

## BUILDING HEALTHY CITIES



# Indore Systems Map

Indore stakeholders have used systems thinking to understand the barriers and enablers of key social determinants of health in their city.

Building Healthy Cities (BHC) is a five-year (2017–2022), USAID-funded learning project conducted in three cities including Indore, India. BHC is designed to increase understanding of the best routes for improving the social determinants of health in urban contexts.

To inform this approach, several exploratory data collection activities were completed in Indore in the first year of the project. These included a political economy analysis, an assessment of data use and access, and a comprehensive health needs assessment. A representative survey on non-communicable disease risk factors was also conducted.

In August 2018, key stakeholders from government, civil society, the private sector, academia, communities, and donor organizations gathered to discuss and validate these data. Participants were also given an introduction to systems analysis, followed by an exercise aimed at eliciting community understanding of various causal relationships at play within the system.

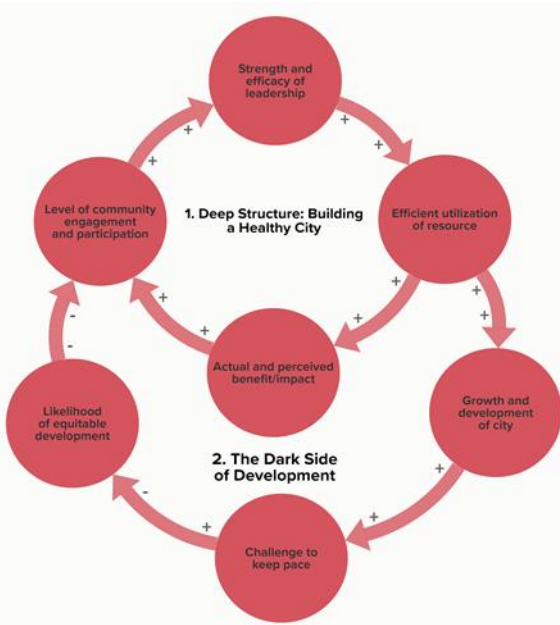
The result was a working map which holds the key dynamics - *the patterns underneath the problems* - highlighted by the combined stories of these workshop participants. It represents an initial "theory of context" that lays the groundwork for practical next steps to find places of leverage for addressing social and environmental determinants of health.

### The Deep Structure: A story that ties together common elements from across the system.

Around Indore, the pace of growth and development is increasing. Strong local leadership ensures that resources are utilized effectively towards positive advancement, and real improvements are taking place. As citizens recognize the positive results of these efforts they become excited to be a part of building a healthy, successful city, and they support leaders dedicated to that mission. With the engagement of the people, leaders enjoy an increased ability to be effective in their role as designers of a bright future for Indore.

While this is the story of Indore much of the time, when we look at the full system, we see that many forces impede this vision for a healthy Indore. Ever-increasing population growth and complex urban governance structures impede the effective utilization of resources which in turn impacts the growth and development of the city. As city capacity strains to meet the

needs of an increasing population, it may be difficult to ensure equitable, sustainable, and healthy urban development. When the benefits of growth do not extend to all members of society, it undermines the city's efforts towards positive improvements. Experiencing challenges to health and quality of life, the community becomes less engaged in supporting leadership and city initiatives.



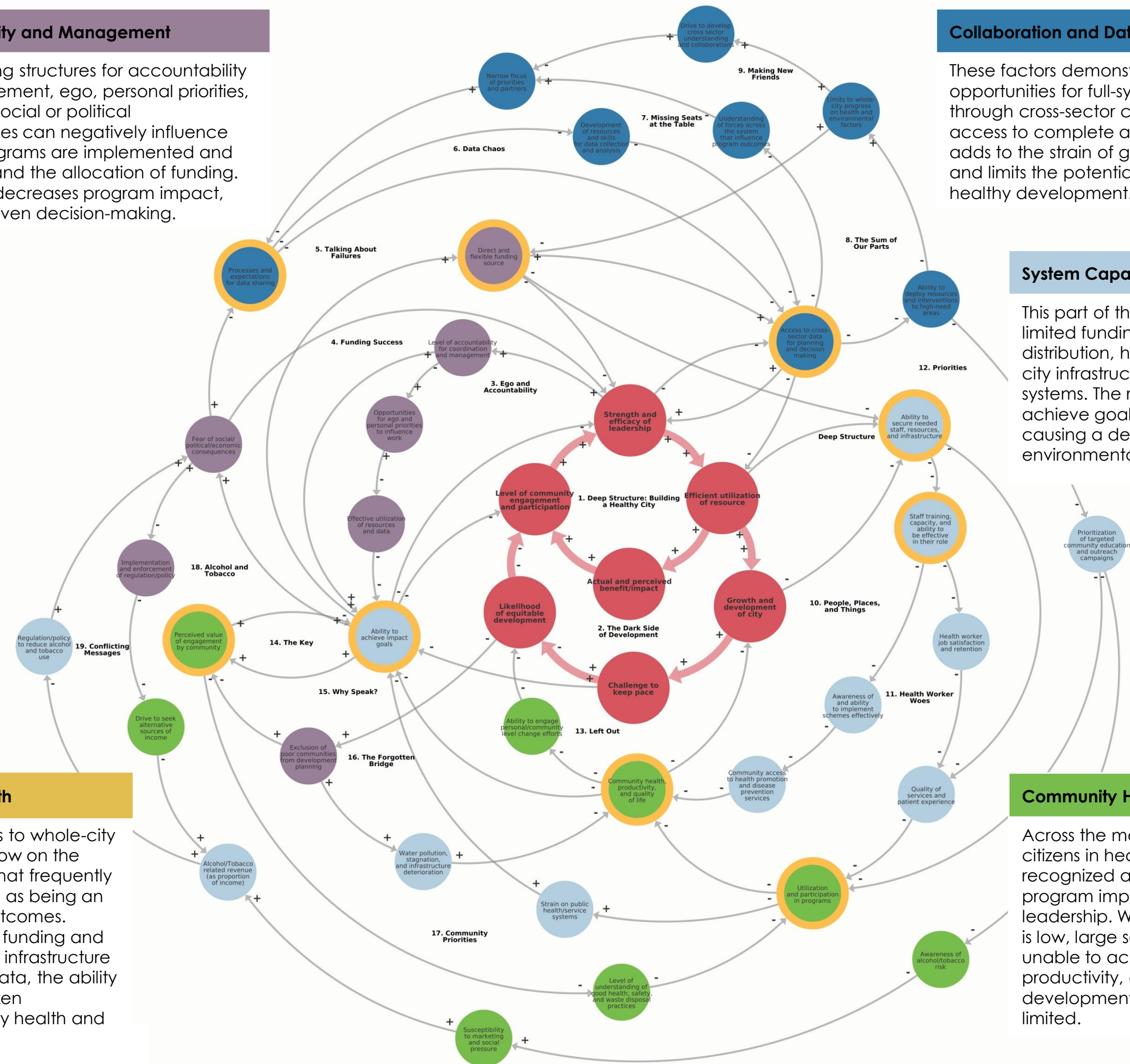
## Inhibitors to Whole-City Growth

Without strong structures for accountability and management, ego, personal priorities, and fear of social or political consequences can negatively influence the way programs are implemented and evaluated, and the allocation of funding. This, in turn, decreases program impact, and data driven decision-making.

These factors demonstrate how missed opportunities for full-system understanding, through cross-sector collaboration or access to complete and accurate data, adds to the strain of growth on the system and limits the potential for whole-city healthy development.

This part of the map tells us the story of how limited funding, or inequities in funding distribution, have eroded the efficacy of city infrastructure and public health systems. The result is a decreased ability to achieve goals for positive improvement, causing a decline in population health and environmental factors.

Across the map, the ability to engage citizens in health/development efforts is recognized as the key to achieving program impact goals and enabling strong leadership. When community participation is low, large segments of the population are unable to achieve good health and productivity, and the growth and development of the city as a whole is limited.



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## FOR MORE INFORMATION

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