



YO-VID22

Overview of the project

Dunja Potočnik & Andrej Naterer

Team members

HR

ISRZ

Dunja Potočnik

Anja Gvozdanović

Iva Odak

Sandra Antulić Majcen

FSSH

Gordana Kuterovac Jagodić

Darja Maslić Seršić

SI

UM

Andrej Naterer

Miran Lavrič

Vesna Vuk Godina

Suzana Košir

Rudi Klanjšek

Danijela Lahe

Minea Rutar

PROJECT: *YO-VID22: Youth wellbeing and support structures before, during and after the COVID-19 pandemic*

- Bilateral project; 2022-2025
- Financed by the Croatian and Slovenian Science Foundation
- Mixed-method approach
- Main goals:
 1. Investigate **the objective and subjective levels of youth wellbeing** in Croatia and Slovenia before, during and after the pandemic, situated in the socio-cultural context of Croatia and Slovenia.
 2. Examine **the social roles of young people, including the self-expectations of young people, as well as the expectations from young people in providing support to family and society** before and after a pandemic.
 3. Analyse which **policy framework and support structures (institutional frameworks and youth services)** exist in Croatia and Slovenia and which types of support structures act as (dis)enabling factors for youth independence.

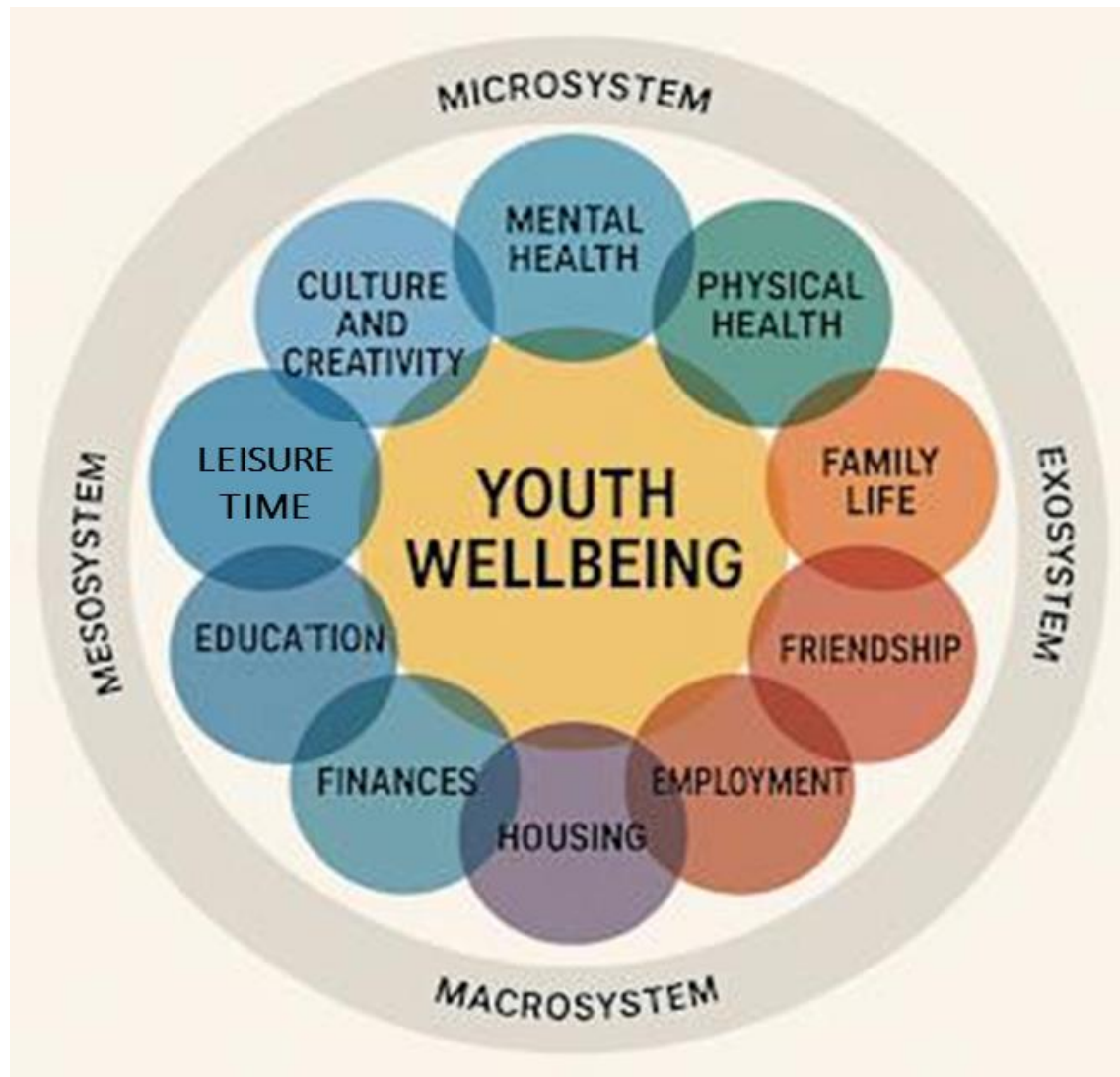
Methodology

- **Online panel survey** on representative national samples of youth aged 16-29 (N = 4.236)
N_{HR} = 2.301 (54,3%); N_{SI} = 1.935 (45,7%)

In each country:

- **Focus groups**: 50 participants (100 in total)
- **Interviews** with the representatives of youth CSOs (N = 6 + 6) and representatives of public institutions in charge of youth policy (N = 4 + 4)
- **Media content analysis** (news web portals, N_{HR} = 290; N_{SI} = 150).

Youth wellbeing ecological framework



Results: Highlights – survey results

- Young people report the highest levels of satisfaction with their circle of friends, family life, education, physical health, and employment, whereas they are, on average, least satisfied with their physical appearance.
- Although there has been a decline in the proportion of young people who perceive their lives as lacking meaning compared to the pre-pandemic period, the figures remain concerning and necessitate an urgent and tailored response from society and institutions.

Results: Highlights – focus group results

- Factors contributing to wellbeing most often stemmed from the immediate environment or living conditions.
- The key needs of young people today, as identified in both focus groups and interviews, include emotional support, opportunities for meaningful engagement, and a sense of belonging.

Results: Highlights – results of the interviews

- The results of the interviews emphasise the critical role of institutional and community support in mitigating the negative impacts on young people.
- There is a clear need for targeted incentives and campaigns aimed at young people, with a particular focus on strengthening immediate social networks and ensuring that support structures are responsive to the diverse needs of different youth subgroups.

Results: Highlights – media content analysis results

- The most frequent headlines concerning young people reported on the immediate impact of the COVID-19 disease on young people, followed by disruptions in the educational process, and a need to enforce pro-social behaviour and inter-generational responsibilities among young people.
- Only the later phases of the pandemic brought the change in a discourse towards greater recognition of negative impact of the pandemic on youth wellbeing and mental health.

There is a need for:

- ✓ **Greater recognition of youth needs and their state of wellbeing.**
- ✓ **Youth-friendly politics and policies and inclusion of young people into policy making and monitoring** —→ Our results are, among others, a consequence of politicians' lack of concern for young people, their social position, aspirations, and the resources at their disposal.