

Activating Values in Urban Transitions:

A novel approach to urban innovation in Romania

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Activating Values in Urban Transitions:

A novel approach to urban innovation in Romania

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Activating Values in Urban Transitions: A novel approach to urban innovation in Romania ®

Table of Contents

Executive Summary ⊙	10
Preface ⊙	14
Acknowledgements	16
Introduction →	18
Cluj-Napoca Through History Urban Transitions to Intermediary Cities	
OurCluj: A Values-Based Urban Living Laboratory ⊖	32
Methodology	58

Practicing Urban Transitions ⊛	62
 Imagining Futures → Imagination as Public Resource Towards Multi-Sectoral Collaboration Local Decision-Making Centering Youth Perspectives Understanding Well-Being 	65
Remembering the Past →Culture of MistrustIndividualism vs. Collectivism	83
■ Sharing Power → Institutional Structures Collaboration	101
Design Recommendations ⊙	114
Conclusions ⊕	126
About the Authors ⊙	130
References ⊙	136
Appendices () Contributor Biographies / Appendix 1	138

Activating Values in Urban Transitions: A novel approach to urban innovation in Romania ®

Executive Summary

Over half of the world's population lives in urban areas. By 2050, this number is expected to rise to two-thirds. As cities grow in size and importance, negotiating just urban transitions is critical for our shared future. Many cities are engaged in a global competition to become "smart," which typically means employing cutting-edge digital technologies to improve service delivery and quality of life, while attracting businesses to a vibrant innovation economy. While the race for smarter cities is often framed in terms of enhanced control, economic growth, lifestyle, and convenience, it is also increasingly becoming associated with an effort for cities to be more just and democratic.

This report documents the urban transition of Cluj-Napoca, Romania, a mid-size intermediary city in Eastern Europe. In 2019, a collective of urban innovators began asking what would happen if a different set of values were guiding urban transitions. What if goals of well-being were prioritized over economic growth? What if care were prioritized over efficiency? What if the cultivation of trust was more important than expediency? OurCluj was created with the goal of exploring these critical questions. It is a geographically localized innovation cluster that takes the shape of a multi-sectoral, multi-disciplinary "living laboratory" optimized for the enhanced well-being of the city's young residents, who are considered to hold the key to a better future. Living laboratories are usually focused on specific innovations like transport, energy systems, tourism or education. Instead, OurCluj focuses on well-being, which substantially alters the shape and function of the living laboratory structure. We call this unique arrangement a "Values-Based Urban Living Laboratory" (or VBULL), and we describe why activating values of care and trust is necessary.

This research demonstrates that urban transitions are not only a matter of who gets funding and how arrangements are governed, but also, and perhaps most importantly, how narratives change. What stories are getting told about the future? What stories need to be told about the past? And how do people model democratic transitions through their everyday actions? We describe the work of the VBULL in three parts:

- · Imagining possible urban futures,
- · Reflecting on the history of past harms, and
- Exploring novel practices that promote power sharing.

Included in the report are 10 design recommendations for practitioners to catalyze VBULLs in their spaces. These include methods for trust building, storytelling, learning, transparency and accountability. Each design recommendation has practical examples and references that can serve as inspiration. A glossary at the end of the report provides the most commonly used terms when practicing urban transitions.

The research was conducted in spring 2020, just at the beginning of the disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, by a team from Romania, Switzerland, and the United States, in support of Fondation Botnar's OurCity initiative. Nearly 30 participants in OurCluj were interviewed, and each interview was creatively documented by artists from the Cluj-based ArtiViStory Collective. The resulting artworks were shared with interviewees, and their responses substantively informed the insights of this report. The artworks are displayed throughout this report. They should be seen not as an illustration of the text but as an additive interpretive element to the findings. In an additional set of full color posters within the print addition, there is an interactive exercise that demonstrates how art and its interpretation can serve as a creative catalyst for the formation and the maintenance of VBULLs.

Artwork by Melinda Ureczki Lázár, ArtiViStory Collective LOGIC MODER YOUNG PEOPLE BULD SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE SENSE OF BELONGING INFLUENCE DECISION NAKING INCREASE SELF YOUTH EMPOWER HAPPING



Activating Values in Urban Transitions: A novel approach to urban innovation in Romania ®

Preface

All urban transitions, whether labeled innovative or smart, are guided by a set of stated or unstated values. Concerns about political corruption, inequitable systems, sustainable urban development, and biases in the data that train "smart" algorithms are concerns for cities striving to be both smart *and* democratic. Values of efficiency, global competitiveness, and economic opportunity tend to guide political and technocratic decision-making, while concerns about equity, the distribution of care, and building and sustaining a foundation of trust between community and institutions are secondary. But as cities around the world find themselves

14 Preface

in the shared position of having to respond to a global pandemic, these secondary values have gained some attention. As more young people obtain positions of power either through institutional positionality or through their digitally amplified collective voice, cities are experiencing a generational shift that is beginning to highlight a different set of values for urban futures. There is a growing recognition that histories of harm in cities cannot be easily covered up by "shiny" digital innovations, and institutions undergoing democratic transformations need to address power and social inequities prior to building technological and social infrastructure that reinforce existing institutional logics.

The ethos of efficiency does not have to guide urban transitions. What would happen if a different set of values were guiding decisions? What if goals of well-being were prioritized over economic growth as a sole pursuit? What if care were prioritized over efficiency? What if the cultivation of trust were considered more important than expediency? In cities throughout the world, efforts are underway to answer these questions and to shift the normative value structures that guide digital transformation.

This research takes a deep look at one such city: Cluj-Napoca, Romania. It documents the creation of OurCluj, a multi-sectoral, multi-disciplinary "living laboratory" that seeks to shift this normative value structure by centering the values of trust and care in project work. We find that prioritizing these values is a requirement for creating policies and programs that are optimized for outcomes such as enhanced well-being. The research discussed in this paper was conducted in spring and summer of 2020 to support Fondation Botnar's OurCity initiatives in seven intermediary cities in Europe, Africa, Latin America, and Asia. In Romania, the Fondation Botnar's legacy country, Cluj-Napoca has been identified as a unique ecosystem for innovation and learning. In this report, we look at the everyday practices and perceptions of the people involved in the formation of OurCluj. They paint a picture of the discursive context that drives values-forward innovation, by: 1) imagining possible urban futures; 2) reflecting on history and past harms; and 3) exploring novel practices that promote power sharing. This tripartite structure, we argue, is essential for nurturing urban innovation that supports economic and democratic development.

Efficient technological futures and democratic futures are not necessarily divergent. However, if the underlying values of economic and digital transitions are not attended to, cities will default to futures that optimize particular ways of life and erase others. The narrative work taking place in Cluj is truly exceptional: groups in the city are exploring how to replace one-sided economic growth indicators with well-being indicators and come to terms with the fact that all futures are built on the past. While this kind of work is taking place in cities all over the world, it tends to go unnoticed. This report is a call to action for us to understand and support the "values work" necessary for democratic and smart transitions.



Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank all the people in Cluj who shared their time and wisdom with us, including those who informed or participated in the OurCluj initiative. They come from public, private, civic and academic organizations in Cluj-Napoca and from Fondation Botnar. Thank you to: Gabriel Bădescu, Emil Boc, Paul Brie, Emilia Botezan, Tünde Buryán, Oana Buzatu, Răzvan Chereches, Ovidiu Cîmpean, Cristian Dascălu, András Farkas, Susanna Hausmann, Călin Hintea, Benjamin Kohl, Florina Lendeczki, Paul Emanuel Marc, Ruxandra Mercea, Marius Cătălin Moga, Bianca Muntean, Tudor Ogner, Alexandra Onisor, Zur Oren, Eugen Pănescu, Dumitru Petreus, Codruța Simina, Marius Ungureanu, Stefan Teisanu, Stefan Voinea, Anamaria Vrabie and Rarita Zbranca. This work would not have been possible without them. We also want to thank all interviewees and in addition to Simona Baciu, István Szakáts and Sabina Leopa who provided feedback to the final draft. That said, we recognize the limitation of not including a greater number of culturally different participants, especially young citizens of diverse backgrounds. We wish to do so in the continuation of this work.

We would also like to thank the graphic art students and faculty members of the ArtiViStory Collective from the University of Art and Design in Cluj-Napoca. They sat in on all the interviews and documented the research process with their creative expression. These artists are: Lucian Barbu, Zsófia Bernát, Horaţiu Coman, Erdély Bálint, Diana Florescu, Oliviana Fudulache, Evelina-Maria Grigorean, Dariana Ilie, Carla Oros, Alexandru Papa, Teodora Predescu, Sebastian Ștefan, Mihai Udubaşa, Melinda Ureczki Lázár, and Eunicia Laura Zidaru. They were thoughtfully guided and supported by Alice Iliescu, Daniel Popescu, and Anamaria Tomiuc.

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And we are grateful to the Fondation Botnar for their engagement and support. Their caring way of working with partners and their profound commitment to novel approaches in urban innovation and youth well-being inspires confidence and hope.



Introduction

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I'm inviting you to a competition in our city. The competition will be called the 'Competition of Dreams.' So your dream is going to be part of our competition, and you never know, you may win. But you'll never lose; you can be sure of that.

Emil Boc, Mayor of Cluj-Napoca, Romania November 2020 Emil Boc, the mayor of Cluj-Napoca, Romania has embraced the discourse of imagination, dreams, collaboration, and progress. Under his leadership, Cluj has become one of the fastest growing cities in the country and in Eastern Europe¹. It was named the European Youth Capital by the European Youth Forum in 2015. With a population of about 325,000 people and over 411,000 in the Cluj Metropolitan Area (CMA), politicians have projected an optimistic growth narrative. According to the mayor, Cluj is a place for "winning, but never losing." It is a place for risk-taking and innovation because "it is impossible to fail." This political rhetoric has been powerful: it has inspired creativity and market growth. And through our research, we found it has also generated a critical realization that winning is not equally available to everyone, particularly to youth and minorities.

Mayor Boc has skillfully wielded imagination as a political tool, fore-grounding its role in reforming the city. A culture of social innovation has emerged in Cluj, motivated by democratic reform that is equally driven by imagining the future and the past. OurCluj is positioned as part of this culture. In this report, we examine OurCluj as a VBULL involving a multi-sectoral collection of individuals and organizations that are striving for collective change and the well-being of Cluj's young residents.

Within the context of a democratizing society, OurCluj seeks to advance Cluj's position in a global innovation economy while cultivating the values that support democratization, namely trust and care.

The goal of this research was to study the efforts of OurCluj participants to shape a democratic narrative that foregrounds sustainable, equitable change in the context of their rapidly growing city. We conducted 57 interviews with stakeholders in government, civil society, academia, and the private sector, alongside hundreds of hours of participant observation. These conversations and observations shed light on how a living lab, a model often linked to market innovation, is acting as a powerful tool to center values of trust and care. We examine the attitudes and practices that make such a values orientation possible, and we demonstrate how the cultural specificity of Cluj actively shapes what values-based urban innovation looks like.

Cluj-Napoca Through History

Cluj-Napoca is the historic capital of Transylvania in central Romania. It lies in the Someşul Mic River valley, surrounded by forests and grasslands between the Apuseni Mountains and the Transylvanian Plain. It is also known by its German name, Klausenburg, and its Hungarian name, Kolozsvár. It has been referred to as a stage for multicultural exchange and common ground and the site of "nationalist politics and everyday ethnicity."

The city stands on the site of an ancient Dacian settlement, Napoca, and was one of important cities in the Eastern Roman Empire. At the end of the ninth century, the ancestors of today's Hungarians settled in Transylvania and were followed by the Saxons' occupation. In 1316, Cluj was granted the status of a city, Civitas Kulusvar. After the constitution of the autonomous principality of Transylvania in the sixteenth century, Cluj became its capital. In 1920, Cluj along with the rest of Transylvania was incorporated into Romania.

Throughout its history, Cluj-Napoca was characterized by a mix of cultures, which remains visible in the name of the city. As a medieval city, the first written name was a Latin one, *Castrum Clus*. From the medieval period until 1970 its name was Kolozsvár, Cluj, or Klausenburg, depending on the language of the three communities living there (Hungarian, Romanian, and German). During communism, in 1974, the word "Napoca" was added, referring to two parts of the history of Cluj: the Roman era and the communist or Ceauşescu's period.

In the early twentieth century, the majority of the people in Cluj-Napoca were Hungarians. This balance gradually shifted after the Second World War, as part of a concerted effort to attract people to the city from elsewhere in Romania. According to the 1966 census, the city's population of 185,663 was 56% Romanian and 41% Hungarian. Most newcomers were from rural villages, attracted to plentiful factory jobs and a growing concentration of universities. The image of Cluj-Napoca as a student city was created during these years by building parks, sports, and student complexes. But this transition was not exactly smooth. Cultural rifts were hardening between existing residents and rural newcomers; Hungarian and Romanian speakers; and young university students and older generations.

Likewise, political changes translated to the built environment. The second part of the twentieth century was pivotal in the urban development of Cluj-Napoca. The communist period (1945-1989) – particularly the national communist period (1965-1989) – saw Soviet influences radically

reshaping the city. Divided into distinct sectors – industrial, residential, professional, and university – the city became physically and socially divided as uses were compartmentalized for maximum efficiency. After the communist era in Romania, Cluj-Napoca experienced a downturn in urban development. Remaining one of a few cities in Romania with a stable population after the 1989 revolution, it embarked on a transformation from one of the most industrialized cities in Romania to one focused on livability and quality of life.

Cluj became recognized for its academic ecosystem, along with its large student population, during this period. Babeș-Bolyai University (one of 10 universities in Cluj) is considered to be the best university in Romania. Simultaneously, it became known for its burgeoning information technology (IT) industry, with many calling it the "Silicon Valley of Romania." The city hosted the Central-European Olympics of Informatics in 1994 and 2000, which attracted international companies to Cluj. According to a study by ARIES Transylvania, in 2017 at least 1 in 11 employees in Cluj-Napoca was working in the IT field. In 2015, the GDP per person employed in Cluj-Napoca was 1.5 times the national average – among the highest in the EU region.

This transformation accelerated with the election of Emil Boc in 2004. He emphasized the need for open discussion among communities in Cluj-Napoca, including the Hungarian-speaking minority, about desirable shared futures. Romania entered the European Union in 2007, which made it possible for Cluj to position itself as an innovation hub in Europe. Cluj-Napoca has attracted European funding totaling 420 million euros for educational infrastructure, energy, green spaces, and mobility. According to Boc, "For each Romanian leu paid by the citizens of Cluj-Napoca, the local administration attracts 3 leis." The municipality is currently developing a new "Integrated Urban Development Strategy" (SIDU) for 2021–2030, in partnership with the Cluj Metropolitan Area Intercommunity Development Association (ADI ZMC) and the World Bank experts.⁹ A new digital strategy, the "Cluj-Napoca Digital Transformation Strategy" 2021" - which was developed by the College of Political, Administrative and Communication Sciences at Babes-Bolyai University - was confirmed by the City Council in 2021. 10

Along with European funds and growth in the private sector, Boc has emphasized intersectoral partnerships between academia, NGOs, local private businesses, and citizens, which has led to a vibrant environment for hubs and industry clusters. In 2021, the European Commission mentioned Transylvania IT Cluster and Transylvania Digital Innovation Hub as examples of good practices in its report. The industries represented by clusters in the city are diverse and include IT, furniture, energy, creative industries, agriculture, and education.

Additionally, Cluj became a frequent player in European city competitions as part of a search for prestige and material resources. It was appointed the European Youth Capital in 2015 and a European City of Sports

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in 2017. It was also a contestant in the competition for the European Capital of Culture 2021, the European Capital of Innovation (2020), and Bloomberg's Global Mayors Challenge (2021). Cluj-Napoca is an active participant in the European URBACT program, which aims to foster sustainable integrated urban development in cities across Europe. In spite of this admirable progress, several structural, social, economic, and environmental challenges remain to be addressed, including the growing imbalance between urban and rural development in the metropolitan area.



Piața Unirii (Union Square) today, the city's main square, hosts various events throughout the year

Source: Transylvania International Film Festival TIFF, 2017 17th century view of Cluj, the capital of Transylvania, which became part of Romania in 1920. "Clavdiopolis, Coloswar commonly known as Clavsenburg, the principal city of Transylvania", engraving by Joris Hoefnagel, 1617

> Source: Szilas in the Hungarian National Museum, Wikimedia Commons





Cluj at the beginning of the 20th century, when it had a predominantly Hungarian population

Source : Biblioteca Județeană "Octavian Goga" Cluj



Central building of Babeş-Bolyai University, one of the 10 universities in Cluj and the largest in Romania, closely related to the development of the city

Source: Cluj-Napoca City Archive, 2020



Cluj-Napoca has a large multicultural student population and was named the European Youth Capital in 2015 and European City of Sports in 2017

Source: Cluj Never Sleeps, Cluj Youth Federation – Volum Studio, 2019

Street life in the Mărăști neighborhood near the city center, a large residential area built during the communist period between 1970-1989

Source: Cluj-Napoca City Archive, 2020



Cluj-Napoca with Someșul Mic (Little Somes) river showing the rapidly growing metropolitan area

Source: Drone photo by Salajean, Dreamstime



Industrial growth, traffic and pollution represent some of the key challenges for a more balanced urban development in Cluj

> Source: Clujul Civic Public Group



Suburban sprawl in Florești, the largest village in the Cluj Metropolitan Area

> Photo by: Barbara Bulc, 2019



Urban Transitions in Intermediary Cities

Intermediary cities today are at the forefront of forging transformative pathways in post-COVID-19 recovery. While they are championing new job opportunities, economic growth, and productivity, they are also a source of growing environmental and social challenges. Cluj-Napoca with its metropolitan area fits the international designation of an "intermediary city," not only based on its size (usually 500,000 – 1 million people) but also based on the functions the city performs, mediating flows of goods, information, innovations, and administration between rural and urban areas. For example, Cluj has played an important role in fostering regional innovation in fields such as information technology. Alongside internal migration to Cluj, long-ignored populations in the city, including Hungarians and the Roma, have started to be recognized.

The COVID-19 pandemic has placed additional pressure on intermediary cities by disrupting flows of people and goods, as well as access to services. This is true of most cities, but it has been particularly acute for those cities that play a distinct intermediary role. Services being forced to quickly move online in response to the pandemic raised the requirements for cities to have robust data and communication infrastructures. The pandemic accelerated digital transitions, in some cases exacerbating inequalities and putting additional pressure on innovators seeking to surface and highlight the need for trust in systems.

While much of the academic literature on the "smart city" still focuses on discrete efforts in cities to build digital infrastructure, recent approaches to the topic have expanded the definition of what makes a city "smart" to include matters of governance and resource allocation. Meijer and Bolívar argue that "the smartness of a city refers to its ability to attract human capital and to mobilize this human capital in collaborations between the various (organized and individual) actors through the use of information and communication technologies." They identify four ideal-typical conceptualizations of smart city governance: 1) government of a smart city, 2) smart decision-making, 3) smart administration, and 4) smart urban collaboration. Smart urban collaboration refers to the ability for local governments to partner with other sectors to achieve mutually beneficial ends and requires trust between sectors and actors.

Truly smart collaborative governance, where the government effectively partners with civil society, the private sector, and academia to achieve programmatic and policy goals is quite difficult to achieve. Chris Ansell and Allison Gash define collaborative governance as an arrangement in which

the government directly engages with other stakeholders in a collective, deliberative decision-making process that works towards consensus. This shift in definition reflects a shift in values. If digital transitions are to facilitate democratic transitions, collaboration, consensus, and power sharing are essential for sustainability. The political scientist Joan Tronto makes the case that the primary objective of democratic governance is to fairly distribute caring responsibilities, which she calls "caring with." To "care with" means that the social imperative is not simply to source resources to care for the "unfortunate," but to acknowledge that all people need care in different ways and all people are responsible for making that happen. The social and political challenge is how to distribute caring responsibilities, which requires imagining new social arrangements and questioning hierarchical power structures that exclude people.

What do people do to create collaborative governance structures within hierarchical institutions or societies as they undergo digital transitions? Within a shared urban environment, how do people negotiate the importance of democratic systems with economic growth and urban efficiency? We begin to answer these questions by talking to the participants of OurCluj. We identify the fundamental practices that hold the arrangement together and which can make it influence organizational and systemic change. These practices compose a collaborative arrangement that moves from imagination to memory in order to explore new practices for power sharing:

- Imagining Futures
 openly articulating possible civic futures
- Remembering the Past
 actively confronting histories and spaces that present
 barriers to achieving desired futures
- Sharing Power
 deliberately taking action to alleviate social inequities perpetuated by institutions

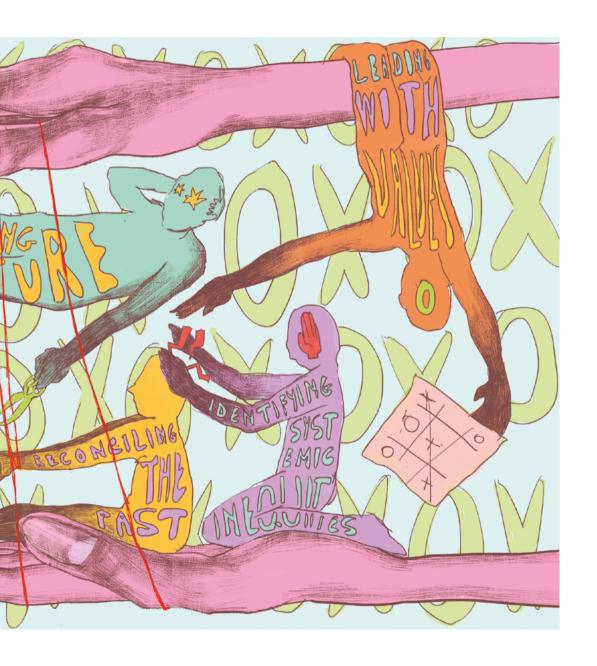
In the following section, we describe the formation and structure of OurCluj. We then discuss the methods of our study and report on its findings. Finally, we offer design recommendations for the practitioner who is interested in creating and supporting similar kinds of urban innovation arrangements.

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Artwork and text by Dariana Ilie, ArtiViStory Collective

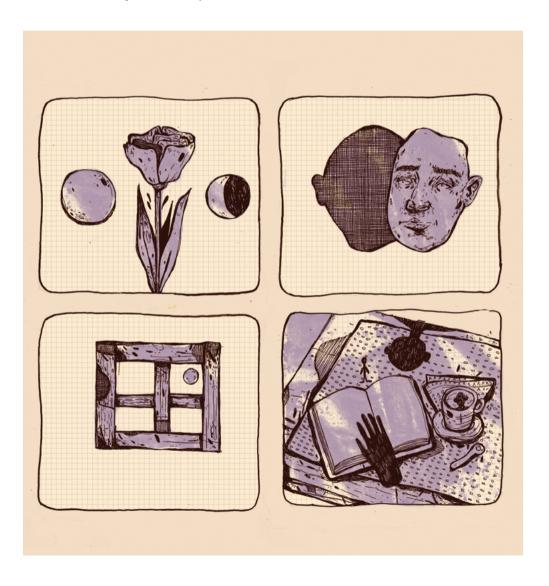
I illustrated OurCluj building blocks after our workshop and I showed how they are connected and work through each other while conditions by the human factor. This is an early representation of the building blocks, in the shape they were at the time. Therefore, this image is an active example of how the motion that happens behind the scenes can facilitate change and development over time. Being able to see this process, these steps, can help with getting a better picture of the whole structure of the research and its meanings, from its early stages to its final version.





Artwork by Melinda Ureczki Lázár, ArtiViStory Collective

Through my work, I reflected on the workshop process and the participants' collaborative work. The participants worked together on a map, which had no content at the beginning. Based on a joint discussion, they had to mark on the map the areas where green belts were located. Thus, a blank map was transformed into a developed individual yet collective infrastructure. So, the spectacular urban transformation reflects the collective work of the participants to designate the green zones of Cluj-Napoca. The result made the ecosystem more transparent and visible.





OurCluj: A Values-Based Urban Living Laboratory

OurCluj is an initiative sponsored by the Fondation Botnar. It started in 2019 with a 10-year commitment. The funding supports urban innovators in government, the private sector, academia, and civil society, in their work to assure the well-being of the city's youth. The specific outcomes of the initiative intentionally remain open-ended, so that goals and shared procedures can emerge organically from its beneficiaries. Design and development of OurCluj is stewarded by a nonprofit intermediary SDG Colab, working in close partnerships with the foundation and stakeholders to build local capacities over time. The foundation has played a supportive role by convening, connecting, and amplifying efforts while not predetermining outcomes.

The concentration of projects in the city, and the concerted effort to create dialogue and relationships across a range of stakeholders, has resulted in an arrangement that resembles an urban living laboratory (ULL). ULLs are multi-sectoral spaces for testing new technologies and strategies to cope with complex social problems. 2012

Expanding on the definition of ULLs, we refer to OurCluj as a Values-Based ULL (VBULL), because it is a multi-sectoral arrangement in which attention is primarily paid to shifting the narrative of urban innovation from economic progress to democratization.

VBULLs have several important differences from standard ULLs. Giorgia Nesti argues that ULLs are useful as sites where governments, NGOs, academia, and companies can co-design services and products. In this way, they can open space for experimenting with innovative policies. They are characterized by an organizational approach inspired by the "quadruple helix" (collaboration between the public sector, firms, universities, and communities), an experimental methodology and an environment of open innovation where knowledge can be diffused across stakeholders. The municipality of Cluj-Napoca, while it does not explicitly use the language of ULL, speaks of a "quintuple helix" that splits communities into unaffiliated and more formal civil society organizations and citizens.

The municipality of Cluj-Napoca is an important partner in OurCluj, but it is not the "owner." The ULL is designed as a distributed network. Universities – including Babeș-Bolyai University (the Universitatea Babeș-Bolyai) and Design in Cluj-Napoca (Universitatea de Artă și Design din Cluj-Napoca) – have been deeply engaged. Startups, youth, and culture-serving nonprofits – including Magic Association, PONT Group, Wello, the Romanian Health Observatory and the Cluj Cultural Centre – have received direct funding. In all, there are 12 projects in different stages of development. Since 2019 the Fondation Botnar invested 3,4 million CHF in the development and co-design of OurCluj VBULL, including Phase I (Introduction) and Phase II (Development).

Typically, ULLs are facilitated by government agencies because they are capable of enacting the policies or processes that emerge from the effort. Leminen et al. argue that in urban living labs, the city government can act as a provider of resources or knowledge, as a participator of neighborhood-scale citizen-led initiatives, as a catalyst for private-sector for-profit initiatives, and as a short-term "rapid experimenter" of public services. [™]

In the case of OurCluj, the local government plays a different role. The municiplaity is positioned as an equal player, not as a leader.

Startups, universities, and local NGOs run projects that seek city-scale impact. Several circumstances make this unique arrangement possible: political will from local politicians, long term foundational support, and a burgeoning innovation ecosystem.



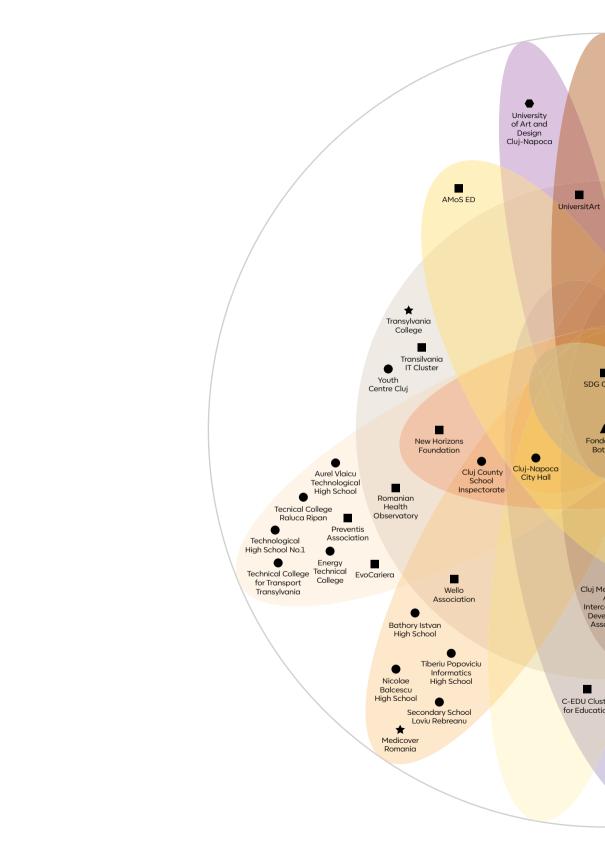
OurCluj Projects

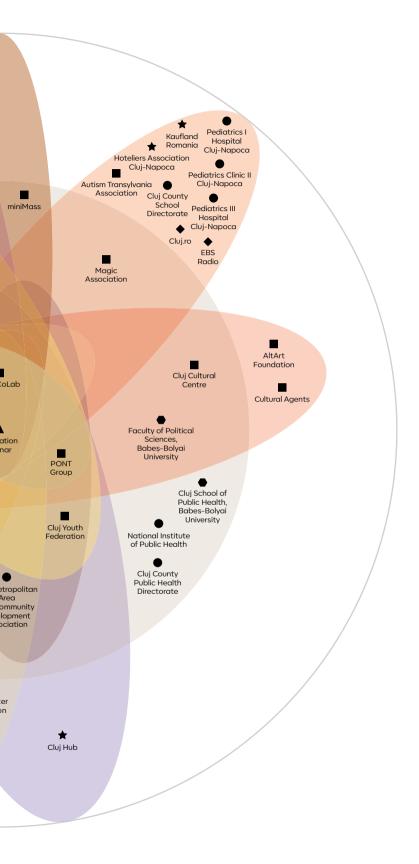
OurCluj is a multi-sectoral arrangement of projects. It aims to activate values of care and trust for outcomes such as youth well-being. Prioritizing these values is a requirement for creating policies and programs that are optimized for enhanced well-being. We call this unique arrangement a Values-Based Urban Living Laboratory (VBULL).

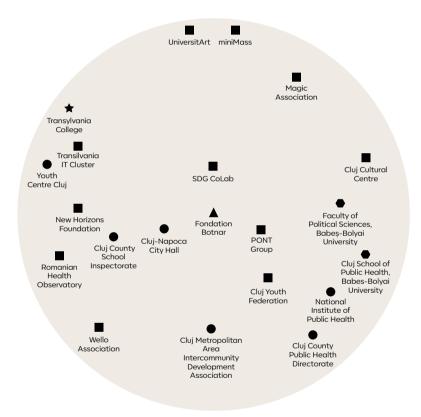
BY PROJECT TYPE:

Interdisciplinary Research LEAP **Ecosystem Mapping** Education Youth Com'ON Cluj Atlas Mapping Mapping Mapping Implementation Projects Cluj for Learning ArtiViStory EduAlert Wello MagicHelp QUB Youth 2030 Social Innovation Fund FIX Cluj Co-design OurClui BY STAKEHOLDER TYPE:

🕒 Public 📕 Civic ★ Private 🕒 Academia 🔷 Media 🛕 Philantrophy









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Well-Being of Young People

Interdisciplinary study assessing needs, gaps and opportunities for youth well-being in Cluj Metropolitan Area (CMA)

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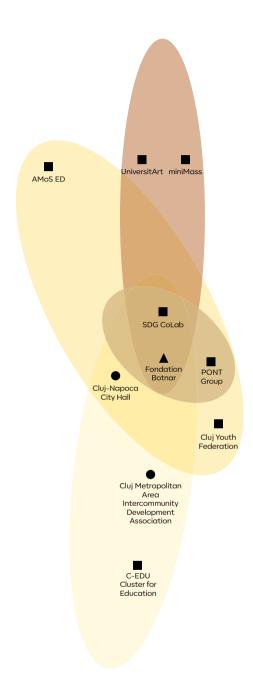
 \$tefan Voinea / Board Member
- Wello Association Dumitru Petreuş / Chief Technology Officer & Co-Founder

- Youth Centre Cluj
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- ★ Transylvania College
 Ruxandra Mercea / Executive Director
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- SDG CoLab
 Barbara Bulc / Founder
 Bianca Ștefania Băluță /
 Project Manager
 Nadina Pantea /
 Local Project Manager
- ▲ Fondation Botnar Susanna Hausmann / Chief Program Officer Zur Oren / Partnerships Coordinator



OurCluj Projects

Ecosystem Mapping



Education Mapping

- C-Edu Cluster for EducationSimona Baciu / President
- Cluj Metropolitan Area Intercommunity
 Development Association
 Adrian Răulea /
 Development Coordinator

Education & Learning

Mapping formal and informal education ecosystems in Cluj Metropolitan Area (CMA)

- Cluj-Napoca City Hall

 Emil Boc / Mayor

 Emilia Botezan / Coordinator and
 Responsible of External Relations
 Oana Buzatu / Spokesperson
 Ovidiu Cimpean / Director
- SDG CoLab

 Barbara Bulc / Founder

 Bianca Ștefania Băluță /

 Project Manager

 Nadina Pantea /

 Local Project Manager
- ▲ Fondation Botnar
 Susanna Hausmann /
 Chief Program Officer
 Zur Oren / Partnerships Coordinator

Youth Mapping

Cluj Youth Federation Tudor Ogner/ President Tünde Buryán / Former Vice President Paul Emanuel Marc / General Secretary

PONT Group

András Farkas / Strategic Director

Ágnes Balázsi-Pál /

Executive Director

Youth Engagement

Mapping formal and informal youth organizations and initiatives in CMA

- Cluj-Napoca City Hall
 Emil Boc / Mayor
 Emilia Botezan / Coordinator and
 Responsible of External Relations
 Oana Buzatu / Spokesperson
 Ovidiu Cîmpean / Director
- AMoS ED

- SDG CoLab

 Barbara Bulc / Founder

 Bianca Ștefania Băluță /

 Project Manager

 Nadina Pantea /

 Local Project Manager
- ▲ Fondation Botnar
 Susanna Hausmann /
 Chief Program Officer
 Zur Oren / Partnerships Coordinator



PONT Group

András Farkas / Strategic Director

Ágnes Balázsi-Pál /

Executive Director

Youth Engagement

Mapping small scale social innovations from participatory budgeting with young people

SDG CoLab
Barbara Bulc / Founder
Bianca Ștefania Băluță /
Project Manager
Nadina Pantea /
Local Project Manager

Fondation Botnar
Susanna Hausmann /
Chief Program Officer
Zur Oren / Partnerships Coordinator



SDG CoLab

Barbara Bulc / Founder
Bianca Ștefania Băluță /
Project Manager
Nadina Pantea /
Local Project Manager

Education & Learning

Participatory visual maps of environments and issues influencing wellbeing

- miniMass Marius Cătălin Moga / Founder
- UniversitArt

 Daniel Popescu / Vice President

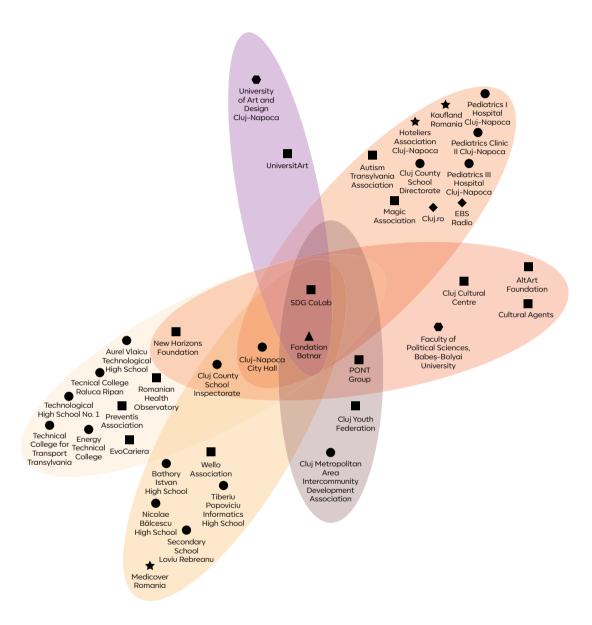
 Anamaria Tomiuc / President

Fondation Botnar
Susanna Hausmann /
Chief Program Officer
Zur Oren / Partnerships Coordinator



OurCluj Projects

Implementation Projects



EduAlert

- Romanian Health
 Observatory

 \$tefan Voinea / Board Member
- Cluj County School Inspectorate
 Mariana Pop / Former County Inspector
- Cluj-Napoca City Hall
 Emil Boc / Mayor
 Emilia Botezan / Coordinator and
 Responsible of External Relations
 Oana Buzatu / Spokesperson
 Ovidiu Cîmpean / Director

Education & Community Building

Technology supported program helping children stay in school by combining predictive technology for assessing dropout risk with evidence-based psychological interventions

- Energy Technical College
- Technical College for Transport Transylvania
- Technological High School No. 1
- Aurel Vlaicu Technological High School
- Technical College Raluca Ripan
- Preventis Association
- EvoCariera

 Florina Lendeczki / Co-founder

- New Horizons Foundation

 Anca Gaidos / Chief Operations Officer
- ▲ Fondation Botnar

 Susanna Hausmann /

 Chief Program Officer

 Zur Oren / Partnerships Coordinator
- SDG CoLab

 Barbara Bulc / Founder
 Bianca Ştefania Băluță /
 Project Manager
 Nadina Pantea /
 Local Project Manager

Wello

- Wello Association
 Dumitru Petreuş / Chief Technology
 Officer & Co-Founder
- Cluj County School Inspectorate
 Mariana Pop / Former County Inspector
- Nicolae Bălcescu High School
- Secondary School Liviu Rebreanu

Health & Community Building

A technology app and platform to improve healthy nutrition for overweight children, combined with learning camps

- Bathory Istvan High School
- Tiberiu Popoviciu Informatics High School
- ★ Medicover Romania
- Cluj-Napoca City Hall
 Emil Boc / Mayor
 Emilia Botezan / Coordinator and
 Responsible of External Relations
 Oana Buzatu / Spokesperson
 Ovidiu Cîmpean / Director
- SDG CoLab

 Barbara Bulc / Founder

 Bianca Ștefania Băluță /

 Project Manager

 Nadina Pantea /

 Local Project Manager
- Fondation Botnar
 Susanna Hausmann /
 Chief Program Officer
 Zur Oren / Partnerships Coordinator

MagicHelp

- Magic Association
 Florina Lendeczki / Former
 Executive Director
- Cluj-Napoca City Hall
 Emil Boc / Mayor
 Emilia Botezan / Coordinator and
 Responsible of External Relations
 Oana Buzatu / Spokesperson
 Ovidiu Cîmpean / Director
- Cluj County School Directorate
- Autism Transylvania
 Association

Health & Community Building

Engaging local partners through Cluj Helping Network and bringing communities together around children with serious illnesses

- Pediatrics I Hospital Cluj-Napoca
- Pediatrics Clinic II Clui-Napoca
- Pediatrics III Hospital Cluj-Napoca
- ★ Hoteliers Association Cluj-Napoca
- * Kaufland Romania
- ◆ EBS Radio

- Cluj.ro
- SDG CoLab
 Barbara Bulc / Founder
 Bianca Ștefania Băluță /
 Project Manager
 Nadina Pantea /
 Local Project Manager
- ▲ Fondation Botnar
 Susanna Hausmann /
 Chief Program Officer
 Zur Oren / Partnerships Coordinator





- Cluj Cultural Centre
- Cluj County School Inspectorate
 Mariana Pop / Former County Inspector
- Cluj-Napoca City Hall
 Emil Boc / Mayor
 Emilia Botezan / Coordinator and
 Responsible of External Relations
 Oana Buzatu / Spokesperson
 Ovidiu Cimpean / Director

Education & Community Building

A capacity building program for the schools in Cluj, connecting QUB (STEAM resource center) and the Cluj School Network (CSN), as a transfer and expansion mechanism

- PONT Group

 András Farkas / Strategic Director

 Ágnes Balázsi-Pál / Executive

 Director
- New Horizons Foundation Anca Gaidoş / Chief Operations Officer
- Faculty of Political, Administrative & Communication Sciences
 Cälin Hinţea / Dean
 Bogdan Radu / Lecturer
 Gabriel Bădescu / Professor
- Cultural Agents
- AltArt Foundation
- SDG CoLab

 Barbara Bulc / Founder

 Bianca Ștefania Băluță /

 Project Manager

 Nadina Pantea /

 Local Project Manager
- ▲ Fondation Botnar

 Susanna Hausmann /
 Chief Program Officer
 Zur Oren / Partnerships Coordinator

ArtiViStory

 University of Art and Design Cluj-Napoca

Daniel Popescu /
Cultural Projects Coordinator
Anamaria Tomiuc /
International Relations Coordinator
Alice Iliescu / Associate Professor PhD
ArtiViStory Collective

Communication & Community Building

Visual storytelling and artistic documentation of OurCluj

- UniversitArt
 Daniel Popescu / Vice President
 Anamaria Tomiuc / President
- SDG CoLab
 Barbara Bulc / Founder
 Bianca Ștefania Băluță /
 Project Manager
 Nadina Pantea /
 Local Project Manager
- Fondation Botnar
 Susanna Hausmann /
 Chief Program Officer
 Zur Oren / Partnerships Coordinator

Cluj for Youth 2030

- PONT Group

 András Farkas / Strategic Director

 Ágnes Balázsi-Pál /

 Executive Director
- Cluj Youth Federation
 Tudor Ogner/ President
 Tünde Buryán /
 Former Vice President
 Paul Emanuel Marc /
 General Secretary

Youth Engagement

Development of youth strategy for Cluj Metropolitan Area (Cluj for Youth 2030)

- Cluj Metropolitan Area Intercommunity
 Development Association
 Adrian Răulea /
 - Adrian Răulea / Development Coordinator
- SDG CoLab

 Barbara Bulc / Founder
 Bianca Ştefania Băluță /
 Project Manager
 Nadina Pantea /
 Local Project Manager
- Fondation Botnar
 Susanna Hausmann /
 Chief Program Officer
 Zur Oren / Partnerships Coordinator

OurCluj Projects Social Innovation Fund



- Cluj-Napoca City Hall
 Emil Boc / Mayor
 Emilia Botezan / Coordinator and Responsible of External Relations
 Oana Buzatu / Spokesperson
 Ovidiu Cimpean / Director
- ▲ Fondation Botnar
 Susanna Hausmann /
 Chief Program Officer
 Zur Oren / Partnerships Coordinator
- C-EDU Cluster for Education Simona Baciu / President
- PONT Group

 András Farkas / Strategic Director
 Ágnes Balázsi-Pál /
 Executive Director

Youth Social Innovation & Community Building

The first co-designed social innovation fund in Cluj-Napoca, supporting young social entrepreneurs and building learning communities

- Cluj Youth Federation
 Tudor Ogner/ President
 Tünde Buryán /
 Former Vice President
 Paul Emanuel Marc /
 General Secretary
- Cluj Metropolitan Area Intercommunity
 Development Association
 Adrian Răulea /
 Development Coordinator
- SDG CoLab

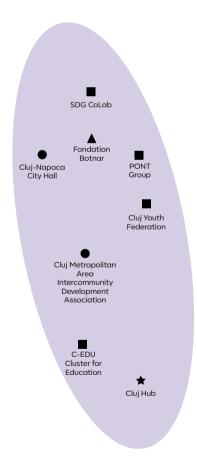
 Barbara Bulc / Founder

 Bianca Ștefania Băluță /

 Project Manager

 Nadina Pantea /

 Local Project Manager
- ★ ClujHub Cristian Dascălu / Co-founder



OurCluj began in the summer of 2019 with a series of exploratory meetings and workshops, co-hosted by Fondation Botnar, SDG Colab and diverse stakeholders.

As a basis for further engagement, in the first year the foundation commissioned a consortium-led interdisciplinary research study called "LEAP," which applied a systems perspective to understand the key factors and stakeholders influencing youth well-being in the Cluj Metropolitan Area. 25

It identified four interrelated priority areas for action: health, learning, agency, and enabling environment. These would serve as an initial compass to navigate complexities of youth well-being in the city. A need for systemic interventions in education and learning were highlighted as particularly relevant, indicating a potential for high-leverage impact spilling over to all other areas.



OurCluj participants exchange learnings in one of several convenings. Hosted at Segment Art Space, with artworks from ArtiViStory Collective.

Photo by: Roland Váczi, July 2021



 $\label{lem:condition} A \ collaborative \ branding \ workshop \ with \ Our Cluj \ participants \ at \ Cluj Hub \ coworking \ space.$

Photo by: Roland Váczi, March 2020



OurCluj workshop with active grantees and participants, exploring values guiding their practices. At Silicon Forest in Cluj.

Photo by: Roland Váczi, March 2020



 $Participatory\ development\ of\ OurCluj\ identity.$

Photo by: Roland Váczi, March 2020

Launch of the LEAP interdisciplinary study in collaboration with the city hall and its Cluj Civic Imagination and Innovation Centre (CIIC).

LEAP

Source: Cluj-Napoca City Archive, January 2021



Mapping of Com'ON ecosystems of small scale social innovation projects, funded through participatory budgeting since 2015; featured FitCreativ in the Gheorgheni Sports Base, part of Com'ON 2021.



Source: PONT Group Archive



Presentation of MagicHelp implementation project to OurCluj participants.



Photo by: Roland Váczi, September 2019



 $UniDex\ team, one\ of\ 140\ innovation\ projects\ by\ youth\ participants,\ presenting\ to\ the\ jury\ for\ FIX\ Cluj\ funding\ and\ training.$



Source: PONT Group Archive, December 2021



A workshop with science teachers in Cluj to develop STEAM resource center (Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics) for guiding student inquiry, dialogue, and critical thinking. Organized by Cluj Cultural Centre with the school inspectorate.

Learning QUB Source: Cluj Cultural Centre Archive, Cluj Hub, February 2022

Learning QUB implementation project builds educational capacity for schools in the Cluj Metropolitan Area. This includes cultivating creativity and freedom of expression to advance the quality of learning through Cluj Schools Network.



Source: Cluj Cultural Centre Archive, Onisifor Ghibu High School, 2021

Cluj Never Sleeps 2021 festival, a milestone event mobilizing young people on a journey to develop a common youth strategy for the Cluj Metropolitan Area (Cluj for Youth 2030). Organized with the Cluj Youth Federation, PONT Group and the municipality.



Source: Cluj Never Sleeps Archive, October 2021

Graphic artists from the University of Arts and Design in Cluj engaging in visual storytelling and creative documentation practices during a codesign session.



Photo by: Roland Váczi, OurCluj workshop, March 2020











Participants in EduAlert implementation project during one of group mentoring sessions. Weekly meetings gave the students a chance to experience new perspectives about life and school through games, discussions, role-palying and other interactive activities.



Source: EduAlert Archive, Octavian Goga County Library, 2019



Wello works with local schools and a network of partners in Cluj to teach children about nutrition and a healthy lifestyle.



Source: Wello Association Archive, Nicolae Bălcescu High School, 2019



OurCluj is envisioned as a 10-year endeavor that will unfold in four phases. Such long-term commitment by the foundation for its OurCity initiative comes from an understanding that any systemic change requires time and persistent engagement.

The core of its design process is a continuous, participatory way of working and learning together with city stakeholders from the public, private, and civic sectors, including the city's youth. The process begins by building a foundation for change by understanding the city social, political, and economic systems in a relational context. Partners first identify "where we are" and "where we want to be." Throughout the process, they make choices that move them towards these objectives, while also recognizing that they may change over time. Phase I is a testing or prototyping phase (also called a "minimum viable product" by the foundation) that introduces OurCity's basic features, identifies potential priority areas for systemic transformation, gathers collective feedback, and decides on future directions. OurCluj is currently in Phase II of the development process.

The affordance of this VBULL's location as both inside and outside of formal institutions gives it the ability to enable institutional transformation. Institutions are "humanly devised constraints that shape subsequent human action." The ways that human action tends to form within institutions is through a series of path dependencies. Rules and regulations dictate the scope and nature of paths that human users of the system can take. This form of change tends to focus on tweaking path dependencies and making slight alterations in how people occupy systems, but rarely does institutional transformation focus on path shaping. In other words, too often institutions are seen as timeless systems occupied by rational actors, and not often enough approached as accommodating new paths with newly articulated values.

We seek to understand how the OurCluj VBULL is poised to shape new paths in the city.

Artwork and text by Evelina-Maria Grigorean, ArtiViStory Collective

This is a visual documentation of a meeting between the municipality, SDG Collab, and Botnar Fondation where the discussion focused on OurCluj and its projects, future goals and challenges. Cultivating trust between the local administration and the citizens, prioritizing youth involvement and focusing on cocreation in urban innovation – these were the goals discussed throughout the meeting.



Artwork by Teodora Predescu, ArtViStory Collective

This artwork was created in early stages of the research, seeking to understand how can OurCluj shape new paths in the city.

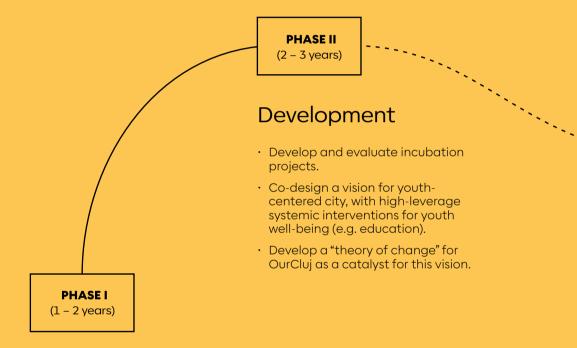


Artwork by Zsófia Bernát, ArtiViStory Collective

This artistic representation of the OurCluj logic model shows how the model is intended to work. Logic model is a systematic way to present the relationships among the resources, the activities, and the results to bring about a desired change.



OurCluj Development Phases



Introduction (testing)

- Map and analyze challenges and opportunities for youth well-being.
- · Identify priority areas for systemic transformation (e.g. education).
- Incubate co-design projects around priority areas.

PHASE IV

(7 - 10 years)

Transition (exiting)

- Transition to a local backbone organization or a novel partnership arrangement.
- Establish collaborative governance arrangements.
- Monitor and evaluate results, adapt as needed.

PHASE III (4 - 7 years)

Transformation

- Enable stakeholders to co-design and implement collaborative, mutually reinforcing interventions.
- Cultivate communities of practice and shared learning.
- Monitor and evaluate results, adapt as needed.

Activating Values in Urban Transitions: A novel approach to urban innovation in Romania ®

Methodology

This report is informed by traditional and emerging qualitative research methods. The research launched in March 2020, just prior to widespread lockdowns because of the COVID-19 virus. In early March, we held a half-day, in-person workshop with active grantees and participants in OurCluj. Workshop participants were taken through a series of exercises that encouraged them to surface the values guiding their practices. These activities were structured by the digital self-assessment tool Meetr. Seven of these participants were later interviewed.

Over the course of one year, we interviewed 29 OurCluj participants and local experts twice each, resulting in a total of 57 semi-structured, hourlong interviews. Interviewees came from public, private, civic, philanthropy, media and academic sectors, with diverse cultural backgrounds and age groups. All interviews were conducted over Zoom. Nineteen participants chose to be interviewed in English and ten chose to be interviewed in

Romanian. English interviews were transcribed. Interviews conducted in Romanian were translated into English and then transcribed. Two members of the research team coded each interview for themes using NVivo qualitative analysis software.

During each initial interview, the researcher and interviewee were joined by two or three visual artists from ArtiViStory Collective, an arts collective that includes university faculty and twelve graphic arts students in Cluj. During the interview the artists took notes and made rough sketches. Within a week, they would finalize their illustrations and share them with the interviewee prior to the scheduled follow-up interview. The follow-up interview, in which the researcher would talk to the interviewee about the artistic representations, took place approximately three weeks after the initial interview. The researcher would ask questions such as: Does the image accurately capture what we talked about? Does the image represent you well? What is surprising in the representation? What is missing from the representation?

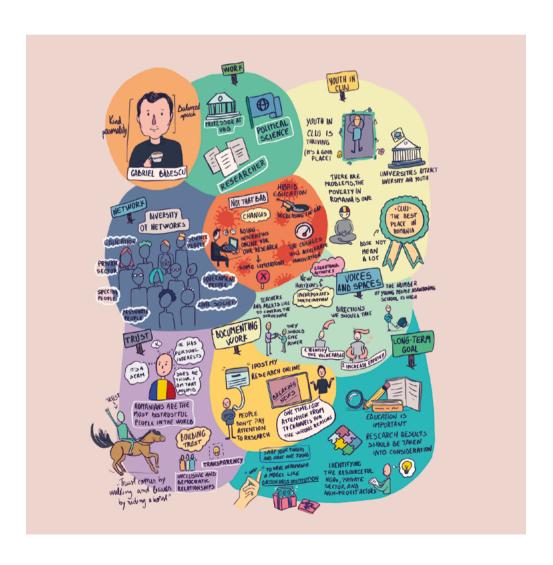
Each artist had a distinct visual style. Some were more representational (see Example 1), meaning that the image felt like a document of events. Others were more figurative (see Example 2), resulting in opportunities for interpretation and exploration. Different people reacted differently to these styles. Some embraced the ambiguity of the figurative style, while others looked for more concrete representation. In all cases, the artwork was a catalyst for reflection and analysis, as we used them to ask interviewees to comment on their role in the VBULL and how they are perceived by others.

Analysis of the interviews involved weekly discussions with all members of the research team about each of the codes. Insights and themes, along with interview excerpts representing them, were drawn from each code. In this report, interviews are cited anonymously with the following format: (Sector + Interviewee number + Number 1 or 2, referring to first or second interview, for example Gov-1.2). The only exception is Mayor Boc. Because of his status as a public figure, he is quoted directly throughout. All interviewees are listed in the Acknowledgements section in alphabetical order, but to protect their privacy, quotes are not attributed to them directly. All the quotes and images published in this report are used by permission of the participants.

Our research team was also embedded within the activities of the VBULL. Barbara Bulc, who is the primary steward of OurCluj and contracted by the foundation, is part of the research team and a co-author of this report. She did not conduct any of the interviews, as we were concerned about interviewees' ability to be critical of the projects and overall arrangement. But she did collect dozens of pages of field notes throughout her everyday activities, which gave us deeper insight into the VBULL's activities. These notes and Barbara's reflections have given us the ability to contextualize what we heard from people and to put the descriptions and reflections into conversation with the VBULL's ongoing activities.

Example 1 of representational artwork that documents the topics discussed By Evelina-Maria Grigorean, ArtiViStory Collective

This artwork is a representation of one of the interviews; it shows the whole process of the interview. The interviewee talked about the education system and the changes that should be applied, the lack of trust present in our country, and about young people in Cluj.



Example 2 of figurative artwork to discuss ellipses in meaning By Melinda Ureczki Lázár, ArtiViStory Collective

This image is an essentialization of the information given by one of the stakeholders, Cristian Dascălu. As my artistic process involves a more personal interpretation, the information from the visual representation could implicitly decode it. This essentially means that the narrative elements contain the information provided by the stakeholder and also contain my opinion and perception about him.



Practicing Urban Transitions

- Imagining Futures ③
- O Remembering the Past \odot
- Sharing power ⊙



Urban innovation is often understood through the evaluation of specific projects, like new technologies and programs. Indeed, understanding why a project succeeds is an important way to evaluate what is happening in a city ecosystem. However, looking only at the nodes and not the connective tissue that binds the nodes can be misleading as it disregards the relationships that form between projects. Such an approach doesn't consider how narratives are generated and spread, and it doesn't sufficiently examine the cultural context in which narratives take shape.

By contrast, our research examines the spaces between projects and the specific practices that center democratization in digital transformation. In this report, through our in-depth look at innovation in Cluj, we place these practices into three categories:

- Imagining Futures
- O Remembering the Past
- Sharing Power

We then make the argument that these categories are the foundation of digital objects that typically represent urban innovation.

Imagining Futures

Imagination as Public Resource ⊙

Towards Multi-Sectoral Collaboration \cite{Grade}

Local Decision-Making \odot

Centering Youth Perspectives *⊙*

Understanding Well-Being \odot

Artwork and text by Melinda Ureczki Lázár, ArtiViStory Collective





Imagining Futures

[[

The only war that matters is the war against imagination; all other wars are subsumed in it.

Diane di Prima (1971)

Systemic challenges – including the climate crisis, free-falling trust in government, and social exclusion – necessitate the deliberate imagining and operationalizing of alternatives to the status quo.

But imagination is a slippery concept. It describes a mental image of something that does not yet exist. Everyone imagines, yet while imaginaries exist in the minds of a single person, they are also shared between people. The historian Benedict Anderson explained that any group of people composed of more individuals than they all personally know is an "imagined community." The concept of nation is imagined "because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion." In this sense, imagination is activated as people make sense of their present communities, their cities or towns, their social or political identities, and their still-unformed futures.

However, imagination is also affected by social and political circumstances. The obstacles to transform the world can limit the imagination about its future. Imagination implies a freedom to create, and that freedom is not equally distributed. This lack of freedom leads to many not being able to strive for their imaginaries, or even just to ponder and explore them. When imaginaries intersect with politics, power determines which imaginaries matter. Those in power can have a monopoly on imagination: for example, dictators present an intractable future to which subjects have no choice but to capitulate. However, restricting imaginaries does not only happen in authoritarian regimes. Even democracies are shaped by institutional prerogatives where leaders of government organizations or other powerful institutions influence what imaginaries of a locality, a region, or a people matter, and which do not.

Scholars of civic media have used the term "civic imagination" to explore these imaginaries of collective life. Baiocchi et al. describe the civic imagination as quite simply "people's theories of civic life" and the "cognitive roadmaps, moral compasses, and guides that shape participation and motivate action." Likewise, Henry Jenkins et al. bring the civic imagination into practical focus by applying it to resistance movements. To Jenkins, it is the capacity to imagine alternatives to current cultural, social, political, or economic conditions; "one cannot change the world without imagining what a better world might look like." Before acting in the world, there is a process through which individuals and groups construct and find power in imaginaries. This process is not simply about designing possible futures; it is about designing the process through which one might achieve desirable futures. "The civic imagination requires and is realized through the ability to imagine the process of change, to see oneself as a civic agent capable of making change, to feel solidarity with others whose perspectives and experiences are different than one's own, to join a larger collective with shared interests, and to bring imaginative dimensions to real-world spaces and places."33



Imagination as Public Resource

Cluj is experiencing a democratic transformation; once-excluded publics are being invited to a discussion about the future of their city. For this reason, imagination is a rhetorical concept that aspirational government organizations are using to facilitate their own democratic emergence. The Centre for Civic Imagination was introduced by Mayor Boc and his team in 2017 as an arm of the mayor's office, and [the Centre was] charged with supporting and collecting input from the public. According to a city employee, "We had these talks about the need to create an instrument in order to involve the citizens, the ecosystem, the civil society, the universities, in the city life and decision-making process. This is how we started. We called it 'civic imagination' because of our slogan 'we imagine the city together'" (Govt-1). In other cities, this agency is often called "Office of Community Engagement" or "Office of Neighborhood Services". In Cluj, the office is rhetorically aligned with imagination to remove its work from the "dry" policy realm and to situate it within a context of democratic creativity, exploration, and ultimately action. The mayor states that it is "the job of the mayor with his staff to create projects based on the dreams of the people." For Boc, the Centre has become a kind of shorthand for democracy, as the concept of imagination is wielded by government representatives to refer to the prosocial aspirations of a responsive government. According to a city employee familiar with the Centre, "it's more like an exhibition than a lab, but it's more accurate to say more like a lab than an exhibition – an instrument to involve the citizens' ecosystem." (Govt-1.2). Boc likes to say, "Cluj is an ecosystem, not an egosystem," and argues the work of governing is dependent on the capacity of the people to imagine how they would like to govern themselves.

There is a significant gap between rhetoric and reality: for one, the Centre is under-resourced and [is] managed by a single staff person with very limited capacity. But furthermore, Boc's central vision was challenged by many civil society actors we interviewed. As one participant in OurCluj told us, despite the existence of the Centre, he never has "big discussions about big futures with the municipality.".

"The discussions so far are like 'OK, there's a conference coming up in three months' time. Let's see how we are cooperating. There is funding coming up for this year. Let's see what we [can] do.' We never discuss four years ahead" (Civic-2).

This theme emerged repeatedly in our interviews; the municipality was great at coordinating people to participate in an external competition

or event but did not prioritize long-term planning or discussion about matters that are important to people or involved sharing power. A central problem highlighted by many was the lack of resources directed at the new office, but others also pointed at bigger hurdles of trust that make the municipality a less-than-ideal facilitator of these conversations.

"If we had public institutions with which we could work, we could move mountains. This is our biggest barrier and has been for so long" (Acad-5).

We found a sincere appreciation of the municipality's ability to facilitate competition entries and city-wide initiatives that support innovation, but also a desire for the city government to lead through structural reform.

"Many aspects are left behind in the city development and especially those that are very difficult to deal with. Some of them are unresolvable, mostly invisible things, and they really hurt the actual daily life of many people in the city. It's not about the traffic. Everybody's complaining about the traffic everywhere and always. It's more than that. People see here the consequences but not the source of the problem. And the source of the problem demands dealing with a lot of powerful drives that politicians sometimes don't want to mess with – influencing local real estate economics. For example, the cooperation between the neighboring villages and the city, it's catastrophic. On the whole, there is basically no real strategy. The city and the county had all the means to promote a metropolitan development strategy and still it has chosen to let things flow their way. And you cannot resolve this later on, but in the long run with repairing projects" (Private-6.2).

There is a consensus on the fact that this is difficult work, but a clear theme among those with whom we spoke was a need for partnership to figure out a development strategy. This includes historical challenges in partnering with the national government to mobilize resources for vital and structural projects in cities other than the capital, such as the "belt road" project in Cluj.



Towards Multi-Sectoral Collaboration

The lack of trust in government points to the limitations of seeking institutional transformation from within government. In order to build trust, it is important that other sectors are brought into decision making from the beginning. For example, as a government initiative, the Centre for Civic Imagination has struggled to genuinely mobilize imaginaries. There is a perception that the government does not solicit meaningful conversations, and even if [it] did, [the government is not] perceived to be trustworthy enough for people to allow themselves to share their visions and ideas for the future. According to a social entrepreneur in Cluj:

"One thing that I would see as essential would be some walls shattered between people, citizens, youth and public authorities. I would like to see some better form of collaboration and engagement between people, because even if you have small initiatives that are successful, you want to have them scaled up. And of course, this is where the authorities have to step in, whether it is the municipality or whatever structure. So having more transparency, more trust between these two forces or groups would be something that I would really enjoy seeing" (Acad-3).

For these reasons, building structures for collaboration is a priority. Individuals and groups are making strides in their programs, but they want more connectivity and comfort in trusting collaborators. One of the functions of OurCluj is to strengthen that connective tissue. Fondation Botnar has emphasized the support of social infrastructure, not just projects. According to a Fondation Botnar employee close to the Cluj project:

"If you create a strong network of people, peers that can work together, that can dream together and create together, there are higher chances that they will stay in the city than if you create a very nice park with no real social connection. And if we want to fund a project like that and we want to become sustainable, we need to find mechanisms to actually implement it within the public system eventually. Otherwise, once we are gone, unfortunately, there are higher chances that the project will be done" (Fdn-2).

According to another leader from Fondation Botnar, there is also a desire to spark new beginnings through project funding, which can only happen with proper investment to establish and support networks.

"Maybe it needs help to start in the beginning, for example to actively convene, but then the more people and stakeholders start to know each other, there are often unintended consequences, unintended benefits or unintended meetings that grow from the first seeds that we planted" (Fdn-1.2).

Artwork and text by Melinda Ureczki Lázár, ArtiViStory Collective

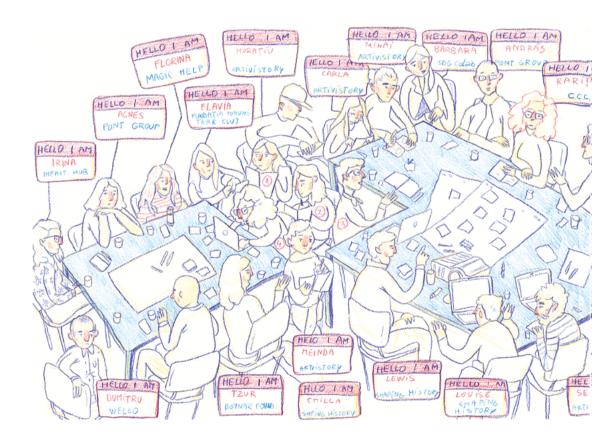
These illustrations show the process of information and the practical implementation of the conclusions in a collective environment-space. The two illustration segments reflect the complex processes that have taken place during different projects. The structures (ladders, stairs, doors, etc.), which are represented as leitmotifs symbolize the desire for growth and development. These visual motifs are implicitly present, but in my opinion, they homogenize the basic tendencies that emerge in the projects that are trying to help society.

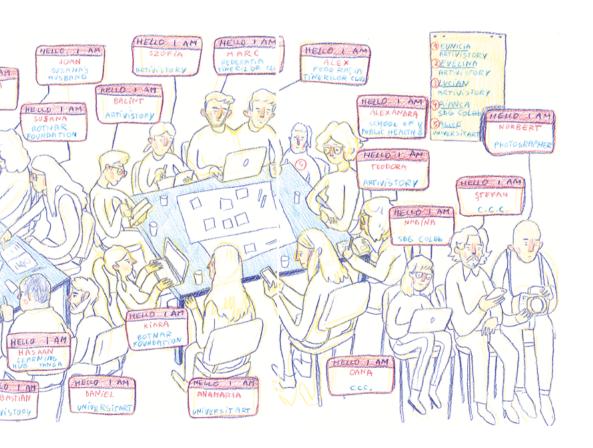




Artwork and text by Lucian Barbu, ArtiViStory Collective

In this spread I depicted everyone that took part in one of the first OurCluj workshops. I tried to capture the diversity that each stakeholder brings to the table, while also translating the feeling of the room buzzing with ideas and collaboration. This embodies multisectoral solution seeking.





Local Decision-Making

A common concern among our informants was lack of local decision-making, which is likely a factor in the limited trust in municipal government. As one participant mentioned:

"Because [national] authorities are not that close to the citizens and they do not influence the votes that much, they are generally more reluctant to needs they do not see as relevant to their activity, or certain processes or mechanisms do not become a priority as quickly as it happens in the case of local authorities" (Civic-10).

According to Mayor Boc, who formally served as the Prime Minister of Romania, decentralization is an important factor in how the city is imagined.

"Decentralization means more decisions at the local level. We need more decentralization, without being a federal state, because it's not possible according to the constitution to think about a federal state. But we have, inside of the unitary state, the capacity to decentralize more tasks to the local level and to keep, as I said, the national level, as the power of control. That's what the European Union is talking about when they say 'subsidiarity.' The decisions should be taken by the authority that is the closest to the citizens. That's not working yet enough in Romania."



Artwork by Horațiu Coman, ArtiViStory Collective

Artwork from interviews

Centering Youth Perspectives

Local decision-making goes well beyond government organizations. The role of youth leadership was a prominent theme in our interviews. As people were asked to imagine a future Cluj, they often discussed wanting to enhance the power of youth. One person said that:

"more mature guidance and youth implementation is needed. I think young people should run their own organizations, but I don't think they're able to do that now. We're talking about administrative capacity or building capacity in other areas, too... This is often brought up in various project discussions. That is, we have a youth organization which isn't able to manage the interests of the youth" (Private-3).

Participants repeatedly drew attention to the irony of a "youthful city" that continues to deny young people agency.

Young people are not given the tools to play a vital role in their communities. A participant highlighted that the long-term goal,

"is to increase youth agency, empowered by adults, not replaced by them. Yes, this speaks about the importance of agency, which is not taken seriously in Romania. Parents do things for their children. Everything is structured for children and youth, and they are more like a recipient where adults pour their knowledge and their wisdom and so on. But I am sure that things will change. I have faith that Romanian youth will become more autonomous" (Acad-2.2).

Participants imagined that this could happen both through organizational transformation and the physical transformation of the city. One participant spoke about building "totems" to youth agency, or renaming city streets to represent generational shifts. Several respondents shared their visions of an education system that supported youth learning, was student centered, and was focused on the development of a child's well-being in addition to academic learning outcomes. "If we don't invest a lot in education and information and the access to very useful information, that's very well targeted towards a sustainable future, things are going to change very slowly in Romania, and we are going to be quite behind" (Civic-7).



Understanding Well-Being

When asked about what well-being in Cluj could look like, our respondents answered in largely varying ways. This demonstrates the complexity of how well-being is perceived, understood, and imagined. Some prioritized a need for basic living conditions, such as housing and employment. As one young person put it: "OK, I'm staying in Cluj, but how can I afford to live here? If you have your own stable place, [then] you don't need to have many jobs to afford it. I think that would really help in terms of well-being and prosperity, in general" (Civic-5). Others prioritized self-development, life satisfaction, and fulfillment. An architect working in Cluj put it this way: "The first thing is to be able to change myself. To what extent can I change my lifestyle and the underpinning motivations?" (Civic-7).

A cultural professional expressed:

"In principle, one of my fundamental beliefs is that people can be whatever they want to be. To me, that means that there are, of course, some limitations, some path-related conditions, some systemic inequalities, which actually limit the horizon. Within this limited horizon, I think we each have the possibility, but also the responsibility, to explore, to realize what we want to be, what we could be and what we need to do, through a lot of practice, some of it pleasant, some quite fastidious, all sorts of experiences, try them all while we are young. And then, when we think we understand what we want to be, we must try and acquire the knowledge, abilities, skills required in order to do that, and, especially, the courage to do it, even if, quite often, that is against all so-called logic. Even if it is contrary to social rules, so to speak" (Civic-9).

There was general awareness about how an unfit education system, disdain for the natural and built environment, and devaluing of creativity negatively influenced well-being. The LEAP study on youth well-being (one of the OurCluj projects) acted as a primer for participants to explore the concept of well-being. One researcher said:

"I started to read about youth health and so on, and I actually got to the concept of well-being and saw that well-being is an umbrella for a lot of domains that actually are related to the quality of life of youth. So now, I understand well-being as a concept that integrates five components: environment, health, education, agency and subjective well-being" (Acad-2).

According to another participant, awareness of interdependent relationships helped them live a meaningful life:

"I really became aware of the fact that we humans are all connected... So, I'm really trying to think about my daughter every day, and that's

guiding my decision... I'm trying to imagine the world that we're building for her in 2050. And it's a world where there will be less land, because we're over constructing... It's a world with less and less fish, a world where pollution and heat will be about the change that needs to be done... The wisdom is about how you spend this time. And when you reach this level of awareness I think that you make informed decisions about how you construct your life" (Private-4).

These approaches to imaginaries represent a discursive process that stretches beyond sectoral boundaries and bridges generational divides in a social context that is deeply fragmented. Our Cluj, at its most basic, can be seen as a forum for imagining futures. It is intentionally structured and carefully shepherded to help participants navigate a very difficult social context. And they often found it disappointing. As one participant shared:

"We, and I, speak a lot about the power of disappointment and how to use it in planning or in imagining the future – the strategic planning. Because this is sometimes the only weapon we have to see where disappointment comes from and to give it power to demand something that cannot rise from the sum of private interests. It's much more than that, and that is what planning is all about" (Private-6).

In the next section, we explore how disappointment played out in OurCluj as people actively connected their future visions with the social and cultural realities of the past.

Artwork by Melinda Ureczki Lázár, ArtiViStory Collective

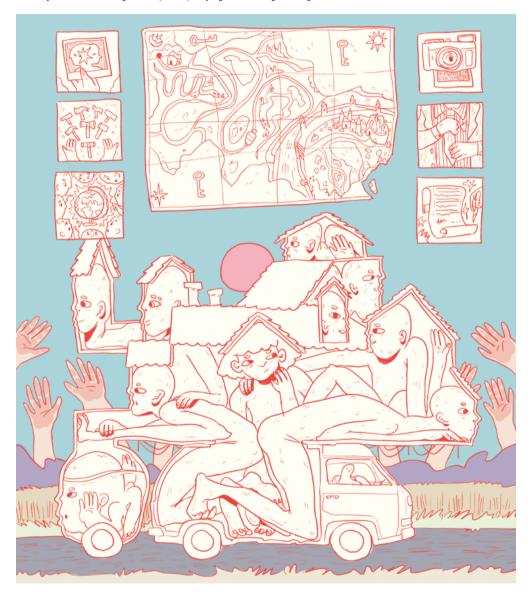
Artwork from interviews





Artwork and text by Lucian Barbu, ArtiViStory Collective

This piece of visual documentation is highly relevant for the inclusion of the youth in the process of imagining a common future. Started as a visual allegory to Cluj Youth Federation's (Federația Tinerilor din Cluj) plan of a mobile youth center to help and activate young people from underdeveloped areas of the county, it became a visual symbol of not leaving anyone behind [as we move] towards the common goal of a healthier future, in which youth agency is inspired and nourished by the adults, present in the image in the form of helping hands along the way.



Artwork and text by Lucian Barbu, ArtiViStory Collective

This piece was developed after an early-state workshop of the LEAP initiative. It translates the attitude that young people in Cluj have over four aspects of well-being in a visually symbolic manner. Each image is supposed to showcase the young people's incredibly mature and comprehensive understanding on nutritional, physical, mental, and interpersonal health.







Remembering the Past

Culture of Mistrust (3)

Individualism vs. Collectivism ⊕

Artwork and text by Melinda Ureczki Lázár, ArtiViStory Collective

These four sequential illustrations were made during the LEAP workshop discussion. I wanted to reflect on the situation of young people and the contexts that influence how they function in their everyday lives. Processing the past in this way also affects the young generation. The relationship we have with our past is crucial in the process of contextualising ourselves.









Remembering the Past

For any governing arrangement, it is important to understand the cultural context in which it is situated. Especially when values and imagination are centered, as is the case with OurCluj, the place of history and memory is essential. History and memory provide different approaches to conceptualizing the past, which Misztal describes as the "learned past" and the "lived past." Histories are often formalized, documented in memos and textbooks. Memories are experiences, often affective retellings of historical narratives, that can be individual or collective. Indeed, the distinction between history and memory can become so blurred that the culture of remembering often gets formalized into historical monuments or political speeches. In OurCluj, the tension between history and memory is not just a backdrop but an animating feature of the arrangement.

We heard from people that barriers to achieving a shared future vision include the strong presence of an unwanted past.

Memories, either lived or told, of the communist past in Romania are present in most every active attempt at imagining the future. In this section, we examine how history and memory inform practices of urban innovation in Cluj and the challenges of centering democratization in future visions. The persistent tension between the imagination of a democratic future and the perception of an immutable non-democratic past is a key component of OurCluj.

Culture of Mistrust

It was a common sentiment among interviewees that the city has come a long way from its post-communist governments. According to a local journalist, "You have to understand that the previous administration was horrifyingly closed and filled with propaganda" (Media-1). The administration was nationalistic, actively pitted Romanian speakers against Hungarian speakers, and sowed division as a means of centralizing administrative authority. It had close ties to Caritas, a Ponzi scheme of astonishing proportions in the 1990s, which was moved to Cluj and further contributed to division and mistrust. It is generally accepted that the Boc administration made significant strides in changing this approach to governing. A current government employee added:

"Twenty years ago, this city was really closed and narrow-minded and nationalistic, and it had a mayor that started everything with 'NO.' And when I joined the city hall, I came into this building and wanted to see how things are done out of curiosity, because working with this institution from the outside as a journalist, I was trying to steal information since everything was closed, everything was impossible, everything was done in a way that was secret, you know. And then the new administration came in 2004, and there were four years for me as a journalist to work with an open administration, but still discovering how to be open because there were no tools, openness and transparency, institutionally speaking" (Govt-2).

While Mayor Boc has attempted to put some tools in place, it is important to consider that these cannot exist outside of their context. Democratic transitions take time, and new tools to foster openness don't work unless there is a culture of openness for them to exist within. As one participant told us:

"I think it has to do with our history. So until 1989, during the communist regime, you could not trust anyone. Relationships were very shallow because you wouldn't know which individuals were collaborating with the Secret Service and making reports. If you would make a joke, it would have political implications. Next day, if your good friend wrote a report that night, they could come and pick you up and you could be arrested. After the revolution, it was found out there were wives who were writing regular reports about what their husbands were saying. Relationships went only so deep as to maintain the connections. After the revolution, people started focusing more and more on life, and those connections, of course, broke, but they continued to teach their kids this. I was told by my parents to never start business with other people because they don't work well, so never trust anyone" (Acad-1).



Despite the active efforts to imagine new futures, most people spoke of the significant hurdles to surmounting their shared history. For older adults with first-hand experience with communism, there tended to be less optimism about the future. One person told us that the only thing that will truly bring about change is for the older generation to die off. "I know it sounds bad, but we need for the people that were mature before the revolution to be physically dead. Not just retired, but physically dead, because they will not let go of the power" (Acad-1). Others had a more optimistic view of institutional transformation, and believed that it could be possible – especially on the local level – to do things differently. Cluj Cultural Centre, a multi-stakeholder nonprofit organization with over 100 members including the Cluj municipality, adopted the acronym WEAST to describe its theory of change; Wonder, Explore, Activate, Share, and Trust comprise the five-step process of realizing change. Importantly, it starts by collectively imagining what's possible and ends with trusting the collective. This vision, by nature of the Cluj Cultural Centre's multi-sector organization, includes the public sector as an essential partner.

On one hand, there is a view that the municipality is a facilitator of civic imagination and trust. On the other hand, there is a view that instead of imagining, people need to just trust the government more. "They don't need to be afraid to come here," one government employee explained. "We (the municipality) need to go the extra mile so that they (the citizens) don't need to be afraid to come here," one government employee explained.

"If you speak with someone young in the city who never owned anything or never paid taxes because they are too young to become a fully engaged citizen, therefore they don't have a personal experience to validate this opinion, still they will tell you that they don't want to come to the city hall. This is because historically, from their parents and grandparents, they know that something frustrating always happened. And these kinds of fears exist without reason, because if you ask them 'Have you ever been there?', they'll say 'No,' or 'Have you ever met somebody who was not nice to you?', they'll say 'No,' and if you ask them 'But why don't you want to go?', they'll say 'Because... bureaucracy and public institutions are stupid'." (Govt-2).

Even youth have come to disregard the role of the public sector, not so much because of its perceived malintent, but rather because they see it as incompetent and incapable of mediating public life. For a city that is seeking to reimagine itself and a municipality that's seeking to reinvent democratic governance, this canard still presents significant challenges to social and economic progress. For example, there is the perception that the city does not have the ability to lead partnerships, thus putting the onus of responsibility on other sectors. "My biggest frustration when it comes to the City of Cluj is the fact that the city hall has a very passive approach," according to a university professor. "I always feel like we need to keep pushing and keep asking. And so the city hall doesn't have an agenda, a plan, an aim that would involve the university in any state" (Acad-1).

This is a clear and present problem with OurCluj, as the municipality is a key player in the organization. Whether it's an educational technology startup like EduAlert, a health technology initiative like MagicHelp, a healthy nutrition app like Wello, or a social innovation fund like FIX Cluj (Cluj Experiment and Innovation Fund), the public sector has a role in scaffolding, scaling, and incorporating these projects into a larger citywide vision. But of course, achieving alignment and growth is challenging when trust levels in the public sector and the public remain low. So, the city is confronting a lack of trust in the collective to act in the public's interest.

Artwork by Melinda Ureczki Lázár, ArtiViStory Collective

This artwork was created at the Cluj Atlas workshop, exploring history of urban gardening and local food production in Cluj-Napoca.



Artwork by Zsófia Bernát, ArtiViStory Collective

Artwork from interviews



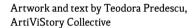
Artwork and text by Evelina-Maria Grigorean, ArtiViStory Collective

This section is from a bigger piece where I have visually explored the issues that have been raised in the stakeholder interviews. In this section, I express the process of citizens trying to find a way to voice their opinions. I wanted to show that it is a process full of challenges and it does not always have the desired result.



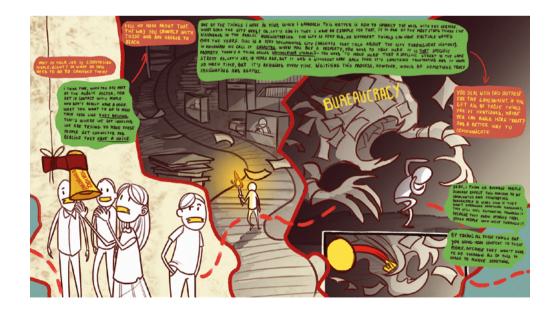
Artwork by Lucian Barbu, ArtiViStory Collective.

Artwork from interviews



This piece shows a government official describing a bureaucracy monster that people perceive. This image highlights the fact that bureaucracy is a persistent issue in the public sector, slowing down processes that could be solved in simpler ways (by digital means, for instance). This issue makes people more reluctant to interact with the public sector, which only perpetuates frustration and a mistrustful attitude towards anything that has to do with the city hall or any other type of public institution.



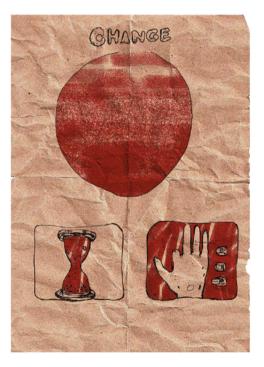


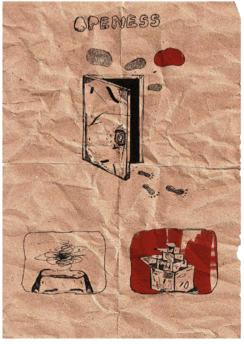


Artwork and text by Melinda Ureczki Lázár, ArtiViStory Collective

These three illustrations were made for the very first workshop in which I selected different keywords and put them into a more symbolic visual form. These three key words, namely trust, change, openness, are the "tools" that the city needs to shed the negative effects of the post-communist form of governance.







Artwork and text by Evelina-Maria Grigorean, ArtiViStory Collective

This section is from a bigger piece where I have visually explored the issues that have been raised in the stakeholder interviews. Using symbols and image association, I visually translated the lack of trust present in our society country-wide. This subject has been mentioned in every interview I have participated in.





Individualism vs. Collectivism

ULLs are typically organized around a concept of innovation culture. They promote creative thinking, risk taking, and entrepreneurialism and celebrate the individual inventor over collective purpose. This focus on individualism is quite complicated in Cluj, and many participants in OurCluj described their unease, born from history, in negotiating individualism with a sense of collectivism. A local entrepreneur explained that "communism has destroyed initiative, entrepreneurship, pride, the good part of individualism" (Private-4). At the same time, because of memories of communism, there is a widely held perception that community is also not easily formed. According to a local academic, "I feel that Romanians are particularly cautious and not very oriented toward community. It doesn't come naturally" (Acad-1).

Creating a collaborative arrangement in Cluj like a ULL, which promotes individual achievement and collective outcomes, is particularly challenging. Individualism is seen as a pro-democratic characteristic that has been eroded by memories of the past. Community or collectivism is seen as out of reach because of a lack of interpersonal trust and can even be regarded as undesirable because it evokes communist rhetoric. This tension has been considered in the design of the ULL. The foundation and its facilitation partner created spaces for dialogue, openness to dissent, and time for forming relationships. This is why Fondation Botnar has made a long-term commitment. "It's not something where you have quick wins or quick changes," says a foundation officer.

"It is very important to build up trust with the different stakeholders, which means that you cannot just come in and say, 'Okay, you and you and you sit together and produce something.' As a funder, you actually really have to listen a lot, and that's not always easy because of course, there are a lot of program or project partners that always have very nice ideas on how they could solve a problem very quickly. And of course, you have the money. So we are very careful not to react quickly, but really build trust in order to also get the ownership into the individual stakeholders and then have ownership in the collective" (Fdn-1).

In Cluj, a significant amount of attention in the city was placed on city competitions. In fact, many of the participants in the VBULL had already worked together to create applications in European competitions. Mayor Boc told the story of a group of young people approaching him in 2012, just as he became mayor for the second time.

"This was an NGO that I remember exactly. They said, 'Look, Mr. Mayor, would you agree to work together to fulfill an application to become the European Youth Capital?' I said, 'I know about European Youth Capital, and it's complicated, difficult, but let's do it!' But I didn't do it alone. Of course, they need just my support. So we started the process to become the European Youth Capital, bringing together 56 youth NGOs. I was there to listen. I never imposed my opinions on the project. I never said no to anything. I said debate, discuss, deliberate, vote, and let us have a project together. I can assure monetary support. That's my job. And it was a fantastic process. We built up a very strong application and we won. Two years later, we became the 2015 European Youth Capital."

We interviewed several of the people who were involved in this initiative, and overwhelmingly, they saw the process as useful for building trusted networks. Because it involved such a wide range of NGOs, it also bridged cultural divides, specifically between Hungarian- and Romanian-speaking communities. The European Youth Capital application process is seen as a starting place for emergent collaboration in the city but certainly not the end point. Several business associations and industry clusters have formed since then that have created opportunities for people to explore collaboration. According to an entrepreneur who has been deeply involved in these collaborative arrangements, the key to collaboration is open communication:

"Our plans are clear and our agenda is well defined. We always say what our vision is, and we think about the next steps of our journey. We do not have a hidden agenda, and we share ideas with our collaborators and partners. Through this we have gained their trust in recent years, and they have been open to support us and work with us. We realized that only time can tell if our decisions are right or not and that only by working together we can make concrete steps and begin a journey together." (Private-1).

But there is a tension in taking the leap of faith to trust someone in the first place. An academic participant said that it's better to trust and get burned than not to engage. "Even if the results are being stolen, we're not going to lose that in comparison to the gains that we get by just trusting people" (Acad-1).

The European Youth Capital competition was effective because it provided a clear timeline, urgency, and pride in outcomes. However, the deadline came and passed, and the large ad-hoc coalition of NGOs that participated in the application became the SHARE Cluj-Napoca Federation, which later reorganized and dispersed. The competition brought people together in the spirit of collaborating towards a common goal. Which, especially for the municipality, was important for positioning Cluj on the European stage and building capacity for what the mayor likes to call "the start-up city." This and other competitions play a role in activating the imagination of people, because they are given a screen onto which to project and share



their visions. When the screen goes away, the lights come up, and there is little capacity for people to "test out" whether their trust in others will pay off beyond the competition. In a context like Cluj, the verification of trusting gestures is extremely important. The constant negotiation of history and memory is characteristic of OurCluj. The process does not work – trust is not built, and imaginaries are not convincing – unless the work of building collective memories is incorporated into the collaborative environment. Even the effort to enter competitions is building muscles for collaboration. Fondation Botnar sees this capacity building as an important goal of the overall initiative.

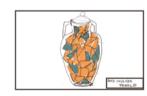
"One of the first things that we've been taught in Cluj is that there is a big cultural issue in the risk, which is the lack of trust due to the history of the country, and that's why people don't trust each other and organizations don't trust each other. I feel it's been reflected very well in [project] applications, and in order for us to be able to fund such big problems, we need to, first of all, provide an enabling environment for partnership. We need to make sure that all of us around the table understand the value of working together" (Fdn-2).

Artwork and text by Sebastian Ștefan, ArtiViStory Collective

This fragment is from one of the interviews. The interviewee was talking about constantly reinventing the practices and the involved groups by including new ideas and perspectives and reconsidering the already existing things. The interviewee compared the existing practices of same involved groups with limited silos that store things and have to be enlarged as the farm grows and produces more. I translated the silos into something more common, the vases, to be relatable to anyone and imagined these objects in a perpetual cycle, a constant state of change. Social inequities need to be addressed and resolved in order to facilitate a better, more inclusive social ground within the city's ecosystem. Working with and consulting the same groups, in terms of resolving certain issues, will never achieve proper results if the said issues affect people outside those groups.







Artwork and text by Melinda Ureczki Lázár, ArtiViStory Collective

This illustration is part of a series in which different stakeholders talked about the development stage of their projects. Within the different projects, trust played an essential role in helping to better articulate a common vision. This visual interpretation reflects the importance of sharing common ideas and collaboration.





Artwork and text by Evelina-Maria Grigorean, ArtiViStory Collective

This is a short sequential comic showing how Cluj has progressed to become forward-thinking and open enough to take part in a discovery process together with the Botnar Foundation in order to better understand the challenges the city faces and to explore concrete solutions. The comic focuses on the overarching role of community, in which building the right relational networks plays a key part in unlocking and evolving well-being. A distributed sense of ownership can improve problem-solving by leveraging the knowledge and creativity of different types of players and stakeholders, which are then united under the community's goals and vision.



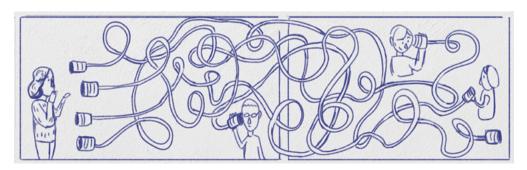
Artwork by Melinda Ureczki Lázár, ArtiViStory Collective

Artwork from interviews



Artwork by Evelina-Maria Grigorean, ArtiViStory Collective

Artist interpretation of networks in the city.



SharingPower

Institutional Structures \oplus

Collaboration →





Sharing Power

All democratic transitions require power sharing. Beyond political revolutions that quickly wrest power from one group and distribute it to another, the incorporation of democratic principles into everyday practices takes time. Centering youth well-being as a desired outcome in Cluj, for example, requires that outcomes like individual wealth building and political authority get deprioritized. Such deprioritization might mean that those with higher authority need to act against the seemingly intuitive interest of maintaining that authority. The difficult and often contentious negotiations of power sharing compose the third strand of the Values-Based ULL. We have discussed OurCluj as an arrangement that facilitates collaboration through the imagination of futures and reconciling histories and memories. But to achieve institutional transformation, the VBULL must also be concerned with sharing power. This means not simply identifying path dependencies within an institutional framework but actually cultivating new paths - new ways of wielding and distributing power. Creation of such new paths require understanding systemic inequities and taking actions to address them.

Institutional Structures

Collaborative arrangements are counterintuitive in Cluj. Even though the city claims it is participatory and collaborations have substantially evolved over the past years, organizations and urban spaces tend to be siloed. They are like simple machines, in which each component has a single function. The challenge and opportunity of OurCluj is to build a collaborative culture that can influence the institutions with which it is engaging. People spoke of this challenge within the municipality, hospitals, schools, universities, companies, non-profits, and most other organizations. Certainly, this challenge endures because of historical vestiges, in which perceptions and reality are not aligned. But other insights are descriptive of directly experienced institutional hurdles.

Stories of corruption and power concentration are common. Entire public organizations are built around individuals so that they can retain power, often acting contrary to the interests of the publics they ostensibly serve. Collaboration in this environment is quite difficult, as the siloed organizational structure is immutable. Even when people from different organizations participate in the collaborative arrangement, there remains a large gap between situational collaboration (working together on a competition) and structural collaboration (creating new governance models).

For example, the challenge of creating collaborative governance can be seen in how hospitals in the city are organized. There isn't one big hospital for all procedures; instead, several specialized hospitals are dispersed throughout the city. For example, there is a heart hospital and a lung hospital. According to a health practitioner:

"While we were at the Ministry of Health in 2016, we tried to move forward a project for developing a regional hospital in Cluj and in another two counties. The biggest pushback against the project was from Cluj. The reason for this was that each hospital has a manager, the king of the domain, and if you bring them together in one big hospital, there would be only one king. So the managers prefer to each be a king of their own domain even if this makes life a lot harder for the patients who need multidisciplinary care and are forced to move from one hospital to another" (Civic-1).

Despite the hurdles, there have been attempts to legitimately distribute power in Romania. For example, "schools... have these structures where the students elect their representatives and there is a national organization of these representatives. So, I think this kind of structure is quite good. They should be willing to share the power to give voice to the students. The schools should become more democratic" (Acad-5). These emergent governance structures are very promising. As we have



discussed throughout this report, there has been a concerted effort to do this work within the municipality itself. By distributing decision-making authority to people they directly impact, the city is seeking to change how it conducts its business. However, this has not been easy. According to a city employee: "We have problems inside the municipality because this is somehow a transfer of power. So you let a part of your power as the local administration be decided on in other environments by the citizens. So this creates some problems inside the municipality. There are some people, some colleagues who say 'Oh, we cannot let those guys decide because they don't know, and because we know better.' So there's also an interior process and an evolution happening inside of the municipality. It's not only outside the municipality, but it's also inside" (Govt-1).

It's one thing to talk about inviting greater participation in decision-making, and it's quite another for the people who are comfortable with their current authority to willingly cede it to others. This kind of change only happens when those holding power realize that they cannot keep power within the current conditions. An example of collaborative practices in creating structures that share power and a purpose was the effort to win the European Youth Capital title. This process represented a new way for youth organizations to partner with the municipality. The SHARE Clui-Napoca Federation was created to facilitate the process and persist beyond the competition. But when SHARE became dysfunctional, the Cluj Youth Federation (Federatia Tinerilor din Cluj) was established in 2017 to continue the work. Created by an executive team, it is an umbrella structure that brings together 37 youth groups in the city. This effort in many ways served as a model and inspiration for the kind of power sharing practices supported by OurCluj. Cluj Youth Federation was set up to sustain a relational and non-hierarchical structure. As one of the participants put it:

"it's of no use to develop personal and friendship relations, because when you leave, you take them with you, at the end of the day, and it is important that these relations, cooperation mechanisms become institutional and work on their own. We practically have an informal consultative council, we have access to the decision-making process, we can submit proposals... advance our points of view, and we solve problems when they occur" (Civic-10).

Specifically, their actions consist of "written partnerships, the knowledge or the mechanism of dialogue as such, of debate, co-management of need to be developed in institutions, which is quite a lengthy process... You need a regulation, a partnership, the undertaken responsibility of certain people, and all these are going to be dependent upon the political will or upon some people's will" (Civic-10). The unique structure of the Cluj Youth Federation helped it to collaborate on a local level with the municipality and other relevant entities and initiate the formal proceedings for the establishment of the Advisory Council for Youth Problems and the Department for Youth Issues in the city hall. There are currently two employees at the Department for Youth Issues, while efforts are underway

to operationalize the Advisory Council, as it is only functional on paper so far. Regarding the Department for Youth Issues, a participant mentioned, "for instance, in order for this council to work, we first had to submit a proposal for the establishment of a special department to be in charge. In the end, by identifying the problems, we realized that no one had these duties, and it was a lengthy process. It took about two years to establish this department, and it still has quite few employees, who are actually still in the process of learning what it is that they need to do" (Civic-10).

On a county level, the Cluj Youth Federation is collaborating with PONT Group and Cluj Metropolitan Area Association for Intercommunity Development (ADI ZMC) and the municipality's Cluj Civic Imagination and Innovation Centre on co-creating the Cluj for Youth 2030 Metropolitan Area Strategy, a long-term strategy for youth engagement in the nearby 19 towns and villages in Cluj county, improving participation and increasing the capacity of the youth ecosystem. The areas of focus will be debated until the expected launch in December 2021. This strategy builds on the Integrated Strategy for Urban Development (SIDU) and is connected to the European Youth Goals and the European Youth Strategy. The way in which youth have organized themselves in the city could serve as a model for collaborative governance and power sharing for other efforts.



Artwork by Melinda Ureczki Lázár, ArtiViStory Collective

Artwork from interviews

Artwork and text by Melinda Ureczki Lázár, ArtiViStory Collective

This image is an abstracted visual interpretation of the information presented at Cluj Youth Federation (Federația Tinerilor din Cluj, FTC) meeting. By collecting and processing the information from the discussion, I have constructed a narrative visual system that illustrates the Federation's operating mechanisms and the values they hold dear.



Collaboration

In order to share power, it is imperative that each of the actors within a given arrangement are clear about the role they play and their stakes in the work. Collaboration is difficult when the individuals involved appear to have uncertain goals or harbor otherwise untrustworthy motivations. Additionally, when the institution does not explicitly promote and support the effort of collaboration, even good intentions are ineffective. According to someone with ample experience collaborating with the municipality, "I wish that that the team from the municipality side would have had more of an official job description to do what they do. But somehow they have to do it in their spare time" (Civic-3). So, while the municipality can speak publicly about the value of collaboration and power sharing, actually putting necessary resources into this work has proven to be far more difficult.

"We have endorsement from the city, but we have endorsement of the fact that it's cool that [we're doing our work] and look how nice [it is]. But it's not an endorsement of the heavy stuff that we talk about or the stuff we would like to talk more about. We need a leader that can say, 'We need to make some changes and these changes are going to come with X, Y, Z loss and we're going to commit to that'" (Civic-3).

There is a large gap between policy and practice. The kinds of conversations happening within OurCluj are making this distinction abundantly clear. While the mayor and his administration are engaging in optimistic rhetorics, others are inventing and socializing new ways of working together. But too often, the bold inventions of real power sharing go unnoticed. According to someone working in the nonprofit sector, "We realized what we were doing... and this is part of the genius of the organizations... we were constantly innovating, and we were not innovating in an incremental way. We were not innovating existing processes, but we were mostly creating new processes, and sometimes it was product innovation, although in the NGO sector, the product is a little bit of a blurry thing, but we were innovating in various ways on how people and organizations are engaging each other, cooperating, delivering results" (Civic-2). This sense of quiet radical change sheds light on the value of OurCluj. Too often, bold procedural innovations go unnoticed or remain within a single organization. Ideally, the collaborative structure of the VBULL and its prioritization of democratization provide a stage on which to share new processes that can significantly impact how people work and how power is distributed.

At the core of power sharing are novel communication practices. Many of the innovations highlighted in OurCluj are associated with how people talk to each other, and specifically how those with power are communicating to those without. In reference to how the government speaks to citizens:



"from my perspective, we need communication with the people, not to the people. If we just had communication to the people, we are sending out information and explanations. Communication with the people means addressing them directly, explaining, opening to dialogue, trying to understand their view" (Acad-1.2).

In this regard, understanding others' points of view is not simply about more of the same communication style; it involves entirely rebuilding the purpose and structure of institutional communication around trust. "Trust is built by communication," according to another, "through willingness, openness, by not being uncompromising, by trying to understand the other, their professional area, their opinion, and to be able to identify the shared potential" (Civic-7). Of course, it's one thing for one individual to engage in generous and open communication, and it's quite another for this to become common practice within an institution. But because these practices were shared by multiple participants, there is the possibility that they can scale.

"Trust is often quite difficult to gain or hold. As a matter of fact, before trust, there comes communication. Trust is very difficult to gain if you can't properly communicate what you know, from a professional point of view. You need to communicate it by using a different language than your professional one, i.e. the common language, and it's there that trust is affected by the quality of the communication, which can hinder understanding. Communication is key" (Civic-7).

Artwork by Lucian Barbu, ArtiViStory Collective

Artwork from interviews



Artwork and text by Melinda Ureczki Lázár, ArtiViStory Collective

These two illustrations are interpretations of the 2020 meeting. Collaboration is essential if the common interests of the city are to be pursued. The different figures in the composition symbolise different goals and projects, and their representation in a compressed site shows an openness to collaborations.

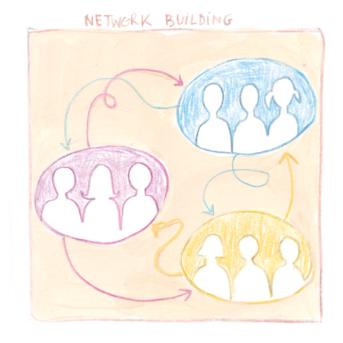






Artwork by Zsófia Bernát, ArtiViStory Collective

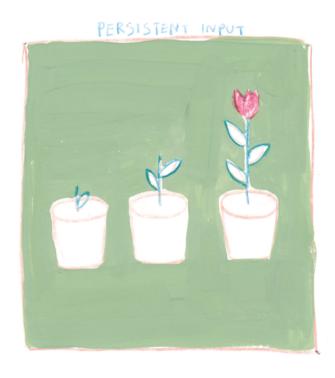
This artwork is an interpretation of OurCluj workshop which launched the research where participants were taken through a series of excercises that encouraged them to surface the values guiding their practices. These activities were structured by the digital self-assessment tool Meetr and included: network building, holding space, distributing ownership and persistent input.





HOLDING SPACE





Design Recommendations

11

Let's begin by avowing care, in all of its ubiquitous complexities, and by building more enduring and participatory caring outlooks and infrastructures, wherever we can.

The Care Manifesto – The Politics of Interdependence³⁸

This report has described in rich detail how imagination, memory, and actions toward power sharing have been negotiated within the VBULL OurCluj. Our insights are based on reflections from the participants themselves and observations of events in the city. In this section, we move from asking "What is OurCluj?" to "What might OurCluj be?" More generally, we ask "What are the actions one might take to establish a VBULL within a shifting urban context" to attain sustainable urban development and just digital transitions?

We provide 10 design recommendations for the philanthropist, intermediary, public sector leader, activist, or entrepreneur who has a vested interest in centering values of trust and care in urban transformation.

○ Imagining →

- 1. Create physical and digital spaces for imagination.
- 2. Map relationships.
- 3. Engage local artists and creatives.

○ Remembering 🧇

- 4. Create safe spaces for reflection.
- 5. Map environments.

○ Sharing Power 🧇

- 6. Identify and empower trust brokers.
- 7. Fund what's value-forward, not valuable.
- 8. Establish opportunities to experiment with processes.
- 9. Embrace failure as a learning opportunity.
- 10. Evaluate and share learning.

Imagining

1. Create physical and digital spaces for imagination.

When initiatives are launched or projects gain momentum, meetings are held and people share their enthusiasm. Too often, this enthusiasm is oriented towards a specific project or initiative. The focus tends to be put on the "what," but not the "why" and "what for." Instead, spaces must be created for people across generations to share what future they imagine together if the project is successful. Otherwise, it is easy to default to standardized values of profit making and efficiency. For this reason, the municipality in Cluj created the Cluj Civic Imagination and Innovation Centre (CIIC), which is both a physical and digital space for the civic imagination. Options to consider:

- Future-thinking workshops, such as Future Design, ⁴⁰ Theory U, ⁴¹ citizen assemblies, ⁴² and long-term post-growth thinking ⁴³
- Interactive games that encourage play and generative thought, such as @Stake⁴⁴ and Chart the Course⁴⁵

2. Map relationships.

Urban social ecosystems should be diverse and complex. It is imperative that arrangements are labeled and mapped as an ongoing process. Actors need to understand the relationship and interdependence between stakeholders (public, private, civic); across generations; across interrelated domains (social, economic, environmental); through policies and their implementation; across time (past, present, and future); and over scales (local, national, global). The visualization of such relationships is essential for participants to imagine what is possible together. There are several existing tools that can be used for this purpose:

- AI-supported mapping tools, such as mapping of stakeholders in OurCluj which combines insights from the designers and publicly available information from the internet.
- Interactive, participatory stakeholder mapping in which actors
 are encouraged to reflect on the value they bring to the arrangement and the value of others. For example, the LEAP study on
 youth well-being in Cluj introduced visual interactive maps of
 stakeholders engaged in improving health, learning, agency, and
 enabling environment.

3. Engage local artists and creatives.

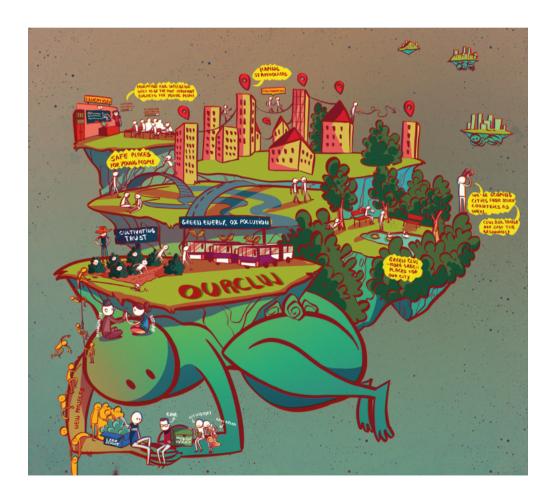
Artists, designers, architects, or other creatives from diverse disciplines must be invited to meetings as active contributors to represent or reimagine the problem space through their own practices. Other participants must also be invited to reflect on these practices and engage. This situates the arrangement within a context of local culture, visualizes possible futures, mobilizes emotions, stimulates critical thinking, and embodies meaning that is essential for imaginative collaborative efforts. Examples include:

- ArtiViStory Collective, which originated through OurCluj, continues to visualize VBULL evolution and its engagement with participants. It engages graphic artists to reimagine and document relationships and processes and invites participants to reflect and critically engage in urban innovation (see an example on the following pages).
- Creative physical or digital spaces for deep listening, storytelling, and interdisciplinary conversations. Local examples include a travelling exhibition DEMOC(K)RACY #1 curated by AltArt Foundation in Cluj, in collaboration with La Criee in Rennes, 48 or a theater production Dreaming Voices hosted at Tranzit House. 49 Other translocal examples include: Aerocene, 50 Art4Action, 51 and Generous Listening. 52



Artwork and text by Teodora Predescu, ArtiViStory Collective

This image portrays an overall image of the city created through the eyes and discoveries of OurCluj. The picture's main focus is to highlight some of the main topics that come to mind when talking about imagining futures: the concept of open space together with the idea of creating safe spaces for people, especially for the youth. The picture takes the liberty of imagining the city as a living being, which suggests the idea of creating a personal connection between the city and its people – people are taking care of Cluj and Cluj is taking care of them.



An interactive, pop-up exhbiit, from ArtiViStory Collective about the future of Cluj. It was part of a youth event called Cluj Never Sleeps.

Source: ArtiViStory Collective, October 2021









Remembering

4. Create safe spaces for reflection.

It is necessary to create space for people to honestly reflect on the harms and challenges of the past and present as they imagine the future. These spaces should be separate from the future-oriented ones, such that they do not get overshadowed by the optimism that those spaces encourage. Only by acknowledging the pain of others is it possible for urban transitions to effectively activate values of trust and care.

It is imperative to be sensitive to the power dynamics that exist within the arrangement. People may not feel comfortable expressing themselves when government representatives are present. If this is the case, a good idea is to initially create separate events for individual sectors or communities, and then to work towards bringing them together in later engagements.

In this process of reconciliation or healing, special attention needs to be paid to psychocultural context and how positive and negative emotions shape behaviors. For example, in Romania dominant social behaviors are generally shaped through punishment, not rewards, and there is a high level of fear about change. 58

5. Map environments.

Mapping environments is a way to directly address the past. What are the places most in need of attention? Where are physical resources lacking? What spaces in the city are most often forgotten? Our Cluj has started to experiment with environmental maps through the Cluj Atlas project (see an example on next page). Some possible approaches include:

- Interactive walking tours. One possibility is to organize a walking session through the city, to invite people to take pictures of the places about which they have a personal story. Then ask people to share their pictures and experiences.
- Cognitive maps as subjective representations of an environment. It is often useful to ask people to map their "desire lines" through a city. How do they commute? Where do they wander? These maps can be collected and shared with the group.

The Hoştezeni community supplied the city with fresh and organic fruits and vegetables, a tradition which largely disappeared in the 1980s.

Source: Károly Feleki, Muzeul Hoștezenilor Archive, Cluj-Napoca



Cluj Atlas participatory workshop exploring the history of urban gardening in Cluj-Napoca.

Photo by: Roland Váczi, June 2020





An example of a cultural map, showing the Hoṣtezeni community and emerging urban gardening initiatives in Cluj-Napoca.

Source : Cluj Atlas Archive, 2021

Sharing power

6. Identify and empower trust brokers.

There should be a person or organization that sits outside of established institutions that can broker trust and build relationships between people and across sectors and generations. While most ULLs are organized by a municipality, it is not productive for a VBULL to do so. If the goal of the arrangement is to build trust where it is lacking, the municipality needs to be a collaborator but should not be the leader. Only existing NGOs that are seen as neutral (not too heavily affiliated with a particular neighborhood or issue) can be a viable option for leadership.

In some cases, it will be necessary to establish a novel entity composed of trusted people. Such an entity could be a new form of an evolving collaborative structure or a hybrid created to fit the context. Local examples of new entities that have potential to become collaborative and inclusive structures include NGOs such as the Cluj Youth Federation, Cluj Cultural Centre, and the recently launched FIX Cluj fund.

7. Fund what's value-forward, not valuable.

Institutions should be explicit about how funding decisions are made and set criteria and document progress in achieving them. It is important for philanthropy and designated intermediaries to be in conversation with the actors involved in the VBULL and not make decisions unilaterally. Institutions should:

- participate in VBULL activities, including in co-designing grant applications; address potential conflict of interest in co-design processes either through contracts or by engaging trusted intermediaries.
- identify and fund interventions that represent leverage points in the city ecosystem, where a small shift can produce big changes. Such leverage points represent opportunities where participants can have greater impact when working together than when working alone. A good local example of such approach is the recent establishment of Education Cluster C-EDU⁵⁶ in Cluj, with potential to collectively improve the education system for the needs of the twenty-first century.
- invest in building local capacities and competencies for urban transitions, across disciplines and sectors. For example, the co-design of FIX Cluj (Cluj Innovation and Experiment Fund), one of OurCluj projects launched in 2021, united public and private partners while building local capacity for social innovation.

 pool resources with other private and public funders who share values and objectives. For example, explore collaboration with URBACT, the European Union's program where Cluj has already participated, in learning and adapting good practices of sustainable urban development.

8. Establish opportunities to experiment with processes.

It is not sufficient to support good ideas or projects. Rather, the VBULL must also incentivize good processes. Project leaders should be encouraged to experiment with how decisions get made, how information is shared, how networks are created, how progress is measured, and how participants get acknowledged and supported. This will not come naturally. People need to be encouraged and rewarded for trying new strategies of governance within project groups and across them. This includes:

- allocating time for continuous reflections and sharing.
- cultivating processes that build communities of practice that bring together groups of people who share a common concern, a set of problems, or an interest in a topic to fulfill individual and group goals.
- · encouraging open innovation and new patterns of thinking.
- including young people early on as active participants and co-designers in all processes.

9. Embrace failure as a learning opportunity.

Too often, innovation environments have zero tolerance for failure. Funding should not be directly tied to anticipated outcomes, such that grantees are afraid to admit shortcomings. Instead, it should be long term and open ended enough to encourage experimentation and reflection in outcomes and process. Arrangements should contemplate spaces to celebrate successes and reflect on failures through a quarterly convening or showcase. For example, iXperiment, the first start-up accelerator for high school students from Romania, organized in Cluj and other cities, had dedicated workshops for participants to embrace and learn from failures.

10. Evaluate and share learning.

Learning happens through assessment and continuous dialogue. It is important for the VBULL to establish an identity by clearly articulating goals and objectives.

 An outcomes and process evaluation strategy should involve all stakeholders. Evaluation should not be used as an assessment of performance but rather serve as a public-facing dialogue that



encourages project leaders to support one another's learning. It is essential to include qualitative and quantitative measurements, consider multiple time horizons, and monitor intended and unintended consequences.

- Cultivate learning that gets to the heart of what it is to be human and what it means to continuously transform. Unintended consequences can open new perspectives or even provide better solutions.
- Share learning translocally, at conventional and unconventional summits, conferences, webinars, and workshops. Engage across fields including urban innovation, sustainable development, health and well-being, smart cities, and civic innovation.

Artwork by Melinda Ureczki Lázár, ArtiViStory Collective (p.124)

Artwork from interviews

Artwork and text by Bálint Erdély, ArtiViStory Collective (p.125)

This image is a sort of summary and interpretation of the stakeholders' works and their common purpose. Different concepts, like well-being, trust-building and pursuing new possibilities, are illustrated in a symbolic language. For example, the hand symbolizes the cohesive force of the stakeholders while the flowers represent the invested work that has progressed inch by inch with united force.





Activating Values in Urban Transitions: A novel approach to urban innovation in Romania ®

Conclusions

For cities undergoing rapid economic transformation, unreflective innovation will default to values of efficiency and profit-making. The Values-Based Urban Living Laboratory can be a powerful remedy for the neoliberal propensity of market-driven innovation environments.

Simply stated, the VBULL is an arrangement that deliberately prioritizes values of trust and care in the pursuit of new markets and global competitiveness.

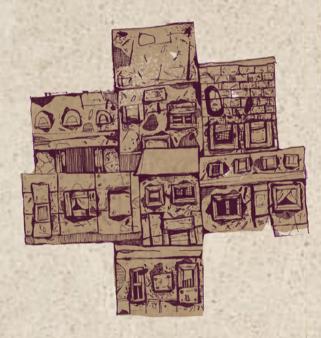
What has emerged in Cluj-Napoca is a powerful example of the form, which has considerable potential to persist and inspire. At its most basic, OurCluj is an intervention into the communication style of urban innovation, one that activates values of care and trust over those of growth and efficiency. It is a demonstration of the need to change the way people and sectors connect with each other to serve the needs of future generations. For example, the acknowledgement of positional authority in everyday exchanges, as well as the need to connect policy and political rhetoric to practice, are essential for democratic transitions.

OurCluj is taking shape during the Covid-19 pandemic, at a time when nearly every assumption about urban growth is being questioned. While this particular VBULL might have been born from a crisis, because of its attention to the values that support the well-being of young people, it is set up in such a way to persist beyond it.

Future research should support the design and facilitation of VBULLs by examining how they shift institutional norms and organizational patterns such that their effects are sustainable.

Effective power sharing necessary for democratic transitions cannot happen without trust, and trust is generated through communication of shared imaginaries and memories. It is only through this discursive work that truly novel collaborative ways of working and bold ambitions for well-being can get a foothold in the twenty-first century city.

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Activating Values in Urban Transitions: A novel approach to urban innovation in Romania ®

About the Authors

This study was developed by a team of researchers and practitioners with a wealth of experience across different disciplines, generations, and geographies. They have all been active collectively and individually in diverse academic and social contexts and share a passion to understand and contribute to creating new paths towards a more just and democratic society. The research was led by Eric Gordon in collaboration with Barbara Bulc, who leads the design of the OurCluj initiative.

Written by:

Eric Gordon, Barbara Bulc, Tomás Guarna, Tijana Zderic, Bianca Ștefania Băluță, Nadina Pantea



Eric Gordon

Eric Gordon is a professor of civic media at Emerson College in Boston, USA, and director of the Engagement Lab and Assistant Dean of Civic Partnerships in the School of the Arts. He is also a research affiliate in Comparative Media Studies at MIT. His current research focuses on emergent, values-based governance structures in the smart city and the ethics of data access and sharing. Additionally, for the last ten years, Professor Gordon has explored how game systems and playful processes can augment traditional modes of civic participation. He has served as an expert advisor for local and national governments as well as NGOs around the world, designing responsive processes that help organizations transform to meet their stated values. He has created over a dozen games for public sector use and advised organizations on how to build their own inclusive and meaningful processes. He is the author of two books about media and cities (The Urban Spectator (Dartmouth, 2010) and Net Locality (Blackwell, 2011)) and is the editor of Civic Media: Technology, Design, Practice (MIT Press, 2016) and Ludics: Play as Humanistic Inquiry (Palgrave, 2021). His most recent monograph, Meaningful Inefficiencies: Civic Design in an Age of Digital Expediency (Oxford University Press, 2020), examines practices in government, journalism, and NGOs that reimagine civic innovation beyond efficiency.



Barbara Bulc

Barbara Bulc is a social designer and the founder of Global Development and the non-profit collaboratory SDG Colab in Geneva, Switzerland. Her transdisciplinary practice focuses on design and research of alternative collaborative structures for the well-being of people and the planet. She worked for over two decades in leadership roles in global diplomacy, business, public health, and international development with the Clinton Foundation, Global Business Coalition, and KRKA Pharmaceuticals in more than 30 countries. This experience led her to dedicate her practice to reimagining values and relationships, essential to shift the current economic paradigm. She is the author of publications and articles about rethinking multi-stakeholder partnerships and governance including The Urgency for Transforming Youth Engagement and A Roadmap for Intergenerational Leadership in Planetary Health (The Lancet Planetary Health, 2020). Her most recent study *Accelerating Global Health R&D*, commissioned by the UK government, examines novel approaches to investments and policies for equitable system-wide collaborations. She studied chemistry and social sciences at Ljubljana University and business management at Columbia University Business School in New York. She is a student of mindfulness in a variety of Buddhist and other wisdom traditions. She has practiced with John Kabat Zinn and Gyetrul Jigme Rinpoche and sees embodied awareness as key to our personal and collective transformation.



Tomás Guarna

Tomás Guarna is a graduate student at MIT's program in Comparative Media Studies, where he researches in the Civic Design Initiative. Before this, he obtained his degree in social sciences from Universidad Torcuato Di Tella and worked in the Presidency of Argentina.

 (\uparrow)



Tijana Zderic

Tijana Zderic is a poet and activist from Bosnia and Herzegovina. Currently, she is poetry fellow and Masters of Fine Arts student at Emerson College in Boston. Her poetry manuscript-length thesis is forthcoming in early 2022.



Bianca Ștefania Băluță

Bianca Ştefania Băluță is a pharmacist with a degree in International Health Policy from The London School of Economics and Political Sciences. She works at the Ministry of Health, contributing to strengthening the healthcare system in Romania. She decided to get involved in the health field because she believes that health is an essential part of our well-being as humans which could be tackled in a more integrated and systemic manner. As a continuation of her involvement in civic organizations, she joined SDG CoLab team in 2019 as a junior researcher, and since then she actively contributed to co-facilitating the design and development of the OurCluj initiative.



Nadina Pantea

Nadina Pantea is a PhD candidate in psychology, studying substance use disorders at the Doctoral School in Evidence-Based Assessment and Psychological Interventions, Babeş-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca. She is also working in the field of youth civic engagement, as the Vice President for Youth Public Policies in the Youth Federation in Cluj. She is dedicated to furthering the accessibility of science and psychology, as a follow-up of her involvement in the Romanian Psychology Students Association Cluj, Romanian Federation of Psychology and Educational Sciences Students. Her involvement in the OurCluj initiative began in January 2020, when she joined SDG CoLab team as a junior researcher and assistant.

Art by:

Art ViStory Collective

ArtViStory Collective is an art collective of students at the Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of Art and Design (UAD) in Cluj-Napoca, Romania. The collective originated during the design process of OurCluj VBULL and currently includes 15 artists. All images below are self-portraits by the artists.



Lucian Barbu



Evelina-Maria Grigorean



Melinda Ureczki Lázár



Horațiu Coman



Teodora Predescu



Erdély Bálint



Alexandru Papa



Dariana Ilie



Sebastian Ștefan



Oliviana Fudulache



Diana Florescu



Eunicia Laura Zidaru







Carla Oros



Mihai Udubașa

Curated by:

Alice Andreea Iliescu, Daniel Popescu, Anamaria Tomiuc



Alice Andreea Iliescu

Alice Andreea Iliescu is associate professor, PhD, within the Graphic Arts Department and the Comics and Cartoons MA Program of the Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of Art and Design in Cluj-Napoca, Romania (UAD). She graduated BA, MA, and PhD programs at UAD as well as the MA program of the Comics Department of École Supérieure Européenne de l'Image, EESI, Angoulême, France. She attended specialization summer courses within École du Louvre, Paris, France. Since 2009 she has been teaching in fields such as mixed media, sequential art, comics, engraving, and printing techniques. Her exhibition activity includes more than 40 national and international group shows, as well as 8 personal exhibitions – Detailism, Intimistique, Unrelieved, Exaltink, Alice doesn't live here anymore, Olympus, Olympiad, 52 m2 under the ceiling – in which she explores the sequential image in high print, linocut, and woodcut, large scale 200x150 cm. She has collaborated in the implementation of nationally and internationally funded cultural and community projects, coordinated 12 workshops and 11 exhibitions, and she is author and co-author of more than 10 artistic publications, journal studies, and collective volumes.



Daniel Popescu

Daniel Popescu is a creator and connector who explores unusual links between art, technology, and education. Besides his project management and teaching roles in the University of Art and Design in Cluj-Napoca, he is involved in the coordination of artistic direction for festivals such as Lights On Romania, in numerous local cultural projects, and community building campaigns. His actions are aimed towards improving collaboration between people in different fields and the integration of new technologies for a deeper understanding of the future.



Anamaria Tomiuc

Anamaria Tomiuc is associate professor PhD within the Department of Theoretical Subjects of the Faculty of Decorative Arts and Design at the University of Art and Design in Cluj-Napoca, Romania, with over 15 years of experience in the sphere of cultural and artistic activities in Cluj-Napoca. She has initiated, coordinated, and collaborated in cultural, research, and community projects funded by national and international programs and has contributed to the implementation of the internationalization and cultural strategies of UAD Cluj-Napoca. She is the author of two volumes and a series of studies published in international indexed journals and in collective volumes. In her professional research, she works on interdisciplinary topics such as the mechanisms of visual arts production and promotion, art and advertising, the experience of arts audiences, the impact of arts in society and for city development, and innovation and cultural strategies.



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Activating Values in Urban Transitions: A novel approach to urban innovation in Romania ®

Appendix 1 Contributor Biographies

The study was informed by almost 30 contributors or participants in OurCluj initiative. They come from public, private, civic, and academic organizations in Cluj-Napoca and from Fondation Botnar, which supports the initiative.

Each biography includes a portrait and an artwork created during the interviews by artists from ArtiViStory Collective. Contributors include: Gabriel Bădescu, Emil Boc, Paul Brie, Emilia Botezan, Tünde Buryán, Oana Buzatu, Răzvan Cherecheș, Ovidiu Cîmpean, Cristian Dascălu, András Farkas, Susanna Hausmann, Călin Hințea, Benjamin Kohl, Florina Lendeczki, Paul Emanuel Marc, Ruxandra Mercea, Marius Cătălin Moga, Bianca Muntean, Tudor Ogner, Alexandra Onișor, Zur Oren, Eugen Pănescu, Dumitru Petreuș, Codruța Simina, Marius Ungureanu, Ștefan Teisanu, Stefan Voinea, Anamaria Vrabie, and Rarita Zbranca.





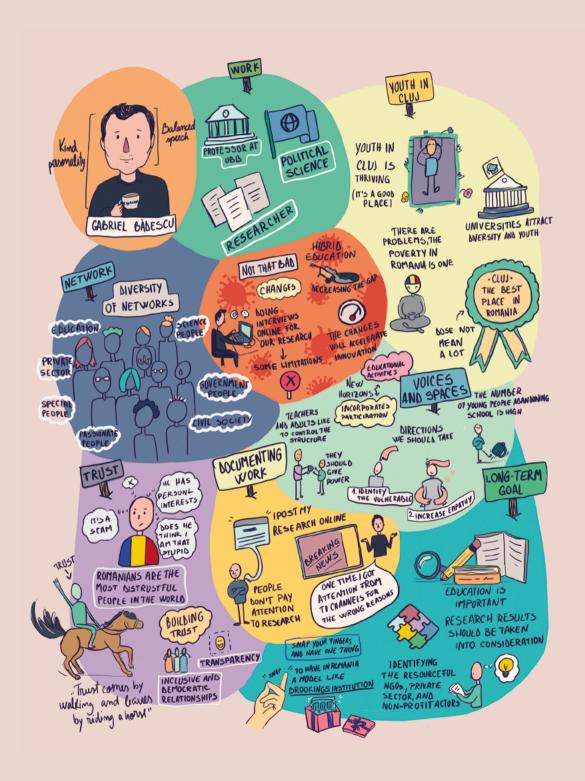
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Portrait by
Lucian Barbu

Gabriel Bădescu

Gabriel Bădescu is a Professor of Political Science and Director of the Center for Democratic Studies at Babeș-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca. An interdisciplinary thinker with background in mathematics and sociology, he coordinated several international and cross-national projects. He is the author and editor of numerous books and articles on democratic and economic transitions in Eastern Europe, civil society, social capital, educational policies, research methodology, income inequality, and labor migration. From 2009 to 2010 he worked in the national government as the President of the Agency for Governmental Strategies. He was a member of the Romanian National Research Council and currently serves on the Romanian National Council of Higher Education Statistics and Forecast. He is a member of several non-governmental organizations, including the Community Foundation in Cluj.

In OurCluj, he contributed to the LEAP study on challenges and opportunities of young people in the Cluj Metropolitan Area. He believes that Romania needs well-established public policies and that the faith of democracy depends a lot on youth socialization and youth participation, both closely linked to education. If he could have one thing in Romania, he would want to have the equivalent of The Brookings Institute, a U.S. think tank, to quide public policy decision-making.

→ Artwork by Evelina Grigorean





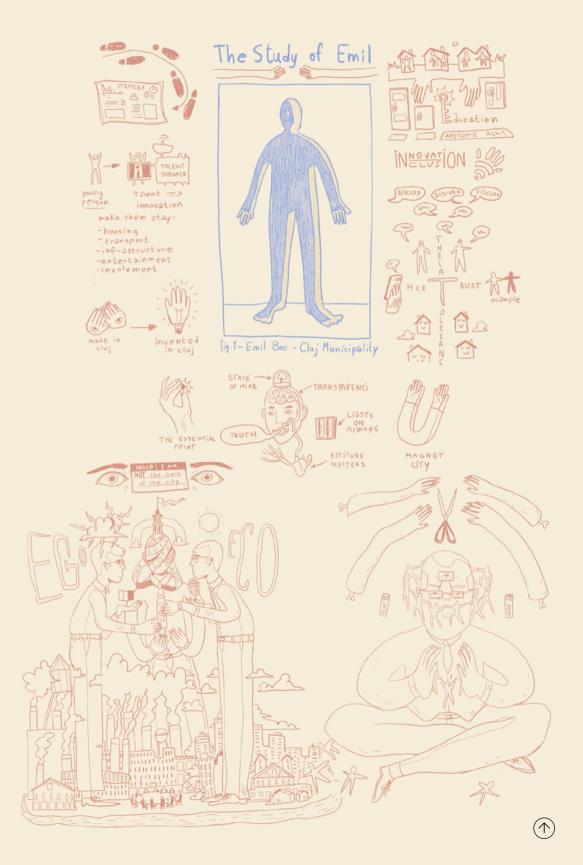
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Portrait by
Melinda Ureczki
Lázár

Emil Boc

Emil Boc is the Mayor of Cluj-Napoca and the former Prime Minister of Romania (2008-2012). He was first elected as mayor in 2004 and served in the local government until he became the National President of the Democratic Liberal Party (PDL). Prior to that, he was a Member of the Parliament of Romania, chairing different judicial committees. Emil Boc returned to the local government and won his fourth election as the Mayor of Cluj-Napoca in September 2020. He is the President of Asociația Municipilor din Romania (AMR) which brings together over 100 municipalities in Romania. He is a member of the European Committee of the Regions of the European Union. Before entering public office, he practiced law and lectured at Babeş-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca, where he is now an Associate Professor teaching comparative politics, political science, and the Romanian political system.

As the Mayor of Cluj, Emil Boc wishes to create an ecosystem of collaborative governance, a direction he refers to as "eco, not ego-system" that involves participation of civil society, academic, cultural, and business sectors. His administration's Center for Innovation and Civic Imagination (CIIC) is one of initiatives created to foster dialogue between sectors and citizens in decisions related to urban and digital transitions. He believes Cluj can compete with other cities in Europe through investments in technology and innovation.

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Artwork by
Lucian Barbu





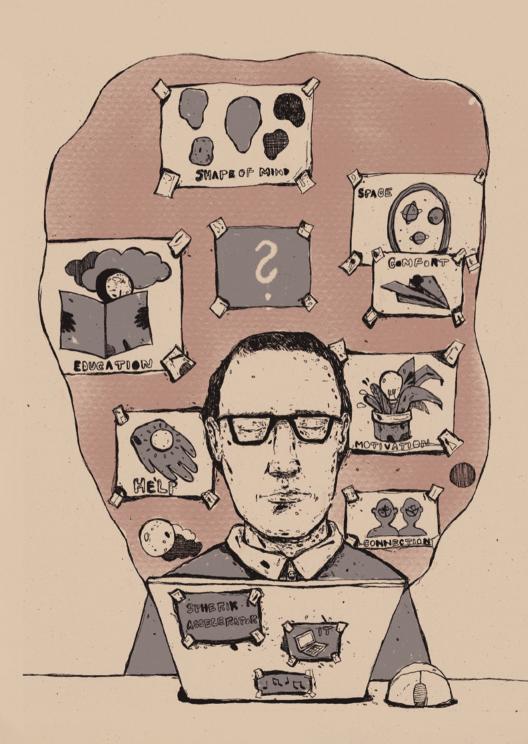
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Portrait by
Evelina-Maria
Grigorean

Paul Brie

Paul Brie is the co-founder and CEO at TeleportHQ, where he creates programs and opportunities for augmented human-machine interactions. He is a president of Spheric Accelerator in Cluj, a support platform for the visionaries and young deep-tech entrepreneurs of the region. A former musician and botanist, he switched to information technology because he believes that technological development is a means to create stronger leadership and societal transformation. His career shift happened a decade ago when he returned to Romania with a commitment to empower young people to realize their full potential.

He has a genuine interest in creating and supporting social networks for knowledge sharing. He initiated open innovation camps and co-founded a nonprofit group called JSHeroes, a community of coders in Cluj which has evolved into an international community and a conference. He values continuous learning and development, based on his interpretation of the "ikigai" concept of "reason for being," which includes environmentally-friendly actions. He believes in the power of imagination and the creativity to transform society.

→ Artwork by Melinda Ureczki Lázár



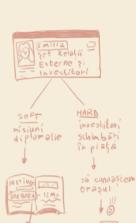


Emilia Botezan

Emilia Botezan is the Head of International Affairs and Foreign Investment Department in the Cluj-Napoca city hall, where she is responsible for national and international partnerships. She joined the city hall two decades ago from a nonprofit group Pro Democrația and has been an active contributor to transition processes since then. She is a graduate of Public Administration at Babeș-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca. She believes that the administration's mindset has significantly changed since 2003 when she joined. Her efforts are focused on building and cultivating the city's networks of partners.

She has been a relationship builder for OurCluj. The main thing she wants for Cluj is more trust from citizens in the municipality and the public administration.





HER JOB : KEEPING THE INVESTORS HAPPY

Prima intalnire Barbara-Primar.

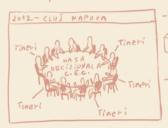




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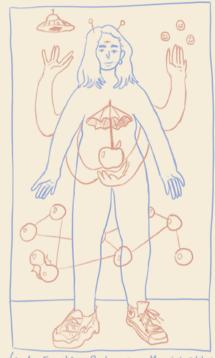


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The Study of Emilia

The cool aunt everyone deserves

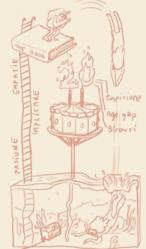






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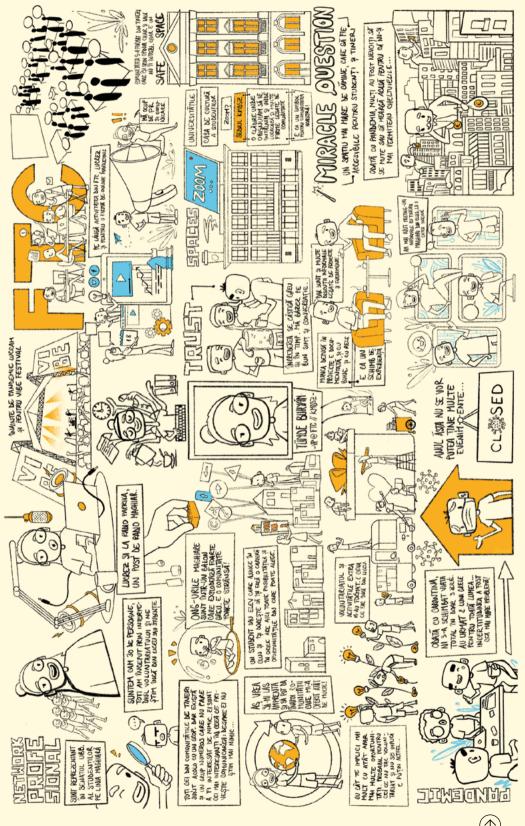


Tünde Buryán

Tünde Buryán works at Paprika Radio, a Hungarian radio channel. She was a Representative of the Hungarian community in the Cluj Youth Federation. She has been volunteering since she was in high school, serving as a representative for the Hungarian community in the Pupils' Council. She believes the power of the community, reflected in her cultivating relationships throughout her engagements. She is currently pursuing a master's degree in communication and represents Hungarian students in the Senate of Babes-Bolyai University.

One of her long-term goals is to excel in the field of communication as a means of giving back to the community that helped her grow. Tünde feels that being part of the youth community in Cluj helped her develop as an individual. If she could change one thing in Cluj it would be that the city might offer better housing for students.





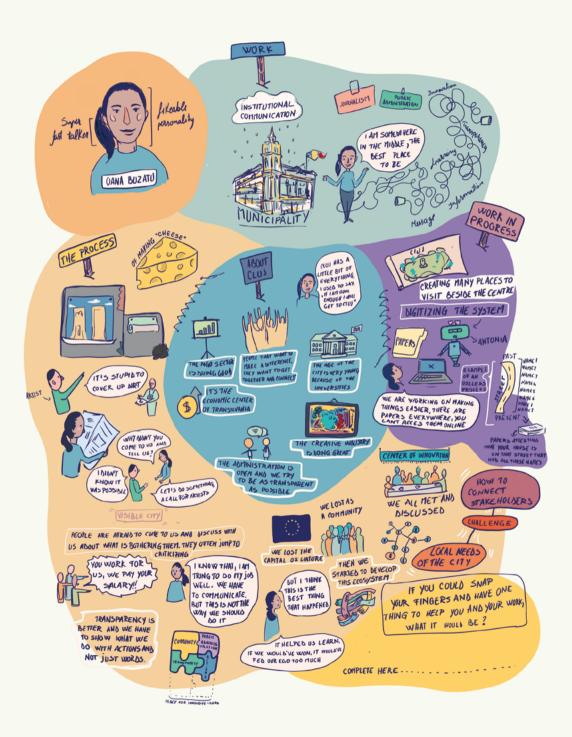


Oana Buzatu

Oana Buzatu coordinates the Institutional Communication and is in charge of the Citizen Information Centre in Cluj-Napoca municipality. She is involved in multiple other activities, such as engaging diverse communities and developing city networks. A former journalist, Oana worked for ten years in the local government. Since entering government, she has worked with three different mayors. Now, one of her responsibilities is improving public opinion about the municipality. To accomplish this, she is seeking to make government processes more transparent. She is interested in cultivating a sense of belonging among people who live in Cluj by facilitating the relationships between citizens and the government.

She has been an active connector between the city hall, local stakeholders, and the OurCity initiative. She participated and supported several projects including the LEAP study, the co-design of FIX Cluj, and the Edu Mapping initiative alongside other local partners.







Răzvan Cherecheș

Răzvan Cherecheș is a Professor of Public Health and Director and Co-Founder of the School of Public Health at Babeș-Bolyai University, the only public health department in Romania with a social science approach. He leads research projects in a wide array of fields including mental health, injury prevention, health systems, capacity building, health policy, and rare diseases. He collaborates with high schools in Cluj-Napoca in various research projects and works with student-led NGOs in building their capacity for health promotion and grant writing.

In the OurCluj initiative, he served as an advisor to the LEAP study, which investigated the needs and opportunities for youth well-being. He is interested in bridging the gaps between the university and other sectors by developing partnerships that improve citizens' health.



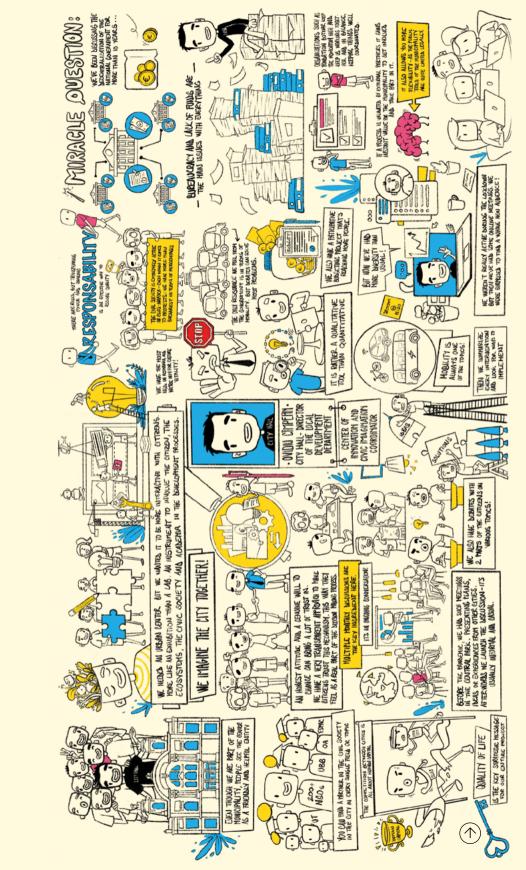


Ovidiu Cîmpean

Ovidiu Cîmpean is the Director of the Local Development Division and Lead Coordinator of the Center for Innovation and Civic Imagination (CIIC) within the city hall. He is responsible for European funding in various fields of urban development including mobility, education, health, tourism, and the creation of energy efficient solutions for the city. He has a BA in political sciences from Babes-Bolyai University, an MA in comparative European political studies, and a PhD in international relations and European studies.

He believes that the Center for Innovation and Civic Imagination is a tool for imagining the city together. As its coordinator, he hosts regular public debates involving a diverse range of stakeholders on various urban development topics that require collective decisions. He played an important role in opening space for the co-design of FIXCluj, one of the OurCluj initiatives, which mobilizes public and private investments to support social innovation projects developed by young residents.







Cristian Dascălu

Cristian Dascălu is the founder of Cluj Hub, a co-working space and community in the center of Cluj-Napoca. He is engaged in national tech start-ups competitions as a board member, mentor, and jury member.

He believes that entrepreneurship is the best way to address economic and social problems. He invests resources in helping new entrepreneurs reach their potential and develop their start-ups. He thinks that it is important to introduce young people to entrepreneurship through teaching and mentoring. His ambition with Cluj Hub is to create learning spaces for young entrepreneurs in Cluj-Napoca where they can connect with local, national, and international investors. He would like to see more programs that finance start-ups led by young entrepreneurs.







András Farkas

András Farkas is a co-founder and Strategic Director of PONT Group, a social innovation organization in Cluj focused on youth and digitalization. He is a youth ecosystem designer in urban settings and manages multiple cross-sectoral and multidisciplinary partnership projects at local, regional, national, and European levels. András, together with his team, was a vital contributor to Cluj-Napoca earning the European Youth Capital title in 2015. This included the creation of Com'ON Cluj-Napoca for youth, carried out on the principles of participatory budgeting. He is creating a resource center that collects and shares knowledge about youth participation in cities, such as participatory budgeting practices.

He sees opportunities to bridge a persistent divide between the Hungarian and Romanian communities in Cluj-Napoca. He is passionate about creating these bridges and working together with diverse stakeholders to address the needs of all communities in Cluj, particularly of the youth. In OurCluj, he contributed extensively to the LEAP study on youth wellbeing, and has been instrumental in the co-design and implementation of the FIXCluj, an innovative participatory financing mechanism which supports young social innovators in Cluj.

→ Artwork by Zsófia Bernát





Susanna Hausmann

Susanna Hausmann is the Chief Program Officer at Fondation Botnar, a Swiss-based foundation which champions the use of digital technology to improve the health and well-being of young people in growing urban environments. This includes programs fostering urban transitions, such as OurCluj, part of the OurClty global initiative. She coordinates and oversees the foundation's engagements in cities, and planning and implementation of grants globally. Over the past 25 years she has been working in global and public health, with long field stays in Tanzania and Mexico, and holds an MA in medical anthropology and a PhD in epidemiology. She has extensive experience in implementation research, specializing in access to care and bringing community voice into policy and planning. She was previously Deputy CEO and Head of Grant Making at the UBS Optimus Foundation and helped to establish several NGOs in the global health field.

She believes in systems transformation, long-term commitments, and actions that need time and participatory engagement. Susanna thinks that to achieve authentic and sustainable transformations, it is essential to build trust between the stakeholders involved in the ecosystem.





Călin Hințea

Călin Hințea is a Professor and Dean at the Faculty of Political Science, Public Administration, and Communication Sciences at Babes-Bolyai University in Cluj. Previously he served as the Secretary of State and Head of Strategy Unit at the Prime Minister's Office. He is the Senior Editor of *Transylvanian Review of Administrative Sciences*. He conducted extensive research on developing strategies in local communities, presented in his 2019 edited volume *Strategic Planning in Local Communities* (Palgrave Macmillan).

For the last 15 years he worked closely with Cluj-Napoca city hall to design and coordinate the development of strategies for urban development. He believes that changes are more visible on the local level than on the national level, and he is committed to supporting local transformations. He would like to see more communication between local and national authorities.

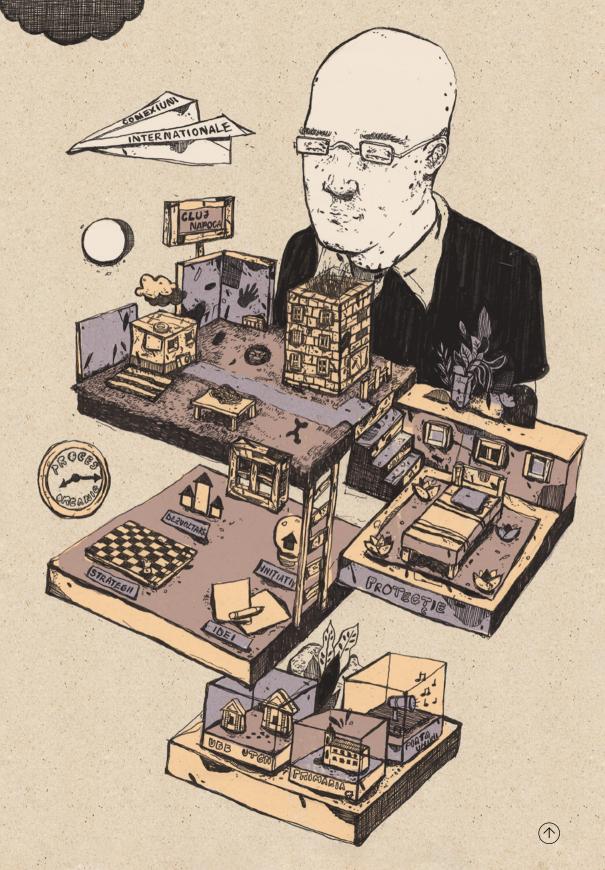




Benjamin Kohl

Benjamin Kohl is a Partner at Planwerk, a Romanian-German collaboration office in Cluj, that works in the fields of urban development, strategic planning, and public space and architectural design. Planwerk aims to provide input to the transformation of post-socialist cities in Romania through interdisciplinary collaboration and exchange with a network of professionals from Romania and the EU, local stakeholders, and with citizens. Benjamin graduated from the faculty of architecture and urbanism of the HfbK Hamburg and has been teaching architecture design and urban regeneration at the Technical University of Cluj.

He is working to make changes in municipal practices that include multilayered analysis of specific urban situations and the involvement of citizens in decision-making.





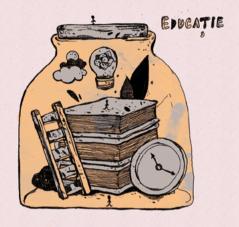
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Portrait by
Horatiu Coman

Floring Lendeczki

Florina Lendeczki is a co-founder of EvoCariera, a nonprofit start-up in Cluj that provides young people career counseling and coaching. Prior to doing this work, she was the Executive Director and Local Coordinator for MagicHelp, a program of the Magic Association that seeks to build networks to support families with children struggling with chronic, developmental, and non-specified illnesses. During the pandemic, Magic's team helped create safe and caring spaces for parents to share experiences and struggles that also connected them to various resources. She holds a PhD in psychology from Babeş-Bolyai University.

She believes Cluj is like a small village community, where you know your neighbor and where you can easily connect with other people. She thinks that trust with people is built through small steps and commitments, along with open dialogue and sharing of resources. She wants to see more nonformal education and personal development programs in Cluj.











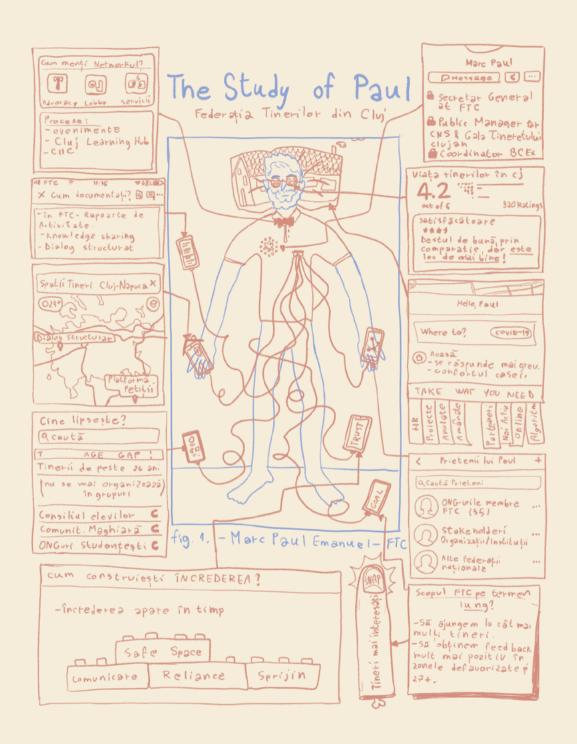


Paul Emanuel Marc

Paul Marc is the General Secretary at the Cluj Youth Federation and was a project manager for two of the largest annual projects of the organization, Cluj Never Sleeps and Cluj Youth Gala. His role includes communication between the members of the Board of Directors and the Executive Board, who serve as volunteers and coordinate various activities. His long-term objective is to reach as many young people.

He values staying connected with his network consisting of presidents of different students' associations and their executive boards, as well as other city stakeholders that work in the youth sector. He believes it is important to actively engage in processes such as transferring knowledge, sharing services, lobbying, and advocacy. He builds trust with people by creating a safe space, by providing help when needed, and by being there for others. He is committed to making Cluj a place where young people are actively engaged in the future of the city.







Ruxandra Mercea

Ruxandra Mercea is an education innovator in Cluj. She is the CEO of Transylvania College, a private school recognized for its transformative approach to learning. Recently she founded Spark School, a hybrid online high school offering the Cambridge International Curriculum. Born and raised in Cluj, Ruxandra's roots with Transylvania College run deep, back to a time when she was eight and a student herself. Having witnessed the evolution of the school through decades in Romania, Ruxandra is committed to establishing and maintaining a well-being-centered culture that incorporates both teachers and students.

A systems thinker, she focuses on developing long-term projects that make a difference in education at the national and international levels. She believes that change in education comes from within each school and through a synergy between school communities. In her opinion, a country can only prosper when education becomes a priority. In this vein, she is passionate about challenging the status quo and contributing to creating a new, more effective education system in Romania, where all children can find their voice and make a difference.





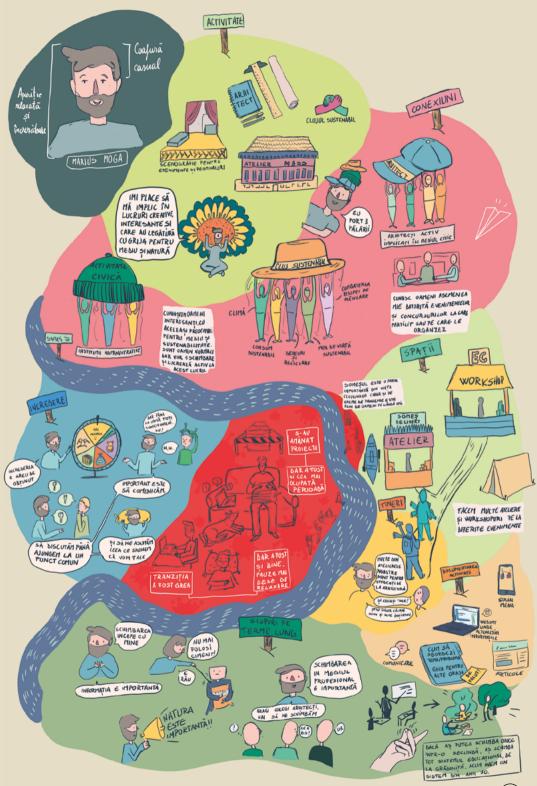


Marius Cătălin Moga

Marius Cătălin Moga is the co-founder of Atelier MASS, an architectural studio based in Cluj-Napoca. He also founded the environmental nonprofit organization miniMASS, whose main project, Someș Delivery, promotes the importance of the Somes River for sustainable urban development. He was an early contributor to Cluj Atlas, which aims to develop cultural maps to reflect on the past and future of youth well-being in the city.

He is passionate about sustainable living and caring for the environment. He has started a new initiative, Clujul Sustenabil, together with other people who have been working in this field. Its aim is to raise awareness and to start conversations on topics such as climate change, ecology, and the environment. He is committed to changing the educational system in Romania to one that values life-long learning. He believes that the laws and principles on which the current educational system is based are too old and that an update is necessary.

→
Artwork by
Evelina Grigorean





→
Portrait by
Zsófia Bernát

Bianca Muntean

Bianca Muntean is the co-founder and manager of Transylvania IT Cluster and the co-founder and coordinator of Transylvania Digital Innovation Hub. The IT Cluster supports networks and organizations from the IT industry in Cluj-Napoca to innovate and connect members through events and training. She has worked in the implementation of various EU funded projects for over two decades. She is active in developing sectoral strategies for fostering technology innovation with a focus on small and medium size enterprises. She holds a PhD in business administration and management from Babes-Bolyai University.

She believes that interdisciplinarity is essential for sustainable impact. Bianca is part of a digital innovation community that tries to do just that. She advocates for the importance of the Cluj-Napoca innovation ecosystem based on authentic collaboration and common goals and acknowledges how much these components matter in creating change and lasting impact. She believes that it is all about the people. Organizations and institutions are designed for stability and might stay in place forever; it will take individuals with a change-focused mindset to actually change things.

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Artwork by
Zsófia Bernát



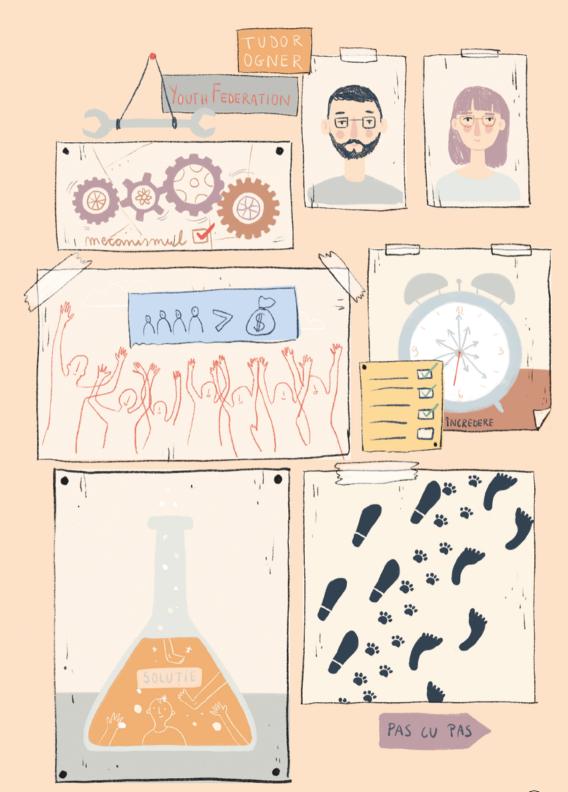


Tudor Ogner

Tudor Ogner is the President of the Cluj Youth Federation. Beyond this role, Tudor is a project consultant for the UNTOLD and Neversea festivals and works with start-ups to raise funds. He believes that Cluj is making significant progress in most sectors in supporting young people, including education, work cultures, culture, and healthcare. However, there is still considerable work to be done to change housing affordability.

Tudor works closely with other youth organizations and stakeholders in Cluj and Romania, including public authorities at the local and national levels. He values personal connections with individuals when getting to know organizations and institutions.

→ Artwork by Zsófia Bernát





Alexandra Onișor

Alexandra Onișor is a teacher and researcher at the Department of Public Health at Babes-Bolyai University with a background in child and adolescent psychology. She was the coordinator of the qualitative analysis component of the LEAP project, a first-of-its-kind interdisciplinary study on youth well-being in Cluj-Napoca. She conducted a youth camp called "Hearts," which combines "health" and "arts," where she used the arts to introduce concepts of physical and mental health to children.

As part of the LEAP study, Alexandra focused on conceptualizing youth well-being, synthesizing international, national, and local literature on youth well-being; collecting voices of youth in Cluj; and conducting qualitative research to indicate youth needs, gaps, and opportunities. Her understanding of well-being expanded greatly through her work with LEAP. Youth agency, she argues, is lacking in Romania and in Cluj. However, she hopes that by conducting focused research, she can advocate for including more voices of youth in decision-making.





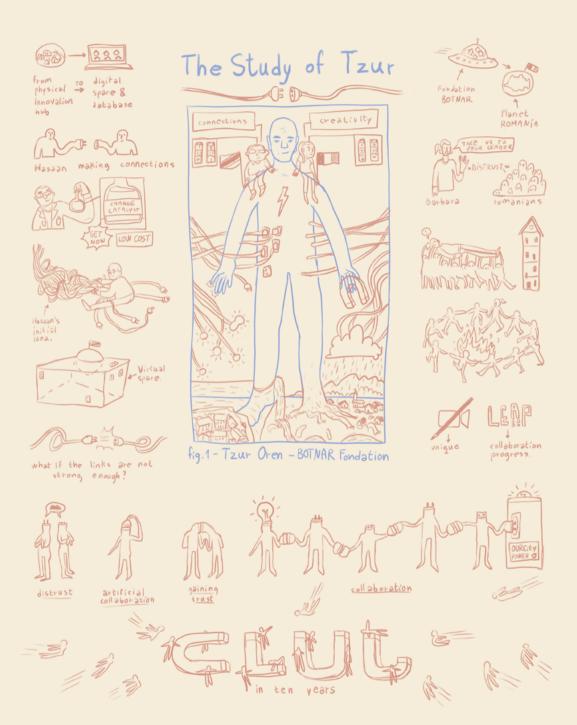


Zur Oren

Zur Oren is the Partnerships Coordinator at Fondation Botnar. He supports the foundation's programs, including the OurCity initiative in cities around the world. He earned his MBA at Hebrew University of Jerusalem and has over 15 years of experience in various aspects of business development, including social entrepreneurship and community-based solutions. Zur is passionate about making the world a better place. He considers himself a part of a bigger whole, in which his role is that of a supporter and facilitator. Change, from Zur's viewpoint, takes time. It most often requires listening, observing, and speaking with stakeholders to truly understand the problems and to create deep and long-lasting change.

In Romania, which is the foundation's legacy country, he is especially committed to addressing deepening inequalities and advancing meaningful inclusion of young people across sectors while building trust between people, organizations, and the government.







→
Portrait by
Zsófia Bernát

Eugen Pănescu

Eugen Pănescu is an architect and urban planner and co-founder of Planwerk, a Romanian-German collaboration office in Cluj-Napoca that works in the fields of urban development, strategic planning, public space, and architectural design. Throughout his career, he has worked on local and regional urban projects and has contributed to the recent development of professional planning in Romania. He is an Executive Board Member of the Architects Council of Europe and Coordinator of the Baukultur Thematic Area. He is passionate about wise reuse and retrofitting of buildings and the holistic approach to heritage through social and economic equity.

He believes his work and the work of his partners is focused on public interest, and he is constantly changed by an environment where private interests prevail and market mechanisms dominate. As a result, he has been advocating for a more empowered public administration, one that can adequately regulate the role of private interests in public matters.

→
Artwork by
Melinda Ureczki
Lázár





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Portrait by
Lucian Barbu

Dumitru Petreuș

Dumitru Petreuș is a technology entrepreneur and co-founder at Wello Association, a start-up that focuses on social and charitable activities for children through promoting healthy nutrition. His passion for nutrition was inspired by his personal commitment to lead a healthy lifestyle for himself and to be a positive role model to his children. Wello has received several grants and awards at the national and international level and has been recognized for its innovative business model. Dumitru considers himself "the man behind" the program, as he is focused on software development. He holds degrees in engineering and information technology from the Technical University in Cluj-Napoca.

He values quality over quantity in his work. He wants to test the Wello application further before expanding collaborations with schools and other partners.





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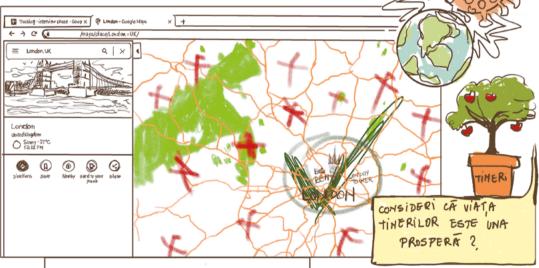
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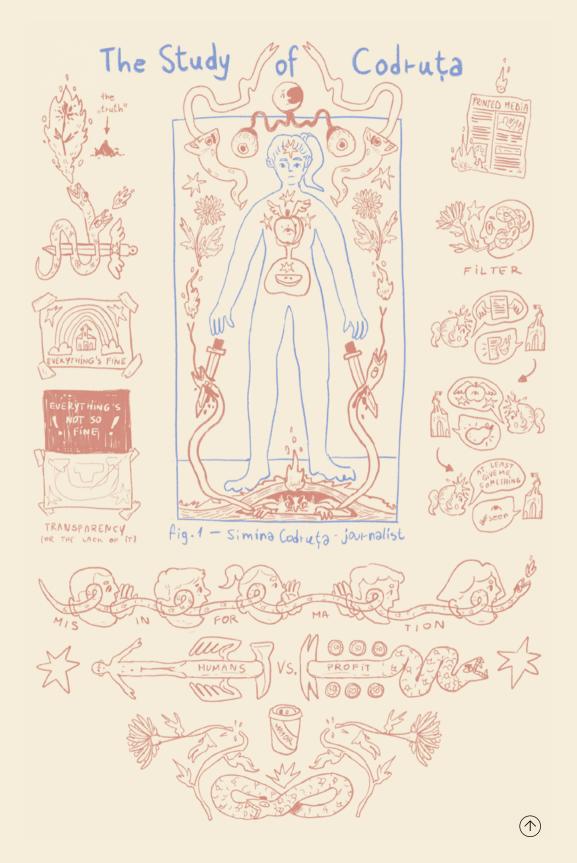
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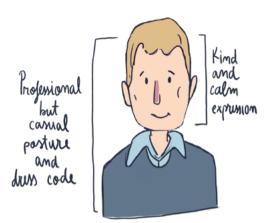
Codruța Simina

Codruţa Simina is an experienced journalist, who has worked in the Romanian press for the last 17 years as a reporter, editor, and editorial consultant. Until recently, she worked as a reporter at PressOne. Before that, she briefly worked in the public sector as an advisor to the Ministry for Social Dialogue. In 2021, during the pandemic, she supported the Ministry of Health in improving communication through a public health information campaign.

She is a strong advocate for public transparency, which she views as an essential element to developing a trusting relationship between citizens and public authorities. She has seen a change in how information is presented at the local level, emphasizing that local journalists do not have sufficient opportunities for press conferences with the public administration in Cluj-Napoca. She chairs the local journalist association in Cluj, and she believes that it is important to offer alternative ways of communication to reach and inform citizens.







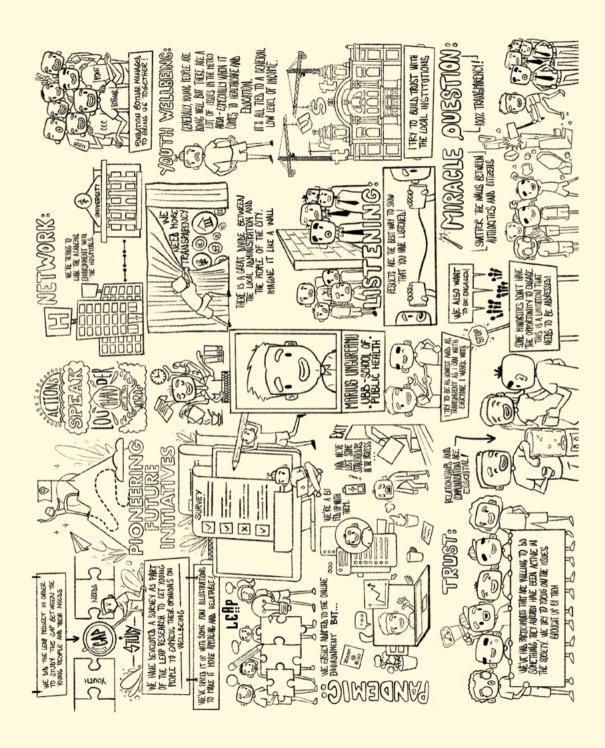
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Portrait by
Evelina-Maria
Grigorean

Marius Ungureanu

Marius Ungureanu is the Department Chair at the Cluj School of Public Health, Babeș-Bolyai University. He also serves as the Director of Education and Director of the Center for Health Workforce Research and Policy. In 2021, he was Chief of Staff to the Health Minister. In 2016 he was also part of the government as Secretary of State for the Ministry of Health. He is a medical doctor, trained in healthcare management and policy. His research focuses on developing evidence for policymaking in health systems, including the impact of health workforce policies on retention of health professionals.

As part of the LEAP study, he led the research consortium to assess the needs of young people in Cluj-Napoca and explore the gaps and opportunities for their well-being. He is actively working to create more collaboration and more trust among people in Cluj.

→ Artwork by Horațiu Coman





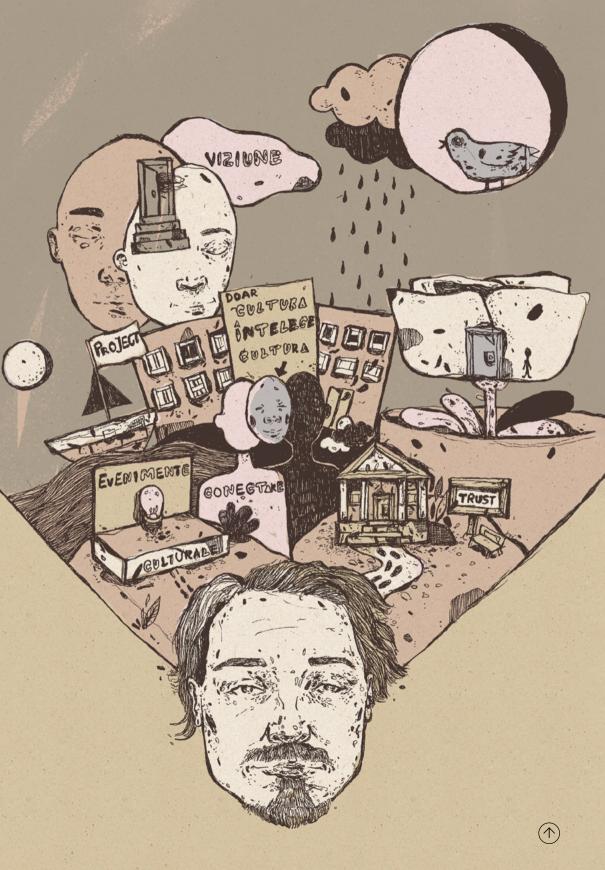
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Portrait by
Lucian Barbu

Ștefan Teișanu

Ștefan Teișanu is a cultural manager and entrepreneur in Cluj. He is the Executive Director of the Cluj Cultural Centre, an association that mobilizes culture to solve urban and societal challenges. The Centre's team explores how culture can have a role in social transformation and sustainable development through many fields like art, education, heritage, social and urban innovation, and STEM education. Ștefan develops his network and relationships by building trust with people he interacts with. His focus is on understanding challenges linked with the field of culture and to achieve collaborations to work to solve them.

In the LEAP study consortium, together with Rariţa Zbranca, he was involved in stakeholder consultations and in the design of the policy recommendations. He is responsible for Learning QUB, a new project of the OurCluj initiative funded by Fondation Botnar, which aims to develop a capacity-building program for the schools in Cluj. Its goal is to connect a STEAM (science, technology, engineering, the arts and mathematics) resource center, which will serve as an innovation laboratory with the Cluj School Network, which will function as a transfer and expansion mechanism. The QUB will act as a community hub and resource center with the mission of researching and designing STEAM education solutions.

→ Artwork by Melinda Ureczki Lázár





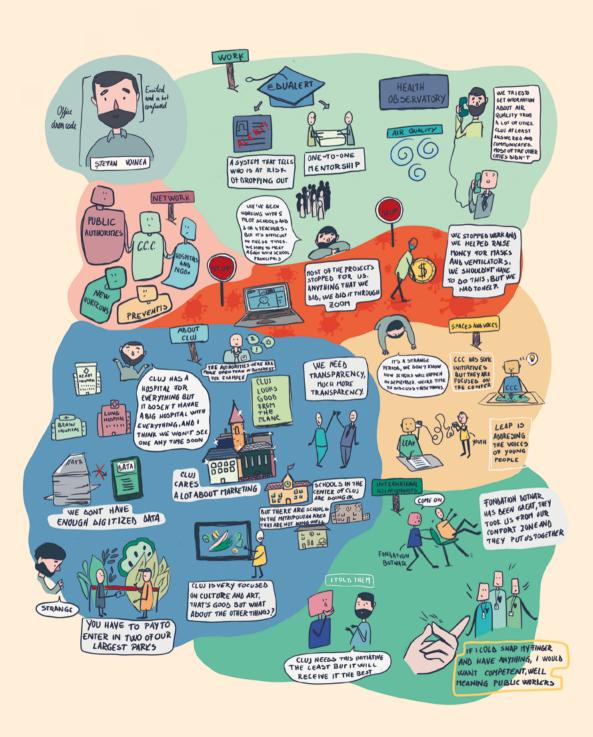
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Portrait by
Horatiu Coman

Ştefan Voinea

Stefan Voinea is a Board Member in the Romanian Health Observatory and a PhD candidate at the Doctoral School of Applied Cognitive Psychology. As a result of the pandemic, in August 2021 he took a new role as a Project Manager and the Infodemic and Technical Lead at the World Health Organization in Romania. He is interested in the impact of mentorship on school retention. He has developed projects at the crossroads of technology, education, and psychology, including an early warning system software for school dropout prevention called EduAlert. At the Romanian Observatory, he works as part of a team that brings together stakeholders across sectors with the goal of improving the overall health of Romanians.

He thinks that for young people to thrive in Cluj, supports need to be equitably distributed across the city. Because most policies focus on the city center, the youth on the outskirts of the city are often overlooked. To address this, Stefan is working towards more and higher quality open data, particularly in the education and healthcare sectors.

→ Artwork by Evelina-Maria Grigorean





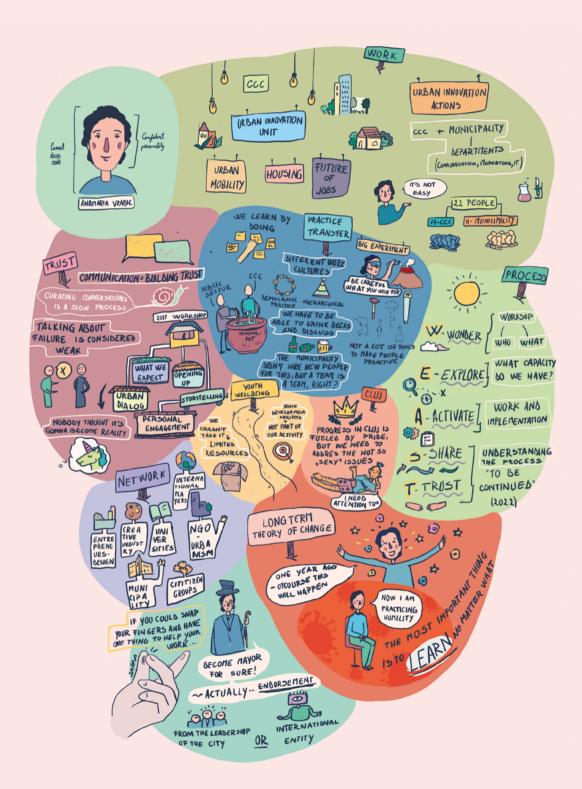
> Portrait by 7.sófia Bernát

Anamaria Vrabie

Anamaria Vrabie is the director and co-founder of the Urban Innovation Unit at Cluj Cultural Centre, a research and development program aimed at strengthening collective action in response to the city's strategic challenges. Since 2012, Anamaria has been working across Romania to bring more knowledge and capacity to sustainable urban development. She co-founded an urban regeneration advisory for transitional cities; she has organized conferences, exhibitions; and workshops with a focus on urban regeneration and social innovation; and she has taught courses on urban economics at Ion Mincu University of Architecture and Urbanism in Bucharest.

As part of the Urban Innovation Unit, she works closely with the Centre for Innovation and Civic Imagination at the city hall of Cluj-Napoca. Anamaria believes there is value in collaboration between sectors and robust urban experimentation. The best tools for effective collaboration are clear communication, the capacity to be vulnerable, and the ability to acknowledge and to celebrate failures.

→
Artwork by
Evelina-Maria
Grigorean





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Portrait by
Erdély Bálint

Rarița Zbranca

Rarița Zbranca is the Program Director of the Cluj Cultural Centre, a nonprofit association in Cluj-Napoca that mobilizes cultural actors and initiatives for social transformation and local and regional development. She has over 20 years experience in cultural management, programming, research, and policymaking. Her current areas of interest include the role of culture in social transformation and urban development, and the relationship between culture and well-being. She joined the Centre's team in 2016 after contributing to the application for the European Capital of Culture 2021, when Cluj-Napoca was one of the participant cities. She is a co-founder of AltArt Foundation, co-founder of Fabrica de Pensule, a member of the Strategy Group of the "A Soul for Europe" initiative, and a board member of the Balkan Express network.

In the LEAP study consortium, she was responsible for designing policy recommendations. She believes that even if there are spaces for young people in Cluj-Napoca, there are not enough tools to help them find out about these spaces or to access them. Rariţa sees these types of processes or systems as essential factors in supporting youth involvement. She is actively working on building trust between the city government and the cultural sector so that cultural programming can be better supported.

→ Artwork by Erdély Bálint



Activating Values in Urban Transitions: A novel approach to urban innovation in Romania ®

Appendix 2 Glossary

Care

Care includes everything that we do to maintain, continue, and repair ourselves and our environment so that we can live as well as possible. There are four phases of care: caring about (recognizing a need for care), caring for (taking responsibility to meet that need), care-giving (the actual physical work of providing care), and care receiving (the evaluation of how well the care provided has met the caring need).

Civic imagination

The act of collectively envisioning better societies or political communities. Before acting in the world, individuals and groups construct and find power in imaginaries. This necessarily requires being able to imagine the process of change, seeing oneself as capable of making change, feeling solidarity with others, joining collectives, and bringing imaginative dimensions to real-world spaces and places.

Civic innovation

The introduction of a novelty that transforms how a public process is understood. The novelty serves a diversity of publics by empowering them to take actions in their communities.

Collaborative governance

A set of events, actions, or spaces where the government works with other stakeholders in the city (like nonprofits, companies, or universities) in a collective decision-making process. This process aims towards consensus and is based on deliberation.

Development paradigm

A path or a modality to follow for achieving development, based on a framework of thought, codified set of activities, and/or a vision regarding the functioning and evolution of a socio-economic system.

Discursive practices

Narratives transmitted in public discourse that show a specific idea of who is in power. Alternative discursive practices can lead to changing this idea and changing the course of action of an institution.

Efficiency

Utilizing the least expenditure of a limited resource necessary to achieve a goal. This can often go against other prioritized values, like care or democracy.

Path creation

Path creation refers to the agency through which actors create and exercise alternative options in a governance path (see Path dependence).

Path dependence

Path dependence is when the decisions presented to people are dependent on previous decisions or experiences made in the past. For example, it exists when a feature of the economy (institution, technical standard, pattern of economic development etc.) is not based on current conditions, but rather has been formed by a sequence of past actions, each leading to a distinct outcome

Prototype

An early sample, model, or release of a product built to test a concept or process.

Social innovation

Social innovation is the process of developing and deploying effective solutions to challenging and often systemic social and environmental issues in support of social progress. Solutions often require active collaboration of constituents across government, business, and the nonprofit world.



Social design

Social design is the creation of new social conditions, paths, and structures in cities, organizations, communities, or teams with the intended outcomes of deeper civic or cultural engagement and increased creativity, resilience, equity, social justice, and well-being. Along the way to these new social conditions, products and services are often developed, but they are part of a larger system that includes invisible social dynamics as well as artifacts.

Smart city

A paradigm that supports the use of digital technologies by city governments for goals like economic growth, citizen engagement, and improving quality of life.

Smart governance

The capacity of a smart city to make decisions in a responsive way. This includes making decisions about technologies, making decisions through technologies, using technologies to improve administration, and collaboration through partnering with other sectors.

System

A set of interdependent components that interact with each other and their environment in dynamic ways and which is defined by its structure and purpose.

System map

A visual representation of a collection of patterns of behavior in the form of causal loops that are interconnected and illustrate why a system currently operates as it does. While no map is ever considered finished – because a system is constantly evolving and any group's understanding of a system is always partial – a system map represents our best understanding of a system as it currently functions. In systems mapping, the boundaries of a system are shaped by a framing question.

Systems thinking

A holistic approach to analysis that focuses on the way that a system's constituent parts interrelate and how systems work over time and within the context of larger systems. It is based on the belief that the component parts of a system will act differently when isolated from the system's environment or other parts of the system.

Urban Living Laboratory (ULL)

A series of meetings and projects, which can take place in a physical space, where companies, universities, nonprofits, and governments work together to co-design, test and develop innovative responses to complex urban challenges. These responses are usually new policies and technologies.

Value

Value is an economic term that defines the measure of the benefit provided by a good or service. When we talk about the value that something brings, we refer to the contribution that it makes. However, how we measure this contribution depends on what we consider to be valuable as a community. This means that value is defined by values. Values are beliefs that guide ethical action.

Values-Based Urban Living Laboratory (VBULL)

An Urban Living Laboratory (see above) that is thematically defined by a set of values and not by its expected outcomes. For example, OurCluj is a VBULL because it centers the values of trust and care.

Well-being

There is no single definition of well-being. It comprises subjective well-being such as happiness and life satisfaction, and objective well-being, which considers quality of life such as material resources (e.g., income, food, and housing) and social attributes (e.g., education, health, voice, and connections). Relational well-being emphasizes that an individual's well-being is influenced by their relationships through the dynamic interplay of personal, societal, and environmental structures and processes.



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In 2019, a collective of urban innovators in Cluj-Napoca, Romania, began asking what would happen if a different set of values were guiding urban transitions. What if goals of well-being were prioritized over economic growth? What if care were prioritized over efficiency? What if the cultivation of trust were more important than expediency? This book is an exploration into the individual motivations and collective goals of people actively seeking to change the script of what social innovation looks like in Romania. We coin the term "Values-Based Urban Living Laboratory," or VBULL, to describe the emerging arrangement. Living laboratories are usually focused on specific innovations like transport, energy systems, tourism, or education. But in Cluj, with the focus on youth well-being, social innovation has an entirely different look and feel. The research was conducted by a team of scholars, practitioners, and artists, resulting in a highly visual analytical and interpretive book. Results of the qualitative research are represented in text as well as through the interpretive lens of Cluj-based visual artists. The images contained here in are not mere illustrations of analysis but interpretations that should take the reader into wholly new and unpredictable directions.

The book concludes with ten design recommendations and is complemented with a reflective activity to imagine alternative frames for urban innovation in communities.

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