

System Map – Youth Wellbeing in Cluj

Collaboratively visualizing
dynamics within the system

January 26, 2024

1. About the **System Mapping Project**

Why focus on youth wellbeing in Cluj?

We face multiple crises:

ecological, social, economic and political, cultural and spiritual.

A growing sense of separation: from our inner selves, each other and nature

Wellbeing over growth: Model of infinite economic growth and technological innovation is not a path for societal and planetary wellbeing.

Examples: New Zealand, Wales, Scotland, Wellbeing Economy Alliance, WHO, OECD; Transition Movement, Doughnut Economics Action Labs. Cities.



The image shows a screenshot of a Financial Times article. At the top, the Financial Times logo is visible, along with a hamburger menu icon on the left and the 'myFT' logo on the right. Below the logo is a dark red banner with the text 'Special Report Thriving Cities' and a white downward-pointing chevron icon. The main headline of the article is 'Why we need to prioritise wellbeing over growth'. Below the headline is a sub-headline: 'For young people living in cities, crisis and opportunity collide, writes Barbara Bulc'. At the bottom of the screenshot is a photograph of a group of young people in a park-like setting, some wearing bright green shirts, performing a group activity or dance on a paved area with blue stadium seating in the background.

Research questions we stated with

... What are the **main drivers** of wellbeing of youth in cluj?

... How are the different dimensions of wellbeing **connected** with each other?

... Where do we see **leverage points** for systemic interventions to positively influence the system?

What is Wellbeing **for You?**



Having time for yourself.

Spending time with your

Making your family happy

Having peace of mind.
a good work-life balance.

Good music, fresh air and good vibes around us.

Good vibrations and vibes around and doing what we love most.

Peace and laughing.

Taking on challenges and winning.

Good food.

Healthy Good relationships with others, in society. with our own community.

Having a mission and being closer and closer to it, being closer and closer to your ideas.

Being free, having freedom.

Cooking cookies and sharing with others.

The connection we have with our friends and events, activities and hobbies.

Having enough sleep-ing on the grass and chilling in nature.
quiet time.

Wellbeing is relational

No one single definition; varies by culture and context. Wellbeing is a property of emergent complex system.

.... balance point between the psychological, social and physical resources an individual has and the psychological, social and physical challenges that individual faces. **(International Journal of Wellbeing)**

.....a positive state experienced by individuals and societies. Similar to health, it is a resource for daily life and is determined by social, economic and environmental conditions. Wellbeing encompasses quality of life and the ability of people and societies to contribute to the world with a sense of meaning and purpose. **(WHO)**

.....four components of mental wellbeing (awareness, connection, insight, and purpose), each of which exhibits plasticity and are supported by neuroscience in the 2015 World Happiness Report. **(Richard Davidson)**

.....linking personal, societal and environmental wellbeing in the concept of relational wellbeing, encouraging people to reflect on how their personal experience is shaped by broader social, economic and political factors, and how these in turn are shaped by and shaping environmental processes, the natural rhythms of the planet and the ecology of all its creatures. **(Sarah White)**

....replacing the individual and the community by illuminating the significance of relationship. Our future wellbeing—both local and global—depends on placing relationship in the forefront of concern. All meaning grows from coordinated action, or co-action, and thus, all that we hold to be real, rational, and valuable depends on the well-being of our relationships. **(Kenneth Gergen)**

....perspective of the wellbeing of young people, or how an urban metropolitan area can enable the following four interrelated aspects of wellbeing: **personal health, learning process, having agency and enabling environment for youth to flourish.** **(LEAP study, OurCluj local context)**

2. Our approach & process

Exploring the system collaboratively

Taking a system perspective

Conventional Thinking

In order to optimize the whole, we must **optimize the parts**

Connections between problems and their causes is **obvious and easy to trace**

Short-term success will also ensure long-term success

Tackle many **independent initiatives** simultaneously



Systems Thinking

In order to optimize the whole, we must **improve relationships** among the parts

Relationships between problems and their causes is **indirect and not obvious**

Quick fixes have unintended consequences: can make matters worse in the long run

Only a few key **coordinated changes** sustained over time will lead to systems change

Taking a system perspective

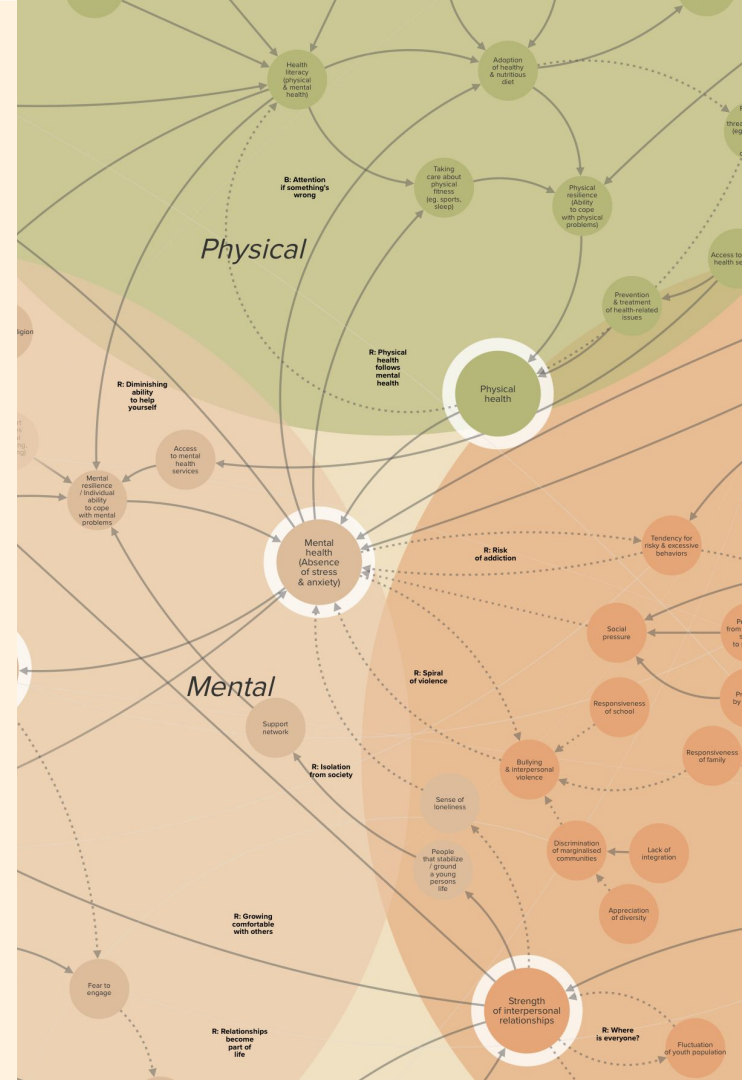
Collaboratively analyse
a complex system to
**create deeper and
shared understanding**



Our Method System Mapping

System Map is a visual language for complex systems

- helps us see hidden connections & dependencies
- creates shared understanding through visualization
- structures various information & makes complexity tangible



City Ecosystem

Cluj-Napoca, Romania



Cluj-Napoca

City center





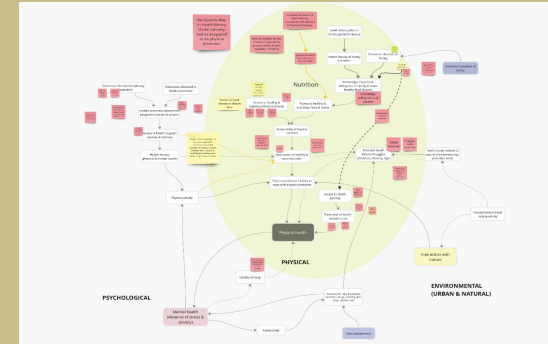
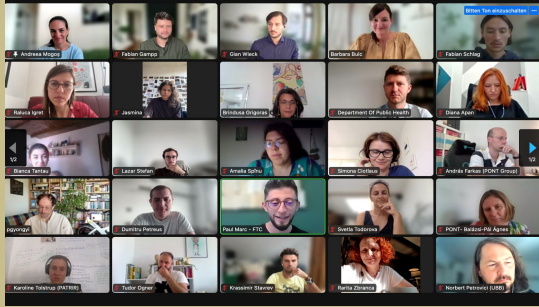
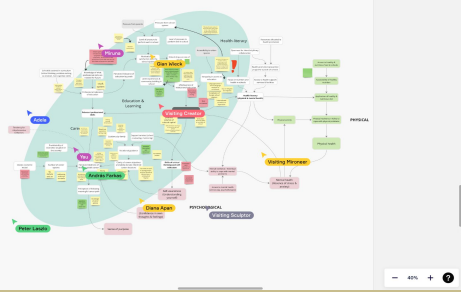
Remembering the past
could our future?

Data Resources

To create our System Map we used various data resources such as:

- Interviews of Experts and Youth
- Studies (e.g. LEAP study)
- Co-Creation Workshops
- Feedback workshops



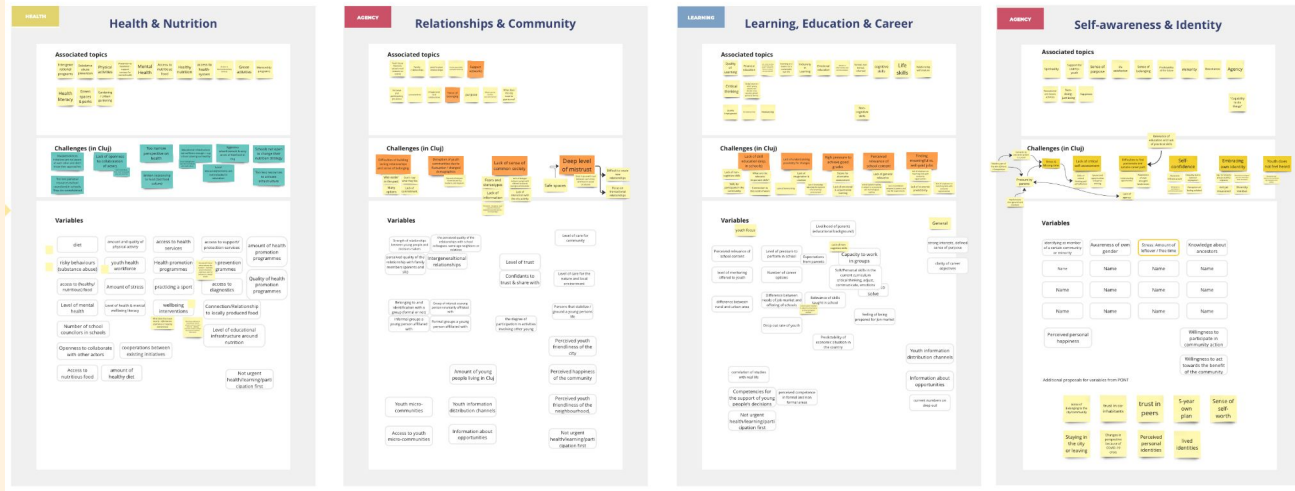


Impressions from the mapping process

In **online** and **offline** formats, we discussed shared perspectives and created the system map with **over 40 local partners** including youth.



System Mapping Process



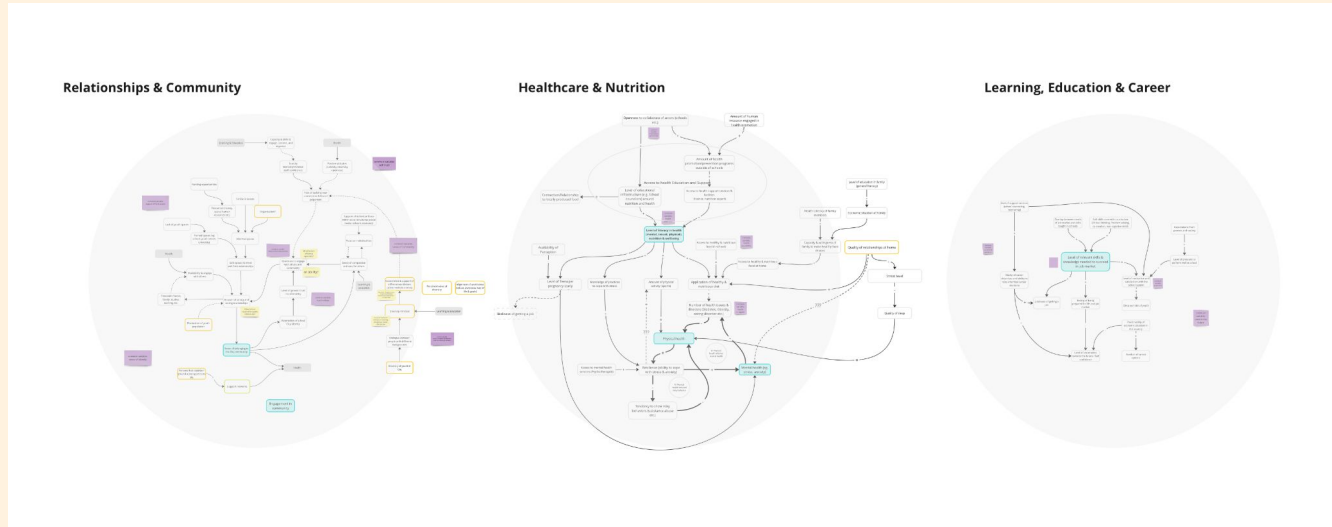
Internal data collection

Weekly meetings with various stakeholders. Collecting system elements

Variable collection

13.7.23 – 24.7.23

System Mapping Process



Internal data collection

Weekly meetings with various stakeholders. Collecting system elements

13.7.23 – 24.7.23

Internal mapping workshop

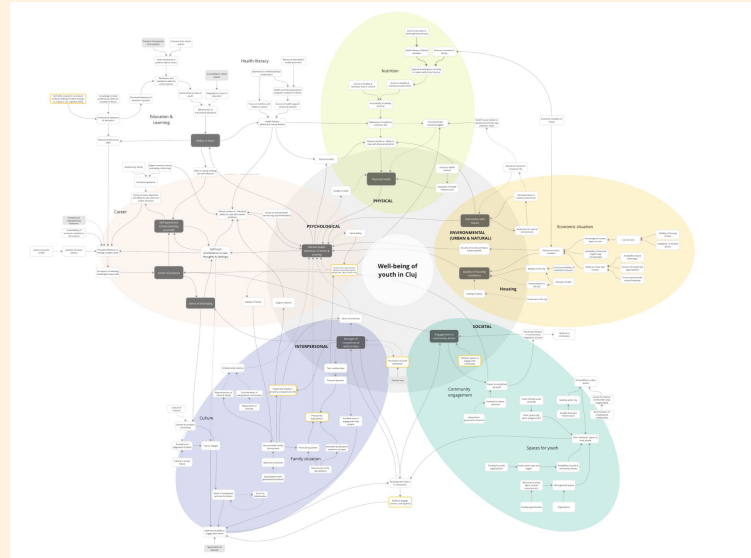
One-Day workshop with 15 participants. Mapping sectors.

25.7.23

Variable collection

System Map V.1

System Mapping Process



Internal data collection

Weekly meetings with various stakeholders. Collecting system elements

13.7.23 – 24.7.23

Internal mapping workshop

One-Day workshop with 15 participants. Mapping sectors.

25.7.23

Stakeholder Workshop

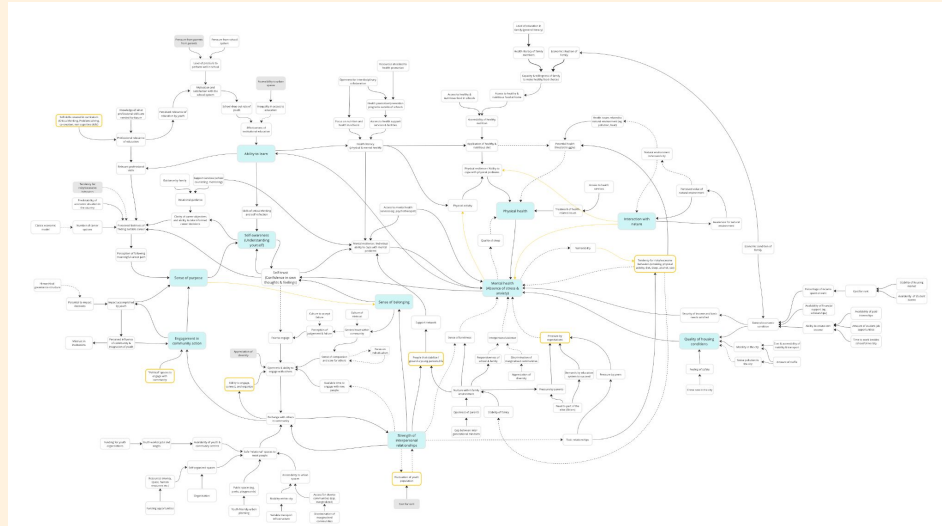
One-Day workshop with 40 participants. Collecting Feedback

13.8.23

Variable collection

System Map V.1

System Mapping Process



Internal data collection

Weekly meetings with various stakeholders. Collecting system elements

13.7.23 – 24.7.23

Variable collection

Internal mapping workshop

One-Day workshop with 15 participants. Mapping sectors.

25.7.23

System Map V.1

Stakeholder Workshop

One-Day workshop with 40 participants. Collecting Feedback

13.8.23

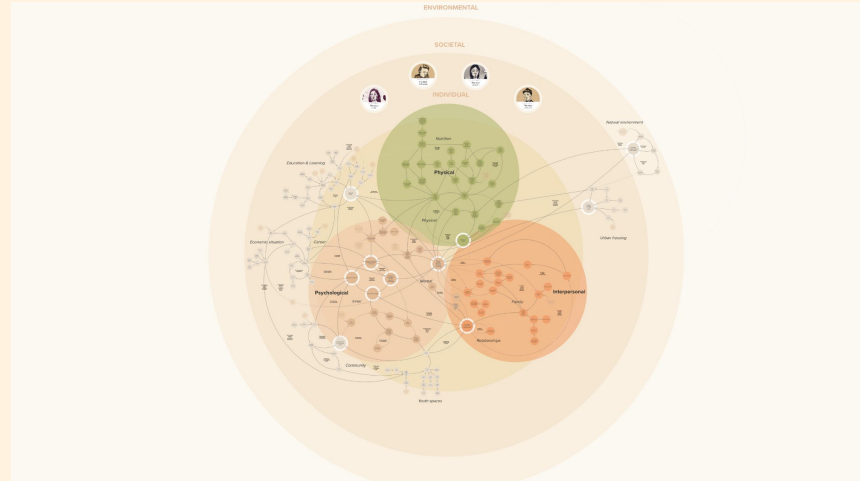
Adaptation of the map & expert consultations

Various interviews and meetings with experts.

13.8.23 – 20.9.23

System Map V.2

System Mapping Process



Internal data collection

Weekly meetings with various stakeholders. Collecting system elements

13.7.23 – 24.7.23

Internal mapping workshop

One-Day workshop with 15 participants. Mapping sectors.

25.7.23

Stakeholder Workshop

One-Day workshop with 40 participants. Collecting Feedback

13.8.23

Adaptation of the map & expert consultations

Various interviews and meetings with experts.

13.8.23 – 20.9.23

Final System Map 2.0 Internal Presentation

Transfer to Kumu-Software & Storytelling

04.10.23

Variable collection

System Map V.1

System Map V.2

Contributors

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Design: Studio PUNKT and System Mapping Academy

OurCluj Contributors

Local partners, coordinated by Babes-Bolyai University School of Public Health as part of the LEAP 2.0 study development (Marius I. Ungeranu, Simona Ciotlaus, Amalia Spinu and Stefan-Augustin Lazar) with the Directorat for Social and Medical Assistance of the Cluj-Napoca Municipality (Brindusa Grigoras), Pont Group (Ágnes Balázsi-Pál, András Farkas), Wello Association (Cristina Rogoz, Dumitru Petreus), and Rural Senses (Raluca Igrat). For more information, visit: <https://publichealth.ro>

Participants in the City Stakeholder Workshop

The City Stakeholder Workshop to develop the Wellbeing Systems Map engaged over 40 participants from public, private, civic and academic organizations across generations from Cluj-Napoca. We are grateful to all contributors for their time and insights. Thank you to: Bogdan Stanciu, ADI ZMC; Jasmina Cloșca, Lorand Maxim, Casa Tranzit; Mihaela Baciuc, Daria Cifudean, David Ciceu Cuc, Raul Tarko, CJE; Miruna Amza, Bogdan Teodorescu, Miruna Toma, Rarita Zbranca, Cluj Cultural Centre (Learning QUB); Adela Bernad, Cluj IT Transylvania Cluster; Diana Apan, Cluj City Hall; Alexandra Bratosin, Tudor Ognér, Marc Paul, Patrick Rojan, Bianca Tantau, FTC (Cluj Youth Mapping); Vlad Cupsa, Gabriel Aldea-Turcu, KOMITI Media; Kseniia Shyriaieva, Karoline Tolstrup Sørensen, Patrîr; Krassimir Stavrev, Svetla Todorova, Studio PUNKT (Participatory Visual Branding); Radu Meza, Andrea Mogos, UBB, FSPAC (Youth Data Collaborative); Otilia Calfa, BEING Romania; Norbert Petrovici, UBB Interdisciplinary Data Science Center; Miki Braniste, UBB, Faculty of Theater and Film; Karoline Tolstrup, PATRIR; Péter László, UBB / PONT Group (Cluj Youth Mapping); Cristina Apetrei, Leuphana University; Anca Goron, Youth Data Collaborative.

Funded by Fondation Botnar

Fondation Botnar is a Swiss foundation focused on improving the health and well-being of young people in growing urban environments around the world. OurCity is an initiative by Fondation Botnar which enables cities around the world to implement coordinated programs that leverage digital technologies and AI to transform them into places where young people's voices and needs are recognized and prioritized.

3. How to read System Maps?

An aerial, sepia-toned photograph of a city. A large white circle is centered in the middle of the image, containing the text 'Level of physical activity of youth'. The city features a prominent church with a tall spire in the upper left, various residential and commercial buildings, and a road with cars in the lower right. The background shows rolling hills under a hazy sky.

**Level of
physical
activity of
youth**

Elements



Amount of sport activities offered

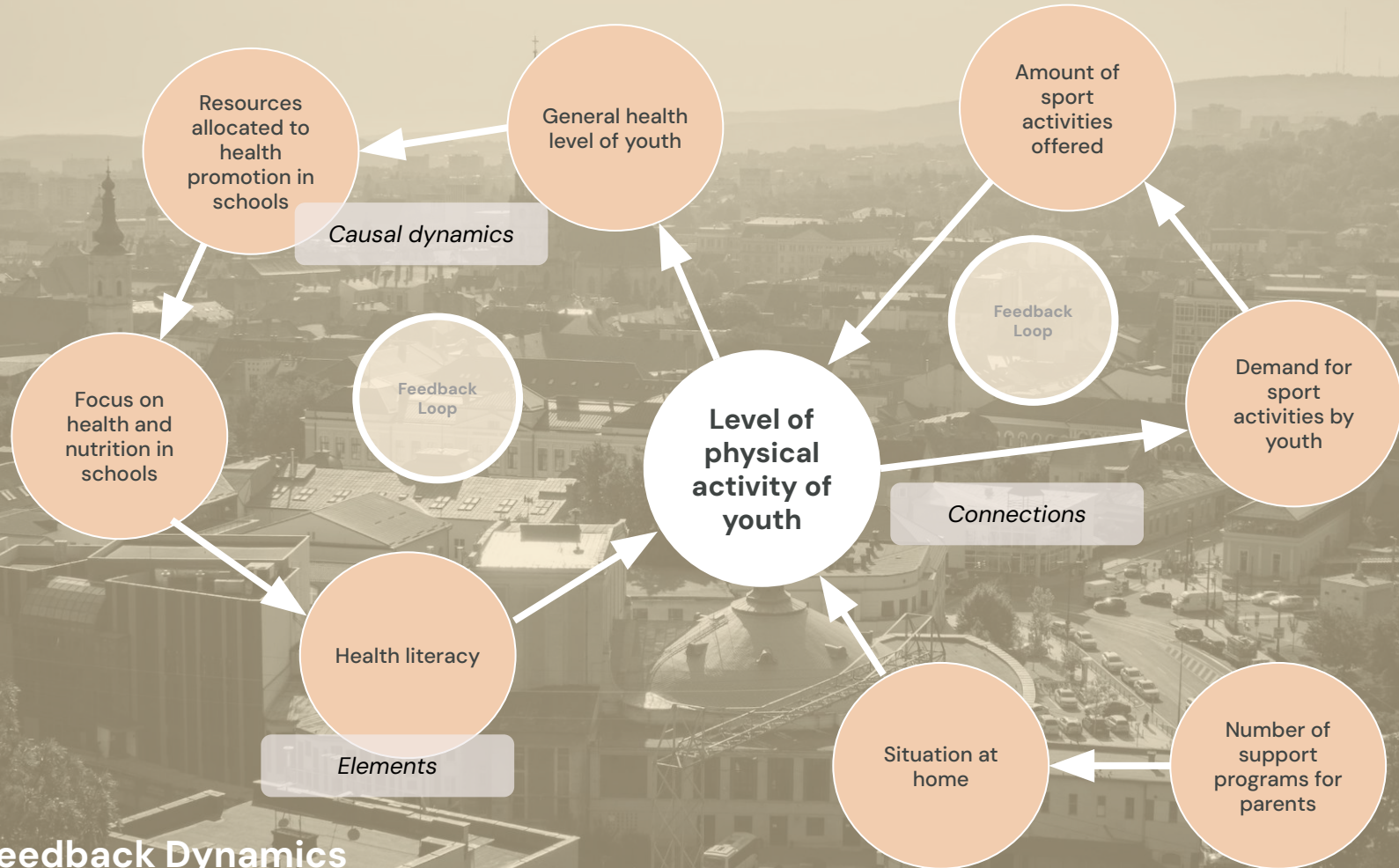
Level of physical activity of youth

Health literacy

Situation at home

Causes and Effects

Feedback Dynamics



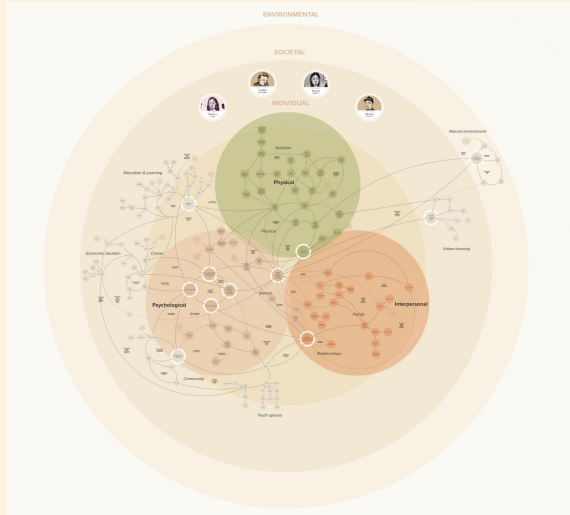
4. Diving into the System Map

The System Maps

As result of our process we created two versions of the System Map.

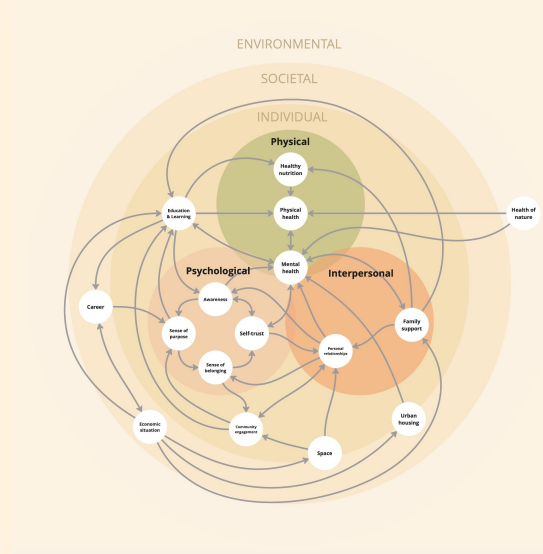
Detailed version

A detailed version, which enables deep insights into the dynamics of the system



Simplified version

A simplified version to share the main themes and relationships



**What parts form the
system** of youth wellbeing?

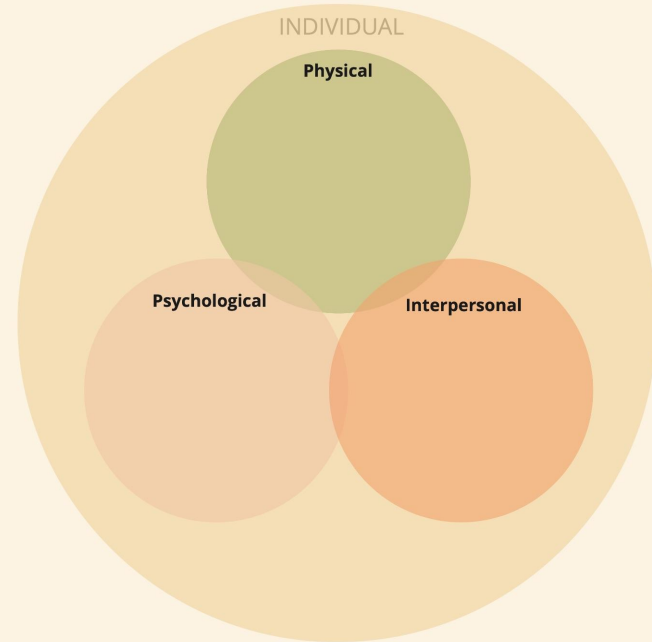
Structure of the Map

Individual Dimension

The **psychological dimension** of well-being helps to understand how the different sectors influence the inner life and the mental health of a young person. They are affected by all other dimensions and at the same time have a big influence on the other sectors.

The **interpersonal dimension** of well-being describes the ability of young people to build strong relationships with others and the support they receive in their family.

The **physical dimension** of well-being depicts the dynamics that contribute to physical health and particularly an example of nutrition as a driver for health.

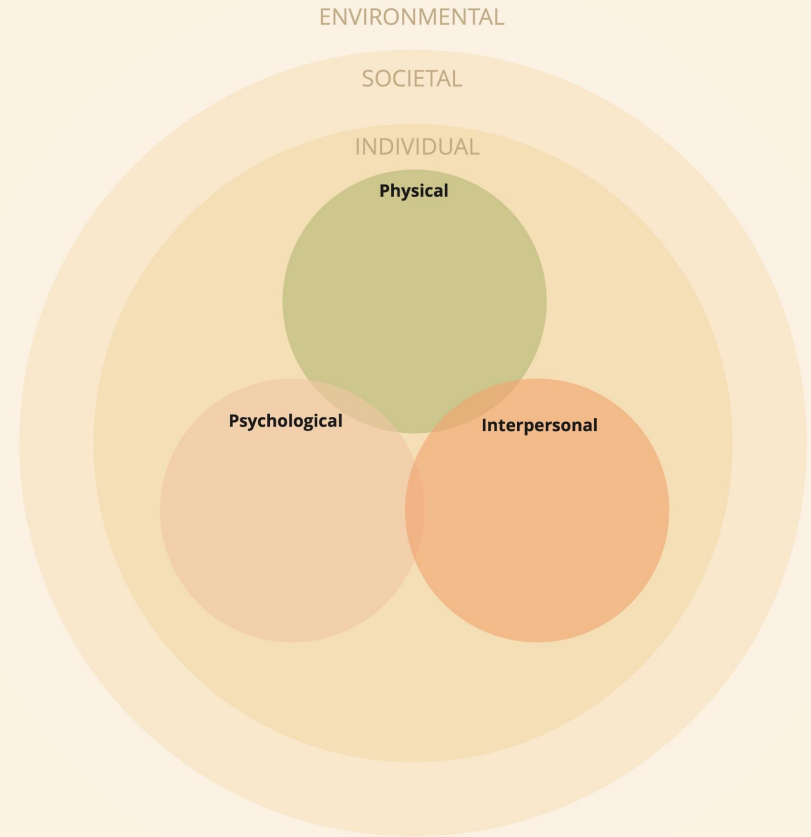


Structure of the Map

Societal & Environmental

The **societal and environmental dimension** of well-being consists of various sectors which directly or indirectly affect the well-being of young people in Cluj.

- Education & Learning
- Career
- Economic situation
- Community engagement
- Youth spaces
- Urban housing
- Natural environment



Bringing the System to Life: Four System Stories

System Stories

We created fictional characters based on observations and discussions to use as a tool to share insights of the System Map



Sofia (Romanian)

- 16 Years
- High-School



Ada (Roma)

- 14 Years
- Secondary School



Eugen (Romanian)

- 23 Years
- University

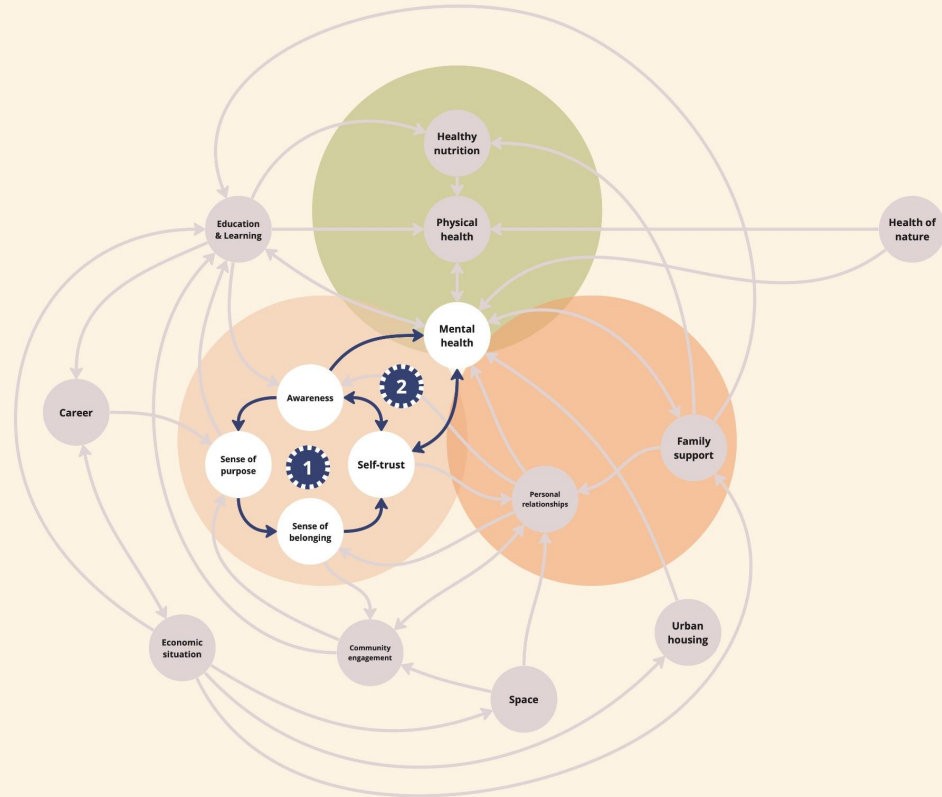


Csaba (Hungarian)

- 28 Years
- Company

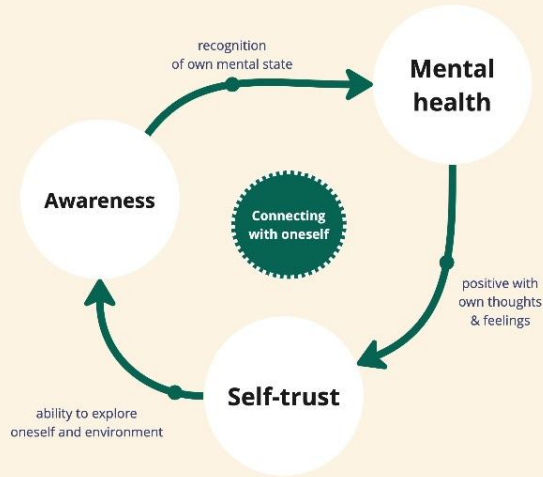
Core of the System Map

Dynamics of inner growth/stagnation and mental resilience at the core of the web of systemic connections

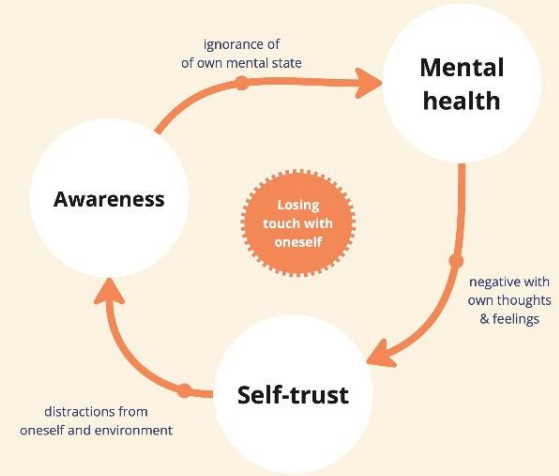


Feedback Dynamics

Virtuous Loops



Vicious Loops



System Story of Sofia



Who is Sofia?

- 16 years old
- from Romania
- in Highschool
- lives in rented apartment in suburban neighborhood
- wants to become a teacher to transform school education and make it more relevant for life today

Sofia's Challenges

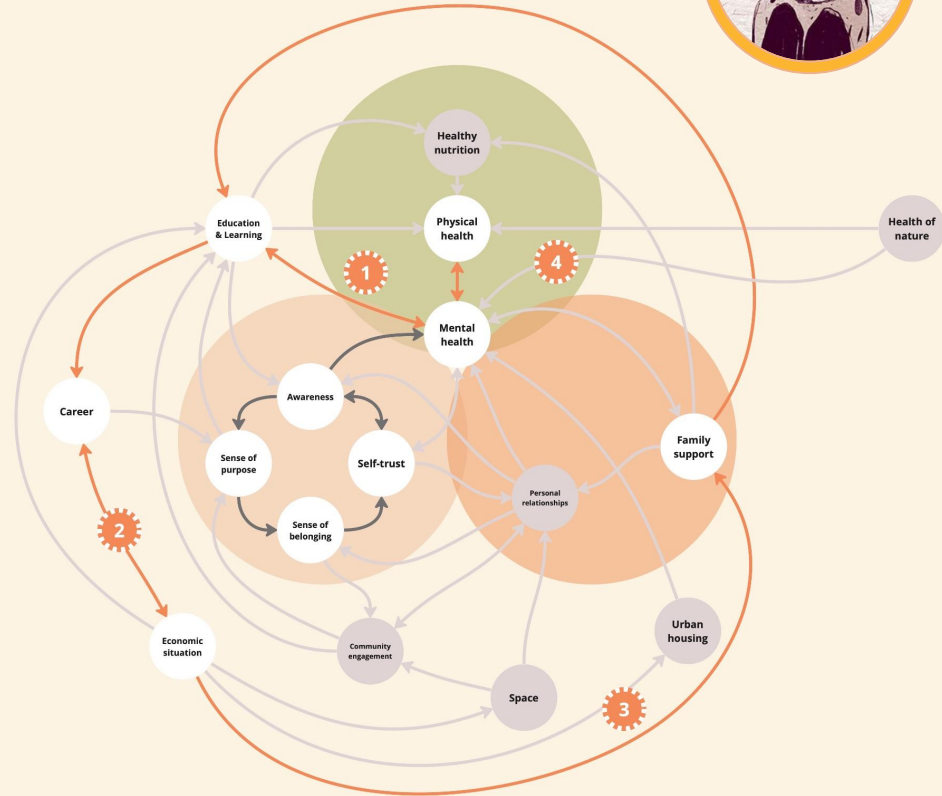


Pressure to get good grades makes her anxious and reduces her ability to learn (1)

Financial stress of family makes it unsure if she can afford her studies (2)

Low salaries in education sector might prevent her from becoming a teacher (3)

Smoking and drugs in her environment risks that she could develop an addiction too (4)



Sofia's Resources

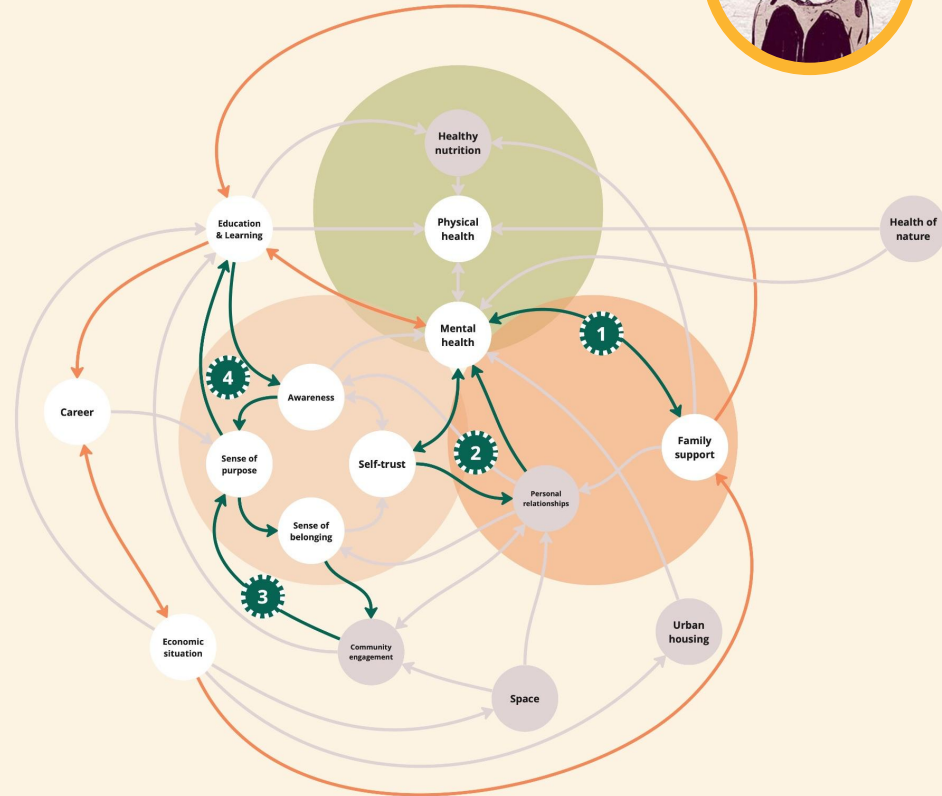


Supportive family environment creates a strong supportive bond to deal with stress (1)

Strong friendships in school helping her to overcome challenges and trusting in herself (2)

Engagement at local youth centre makes her trust in people and belonging to a community (3)

Awareness of her strength & passion let's her see her purpose clearly and motivates her to learn (4)





System Story of Eugen

Who is Eugen?

- 23 years old
- from Romania
- Math student at Cluj University
- moved to Cluj for studies and lives in comfortable and safe neighborhood
- working in Math/IT is not his goals but his parents want him to get a well-paid job
- feels sometimes lonely and depressed

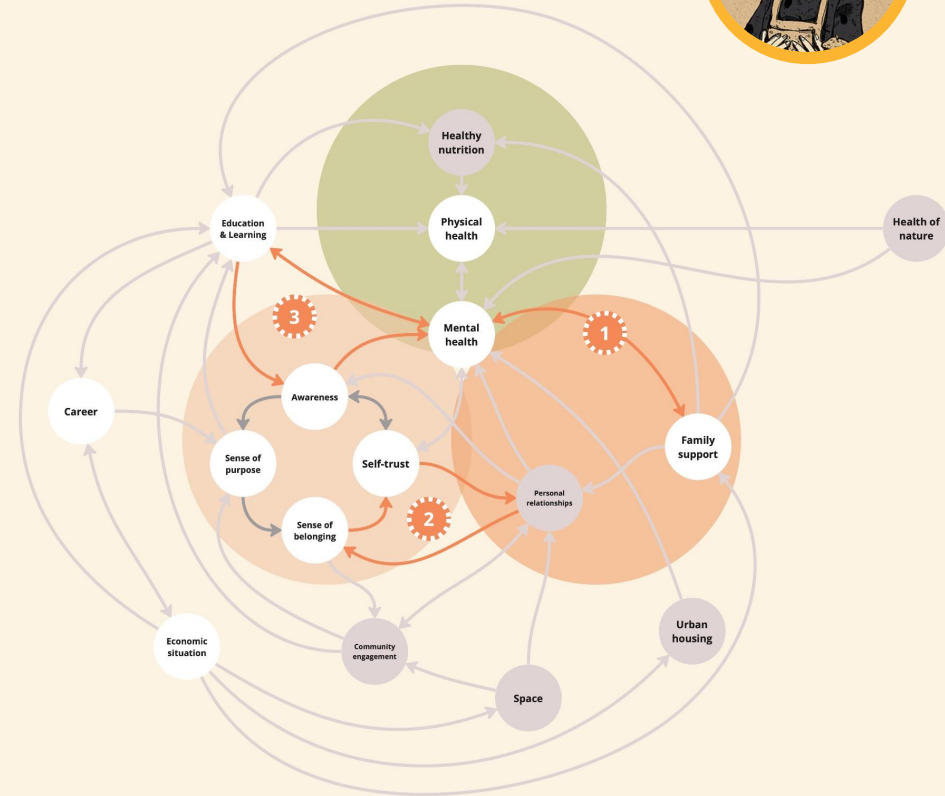
Eugen's Challenges



High expectations from parents to succeed at studies makes him stressed and less motivated to learn (1)

Difficulties to make friends in Cluj lack of personal connections, sense of community and acceptance (2)

Difficulties to understand and express his emotions might not recognize early signs of depression and how to help (3)



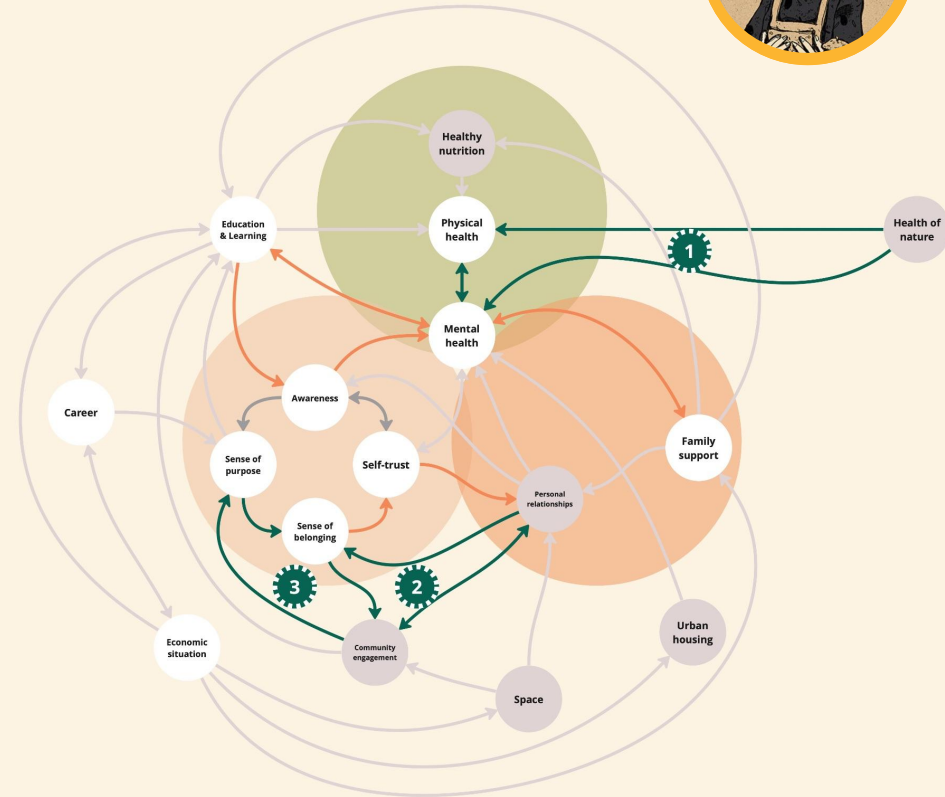
Eugen's Resources



Access to sports and natural environment improves his physical health and reduces his stress (1)

Volunteering to teach children in sports helps him to make personal connections and be part of community (2)

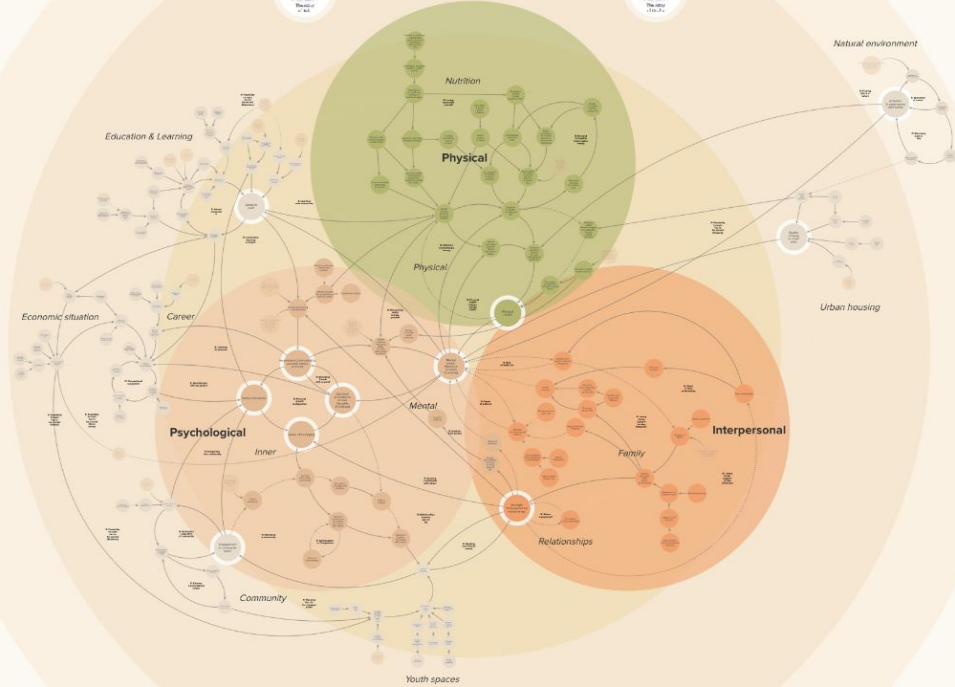
Engagement to make city more bike-friendly provides him with a sense of purpose that he lacks in his studies (3)



ENVIRONMENTAL

SOCIETAL

INDIVIDUAL

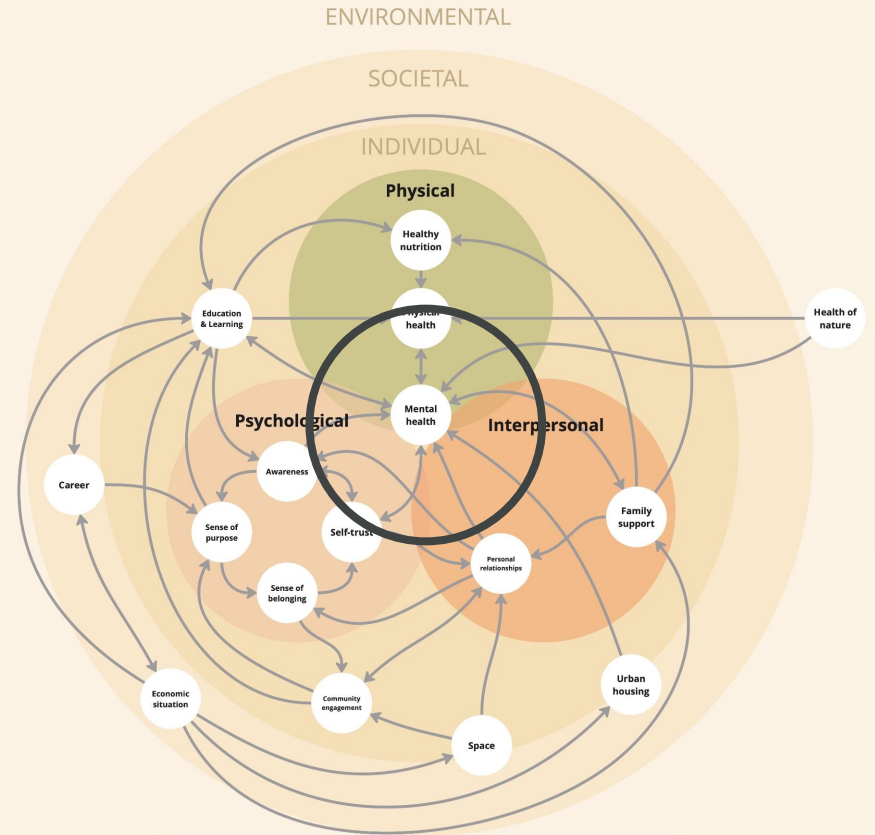


Explore all System Stories with our interactive System Map on Kumu

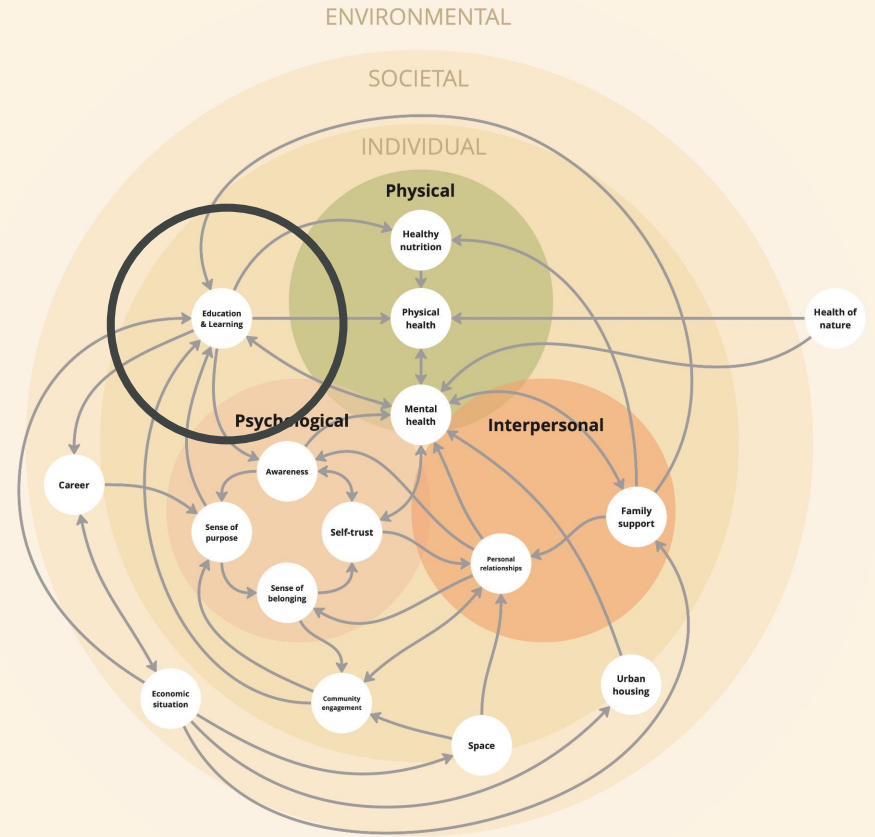
[Link to interactive map](#)

5. Key Insights from the System Mapping Journey

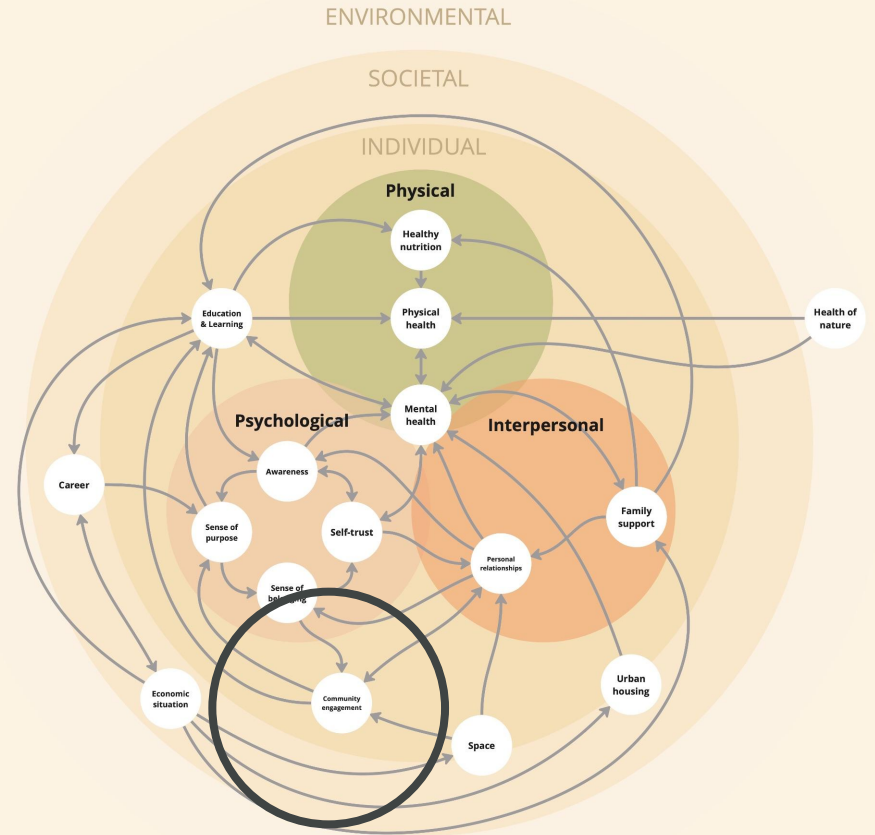
1. *Very low awareness about central role of mental health & wellbeing*



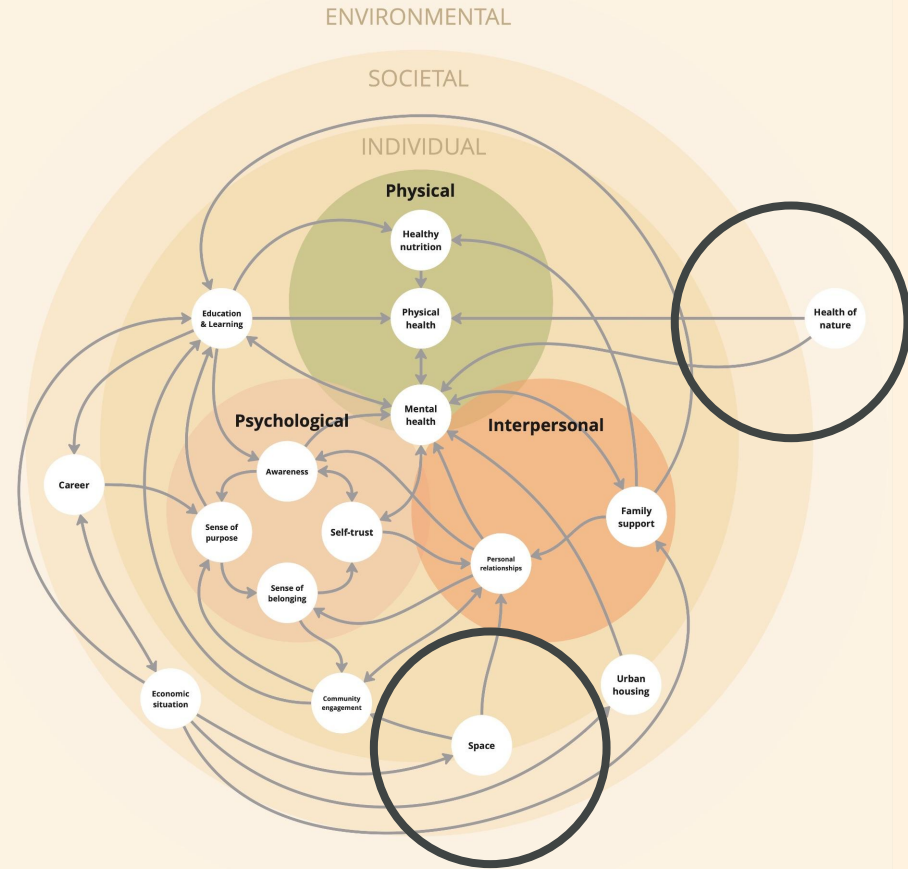
2. Critical importance of education & learning to flourish



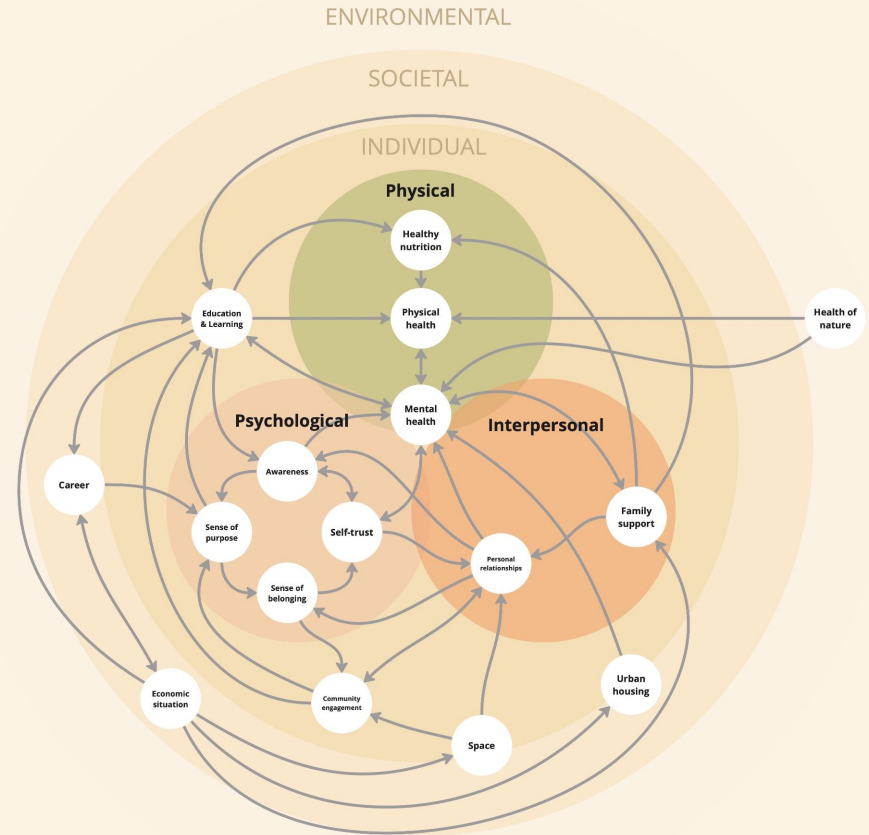
3. Multiple inequalities to access services & engage in community



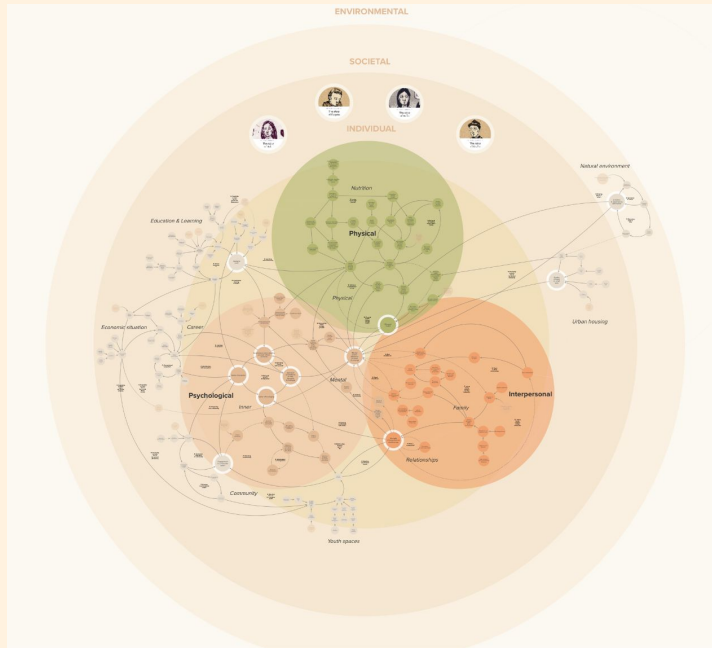
4. Environment (built & natural) not prioritized for wellbeing



5. Youth has multiple challenges and resources. They are not linear, but influence each other in a dynamic ways



What's next?



Identify further opportunities for change and collective action in the city of Cluj (eg. OurCluj living lab)

Develop policies & portfolio of interventions that improve wellbeing of youth in Cluj

Scale the collaborating community using System Map as navigation & communication tool

6. Benefits & Use of System Mapping for Wellbeing and Urban Development

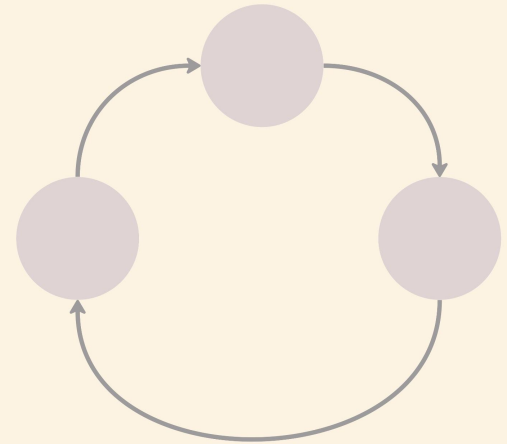
1. Make Sense of Complex Challenges

By visualizing the dynamics within the city, we gain a **holistic perspective** on problems and a deeper understanding of underlying **root causes**.

We can **uncover connections** which we might have not seen and identify feedback dynamics that make the problem so persistent.

Example:

Identify root dynamics and vicious cycles which increase and maintain mental health problems of youth in the city.



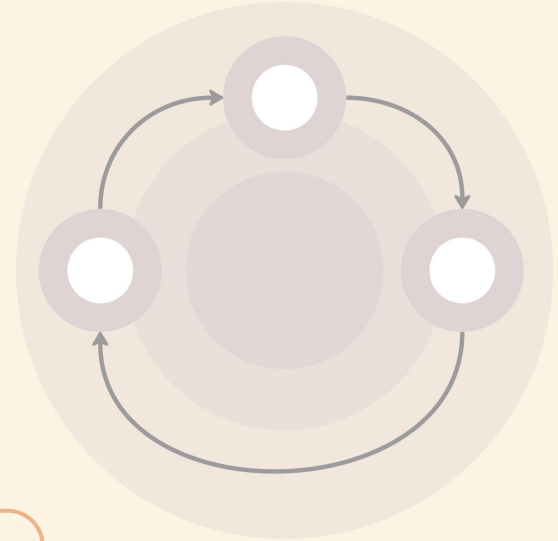
2. Develop Shared Understanding

Participatory System Mapping **engages urban actors** to share their views and to combine their perspectives in an integrated map.

Actors develop a **better understanding** of the situation and see their own role within the system. This creates a **shared language** to collaboratively improve the long-term health of the whole system.

Example:

System Mapping unveils the importance of parenting literacy and brings together family support initiatives to align on shared goals, reflect on current initiatives and create new partnerships



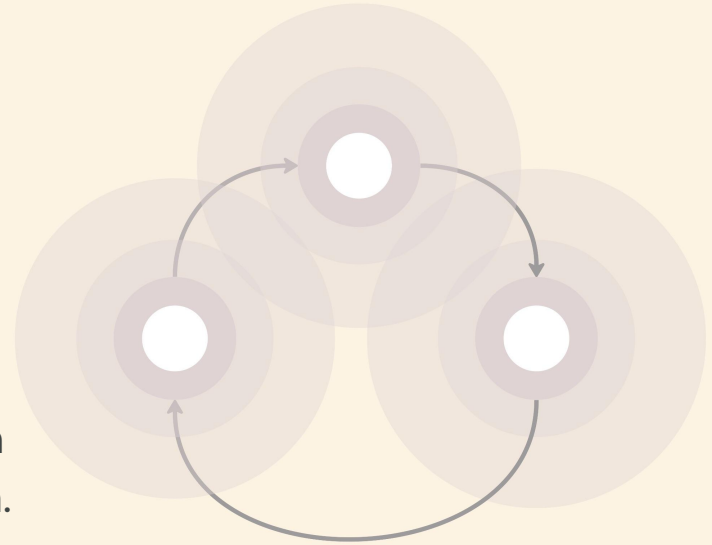
3. Find Leverage to Improve the System

System Mapping helps us to assess and hypothesize **systemic impacts** of our initiatives. Leverage points allow us to develop holistic intervention portfolios and **systemic theories of change** to guide systems change.

This helps us to **streamline financial and human resources** and **win partners** for collective action.

Example:

Identify healthy food in schools as a key leverage point for physical health, develop initiatives to promote healthy food and share systemic theory of change to win school partners



6. Explore the System Map & Findings

Explore the map yourself!

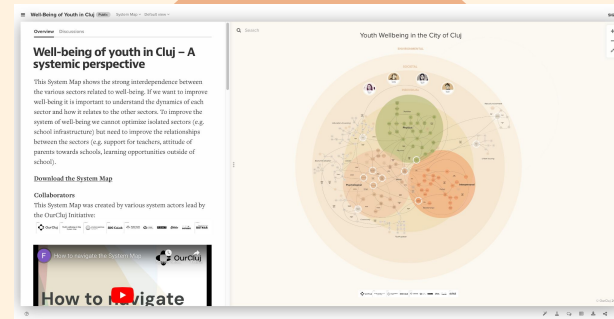
[OurCluj Website](#)

More Informations & Download of
System Map PDF



[Kumu-Interactive Map](#)

Interactive System Map



Where would you see the
value of **System Mapping** in
your city?

Let's stay in touch

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