe for further transfer of knowledge towards the city of Cluj-Napoca and its metropolitan area.

There is a lack of incorporation of youth-related policies established within a broader geographical area into national and local strategies where their impact could become enhanced. Another aspect of these policies lies in the fact that with some notable exceptions, they were not created in a participatory way (having young people involved in the development process). However, there are significant efforts in supporting local actors in de-facto enforcing a policy at local level via a range of tools and mentorship, or via networks of actors who provide a horizontal-type support for these policies. There are four European networks



which focus on cities and youth in a specific way (which is a key asset of youth-related urban efforts in the future. While developing and consolidating its youth policy framework, it is highly recommended for Cluj-Napoca to take part in these networks which provides a constant access in the future to professional expertise but practical experience of other cities, too.

**2020 tends to be a milestone for transition between two periods of strategic framework implementation.** This is partially influenced by the 7-year financial framework of the EU to which Cluj-Napoca and the metro area are aligning their development processes while the existing youth strategy is embedded in the local strategy, but also by the fact that the current Romanian national youth strategy's implementation period finished at the end of 2020.

There is a wide range of arguments for the creation of an independent youth strategic framework at local and metropolitan level, focusing on the metropolitan as the target group's mobility addressed by this research doesn't stop at the city's boundaries while the current administrative prerogatives of municipalities do. The creation of this strategic framework in line with existing policies on national, European and global level would open a perspective for Cluj-Napoca to provide a best practice on how a local community can enforce higher level policies on grassroots level while adding to the actual achievement of the objective of these policies, too.

Finally, as with every policy, aspects of implementation need to be considered, too. In this case, the ownership of implementing policies at various levels is highly diversified depending on the level of authority of the institutions which enabled any policy or strategy.

# Conclusion

**LEAP study findings create a fairly complex image of the needs and opportunities of the adolescents and youths living in the Cluj Metropolitan Area (CMA), along four theory driven intersecting dimensions: Health, Learning, Agency and Enabling Environment.**

On the one hand, the CMA offers significant opportunities for development, such as a good education system, a dense network of civil society organizations engaging youths in a plethora of participatory projects, a dynamic job market and a constantly improving infrastructure. Furthermore, youths living in the CMA seem to form a cohesive category of future citizens committed to liberal democracy, as they hold progressive views of citizenship and inclusion. On the other hand, in terms of needs, (1) social and economic inequality (especially the urban/rural divide) affect ease of accessing the above opportunities; (2) youths' are not usually properly included in decision making processes that directly affect them, and (3) infrastructure specifically designed for their development still lags behind. Moreover, (4) nation-wide issues affecting the youth are also present in Cluj, and (5) tackling these issues is very difficult in the context of a highly centralized state; for example, education is still poorly connected to real-life challenges and the needs of the labor market and involvement of the youth in different extracurricular activities is still limited in reach. These problems have been identified by all relevant actors that we reached out to, from the youth and adolescents themselves, to parents, teachers and other relevant stakeholders, especially from the nongovernmental sector.

Besides identifying the needs of youths living in the CMA, the LEAP study also focused on offering solutions for solving the problems identified by our interviewees. The process of formulating such solutions involved extensive consulta-

tions with a wide array of stakeholders. After the LEAP core team identified several **systemic gaps** associated with each of the four dimensions analyzed in the study, solutions were formulated in the shape of policy proposals aiming to offer youths more personal and professional development opportunities.

These **policy proposals** include both reforms of public institutions and changes initiated by the nongovernmental sector. 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 others' 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 wellbeing of youth in Cluj-Napoca and its Metropolitan area.

- Cluj-Napoca municipality is invited to take the lead and coordinate with local authorities from the Metropolitan area in order to develop a dedicated 2020-2030 Youth Strategy for the and to allocate the necessary support for its implementation, both in financial terms and administrative capacity. A Youth Department or at least qualified youth workers 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 centers, mechanisms for youth participation in decision making and also to actively include 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 youths 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 in the capacity development of the local actors. They are also called to engage in facilitating 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. This powerful stakeholder is also invited to 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 wellbeing.
- Recommendations for universities in Cluj-Napoca include their consistent involvement 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 young ecosystem and become involved in career guidance programmes.
- In order to increase the impact of their work, local organisations working with and for adolescents and youths 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 adolescents and youth in decision making, integrated information systems, new services and youth centers.

The LEAP research findings and recommendations provide a strong basis for future action. Advocacy actions on behalf of the youth sector and joint working groups of local organisations, institutions, local authorities and representatives of the young people are hereby offered support in drafting of campaigns, projects and strategies.

Finally, this interdisciplinary study had several limitations. First, the Covid-19 pandemic affected both the data collection processes and, ultimately, the results of the study. All interviews, focus groups and surveys were realized online, which only allows for limited interaction between participation. Moreover, when asked about different things having to do with interaction with peers, or even school and free time activities, we assume that the youth answered according to the lockdown situation taking place when the surveys and interviews were realized. Second, while the core team included both scholars and non-governmental sector activists and experts, we did not manage to attract representatives of public institutions, at least not to the degree of engagement that we would have preferred. Third, most of the youth that participated in our study and shared with us their views were already engaged in different projects and extracurricular activities, so the odds are that those adolescents and youth that are not involved in such projects are underrepresented.

However, we believe that the report brings a significant contribution to better understanding the needs and opportunities of the youth in Cluj, these limitations notwithstanding. Future studies should aim to identify points of overlap/intersection of different issues/needs, and address them holistically; all too often, projects implemented by various institutions approach the issue of the youth's need from a segmented perspective while a heavier emphasis on an integrated approach would be more beneficial.

# Annex

## Overview of recommendations for key stakeholders

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

Systemic Gaps / Policy and Action Proposals <i>(priority proposals in green)</i>	Stakeholders' Roles
<p><b>I. HEALTH</b></p> <p><b>SG1.1. Insufficient and Ineffective Health Promotion, Health Education and Disease Prevention</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• P1.1.1. <b>Prioritize health inside the youth ecosystem</b></li> <li>• P1.1.2. Digital platform with science-based information for youth health</li> <li>• P1.1.3. Involve youths in designing information campaigns for prevention</li> </ul> <p><b>SG1.2. Rudimentary collaboration between local actors of health promotion and health education</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• P1.2.1. <b>Healthy food system in schools</b></li> <li>• P1.2.2. Local partnerships to support, develop and adjust to real needs the publicly funded medical services in educational institutions</li> </ul> <p><b>SG1.3. Inequalities in accessing health and health services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• P1.3.1. <b>Dedicated health support mechanisms for vulnerable groups</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>Local authorities:</b>  initiate: P1.1.1, P1.1.2  support: P1.1.2, P1.2.1, P1.3.1  enable: P1.1.3, P1.2.2.</p> <p><b>Donors:</b>  initiate: P1.1.1  support: P1.1.1, P1.1.3, P1.2.1, P1.3.1  enable: P1.2.2.</p> <p><b>Health Institutions</b>  initiate: P1.2.2, P1.3.1  support: P1.1.1, P1.1.2, P1.1.3, P1.2.1</p> <p><b>County School Inspectorate:</b>  initiate: P1.2.1  support: P1.1.1, P1.2.2.  enable: P1.1.2, P1.1.3, P1.3.1</p> <p><b>Universities:</b>  initiate: P1.2.2.  support: P1.1.2., P1.3.1</p> <p><b>Youth organisations:</b>  initiate: P1.1.2, P1.1.3  contribute: P1.1.1, P1.2.2., P1.3.1</p> <p><b>NGOs:</b>  initiate: P1.1.2, P1.1.3  contribute: P1.1.1, P1.2.1, P1.2.2., P1.3.1</p>

Systemic Gaps / Policy and Action Proposals (priority proposals in green)	Stakeholders' Roles
<p><b>II. LEARNING</b></p> <p><b>SG2.1. Discrepancies between education needs and school offer</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• P2.1.1. Curricula for sensitive topics and inclusion (vulnerable groups, minorities, mental health etc.)</li> <li>• P2.1.2. Education network to support scaling up and replication of good educational practices</li> <li>• P2.1.3. Ecosystem partnership for a career counselling system</li> <li>• P2.1.4. Improving the quality of the pedagogical training in university</li> <li>• P2.1.5. Metropolitan vision for education</li> <li>• P2.1.6. Action plan for digitalization in schools at the metropolitan level</li> </ul> <p><b>SG2.2. Inequality in opportunities and access and urban-rural discrepancies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• P2.2.1. Pedagogical support for rural schools</li> <li>• P2.2.2. Programmes to encourage school attendance and increase learning opportunities for disadvantaged groups</li> </ul>	<p><b>Local authorities:</b> initiate: P2.1.5 support: P2.1.2, P2.1.6, P2.2.1, P2.2.2 enable: P2.1.1, P2.1.3</p> <p><b>Donors:</b> 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</p> <p><b>County School Inspectorate:</b> 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</p> <p><b>Universities:</b> initiate: P2.1.4 support: P2.1.1, P2.1.2, P2.1.3, P2.1.5 contribute: P2.1.6, P2.2.1</p> <p><b>Youth organisations:</b> 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</p> <p><b>NGOs:</b> 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</p>
<p><b>III. AGENCY</b></p> <p><b>SG3.1. Inhibitors and catalysers of agency</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• P3.1.1. Cooperation mechanisms in the field of youth through a wide connection of stakeholders</li> <li>• P3.1.2. Collaborative youth ecosystem gathering stakeholders from key domains: school system, local public administrations, business environment, NGO sector</li> </ul> <p><b>SG3.2. The lack of recognition of agency and engagement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• P3.2.1. Certificate for youth training and volunteering programmes to be recognized by employers and universities</li> <li>• P3.2.2. Involve youth in real-life projects in the metropolitan area</li> </ul> <p><b>SG3.3. Participation of young people in decision-making</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• P3.3.1. Mechanisms for youth empowerment and participation in decision-making</li> </ul>	<p><b>Local authorities:</b> initiate: P3.1.2, P3.2.2, P3.3.1 enable: P3.1.1, P3.2.1</p> <p><b>Donors:</b> initiate: P3.1.2 support: P3.1.1, P3.2.1, P3.2.2, P3.3.1</p> <p><b>County School Inspectorate:</b> initiate: P3.2.2, P3.3.1 support: P3.1.2 enable: P3.1.1, P3.2.1</p> <p><b>Universities:</b> initiative: support: P3.2.1, P3.3.1</p> <p><b>Youth organisations:</b> initiate: P3.1.1, P3.1.2, P3.2.1, P3.2.2 act/support: P3.3.1</p> <p><b>NGOs:</b> initiate: P3.1.1, P3.1.2, P3.2.1, P3.2.2 act/support: P3.3.1</p>

**Systemic Gaps / Policy and Action Proposals**  
(priority proposals in green)

**Stakeholders' Roles**

**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 ecosystem

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