



UPLIFT – Urban PoLicy Innovation to address  
inequality with and for Future generaTions

## Deliverable 3.2

# Case study report

*Barakaldo Functional Urban Area*

November/2022



This project has received funding from  
the European Union's Horizon 2020  
research and innovation programme  
under grant agreement No. 870898.

<b>Project title</b>	<b>UPLIFT – Urban PoLicy Innovation to address inequality with and for Future generaTions</b>
<b>Grant Agreement No.</b>	870898
<b>Project duration</b>	January 2020-June 2023
<b>Project website</b>	<a href="http://uplift-youth.eu">http://uplift-youth.eu</a>
<b>Project coordinator</b>	Metropolitan Research Institute
<b>WP3</b>	Case studies on inequality, comparing policies and household strategies
<b>WP duration</b>	January 2020-February 2023
<b>Deliverable title</b>	Case study report, Barakaldo/Spain
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<b>Date of submission</b>	15/11/2022
<b>Dissemination level</b>	Public

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# 1 Executive Summary

The deliverable describes the process and results of the research conducted in the Functional Urban Area (FUA) of Barakaldo on the policy entry points that should be changed to influence both institutional and individual strategies in facing youth inequalities in education/employment/housing.

Following the analytical framework based on the Capability Approach (CA), the document begins by describing the choices that a vulnerable young individual may theoretically have in Barakaldo based on the research carried out in Work Package 2 (WP2; Muniz N. and Lorenz U., 2022).

The structural characteristics of the economy, demography, and social issues have been significantly influenced by the economic cycle in Barakaldo over the years. Positive economic cycles, within periods until the 1980s, from the 1990s to 2008, and from 2015 to 2020, are characterised by an increase on population and migration rates, wealth, high employment rates, and a degradation of living conditions (at least until the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century). Overall, Barakaldo has not achieved the desired outcomes through its industrial reconversion process that started in the 1980s and whose objective was to transform the FUA into a digital tertiary urban area. The area is currently under the Regional Shock Plan that aims to support those sub-regional areas in the Basque Country that are less favoured in terms of social inequalities and economy.

Thus, youth today is strongly influenced by the development path followed by Barakaldo. It was in 2015 that policies addressing the inequalities faced by young people emerged in the FUA, driven by the high unemployment rates and their difficulties in accessing housing. The map of policies tackling young people's issues in the areas of housing and employment is complex because of a set of atomised policies that are implemented by different administrative levels and institutions in the FUA.

The document examines how young individuals' choices in Barakaldo are narrowed down into individual outcomes by understanding how institutions interact with these individuals. In order to be able to improve the efficiency of local policies addressing youth inequality, institutions could reflect on two main mismatches identified between them and young people. These are:

1. The disconnection trap: increasing distance between institutions and young people.  
There is a disconnection between the existing set of policy initiatives for fighting youth inequalities available in Barakaldo, and the knowledge and actual use of these resources by the local youth. The researchers provide evidence of the above statement by demonstrating the poor level of effective interaction between the institutions and the young people in Barakaldo and identifying the main drivers of this disconnection.
2. Institutional capacity building in the fields most valued by young people for tackling inequalities.

The most valued types of support in fighting inequalities for young people are not the ones primarily developed by the public policies and programmes run by the institutions in Barakaldo. Three reasons were identified that explain this mismatch: two linked with the behaviour of institutions (the meso-level conversion factors) that are not cross-sectorially coordinated and are not enabled to play their counselling and support role; and one related to individuals, i.e., the essential personal capacities required for young people to achieve the desired results.

Finally, we introduce the two discussions that arose from the research. The first one is the need to bridge the gap between the existing set of formal resources available in housing, employment, and education for young people and the actual opportunities they see and recognise. In this sense, both young people and policymakers acknowledge that efforts must be made on both sides. Furthermore, both groups call for more efforts in improving young people's capabilities to interact with institutions from school so that they are later prepared to interact with the resource space more easily and help overcome the disaffection of young people towards public institutions.

The second discussion introduces the idea that institutions are not developing the services that are most valued by young people in their life strategies, which are advice and counselling services. In this regard, there is a need to increase the capacities of institutions to provide such services.

## 2 Introduction

The current document is the result of the research activities carried out in work package 3 (WP3) of the UPLIFT project<sup>1</sup> in Pécs, Hungary. It aims to understand which micro, mezo and macro level factors influence vulnerable young people's decisions in education, employment and housing, and how these young people create their own strategies and make choices within the possibilities available in the given locality.

The main research questions we analyse in this study are:

- What are the different factors in different levels (welfare system, intermediary institutions, family background, individual characteristics) that retain vulnerable young individuals to live the life they would like to live or they should be able to live taking into account the possibilities the locality offers for them?
- Which are the factors that can be changed by means of Reflexive Policy Agenda - RPA - (a co-creation tool that includes vulnerable young people into policy design, implementation and monitoring)?

These two main questions rather serve as guidelines for the analysis, but are too broad to be answered fully, thus we have chosen those sub-topics in this framework that came out to be the most relevant in the local interview process. We aimed to focus on factors that cannot purely be explained by the deficiencies of the welfare systems, rather by the interactions between vulnerable young individuals and institutions as a response to the welfare framework.

Our chosen sub-topics are around 1) Disconnection trap: the increasing distance between institutions and young people; and, 2) Lack of capacity from the institutions to generate an impact in the fields most valued by young people to reduce inequalities.

The methods of exploring the factors behind individual decisions are primarily based on interviews with local policy experts and policy implementers and 40 vulnerable young people: 20 currently young people between the age of 15 and 29 and 20 interviews with people aged 30-43 - who were between 15-29 at the time of the financial crisis of 2008. These interviews naturally revealed many, mostly already well-studied deficiencies of the national and local legislations and the welfare systems. Still, this case study report does not have the primary goal to formulate criticism about the general welfare policies and other structurally given resources in Barakaldo (this was already done in another work package of UPLIFT<sup>2</sup>), it rather aims to understand how these structural resources, policies, programmes, and services are

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<sup>1</sup> More information on the project can be found at: [uplift-youth.eu](http://uplift-youth.eu)

<sup>2</sup> More details about the local welfare systems in 16 urban areas of Europe can be found at: <https://uplift-youth.eu/research-policy/official-deliverables>

implemented and how they influence the life strategies of young individuals. (For instance: how do individuals use the local social housing opportunities within the frame of the available number of social housing, and the current set of eligibility criteria.)

The final aim of this case study report and the analysis of the interactions of the behaviour of individuals and the institutions is to discover and suggest topics for a future Reflexive Policy Agenda for each of our eight localities of WP3 of UPLIFT, including Barakaldo. Reflexive Policy making lies in the centre of the UPLIFT project. It refers to a policy co-creation, refining process, which involves the target group of the policies (in our case vulnerable young people). This process aims to explore young people's narratives on their perceived reality about the locally available policies and services, and empower them to be part of the creation of knowledge on the policy framework. Moreover, this process takes young individuals' feedback on possible changes of policies seriously, and also invites them to monitor the implementation of these policies. By nature, it means a power-balanced cooperation between local decision makers and the target group of local policies, which process relies on both groups' interests and knowledge. Thus, the current research aims to deal less with fundamental systemic deficiencies of welfare policies, as it would exceed the competencies of local actors, but rather aims to discover those topics that can be handled locally.

In this report, we first introduce the framework of the analysis in Chapter 3, then we describe our methodology of the research and the analysis in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 first summarizes the main characteristics of the current life situation of vulnerable young people (40 interviewees) regarding their education, employment and housing conditions. Then we describe the main inequality traps we have discovered in our analysis, and the conversions that lead to the current outcomes (positions) of our interviewees. Finally, Chapter 6 contains the main suggestions for potential topics for a Reflexive Policy Agenda.



### 3 Framework of the analysis

This section contains the theoretical framework for the case study analysis to gain a comprehensive understanding of the qualitative research that has been accomplished in eight UPLIFT locations: Amadora, Amsterdam, Barakaldo, Chemnitz, Corby, Pécs, Sfantu Gheorghe and Tallinn.

The framework of the analysis of this case study report is based on the **Capability Approach**, an attempt for better understanding and interpreting the nature of modern age poverty, social inequalities, human development and well-being, devised in the 1980s by the Nobel prize laureate economist-philosopher Amartya Sen. The Capability Approach understands certain life-pathways as results of a complex interplay of various factors: the nature of the system (e.g. economic, housing, education); individual perception of the system and other micro level, individually driven factors. Moreover, the main goal of the theory is to be able to comprehensively capture the factors that are constraining or enabling an individual to live a meaningful and fulfilling life. Our analytical framework builds on the Capability Approach; however, it implies some adjustments and complements it with the life-course approach and the transgenerational approach.

The starting point for understanding the life strategies of vulnerable individuals is to define the **resource space**, which is a complex socio-economic environment around individuals, consisting of all formal rights (e.g. laws and legislations) and possibilities (e.g. subsidy schemes, programmes against social inequalities), which defines opportunities for all inhabitants in a given location. This environment might be enabling, e.g. providing work places, subsidies, networks, while it might be restricting as well, e.g. providing segregated school system, unaffordable housing. The resource space, as it is, largely depends on the socio-economic context in which people live: constitutional rights, economic development of the place, degree of inequalities, thus it varies from location to location. In addition to this, the accessibility of resources is conditionally determined. For instance, even if there is a subsidy scheme to buy a flat, it is only accessible in case of having savings (wealth), having a certain income level and under certain circumstances (e.g. having children). Based on individual characteristics, thus we define an **individualized resource space**, in which an individual can navigate. This individualized resource space is what we basically interpret as **real freedoms, real opportunities**.

However, young individuals have their own culturally and socially embedded perception of their possibilities that are not necessarily match with the so-called real opportunities: either by having unrealistic view or by not seeing those opportunities that theoretically would be achievable for them. This distinction is a new element compared to the original Capability Approach developed by Sen, as our analytical framework places great emphasis on the distinction between **real and perceived opportunity spaces** to understand the origin and the consequence of the gaps between the space of available possible actions and the perceived

possible actions. The mechanisms that cause the gaps between the two (e.g. blind spots, false perceptions or conditioned to illegal interventions) are those that make it difficult for an individual to choose those positions in life that best suits his or her abilities and remain in the widely accepted legal and socio-cultural environment.

Inside the individualised resource space, based on the perceived and real opportunities, one can take different positions: **functionings** (*See it in Table 1*). In the original theory, functionings are defined as ‘various things a person may value being or doing’. In empirical terms, this can mean two things: 1) the actual and current achievement/outcome of an individual 2) a desired, valued outcome an individual would prefer doing instead of his or her current life choices. Thus, functionings are practically the achievements in a person’s life, which he/she either achieved in reality, or may value doing or being.

*Table 1. Potential functionings (either current or desired) by domains*

Education	Employment	Housing
Qualification (completed and on-going education)	Working conditions (legal/illegal, full time/part time, one shift/three shifts)	Tenure type (public rental, private rental, owner occupation)
Quality of qualification (value of qualification depending on the specific school and dropout history) <sup>3</sup>	Salary level	Quality of housing (neighbourhood, affordability, density)

*The main question of the case study analysis in UPLIFT is the mechanism with which these functionings (outcomes/positions/choices/desires) are chosen in the local resource spaces by vulnerable individuals.*

According to the original Capability Approach, individuals ideally choose from real opportunities based on what they value or desire. However, it is not necessarily possible to interpret the decisions made by individuals in a vulnerable life situation as value-based decisions, as they could be based on their everyday life difficulties (compulsion), or also be a consequence of past decisions. Hence, two ideal types of decision chains can be identified: 1) value-based and 2) path dependent – which are not easy to distinguish, as values are born by internalising the circumstances. In case of value-based decisions, the individual can live a meaningful and fulfilling life, while under the notion of path-dependency we understand patterns of past outcomes which, in time, increase the likelihood of a limited number of future choices that are not necessarily advantageous for the individual. Understanding the outcomes from the perspective of a life-course approach is essential to be able to evaluate the agency

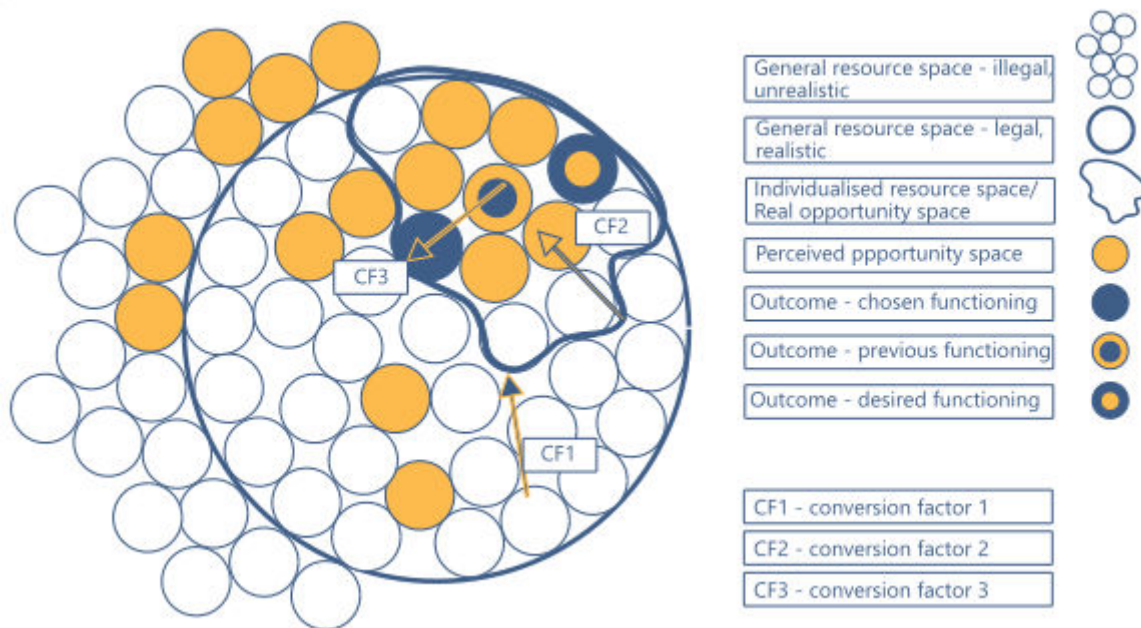
<sup>3</sup> The quality of education is interpreted in a wide sense, outside of education, having socialising effects on students (e.g. functions/dysfunctions developed in schools that enable/disable functionings in the labour market or the housing market).

potential and the role of agency in the life-path of an individual. Thus, the **Life-course Approach** is an important additional component to the Capability Approach. Among the past life events and experiences, the behaviour of the family system and the childhood home environment play a key role, which provides a potential to understand what trajectories and possibilities an individual has. The theory of the **Transgenerational Mobility** contributes and valuably complement the capability approach with emphasizing the role of socialization and the parental experiences and behaviour as conversion factors.

The routes (conversions) i) from formal resource space to real opportunities (CF1 on Figure 1), ii) from real opportunity space to perceived opportunities (CF2 on Figure 1), and iii) from perceived opportunity space to chosen or desired functioning (CF3 on Figure 1) are paved by **conversion factors**: the interference of institutional and individual conditions that lead to the creation of individual life-strategies. Conversion factors refers to the fact that different individuals have different capabilities to convert public policies and formal rights into valuable opportunities (Kimhur, 2020: 4, CF1 on Figure 1). Certain conversion factors enable some elements of the opportunity space to be made visible and usable, while other factors have the ability to conceal the real opportunity space, resulting in a gap between the real and perceived opportunity space (CF2 on Figure 1), and a distorted decision about chosen functionings (CF3 on Figure 1).

One may think that the perceived resource space is part of the real resource space, and the conversion from real to perceived necessarily results in the reduction of choices. According to our research however, vulnerable young individuals tend to see options for themselves also outside the social norms and legal framework (real opportunities), thus are able to widen their space of options even if it is not realistic from an external viewpoint or not valued positively by the society.

Figure 1. A modified concept of the Capability Approach



Source: Own elaboration

Our analysis of the interviews was based on four sets of conversion factors:

- **Individual conversion factors** (micro level conversion factors) focus on a person's psycho-social set, domain-specific capabilities, individual character (e.g. sex, intelligence, financial literacy, learning abilities, work ethics), things a person values (e.g. attitude towards education, certain professions) and his/her social network (including the secondary social group where an individual belongs to: neighbourhood, schoolmates, friends, etc.).
- **Family conversion factors** (micro level conversion factor as well) focus on the original family system<sup>4</sup>, where he/she was brought up, family's educational/employment background, values, beliefs and attitudes in the family, psychosocial environment.
- A special focus is given to **institutions** (meso-level conversion factors), where we are interested in how institutions narrow down, or rather correct, the perceived space of possibilities in their interactions with individuals. Institutional conversion factors focus on attitudes and behaviours of an institution<sup>5</sup>. Just as the individual conversion factors,

<sup>4</sup> Family system includes the position of the individual in the original family dynamics. For instance, whether it's a supporting and functional or a negative, dysfunctional environment.

<sup>5</sup> Institutionalized norms in our interpretation are the ones that are followed by most members of an institution. One widely known example is institutionalized discrimination, when a large majority of the members of the institutions systematically behave differently (in a negative way) with people belonging to a certain social group e.g. ethnicity or gender.

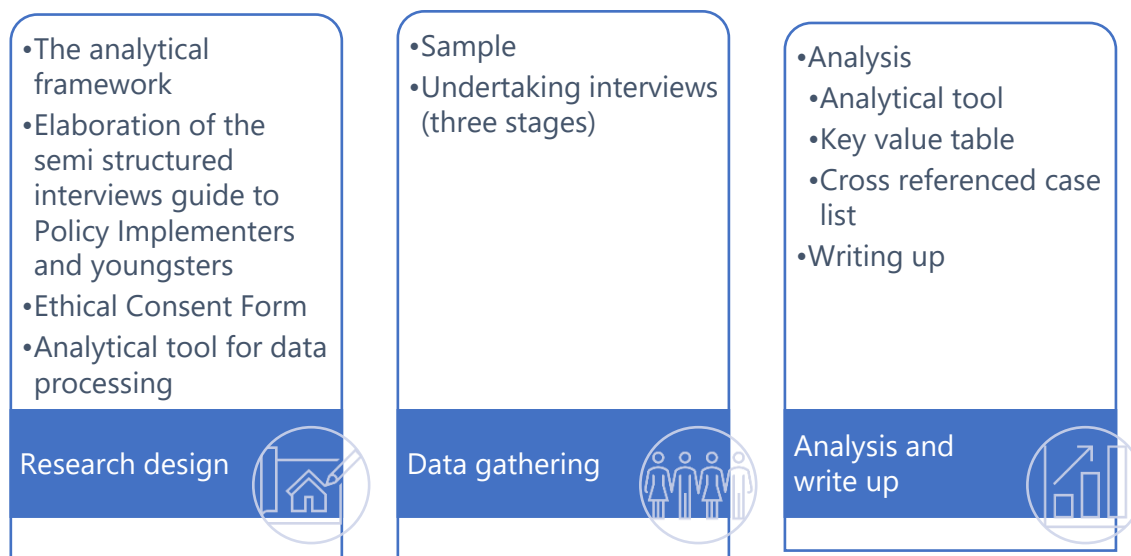
institutional conversion factors work out differently for (different groups of) people (see exposure to institutional dysfunctions).

- Even being embedded in individual behaviour, institutional response or family event we consider **crucial life events** as independent conversion factors, some of which may have a decisive role in widening or narrowing down the choices one has in certain situations.

## 4 Methodology

This chapter aims to provide information on the methodology followed throughout the research and interview process to make our work replicable and maintain validity standards. The basic stages followed are briefly outlined and shown in Figure 22.

Figure 2. Research methodology followed by Orkestra



Source: Own elaboration and adapted from Young, J. C. et al. (2018)

The overall objectives of the research are:

- To understand the behaviour of individuals and institutions in the given policy context (resource space).
- To comprehend how they adapt to the circumstances, how they create their individual strategies and how the different strategies interact with each other, to discover policy mismatches.
- To identify entry points, that is where these policies may or should be changed to increase their efficiency.

## 5 The research method implemented for conducting the research interviews with policy implementers and young people in Barakaldo (see **References**)

Armat, M. R., Assarroudi, A., Rad, M., Sharifi, H., & Heydari, A. (2018). Inductive and deductive: Ambiguous labels in qualitative content analysis. *The Qualitative Report*, 23(1), 219-221.

Azungah, T. (2018). Qualitative research: deductive and inductive approaches to data analysis. *Qualitative research journal*.

Eakin JM, Gladstone B. (2020) "Value-adding" Analysis: Doing More With Qualitative Data. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*. January 2020. doi:10.1177/1609406920949333

Kimhur, B. (2020). How to apply the capability approach to housing policy? Concepts, theories and challenges. *Housing, Theory and Society*, 37(3), 257-277.

Muniz N. and Lorenz U. (2022). D2.2. Urban report of Barakaldo. *UpLift*, available at <https://uplift-youth.eu/sites/default/files/upload/files/D2.2%20Urban%20report%20-%20Barakaldo.pdf>

Pearse, N. (2019, June). An illustration of deductive analysis in qualitative research. In 18th *European Conference on Research Methodology for Business and Management Studies* (p. 264).

Robeyns, Ingrid and Morten Fibieger Byskov (2021), "The Capability Approach", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2021 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2021/entries/capability-approach/>>.

Roulston, K., DeMarrais, K., & Lewis, J. B. (2003). Learning to interview in the social sciences. *Qualitative inquiry*, 9(4), 643-668.

Sen, A. (2014). Development as freedom (1999). *The globalization and development reader: Perspectives on development and global change*, 525.

UpLift (2020). Deliverable 1.2. Inequality concepts and theories in the post-crisis Europe: summary of the literature review. Available at [https://uplift-youth.eu/sites/default/files/upload/files/D12%20Inequality%20concepts%20revised\\_october%202021-web.pdf](https://uplift-youth.eu/sites/default/files/upload/files/D12%20Inequality%20concepts%20revised_october%202021-web.pdf)

Young, J. C., Rose, D. C., Mumby, H. S., Benitez-Capistros, F., Derrick, C. J., Finch, T., ... & Mukherjee, N. (2018). A methodological guide to using and reporting on interviews in conservation science research. *Methods in Ecology and Evolution*, 9(1), 10-19.

## 6 Appendix

Objectives and focus of the interviews) to find out what drives each of them in their interactions and identify mismatches between the two approaches.

## **7 The research design includes the elaboration of semi-structured interview guides for policy implementers and young people to respond to the objectives and concepts described in References**

Armat, M. R., Assarroudi, A., Rad, M., Sharifi, H., & Heydari, A. (2018). Inductive and deductive: Ambiguous labels in qualitative content analysis. *The Qualitative Report*, 23(1), 219-221.

Azungah, T. (2018). Qualitative research: deductive and inductive approaches to data analysis. *Qualitative research journal*.

Eakin JM, Gladstone B. (2020) "Value-adding" Analysis: Doing More With Qualitative Data. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*. January 2020. doi:10.1177/1609406920949333

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Muniz N. and Lorenz U. (2022). D2.2. Urban report of Barakaldo. *UpLift*, available at <https://uplift-youth.eu/sites/default/files/upload/files/D2.2%20Urban%20report%20-%20Barakaldo.pdf>

Pearse, N. (2019, June). An illustration of deductive analysis in qualitative research. In 18th *European Conference on Research Methodology for Business and Management Studies* (p. 264).

Robeyns, Ingrid and Morten Fibieger Byskov (2021), "The Capability Approach", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2021 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2021/entries/capability-approach/>>.

Roulston, K., DeMarrais, K., & Lewis, J. B. (2003). Learning to interview in the social sciences. *Qualitative inquiry*, 9(4), 643-668.

Sen, A. (2014). Development as freedom (1999). *The globalization and development reader: Perspectives on development and global change*, 525.

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Young, J. C., Rose, D. C., Mumby, H. S., Benitez-Capistros, F., Derrick, C. J., Finch, T., ... & Mukherjee, N. (2018). A methodological guide to using and reporting on interviews in conservation science research. *Methods in Ecology and Evolution*, 9(1), 10-19.



## 8 Appendix

Objectives and focus of the interviews. The process in both cases was initiated by Metropolitan Research Institute (MRI), which proposed the first draft of interview guides that were later reviewed and discussed among the consortium members. The final interview guides and consent forms for experts and young people (in line with the Deliverable 7.3 H-Requirement No.3: UPLIFT informed consent forms) were then used to carry out in-depth interviews with both target groups. The analytical tool for processing the interviews was defined in both cases to enable information collection and its analysis.

### 8.1 Interviews with policy implementers/experts

After the research design was agreed on, the data gathering stage started. The first step consisted of *defining the sample* and *selecting the interviewees*. For the interviews with policy implementers and experts, the research group selected the most important institutions that were implementing policies for youth in the three principal areas studied in Barakaldo (housing, employment, and education<sup>6</sup>), departing from the main programmes and implementers already determined for the FUA of Barakaldo (see, Appendix 2: Summary of the main programmes and the implementers from WP2). Thus, additional desk research was conducted to identify relevant implementers in the educational field, where policy implementers at the local level do not exert large competencies.

## 9 The following table summarises the final list of policy implementers interviewed during January and early March 2022. The interviews were recorded and transcribed, and the data was transferred to the analytical tool (see details of the tool in References).

Armano, R., Issaoui, M., Sharifi, H., & Heydari, A. (2018). Inductive and deductive: Ambiguous labels in qualitative content analysis. *The Qualitative Report*, 23(1), 219-221.

Azungah, T. (2018). Qualitative research: deductive and inductive approaches to data analysis. *Qualitative research journal*.

Eakin JM, Gladstone B. (2020) "Value-adding" Analysis: Doing More With Qualitative Data. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*. January 2020. doi:10.1177/1609406920949333

Kimhur, B. (2020). How to apply the capability approach to housing policy? Concepts, theories and challenges. *Housing, Theory and Society*, 37(3), 257-277.

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<sup>6</sup> In the case of education, local policy implementers do not have an active role in implementing policies since the regional government mainly introduces these. With regards to this, the researchers carried out in-depth desk research to identify the main programmes addressing this dimension at the local level and the relevant stakeholders acting in the field (which is the case of Berritzegune, a local office of a regional body working on education innovation).

Muniz N. and Lorenz U. (2022). D2.2. Urban report of Barakaldo. *UpLift*, available at <https://uplift-youth.eu/sites/default/files/upload/files/D2.2%20Urban%20report%20-%20Barakaldo.pdf>

Pearse, N. (2019, June). An illustration of deductive analysis in qualitative research. In *18th European Conference on Research Methodology for Business and Management Studies* (p. 264).

Robeyns, Ingrid and Morten Fibieger Byskov (2021), "The Capability Approach", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2021 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2021/entries/capability-approach/>>.

Roulston, K., DeMarrais, K., & Lewis, J. B. (2003). Learning to interview in the social sciences. *Qualitative inquiry*, 9(4), 643-668.

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## 10 Appendix

Objectives and focus of the interviews). Finally, the data included in the analytical tool was used to cluster the main ideas and to enrich the conclusions in section 11.3 *Why young people cannot fully exploit their potential*

Table 2. Sample of the interview with policy implementers

EMPLOYMENT	HOUSING	EDUCATION
1. BIC Ezkerraldea (Business Development Centre of Ezkerraldea)	4. ALOKABIDE (Public Company for Renting Subsidised Housing in the Basque Country)	6. BERRITZEGUNE Barakaldo (Support Centre for Training and Educational Innovation)
2. LANBIDE (Basque Employment Agency)	5. ERETZA (The Urban Development Management Company)	
3. INGURALDE (Employment, entrepreneurship and innovation local public agency)		
YOUTH	OTHER DIMENSIONS	
7. Youth Department of Barakaldo Municipality	8. Goiztiri (Association for the support for people and groups living in poverty and/or at risk)	

	of social exclusion in Barakaldo)	
<b>Total interviewees</b>		<b>8</b>
Women		7
Men		1

Source: Own elaboration

## 10.1 Interviews with young people

As in the case of the implementers of local public policies and programmes, the young people that participated in the study were carefully selected. The following table shows the representation of current and former young people.

Table 3. Sample of the interview with young people (former and current)

Former young people (30 to 42 years old)	20
Current young people (18 to 29 years old)	20
Total	40

Source: Own elaboration

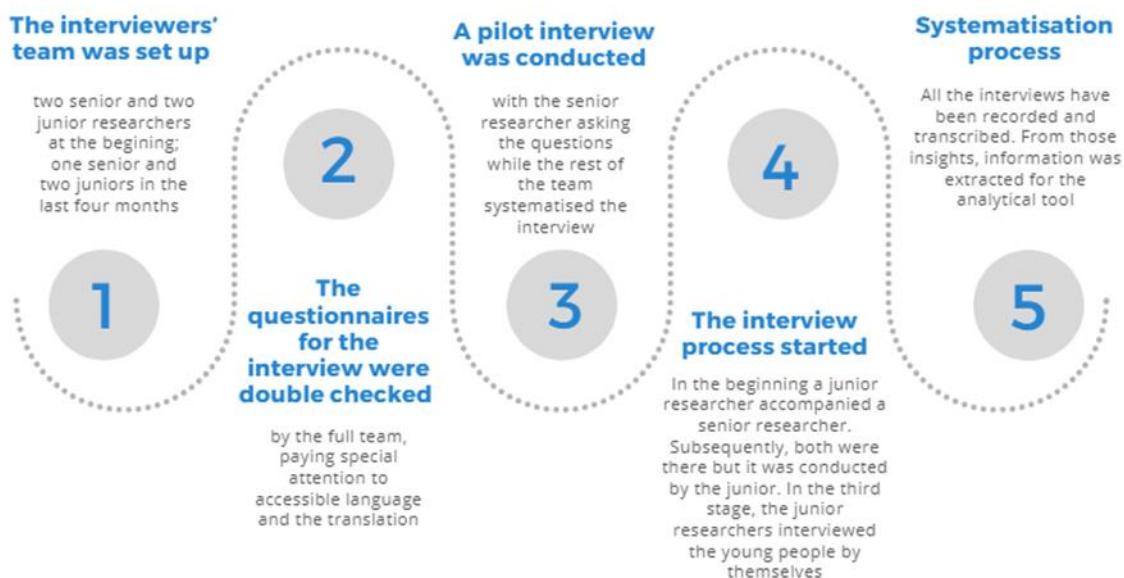
Thus, the process was developed in three stages: in the first, 34 were conducted and analysed; and in the second, two extra interviews were carried out to test the hypothesis derived from the data extracted in phase one. Once the analysis was conducted, the third stage consisted of conducting the last four interviews for deepening into the understanding of elements of the conceptual framework that were not enough developed in the analysis. Those elements were mainly the strategies of the young people for transiting from the actual functionings to the desired ones .

Different techniques were used to reach the respondents mentioned above. First, massive diffusion was carried out (through mailing techniques, and social media,) throughout the institutions implementing policies (Municipality, Gaztebulegoa, Inguralde, and Eretza). As the number of respondents was very low, more individualised actions were put in place such as individual e-mails and calls. Eretza was a key actor in this second stage as it has reached young people, both former and current, who were beneficiaries of its housing programmes. The institution has a long history of providing young people in the Municipality with grants to finance their rent. Thus, it has a long list of beneficiaries at its disposal. The profile of these beneficiaries matched the profile of people Orkestra was looking for, which is why Eretza's contacts were our first option.

The common characteristic of the selected interviewees is that, at some time in their lives, all of them have applied for or received a public subsidy or been in contact with at least one of the gatekeepers mentioned above. However, the sample is very heterogeneous, as later explained in section 11, where the sample is described in terms of vulnerability.

Thus, the interviews conducted followed the process shown in the figure below:

Figure 3. Interview process with young people



Source: Own elaboration

In this process, the interview guides developed during the research design stage by the consortium members were used and translated when needed, especially when sharing them with the study participants.

## 10.2 Analysing the interviews

The interviews were recorded and transcribed, and the data transferred to the analytical tool (see details of the items included in Appendix 1: Objectives and focus of the interviews), allowing the data to be processed and insights to be retrieved as explained below.

Data processing started by identifying measurable empirical data across the whole set of qualitative data (where sources did not include close-ended questions /answers). The objective was to find common themes and concepts in the qualitative data and assign meaning to them (coding into categories such as "low", "moderate", and "high") so as to allow the analysis and enable findings to be generalised for the sample. The output is the key-value table shown in Table 10 from Key value table with common themes in the interviews with young people.

The research team also worked from a list of questions related to the interview objective to find references in each interview that could respond to that list. The list is shown in Table 11 in List of questions for the cross-referenced case list. The process included identifying specific circumstances and experiences related to the young people and in connection with the questions. The answers were collected for each of the questions using cross-reference to be able to identify answers from the interviews quickly. The main ideas were clustered and analysed in later stages.

After the previous steps, the team had different tools and documents which gathered all the information related to the data from the interviews held with the young people that were used for retrieving insights:

- **The analytical framework.** This works as a summary of each interviewee and allows fast querying for specific words with the usual spreadsheet software (Microsoft Excel) used by the team.
- **A key-value table.** This table defines close-ended and codified answers which allow the construction of different visualisations and graphs describing the sample.
- **A cross-referenced case list for each question related to the interview objective.** A document that focuses directly on the detailed information that describes specific realities of everyone and may support the elaboration of the storylines.

A methodological limitation concerning the data analysis described in this section is subjectivity. Transcription and the analytic process beyond transcription, including interpretation and conceptualisation, are not neutral processes but rather interpretative ones given that the narratives in the interviews were difficult to catalogue and compare because they reflect very different personal situations. The objective of the data processing was to organise and assign meaning to data. As extensively studied in the literature on qualitative data and its analysis (for example, in Roulston, K et al., 2003; Eakin JM, Gladstone B., 2020; Young et al., 2018), interviewees express the facts, experiences, and stories as they understand them, while researchers conduct and interpret analysis bringing their values to the research process. Thus, to minimise bias, the data analysis included a triangulated process to cross-check and validate the evidence by:

- Conducting individual analyses of the data analysis by each researcher.
- Sharing and reflection sessions for the research team.
- Conducting a reflection session to confirm and agree on conclusions and in the case of disparity in reaching consensus.

## 10.3 Group meetings

### 10.3.1 Youth Town Hall Meeting

The first contact with the potential interviewees, including current and former young people, occurred during the Youth Town Hall Meeting (YTHM), which, in the case of Barakaldo, took place on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2021. Through an open call to people from the Municipality aged between 18 and 29 (current young people), and those aged between 30 and 42 (former young people), a total of 14 attendees gathered in the civic centre of the Municipality where the YTHM was held. To make the event more dynamic, it was divided into two parts. The first part was more theoretical, with the participants having the chance to gain some insight into the objectives and activities of the project, while in the second part, the target group was asked to share their own experiences related to education, employment, and housing. A piece of paper was also handed around so that the attendees could provide their personal details to be later

contacted for the interviews. To close the event, the researchers and the young people went for a meal together in an informal setting and had the chance to share information about their hobbies and their aspirations.

### **10.3.2 Storytelling Workshop**

The research results were presented separately to the participants on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2021, i.e., to both the implementers and the former and current young people. The meeting was held with the implementers in the morning and with the young people in the afternoon.

A total of seven people participated in the workshop with the implementers, which was divided into two parts. In the first part, the research aims, and the methodology were presented, and in the second, the participants were asked the following:

- With which aspects of the research do you agree/disagree?
- What data/elements do you find to be missing in this research?

The group showed great interest in the research, and participation was high. Among the main issues that were commented on, it is worth highlighting:

- The composition of the young people's sample. One of the participants commented on the necessity to reach people at a greater risk of vulnerability.
- The importance of other aspects, such as leisure or culture, in developing individual strategies for young people.
- The disaffection of young people towards public institutions as a possible explanation for the lack of connection between them.

The workshop held in the afternoon was directed at the young people who had participated in the interview process. It took place right after a talk organised by the youth department of the Barakaldo City Council, Gazte Bulegoa, related to emancipation issues concerning the Municipality's young people. Thus, the talk's participants also had the chance to hear the research results.

In the case of the presentation for the young people, its main focus was on the storylines (described in section 11.3), and less importance was given to the objectives and methodology of the research. The four people attending (three male and one female) agreed on the storylines presented by the researchers. As in the case of the implementers, the same questions were presented to them to start the discussion.

The four of them agreed on the disconnection between young people and institutions and the importance of developing individual capabilities to achieve the desired outcomes in life. Moreover, they explored possible solutions to the dilemmas posed throughout the storylines. One of the ideas that emerged was the possibility of using educational institutions as: a) a nexus of the different programmes offered by local public institutions and b) as a tool to develop individual capabilities that go beyond the curriculum, such as learning how to pay taxes, how to read the electricity bill, etc.

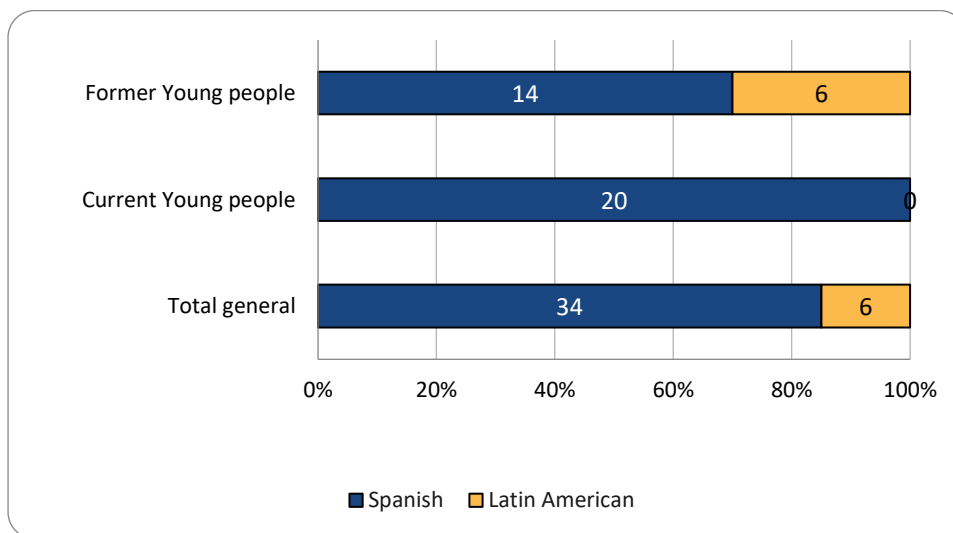
# 11 Findings

## 11.1 Outcomes: what have vulnerable young people achieved

Before going into detail about the situations of inequality that characterise the interviewees, it is worth providing a brief description of the sample.

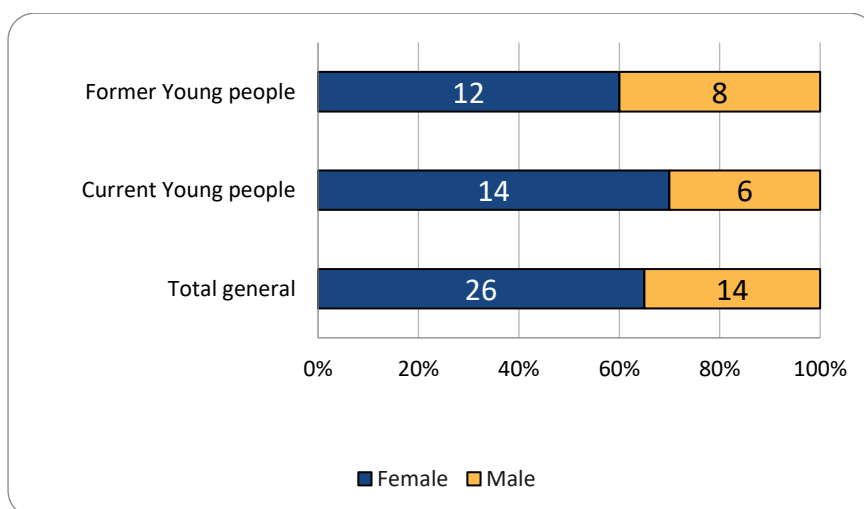
As it is shown in Figure 4, 30 are of Spanish origin, and 5 are Latin American. Moreover, according to Figure 5, 26 women participated in the study and 14 men. Finally, the average age of the former young people (aged 30 to 42) is 35.9 years old, and in the case of the current young people (aged 18 to 29), it is 26.3 years old.

Figure 4. Interviewees' origin



Source: Own elaboration

Figure 5. Interviewee sample broken down according to gender

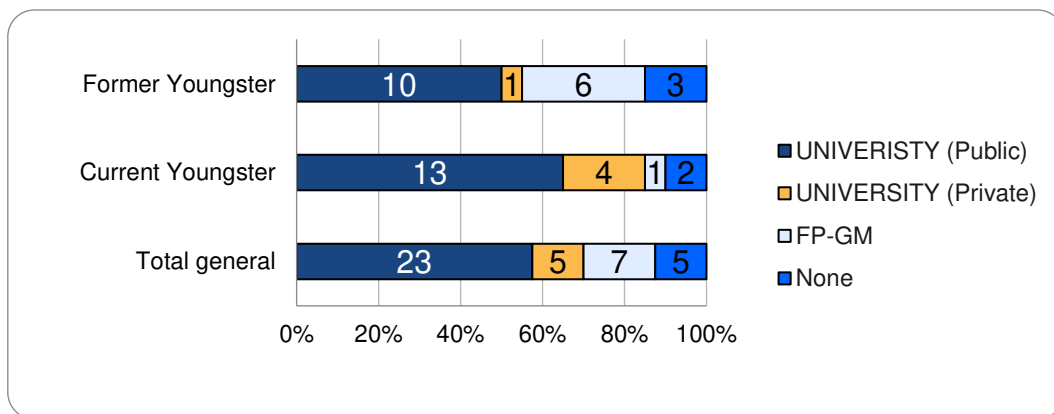


Source: Own elaboration

In order to better understand the sample in terms of the personal achievements of the respondents and what they may value doing or being, below there are described the patterns on the current and desired outcomes in the three life domains:

- In the education domain, as shown in Figure 66, the respondents show high education levels. Many of them have achieved a university degree, especially those that are current young people. University studies are completed mainly at public universities, where tuition fees are much lower than those of the private universities.

Figure 6. Interviewees' level of study



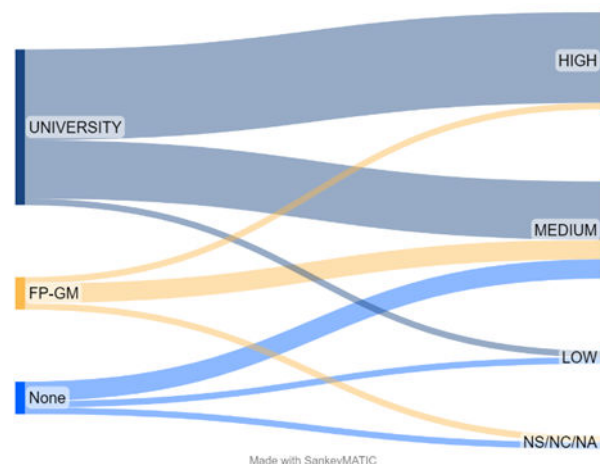
Note: FP-GM refers to Vocational Training Studies

Source: Own elaboration

Moreover, it is worth mentioning that the respondent's level of studies is directly linked to his/her overall satisfaction. The following Sankey diagrams relate the level of studies (on the left side of the diagram) with the satisfaction in education, employment, and housing of the respondents (on the right side of the diagram). The satisfaction with life domains gives us the perception of the interviewees on their own view of their individual situation and it is a measure that has been interpreted by the researchers according to the values established in table 9. As demonstrated in the diagram, respondents with university studies are more satisfied overall than those with vocational training studies or with compulsory studies or those who are undereducated. Hence, while the young people with vocational training studies show mainly moderate satisfaction, it is more likely that the group with compulsory studies or who are undereducated have lower satisfaction than the respondents of the other groups.



Figure 7. The relation between the respondents' level of studies and their degree of overall satisfaction



Source: Own elaboration based on the key-value table with basic and comparable common themes across interviews described in table 9.

Note: FP-GM refers to Vocational Training Studies

- In the housing domain, the pattern identified in the sample is that the respondents hold a position they would like to change but with differences according to their age cohort. Most of the current young people still live in the family house with their families, in a rented house or have not thought to emancipated yet. Their desired functioning would be to have their own house, either from the private or public housing market, as renting prices are higher than the mortgage monthly payments. The strategy for evolving from the current position to the desired one, relies in achieving a good economic position (i.e., a good job position, stable and well paid) that enables them to save enough money or to get funding to buy and maintain a house and a mortgage. The former young people of the sample live on their own, mainly in a rented house or in a social public house. Overall, the ones that own a social public dwelling or have a cheap rental house are satisfied with their current position. However, the young individuals that have a rented house recognise that due to the high prices they would like to own a house, preferably in the publicly subsidised housing market. But their current labour or family situation do not allow them to do so due to difficulties to save money or to have a well-paid job. In general, both the current and former young people increase their chances to emancipate when their household consists of more than one person, usually a couple.
- Regarding the employment dimension, two very different patterns are identified. First, regarding the current young people that are still studying, that do not hold formal job positions, and tend to have informal jobs such as employment in private tutoring per hours. Once they enter the labour market, the path towards a stable and well-paid job is long: starting from fellowship and trainee contracts (which are paid below regular jobs) to unstable contracts. This situation tends to prolong over time in some cases and former young people still are involved in this vicious circle. That's why young people seek to

achieve a work position in the public sector as a civil servant (where the rights of the employee are high in terms of salary and working hours). This pattern emerges very strongly as one of the main desired strategies of young people in the employment dimension.

## **11.2 Resource space: formal freedom of choices for young people**

Barakaldo is a 100,000-inhabitant (2019) river-port town that is part of a larger suburban area around Bilbao (a medium-sized city with 340,000 inhabitants in 2021) called Grand Bilbao. It is in Bizkaia, one of the three provinces of the Basque Country (2.2 million inhabitants in 2021).

The local economic and sectoral development of Barakaldo and the surrounding cities on the left bank of the river *Nervi6n* have strongly influenced its structural factors and the policies affecting the younger generations.

Until the 1980s, there was a mono-industrial culture which resulted in an increase in employment and the construction of low-quality buildings in Barakaldo due to the need to absorb the housing demand of the increasing migration flow. Although it constituted a period of wealth characterised by high employment levels, it also meant a degradation of living conditions.

The disappearance of this industrial engine (the closing down of the main factories) in the area in the 1980s brought very high levels of unemployment, which, in addition to the low quality of urban planning and buildings in Barakaldo (including its periphery), led to a deterioration in the living conditions of the community at the end of the 20th century.

The 1990s onwards saw a favourable economic cycle leading to improved living and housing conditions. Employment rose thanks to the tertiary transformation of the city that focused on the service sector as a driver of growth. Fuelled by high employment, high levels of savings, and cheap credit, large urban development operations were carried out until early 2008.

When the financial crisis suddenly hit in 2008, the economic cycle stopped and unemployment increased, especially for young people between 2010 and 2015. The unfavourable economic situation, together with the lack of credit to access housing, halted the construction of social housing and led to young people leaving their parental home much later.

In 2021, Barakaldo and its surrounding cities that are part of the two sub-provincial areas of Bizkaia of Meatzaldea and Ezkerraldea, face inequalities caused by the fact that the post period of industrial reconversion process which aimed to transform the territory from a mining and metallurgy industry to one of services (mainly based on technology and digitalisation services), has not followed the desirable pace. Concretely, although the growth model adopted has achieved good figures in employment and wealth in the Municipality, the type of employment it has created is unstable and low-skilled.

The development path of Barakaldo has also influenced demography. The gradual loss of most of its industrial jobs until the 1980s provoked an initial shrinkage and later a stagnation of its

population after reaching its peak of almost 124,000 people in the late 1970s. The migrant profile has also changed over time. Up until the 1980s, migrants were mainly from other parts of Spain, while 2020 saw a high increase in migrants from Latin America, Maghreb countries, and Eastern Europe.

Currently, Barakaldo and several neighbouring municipalities are beneficiaries of the Regional Shock Plan that focuses on stimulating the economy to reduce social inequality in the less favoured areas of the Basque Country, with Ezkerraldea one of the target areas.

The transformation of Barakaldo over time has influenced young people and the policies affecting them. Contrary to the Basque Country, where the youth population decreased in 2005-2020, the youth population in Barakaldo rose in 2007-2019 and at a higher growth rate than the population.

Regarding **employment**, the youth of Barakaldo is characterised by a small group of people with high qualifications and a larger group of low-qualified individuals that the market cannot absorb. Local unemployment affects primarily women, migrants, young people beginning their working life, people over 45 years old and long-term unemployed people. There is also a youth "talent" drain, mainly to other municipalities and parts of Europe.

The three levels of governance in the territory (the Basque Government, the Provincial Council of Bizkaia, and local administrations) act in a complementary way in the field of employment. The Basque Government proposes a strategic, legislative, and regulatory framework for the entire region in political and strategic matters. The local administrations implement various programmes promoted by other administrative bodies, adapting them to the local context.

For Barakaldo, the main institutions working in the labour market are Inguralde, the Local Development Agency, and Lanbide, the Basque Employment Agency. The former is focused on working on programmes that link local companies with potential talent to prevent them from leaving the city so that they can gradually join the social mass and contribute economically to the Municipality. Barakaldo works with Inguralde as the main implementer of policies to tackle employment issues. Inguralde manages resources from the regional and provincial levels of government as well as local municipal co-funding by adapting the programmes to the local context, and the needs, demands, and interests of the local population. The main programmes implemented locally by Inguralde are the following: a recruitment grant for companies funded by the Basque Government (*Lehen Aukera*), a youth employment initiative aimed at bridging the intergenerational technology gap in Ezkerraldea funded by the Provincial Council (*Udal Gaztedi -Gaztedi Ezkerraldea*), and, grants for fostering employment of the most vulnerable in disadvantaged areas and/or municipalities run by Inguralde (*Calls for Local Actions for Employment Promotion*). In addition to Inguralde, Lanbide, the Regional Employment Agency with two offices in Barakaldo, leads active employment initiatives (hiring, training, orientating, and prospecting) and manages guaranteed income.

As stated before, the local **housing** situation is very much influenced by the economic cycle; i.e., favourable economic cycles are characterised by better employment rates, access to credit,

and savings that make it possible to improve living conditions and housing while unfavourable cycles lead to the contrary. Currently, the pandemic is affecting housing inequalities. The youth in Barakaldo are not only experiencing difficulties in terms of employability, but they are also facing housing inequalities and, in some cases, difficulties in accessing their first home, especially because of the 20% down payment needed to buy a house and the high rent prices in the private housing market. In the whole region, prices in the private market are much higher than those of social housing (2,358.9€/m<sup>2</sup> against 1,154.4€/ m<sup>2</sup> in Bizkaia in 2019). Buying is the preferred option for young people in Barakaldo with 80% of them buying and only 20% renting.

The central policies and policy implementers working on the issues of housing for young people in Barakaldo are the Basque Government and its public agencies working in housing, and Eretza, the Local Housing Agency of Barakaldo.

The Basque Housing Law recognises the subjective right of citizens to housing, which basically means that public administration must provide dwelling to citizens.

Social housing, whether for sale or rented, is one of the main policies aimed at people with low income. Houses classified as "official protection housing" have a price controlled by public administration and can be sold and/or transferred, but not at any price or to any buyer. The key policy implementers that act within the housing policy in Barakaldo are Alokabide and Etxebide, the Public Agency of housing and the Basque Housing Service of the Basque Government and Eretza, Barakaldo's Local Housing Agency.

The most outstanding policies introduced by these institutions are the following: The **Bizigune programme**<sup>7</sup> run by Etxebide and Alokabide encourages the rental of unoccupied homes of private property by paying a monthly fee to their owners and guaranteeing timely monthly rent payments, as well as returning the home as delivered. If it has been damaged in any way, it is repaired and returned in perfect condition. Apart from managing the Bizigune programme with private owners, the Basque Government owns a number of properties that rents to beneficiaries with difficulties to access the conventional rental markets.

The **Gaztelagun** programme or The *Youth Aid Programme*, introduced by the Basque Government's Housing and Territorial Planning Department, finances rent payments up to 50% of their price to people aged 18-36 years old.

There are also **endowment dwellings**, which are flats under a social rental scheme for young people. These homes have a rotating nature, with the tenant being able to reside there for no more than five years and facilitates the first access to housing among young people.

The local housing agency Eretza promotes new official protection housing and rehabilitation. It channels requests for help in the case of **rehabilitation** of used homes, especially for facades, roofs, and installation of elevators. The aid is requested by the community of owners of the entire property. Eretza also manages **the local emancipation aid**, which provides young people with a subsidy to pay their rent.

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<sup>7</sup> See: <https://www.alokabide.euskadi.eus/que-es-el-programa-bizigune/>

Regarding **education**, access to public education is free from two years old. Non-university education starts with early childhood education (2-6 years old; non-compulsory), followed by basic compulsory education, from primary school (6-12 years old) to the fourth year of secondary (12-16 years old), and finally, vocational training and baccalaureate (post-compulsory education). The Basque Government is in charge of education while the municipalities are responsible only for maintaining local infrastructure and recruiting the caretakers in primary schools. The Basque Education System has worked towards inclusive schooling based on the principle that everyone should have the right to a good education.

Nevertheless, even if education is accessible to everyone, Alzola and Vigo (2019) found that the Basque education system overlooks certain vulnerable situations students can be in, other than those associated with disabilities. These circumstances are more of social nature, such as lack of support, adequate care in family households, or situations of gender violence, etc. Generally, the young people affected by these circumstances do not seek help from the educational system, or from those responsible for their care, or those in charge of the related social actions implemented in the territory. In the same vein, the education system needs to support students facing difficulties that act as a constraining factor for youth development in education, namely, a lack of knowledge of Euskara, digital illiteracy and the lack of technological resources.

One of the most outstanding programmes tackling education inequalities for youth is the **Transit Programmes to Adult Life**, run by the Basque Government, which allow students with disabilities access to education up to 20 years old.

Given that Barakaldo does not have enough competences nor resources to respond to local specific needs in education, coordination with the Basque Government is sought after to support local youth. That is the case with some inclusion programmes for migrants where the objective is to embrace the Euskera culture (Programmes focusing on diversity/Programmes to promote interculturality).

Table 4. Summary of the main policies and policy implementers addressing youth inequalities in Barakaldo

Dimension	Main policies in Barakaldo	Main policy implementers in Barakaldo
<b>Employment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lehen Aukera</li> <li>- Udal Gaztedi -Gaztedi Ezkerraldea</li> <li>- <i>Calls for Local Actions for Employment Promotion</i></li> <li>- Active employment initiatives (hiring, training, orientating and prospecting)</li> <li>- Guaranteed income</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Inguralde, the Local Development Agency of Barakaldo</li> <li>- Lanbide, the Basque Employment Agency.</li> </ul>
<b>Housing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Social housing</li> <li>- Bizigune</li> <li>- Gaztelagun</li> <li>- Youth quota in social housing</li> <li>- Endowment dwellings</li> <li>- Aid for youth emancipation of Barakaldo</li> <li>- Local rehabilitation aid</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Basque Government and its public agencies (Alokabide and Etxebide)</li> <li>- Eretza, the Local Housing Agency of Barakaldo</li> </ul>
<b>Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Free public education system</li> <li>- Transit Programmes to Adult Life</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Basque Government, Education department</li> </ul>

Source: Own elaboration from Muniz N. and Lorenz U. (2022)

## 11.3 Why young people cannot fully exploit their potential

Having explored the formal resources available in Barakaldo in the three life domains (education/housing/employment) and the perspectives of both the policymakers and implementers, and the young individuals from Barakaldo, the following chapter aims to identify the obstacles that prevent public policies from addressing the needs of young people in Barakaldo based on the analytical framework described before.

Thus, the aim is to present the policy mismatches for local analysis, based on the research carried out on the choices that the vulnerable individual may theoretically have in Barakaldo (see Muniz N. and Lorenz U., 2022), and also based on the interview process conducted with policy implementers and young individuals to understand the policy failures in the interaction between the young individual and the institutions in Barakaldo.

The interview process and the previous research on young people's life choices made it possible for the researchers to develop an in-depth analysis of the results, leading to two main storylines. These storylines focus on the central gaps between the existing formal possibilities and the strategies vulnerable young people have. In this regard, the two main storylines identified by the researchers aim to respond to the following question: Why are public programmes/policies for youth not an integral part of young people's life strategies in Barakaldo? The two main reasons for this are:

- Disconnection trap: the increasing distance between institutions and young people.
- Lack of capacity from the institutions to generate an impact in the fields most valued by young people to reduce inequalities.

### 11.3.1 Disconnection trap: the increasing gap between institutions and young people

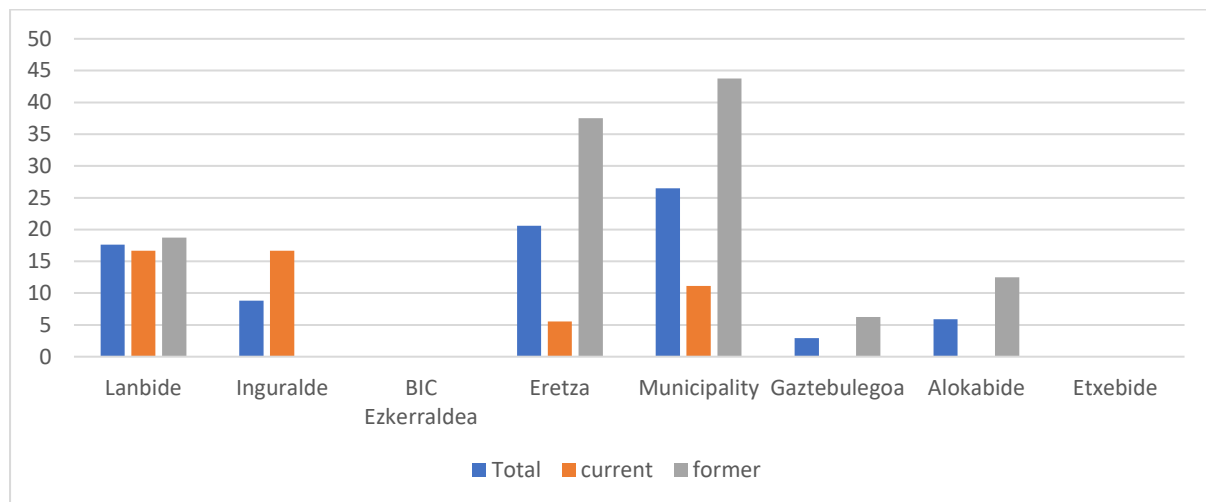
The gap identified is the disconnection between the available policy initiatives focused on youth inequalities in Barakaldo and the local youth's knowledge and actual use of these resources. In the following lines, the researchers provide evidence of the above statement by demonstrating the poor level of effective interaction between the institutions and young people in Barakaldo and identifying the main drivers of this disconnection.

First, we find a lack of awareness among young people concerning the role the resource space could play in their life strategies. Consequently, the young individuals in Barakaldo do not know about the whole range of formal possibilities they can theoretically mobilise to live the life they want, specifically in terms of education, housing, and employment.

The analysis of the interviews demonstrates this fact. Moreover, it is possible to state, departing from young people's perspective, that it is because their lack of awareness and knowledge of the formal spaces that the resources available do not have a direct impact in their "capability space". This issue is fundamental for young people if they are to know about the range of possibilities they can choose from and the opportunities available to them. This lack of

knowledge could be because they are unaware of the support that the institutions tackling inequalities in the three life domains studied in Barakaldo<sup>8</sup> can play in their lives (policy implementers, public agencies, and third sector institutions), or inexperience when it comes to interacting with these institutions. The data collected in the interviews shows that young people do not mention institutions as relevant actors in their life strategies, as seen in Graph 1.

Graph 1. Percentage of the interviewees citing main policy implementer institutions in Barakaldo



Source: Own elaboration from the interviews with the young individuals

Graph 1 indicates institutions' low prominence in the life experiences of the interviewees. Here, the number of citations of the principal institutions for dealing with youth inequalities (see Table 4) are quantified across the interviews (using the analytical tool described in Appendix 1). Overall, the reference to these institutions is very low. Although this data does not necessarily mean that the interviewees do not know about the institutions, it does provide evidence of the importance they give to them in their life strategies. It should be noted, however, that the level of knowledge varies depending on the institutions observed or the age cohort the interviewee belongs to.

*The policy initiatives available in Barakaldo are not part of young people's life strategies in Barakaldo, because they are unaware of these resources.*

Regarding the institutions:

- The most cited institutions are the Municipality of Barakaldo and Eretza, the Local Housing Agency of Barakaldo. The Municipality is a well-known institution present in citizens' everyday lives and in the case of Eretza, the databases used for recruiting the

<sup>8</sup> These institutions are described in "Deliverable 2.2 Urban Report of Barakaldo, Spain" available at <https://www.uplift-youth.eu/research-policy/official-deliverables>

interviewees were provided by this agency and included young people that have been beneficiaries of their housing programmes, which explains why it was one of the most cited institutions.

- Secondly, we found two institutions known by almost 15% of the interviewees: Lanbide, the Employment Agency of the Basque Government, and Inguralde, the Local Development Agency of Barakaldo. The data suggests the value contribution of these institutions to young people should be increased due to their importance in terms of job searching (one of the functions of Lanbide) and the role of Inguralde in reducing unemployment in Barakaldo.
- The third group of institutions have either very few or no citations: BIC Ezkerraldea, Etxebide, Alokabide and Gaztebulegoa. While it is not surprising that BIC Ezkerraldea is in this group since it focuses on entrepreneurs, and the sample does not include many of them, it is surprising that Etxebide, Alokabide, and Gaztebulegoa are hardly mentioned. The first two address housing inequality, and Gaztebulegoa is a support service for young people's initiatives in the Barakaldo Municipality.

As to different age cohorts, the data in Graph 1 shows that institutions have a greater presence in the life of former young people, which is consistent with longer experience in life. Therefore, young people in the first stages of their lives do not receive sufficient information on their possibilities, and institutions may be failing to connect with young individuals.

When it comes to identifying public aid and grants, young people have more knowledge and awareness about the available resources. Many of them have received, in either one of the life areas studied here, a grant or a subsidy to which they can refer. The most mentioned aid is unemployment benefit, followed by the employment scholarships aiming to support young people in their early careers (Global training, the Internationalisation Scholarship BEINT and alike), as well as education grants such as Erasmus or scholarships to study abroad.

As beneficiaries of these grants, the interviewees have interacted with the institutions in charge of managing them. Nevertheless, when talking about the grants, they do not refer to these institutions. One reason for this might be the channels through which the interviewees have got to know the subsidies. In the case of education grants, schools play a key role in promoting them, even if they are not in charge of promoting them. In the case of employment and housing subsidies the interaction with people that are benefiting from these programmes has been crucial.

When contrasted with the main programmes that policy implementers identified in the interviews, we find some mismatches. Surprisingly, none of the programmes considered important by policy implementers for addressing inequalities were highlighted by the young people as relevant in their life strategies.



Table 5. Programmes highlighted as important for addressing inequalities in Barakaldo

Programmes highlighted as important for addressing inequalities in Barakaldo		
	By policy implementers	By young people
<b>Employment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Explorer Programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Unemployment benefit</li> <li>- Employment scholarships:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Global training</li> <li>- Internationalisation Scholarship BEINT</li> <li>- University scholarship</li> <li>- ....</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- PRE, Educational reinforcement programme (secondary education)</li> <li>- Curricular diversity programme (secondary education)</li> <li>- Supporting adolescents with values</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Erasmus</li> <li>- Scholarships to study abroad</li> <li>- Subsidy for paying university fees</li> <li>- Curricular Diversity</li> </ul>
<b>Housing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Service for facilitating emancipation in Barakaldo</li> <li>- Gaztelagun</li> <li>- Bizigune</li> <li>- Endowment dwellings</li> <li>- Quota system</li> <li>- Renting grants COVID-19</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Guaranteed income</li> </ul>

Note: matches are shown in green

Source: Own elaboration based on the interviews with policy implementers and young people in Barakaldo

The fact that the interviewed young people’s knowledge regarding financial assistance and subsidies does not match the existing programmes identified by policy implementers leads to the conclusion that the interaction between the implementer institutions and young people is weak and needs to be strengthened.

The mechanisms that prevent individuals from using the resource space are also related to the behaviour of intermediary institutions (policymakers and policy implementers), the policymakers and implementers working in the three life domains.

*The low level of interaction distances the reality of young people from institutions which may lead to an incomplete picture of young people’s primary needs and a policy content that is not adjusted.*

Table 7 summarises the reasons that have prevented the interviewed young people from identifying and making use of the real opportunities they could choose from and make part of their life strategies. The constraining factors are classified into two general categories and a specific one for the employment dimension. Within the general categories, we found that the lack of support concerning vulnerable circumstances and a lack of guidance (on which are

their formal possibilities to choose from) from the institutions are the main gaps stopping young people from having a broader set of opportunities available to them. Young people's vulnerable circumstances, such as difficulties learning the local language, personal hardships, difficulties getting to work because of distance or having to spend a large share of their salary on housing, are not the issues on which the institutions are focusing. And this makes it hard for young people to access the formal resource space

Table 6. Life events that prevent young people of making real use of real opportunities by dimensions

Dimensions and main resources	Primary factor preventing the use of the formal space
<b>Education</b> - <b>Free Public education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional support due to vulnerable circumstances. :                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ No support from their primary school for preventing school dop-out.</li> <li>○ Lack of individualised attention for less able students.</li> <li>○ Personal circumstances that the individual does not mention but that caused him/her to drop out of school.</li> <li>○ Inability to continue education due to excessive working hours.</li> <li>○ The knowledge of the local language (Euskera) as an obstacle in the education of foreign young people.</li> <li>○ Unable to continue their vocational studies due to a lack of financial support.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Guidance:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Upon graduation, individuals realise how few job opportunities are available related to their studies.</li> <li>○ Individuals who, not having received good guidance, choose careers that are not in line with their interests.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Employment</b> - <b>Public employment services for matching demand / offer</b> - <b>Active employment initiatives (hiring, training, orientating, and prospecting)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional support due to vulnerable circumstances. These circumstances include:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Individuals who must travel long distances to get to their place of work.</li> <li>○ Individuals who, because of their professional profile, go from one precarious job to another unable to break this cycle.</li> <li>○ Individuals who are in highly temporary work.</li> <li>○ Individuals who work more hours than agreed, do not get paid overtime, and cannot take the holidays to which they are entitled.</li> <li>○ Individuals who receive a very low salary.</li> <li>○ Individuals who are forced to resign without the possibility of unemployment benefits.</li> <li>○ Individuals who recognise that they are being exploited.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Mismatches between work demand and offer:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Individuals with a professional profile that is in very low demand in the territory.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Guidance                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Individuals who have not enjoyed contact with their parents due to their parents' long working hours.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Housing</b> - <b>Social housing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional support due to vulnerable circumstances. These circumstances include:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Individuals in need but to whom benefits do not apply. (less income, not having the 20% down payment needed, etc.)</li> <li>○ Individuals who spend more than 50% of their salary on rent.</li> <li>○ Families who must pay rent on one salary.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Source: Own elaboration

Note: Excerpt from cross-referenced case list (See List of questions for the cross-referenced case list) and the identification of clustered factors from the interviews (more than five observations).

Thus, as young people do not know about all the resources available in Barakaldo, policy implementers fail to identify the real expectations, needs, and socioeconomic profiles of the youth in Barakaldo. This begs the question as to whether they are ruling and implementing without considering the needs of young people.

The information in table 5 indicates the importance of considering vulnerabilities as a factor that influences the youngsters capacity to use them. From the interviews with the policy implementers, it is clear that institutions do not incorporate the vulnerable circumstances of beneficiaries as a central aspect in their policy actions. Not having the whole picture of the beneficiaries' profiles influences their ability to adapt policies to the changing characteristics of the youth in Barakaldo over time, that is, to design more adapted policies and programmes. Furthermore, the policy initiatives (grants, programmes, and others) highlighted by policy implementers (see

Table 5) as being the most influential for addressing youth issues in the three dimensions are aimed at young people as a homogeneous group. However, the changing needs related to the different profiles of young people as a target group and vulnerable circumstances, such as the increase of migrant youth in Barakaldo in the last decade (Muniz N. and Lorenz U., 2022), should have an impact on public policy processes, including their design, implementation, and evaluation. One size does not fit all, and a deeper understanding of the needs of the local youth should be considered in policy initiatives.

Examples of considering youth as a homogeneous group are found in the entrepreneurship field. The objective of the Explorer Programme run by BIC Ezkerraldea is to support young people in developing innovative ideas. After analysing the programme's requirements, it can be said that it is directed at a certain kind of young person with stable economic conditions. How could a migrant with scarce economic support withstand a long and non-productive business development process without having any economic support for everyday expenses, such as housing, transportation, food, etc?

Other examples are also found in the housing field, where there are programmes such as the quota system in social housing at the regional level (guaranteeing the allocation of a percentage of social houses to young people), the provision of rental social housing (regional social renting for five years for young people run by Alokabide), or Gaztelagun (grants to support young people in renting an accommodation). But despite targeting young people as a policy priority, these programmes do not differentiate within the group of young people according to their vulnerable circumstances. A housing expert interviewed highlighted that more spaces are needed to reflect on and evaluate these programmes, which, she stated, would help gain a greater understanding of the target group and their needs.

Similarly, in the education field, programmes focused on pupils from secondary schools with learning difficulties (Curricular Diversity Programme) do not contemplate socio-economic differences among pupils to adapt the programmes according to the different needs of young people in Barakaldo.

The conclusion is that the role institutions can play in connecting the resource space with young people must be strengthened for them to be aware of the formal resources they have at their disposal. A bond needs to be built to guarantee that implementer institutions present young people with the whole picture of the existing housing, employment, and education resources. In this regard, it is essential that institutions consider the vulnerability variable as an important criterion in their policies and programmes to ensure that the interactions between the target group and the implementer organisation or the policymaker are strengthened and sustained over time.

### **11.3.2 Institutional transformation towards the implementation of policies most valued by young people**

The second storyline corresponds to the fact that the most valued types of support in fighting inequalities for young people are not the ones primarily developed by the public policies and

programmes run by the institutions in Barakaldo. This could also explain why the latter are not central in the life strategies of young people in Barakaldo, as mentioned in the previous section. The evidence shows three main reasons why this is happening:

Firstly, institutions do not work cross-sectorially and in a coordinated way to tackle youth challenges in Barakaldo.

Secondly, the role of counselling and support, together with individual capacities, are essential for the young people interviewed to achieve the desired results. In many cases, this support in education, employment, and housing fall on the family, as young people do not rely on public institutions.

Thirdly, the advisory and supportive role is not the central role of policy implementers, which often fail in playing this role.

Concerning the first point, the deep understanding of the policies and their implementation show that the resource space is characterised by very atomised initiatives across the different policy fields relevant for youth challenges in Barakaldo (social, youth, and education fields). However, youth challenges require a more holistic response since they are of complex nature, combining personal circumstances with social, health, and education issues, among others. Therefore, the different policy domains and governance structures (different policy governance levels and institutional departments) should integrate a coordinated approach.

In Barakaldo, however, the resource space in the fields of education, housing, and employment shows an atomised and scattered map of policies for young people in the three life domains, with a great diversity of administrative levels implementing such policies and room for improved coordination (Muniz N. and Lorenz, U., 2022). The atomisation of policies for youth inequalities is one of the main reasons behind the gap between the freedom of choice identified by young people and the resource space.

In addition to this complexity, institutional conversion factors do not act as enabling factors to overcome the previously mentioned atomisation. The work of policy implementers is usually isolated and disconnected from other institutional actors, with scarce examples of coordination found in the Barakaldo Urban report (Muniz N. and Lorenz, U., 2022). The policy implementers interviewed confirmed that they work principally under the scope and scale of their own institutions, which makes it difficult for them to have the knowledge on what other existing policy initiatives are available for them locally. Evidence of this can be found in

Table 5, where the most relevant policies identified by implementers when asked to name them in the interview process, do not match the policies and programmes highlighted by the young interviewees as significant in their life strategies.

When the policy implementers were asked to name the more relevant policies for youth, they cited their own policies. Despite the complexity of young people’s challenges, institutions deal with them as watertight compartments, i.e., education only deals with that area, Eretza solely works on housing, and Lanbide on employment issues. There is no real coordination, which is a constraint when it comes to advising young people properly.

As for the second point, the most outstanding conversion factors identified by the young people as being essential for achieving the desired outcomes are the role of counselling and support, and individual capacities. As shown in table 6, the interviewed young people (current and former) found the family and individual conversion factors as fundamental in helping them choose from the formal possibilities to achieve the desired results. They cited the guidance role of family and friends as one of the most outstanding enabling factors, followed by the individual skills related to the level of their proactivity, perseverance and tenacity skills, and motivation.

Table 7. Summary of enabling and constraining conversion factors for the young interviewees

Conversion factors		Enabling factors	Constraining factors
<b>Family conversion factors</b>	Additional financial possibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Having the support of family wealth may influence access to certain advanced education / housing.</li> </ul>	
	Guidance role of family and friends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Having a mentor in life (friend, family, counsellor, teacher).</li> <li>Constant family support encourages individuals, even after academic / labour failure, to find suitable options for the future.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not having family financial / emotional support leads to hardship in life.</li> </ul>
<b>Individual conversion factor</b>	Proactivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Being able to generate savings enables individuals to change their position for something better.</li> </ul>	
	Perseverance and tenacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Being good at studies tends to give individuals more power to live the life they want.</li> <li>Continuous learning to improve job positions.</li> </ul>	
	Motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The young person earns enough to live on his/her own</li> </ul>	
	Economic possibilities		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not having enough economic support may mean the individual does not achieve the education level/ housing situation he/she would like to.</li> </ul>
	Individual characteristics/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Being older and more experienced.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Being a single mother with a disabled daughter.</li> </ul>

	life circumstances		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having low qualifications and not being able to find opportunities to improve.</li> <li>• Being migrant and joining school at a late stage may lead to problems with the Basque language.</li> </ul>
<b>Institutional conversion factors</b>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individuals losing an opportunity due to bad institutional advice.</li> </ul>

Source: Own elaboration

Note: Excerpt from the cross-referenced case list about the questions [B] [E], [F] (See List of questions for the cross-referenced case list) and the identification of clustered factors from the interviews (more than five observations).

For each life dimension, the interviewees provided more details on the enabling factors included in table 6. Regarding the support of family wealth, it mainly influences the education and housing fields. Furthermore, although the young people know very clearly that the education system is free, they pointed to the need for extra support to overcome certain difficulties in aspects like properly learning English or the local language (Euskara), finding a purpose in education or avoiding being bullied. Family economic support was often mentioned by the interviewees as a critical factor that helped them overcome these hardships, showing the importance they attribute to this factor.

The following extracts from the interviews are examples of how they considered family wealth as fundamental for opening up the opportunities they may have in their life domains.

*‘Thanks to my family’s support, I overcame my difficulties in learning English and faced the bullying problems I was having. ‘*  
*‘I got private lessons while I was at school thanks to my family’s financial support. ‘*

*‘To learn English, you had to get private lessons outside school. ‘*

Examples of family economic support in education

In the same vein, family economic support is often mentioned by the interviewees in the housing dimension as being fundamental, not only helping them to afford the 20% down payment that is needed to buy a house, but making it possible for them to save while they are supported economically by the family (by for example letting them live at home while they are saving).

*'If you don't have family support from a partner or parents, you cannot access housing.'*

*'I can live alone because I live in a relative's house.'*

*'You can get a house in Barakaldo because it's a family house or because you live at home while you save money to be able to buy or rent.'*

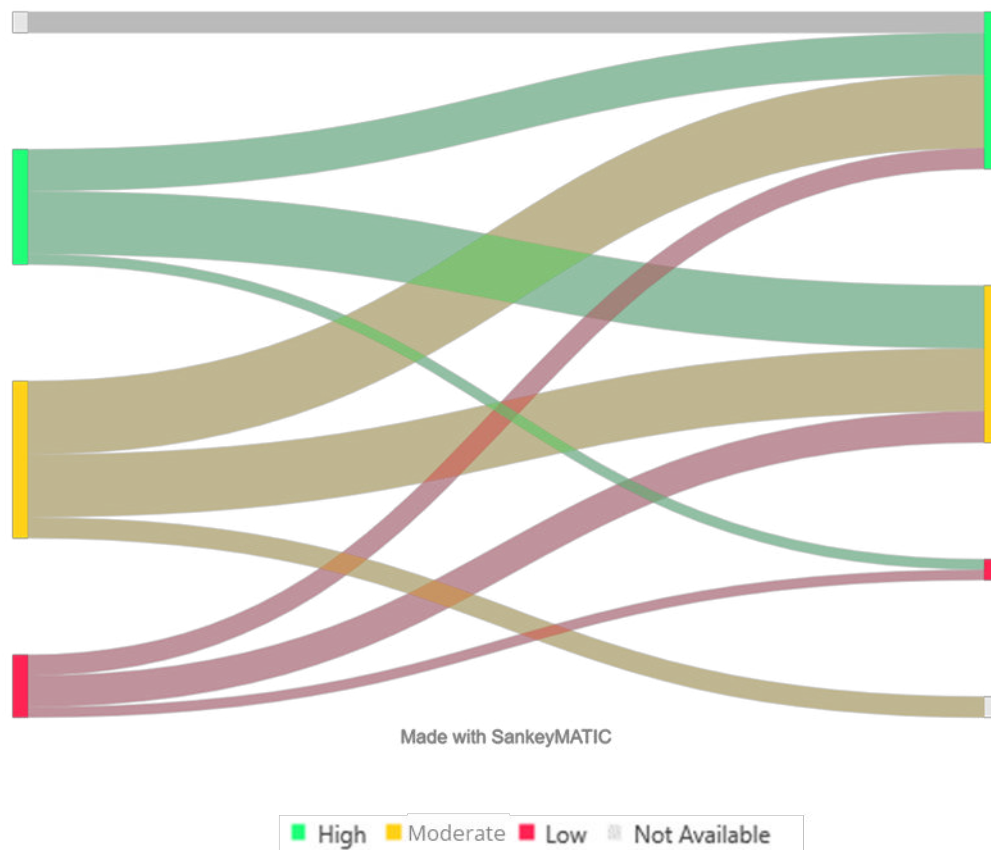
*'Thanks to my family's economic support, I can pay the rent.'*

Examples of family's economic support in housing

However, according to the analysis in figure 8 **Hiba! A hivatkozási forrás nem található.**, the level of a family's economic support (high, moderate, or low) received by the interviewees throughout their lives is not the sole factor influencing their overall satisfaction in life. Thus, the support needed to achieve the desired outcome goes beyond economic support. This can be seen from the fact that low economic support does not necessarily mean a low level of satisfaction, as most of the young people in this particular situation have gone on to achieve either moderate or high satisfaction with the outcomes in the different life domains. At the same time, individuals with a greater economic support from their families mainly achieve moderate satisfaction, and a few even perceiving a low level of satisfaction. This data points to a need to ask institutions whether their central role should be to provide grants and money or whether other mechanisms not based on funding could be more suitable for young people and for supporting them in their life strategies.



Figure 8. The share of the different levels of family economic support received by the interviewees (represented in the left side of the figure) in relation to their overall satisfaction in life (including housing, employment, and education) (represented in the right side of the figure)



Source: Own elaboration based on the key-value table with basic and comparable common themes across interviews described in table 10

Family guidance and counselling, as shown in Table 7, emerges as a significant conversion factor in supporting young people across all domains. The individual often has a mentor in life like a sister, an aunt, or a parent that supports him/her in choosing an individual strategy.

*'My Family gave a lot of importance to education, and demanded I reach a high level.'*

*'They have always encouraged me to study.'*

*'Family guidance is essential and can overcome demotivation and emotional breakdowns...This is something completely forgotten by institutions.'*

*Quotes related to family emotional and motivational support*

The development of individual conversion factors is also identified in the interviews as an enabling factor for generating successful life strategies. Table 6 categorises these into individual skills (proactivity, perseverance and tenacity, and motivation) (i); economic possibilities (ii); and individual circumstances (iii).

The paragraphs above offer a detailed description of how individual economic possibilities influence an individual's life strategies. Emerging strongly as enabling factors are individual skills related to the individual's ability to be informed, to actively search for information, to be able to network, socialise and interact with the community, and to be empowered to undertake new challenges in life. The interviews highlight the importance of individual capabilities to identify the real opportunities to choose from and transform them into the desired outcomes.

Other individual conversion factors related to the young person's circumstances emerge as constraints on achieving the desired outcome across dimensions. Examples are being divorced, having a disabled daughter, having economic difficulties, having dropped out of school or lack of motivation, among others. The interviewees experiencing this kind of hardship cannot see a turning point in their situation and or do not know where to look to change their current position to a better one. Although the resource space can find possible solutions to these young people's different circumstances, the fact is that the welfare system and institutions should strengthen the mechanisms to support them in their situations, for example, by guiding them through the various possibilities that exist, like free education for adults or offering guidance for their emancipation.

*'I left school and now it's too difficult to continue my studies with my child.'*

*'I'd like to do upper secondary school, but I don't know how.'*

*'I try to do courses, but it's been impossible because of my economic situation.'*

Quotes related to individual constraining conversion factors

Individual circumstances like being older and more experienced help young people access the resource space. Evidence is found in the fact that former young people show stronger enabling individual capabilities than the current youth, and these help them to transform formal resources into opportunities by:

- Making use of the Employment Agency, Lanbide, for job-seeking and education opportunities.
- Studying languages through the official school of languages, which is a public centre for adult students and is dependent on the Basque Government's Department of Education.

- Entering the Curricular Diversity Programme to avoid dropping out of school.
- Applying for Eretza grants(the Housing Agency of Barakaldo) to access affordable housing.

Regarding the third point, the behaviour of policy implementers and policymakers (meso- level conversion factors) shows that there is room for improvement in the way they design their services and programmes to guide young people when choosing their life strategies.

On the one hand, the day-to-day work that institutions carry out to tackle youth inequalities in the three life domains is not based on advice and counselling. And as highlighted by the young people, having access to advisory services on a daily basis would be important for their life strategies. The underlying reason for this lies in the huge institutional complexity (as mentioned before, characterised by a scattered map of policies and the great diversity of administrative levels implementing such policies), which makes it hard for institutions to act as a counsellor and advisor. Second, as seen in the interviews with policy implementers, there is no holistic knowledge of the map of policies or clear guidelines for supporting youth in their life strategies, except for the advice that Gaztebulegoa gives to the youth in these regards. The work that institutions do on a daily basis is usually isolated from other institutions when it comes to offering holistic services and counselling. This leads to one of the institutional constraining conversion factors included in Table 7, the non-advisory role of institutions. Moreover, interviewees gave examples of how they missed opportunities due to the bad advice they received from an institution. The following quotes illustrate some of these experiences.

*'The Basque Government refused to support him because he was earning €100 a month more than what was stated in the requirements, and although he had asked for it, he was not well advised.'*

*'In institution X, they presented a proposal for a creative project for young people that was discarded without any feedback or possibilities to adapt the business idea. They found it very demotivating. If this institution wants to encourage youth entrepreneurship, they should take a different approach.'*

Quotes related to institutional constraining conversion factors extracted from interviews with policy implementers

Nevertheless, the Municipality has very powerful assets that can help young people decide the best option for them and guide them in their choices. The Youth Department of the Municipality counts on a permanent, stable working team that is highly experienced and qualified, which includes City Council civil servants and the workers of Gaztebulegoa.

According to a policy implementer in the Municipality, this is one of the most outstanding characteristics of the Barakaldo City Council and one that does not exist in all municipalities. In addition, Gaztebulegoa acts as a single one-stop office dealing with young people's needs and counselling. Finally, the Barakaldo City Council offers not only an appropriate service but also a pool of qualified professionals trained to work with youth and highly focused on providing service and advice. But despite all this, the Municipality must acknowledge its role as a one-stop office for youth and aim to tackle youth related issues cross-sectorially.

Both internally and externally, the service needs to be strengthened. The Municipality of Barakaldo and the departments of Social Action, Youth, and Housing that have competencies in policies for youth inequalities systematically work in collaboration at an internal level. However, the service should be acknowledged as a one-stop office for young people, working closely and cross-departmentally to design and provide youth services. Externally, the service is underused by local young people, as seen in Graph 1, where the young interviewees mentioned Gaztebulegoa very few times, which can be interpreted as the service not being relevant in their life strategies.

## 12 Discussion points for a (potential) Reflexive Policy Agenda in Barakaldo

The capability approach, pioneered by Amartya Sen, provides the analytical framework for gaining insight into urban youth inequalities, as explained in section 3 (Sen, 1999; Robeyns, 2021; UPLIFT, 2020). This approach allows us to understand the intertwined macro-meso-micro-level factors that affect inequalities, focusing on resources (such as income, wealth, etc.) and their interplay with the individual's decisions (Sen, 1999; Kimhur, 2020). The drivers of youth inequalities at the macro level are summarised in section 11.2, while the meso and micro-level factors are studied partially through the interviews with policy implementers (section 8.1) and also through the interviews with young people (sections 10.1 and 10.2). As introduced in Deliverable 1.2 (UPLIFT, 2020), the analyses of inequality cannot be separated into the different levels mentioned as their interdependencies need to be considered. The research summarised in this document focuses on the interactions between the macro, meso, and micro levels that influence youth inequalities in Barakaldo, as certain problems can be explained primarily with macro factors whereas micro variables play a more important role in explaining other problems. Combining these approaches involves reflecting on the 'agency-structure' debate (Jessop, 1997; Ward, 1996; Cox, 1993) in terms of whether it is structural factors – macro-meso dynamics – or human agency – the decisions made by individuals which have a greater influence on urban inequalities.

One limitation of the current research is related to the composition of the young people's sample and their vulnerability level (see section 5.1). As one of the participants commented in the Storytelling Workshop, where the storylines were presented to policymakers, the necessity to reach people at a higher risk of vulnerability remains a challenge. However, as explained in section 10.1, the recruitment process through gatekeepers allowed the researchers to reach young people experiencing some kind of difficulty as they have looked for support at some time in their lives.

The first aspect that emerges from the research is the necessity of bridging the gaps between the micro, meso, and macro levels that affect urban youth inequality. Following the capability approach, its core concepts and the terminology followed in UPLIFT, both young people and policymakers agree that there is an increasing disconnection between the resource space and the actual use of this space by the young individuals in Barakaldo<sup>9</sup>. The policy initiatives available in Barakaldo for fighting youth inequalities are underused. The bridge between the formal resources available in housing, employment, and education and the real opportunities young people see and identify must be strengthened. Furthermore, it is essential that institutions consolidate their role in guiding and informing the most vulnerable of the possibilities they have at their disposal, especially current young people and migrants. Also,

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<sup>9</sup> Conclusion of the back-to-back Storytelling Workshops held in Barakaldo on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2022

the disaffection of youth towards public institutions catalyses this lack of connection between them. Consequently, the relationship between the most vulnerable and the institutions should change. Institutions cannot rely on the fact that the mere existence of opportunities means that these will be taken, which is why they have to adopt a more active role, mobilising and encouraging potential beneficiaries to participate.

In this sense, from the storylines of youth inequality in Barakaldo in section 5.3 and discussions with policy implementers and young people in the Storytelling workshops<sup>10</sup>, the first principle to emerge that could guide policymakers in gaining insights for Reflexive Policymaking is the following:

**To bridge the gap between these two spaces, efforts need to be made on both sides, institutions and young people. Efforts on one side alone can be unproductive not only in terms of efforts but also in resources.**

Aware of the need to connect more effectively with young people, policymakers have worked on innovating and investing in new dissemination and communication activities/channels. The impact of the actions taken in this regard shows the difficulty of strengthening communication, in that the institutions already work with the most widely-used social media channels by young people, with limited success as the latter do not use these channels to get informed about formal issues. Moreover, more traditional dissemination tools like personalised (addressing the individuals by name) letters and advertising youth services to the whole youth population had very few responses.

Therefore, it is fundamental that each side strives to connect with the other. This means that young people need to be prepared to approach the local welfare system opportunities and not wait until they leave school and turn 18 to get the necessary information about the institutional realm, which will then enable them to interact with it. Some work must be done first, so that young people get to know something about institutions and their role, what the resource space is and where they can go for advice. According to the discussions held in the Storytelling workshop, some of the most powerful connections occurred with young people participating in educational programmes at school, where they interacted with the institutional realm. Later, these individuals found it very easy to contact and trust institutions. Nevertheless, from the research, we have seen that unless this type of work is done first, the connection is very hard to make afterwards. Family and friends are the mechanisms young people use to access formal resources, but in those cases, they do not obtain the whole picture, limiting their range of opportunities. The following quote illustrates this last statement:

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<sup>10</sup> Held in Barakaldo, the 21st July 2022

*'If I'd been aware of the existing possibilities for independence in Barakaldo, I'd have become independent three years earlier.'*

Quote from the Storytelling Workshop with young people in Barakaldo, 21<sup>st</sup> July  
2022

Therefore, efforts in capacity building can be made while young people are at school. These processes could include educational leisure and sports activities with institutions, study visits, events, conferences, practical courses, and definitively activities where institutions can get closer to pupils.

But what happens once the young individual legally becomes an adult (turns 18) and he/she lacks knowledge about the resource space? The second principle found that may guide policymakers in gaining insights for Reflexive Policymaking identified could be the following one:

### **Give young people what they really value**

The resources most cited and valued by young people with regards to supporting them in their life strategies are advice and counselling, which family and friends mainly provide. Throughout the interviews, the following factors emerged as being fundamental in their lives: having a figure they can look up to in life, having a mentor that gives them constant and systematic advice concerning the different areas of life, having someone encouraging them to improve or to keep on learning, etc. When young people does not have a close social network, the institutions could step in, not only with counselling but also with mentorship.

Institutions are generally not used to offering advice and counselling services. On the contrary, they often fail to give advice in their regular service provision due to lacking a holistic view of the different formal possibilities available to young people and their interconnections, and also because of the nature of their regular service provision, which is based on managing programmes/initiatives rather than on giving advice.

However, there are exceptions in the institutional realm. A public service like Gaztebulegoa in Barakaldo aims to guide, advise, and provide services to support young people in their personal and professional development. Along with its regular work, this service combines advice and counselling with a more holistic view of what a young individual could necessitate. The interviewed young people identified the need for more guidance in life, more dialogue and information sharing spaces and quality advice as possible entry points for a reflexive policy agenda in Barakaldo.

In addition, the importance of developing individual capabilities to achieve the desired outcomes in life was also mentioned. Moreover, the young people suggested using

educational institutions as a) a nexus of the different programmes offered by local public institutions and b) as a tool to develop individual capabilities beyond the curriculum.

The discussion in this section aims to stimulate reflection on the potential policy entry points that could be changed to influence both institutional and individual strategies for youth inequalities in education/employment/housing. Despite the analysis focusing on the specific context of Barakaldo, the challenges described can also be met by other urban areas or territories, which could be inspired to find better and improved mechanisms for fighting youth inequalities.



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## 14 Appendix

### 14.1 Objectives and focus of the interviews

Table 8 summarises the main objectives of the interview process with both policy implementers and young people in Barakaldo, as well as the focus of the interviews within the framework of analysis described in section 3. It also includes the list of topics compressed in the analytical tools designed for processing the interviews.

The interviews with policy implementers attempted to understand the policy failures in the interaction between the young individual and the institution with regards to a specific policy over three different time scales: the financial crisis period, the recovery, and the current Covid crisis. It also aimed to determine to what extent implementer organisations have room for manoeuvre in influencing the policies studied. Meanwhile, the interviews with young people sought to find the weak points of local policies from young people's perspective by implementing the Capability Approach. The objective was to gain insight into young people's achievements, and inequality positions (Functionings) in different policy domains (education/employment/housing) and how (through which conversion factors at the individual, family, and institutional level) the individual reached the current position and aims to reach a desired position. It also aimed to understand how the Resources (formal rights and formal possibilities) were narrowed down to Capabilities (real opportunities to choose from) and the role of the Conversion Factors (individual, family, institutions) in an individual's life strategy.

Table 8. Objectives and focus of the interviews with Policy implementers and young people

INTERVIEWS WITH POLICY IMPLEMENTERS			
Objective	Focus of the interview and the analysis framework	Topics covered in the analytical tool	
<p>To understand the <b>policy failures</b> in the interaction between institutions and young people in Barakaldo.</p> <p>To determine to what extent implementer organisations, have <b>room for manoeuvre</b> in influencing local policies.</p>	<p>Potential policy failures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improper content of the policy (it fails to respond to the needs of the target groups / it is not adequately defined/ the mechanisms generating inequalities are not dealt with properly, etc).</li> <li>- Conflicting interactions between the target group and the implementer: lack of trust between the parties, improper communication, loss of information, administrative errors, etc.</li> </ul>	Description of the service (policy content)	Short summary of the service / Financial, legal background / Importance (scale) in the value chain.
		Finding and defining the target group.	Target group characteristics (drivers)/ Change of target group characteristics (drivers)/ Selecting clients/ Finding the beneficiaries.
		Human resources and interactions	Impacts / Conflicts with clients/ Conflict resolving solutions/ Conflicts with decision makers / Human resource management / Policy incentives for the clients / Policy incentives for the institution / Barriers for policy improvement.
		Possibilities for reflexivity	Organisation's room for manoeuvre / Influencing decision making/ Points of reflexivity/ Evaluation on how it fits into the national/local welfare system/ Reference to innovative policies.
INTERVIEWS with young people			
Objective	Focus of the interview and the analysis framework.	Topics covered in the analytical tool	
<p>To find <b>weak points in local policies</b> from young people's perspective.</p>	<p>Capability Approach and its core elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Functioning: The functioning shows what people actually are (being) or do (doing).</li> <li>- Capabilities / Real freedom of choice: They refer to the ability to achieve being and doing (Functionings).</li> </ul>	Individual characteristics	Individual conversion factors: Age / Gender/ Health status/ Disability/ Nationality/Ethnicity / LGBT+.
		Education	Choices/Functionings: Outcome/Current position Strategy.
			Capabilities (opportunities).
			Conversion factors: Individual factors / Family background / School / Institution.

	- Resources / Formal freedom of choice: Capabilities are affected by the formal freedom of choice or the resources available for a person.	Labour market	Choices/Functionings: Outcome/Current position Strategy
			Capabilities (opportunities)
			Conversion factors: Individual factors / Family background / Workplace / Institution
		Housing	Choices/Functionings: Outcome/Current position Strategy
			Capabilities (opportunities)
			Conversion factors: Individual factors / Family background / Housing market or provider / Institution

Source: UPLIFT

## 14.2 Summary of the main programmes and implementers from WP2

The following table summarises the main programmes and policy priorities identified in the interview process through WP2 that have a key role in addressing youth inequalities and were considered as fundamental by the policymakers interviewed in WP2.

Table 9. Summary of the main programmes and implementers from WP2

Main policies/projects/programmes addressing youth in the three life dimensions		Policy implementers at local level
Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional government competences in the field: Active employment policies transferred since 2009 and also passive ones (e.g., RGI).</li> <li>• The Employment Plan of the Basque Government.</li> <li>• Youth programmes addressing employment by the Basque government:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Educational transit programme to the world of work, which is held in VET as well as in universities, through a scholarship.</li> <li>○ Entrepreneurship grants with vocational training centres and the three Basque universities.</li> <li>○ Youth return programme aimed at young people. It supports companies in hiring young people who are working abroad.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The Youth Employability Programme.</li> <li>• 3R Local Employment Programme.</li> <li>• Lehen Aukera, which is the Basque Government's strategy for young people, offers support to companies that hire them.</li> <li>• Udal Gaztedi- Gaztedi Ezkerraldea, the coordinating body for integrated youth policies in the different counties of Bizkaia in Ezkerraldea.</li> <li>• Calls for Local Actions for Employment Promotion.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lanbide, the Employment Agency of the Basque Government.</li> <li>• Inguralde, local development agency.</li> <li>• BIC Ezkerraldea, centre for business development support in Ezkerraldea.</li> </ul>
Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Basque Government's Youth Plan.</li> <li>• Gazte bizi, one-stop web for youth).</li> <li>• Gaztelagun, the Basque Government's emancipation programme.</li> <li>• Gaztebulegoa, the local youth association.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipality of Barakaldo, Youth Department</li> <li>• Gaztebulegoa, Barakaldo Municipality's youth participation and support service</li> </ul>
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bizigune, the Basque Government's free public service for housing-related issues.</li> <li>• Urban development plan of Barakaldo.</li> <li>• Ezkerraldea's Regional Shock Plan.</li> <li>• The emancipation grants of Barakaldo.</li> <li>• Barakaldo Social Housing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eretza (Inguralde)</li> <li>• Alokabide</li> </ul>
Social field	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Guaranteed Income Scheme (RGI) and Social Assistance Scheme (PCV).</li> <li>• ERTES (Temporary layoffs).</li> <li>• Collaboration and agreements with the third sector.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Goitiri, third sector association for supporting people and groups in</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment social policy.</li> <li>• Self-employment programme.</li> </ul>	situations of poverty and/or at risk of social exclusion
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Source: Own elaboration

### 14.3 Key value table with common themes in the interviews with young people

The following tables shows a key-value table with basic and comparable information of every interviewee as well as the topics and the tags used to give meaning to the topics.

Table 10. Key-value table with basic and comparable common themes in the interviews

Common themes	Code system
[Functioning] #Education Attended Higher Education	STATE UNIVERSITY PRIVATE UNIVERSITY FP-GM <sup>11</sup> NO
[CF] #Family: Family could provide economic support	NA: No information available or no special mention. LOW: Family support is insufficient, so needs extra economic support from other sources. MODERATE: Average family economic support for the individual to achieve functioning. (State school, living expenses, etc.) HIGH: Evidence that family economic support is above average for the individual to achieve functioning (private universities, relocation costs to study in another city, summer courses, special tuition, etc.)
[CF] #Family: Family could provide emotional support	YES (They are close and support him/her emotionally on a daily basis) NO
[CF] #Family: Family could provide housing support	NA (No special mention) FAMILY HOME FAMILY-OWNED HOME/ LIVES ON HIS/HER OWN NO
[CF] Received public financial assistance	YES NO
[CF] #Family #Education Attended Extracurricular Lessons	YES NO
[Results] Overall	AVERAGE VALUE OF: Overall satisfaction with education, employment, and housing

<sup>11</sup> FP-GM refers to Vocational Training Studies

satisfaction with the path chosen	
[Results] Overall satisfaction with education satisfaction	NA (No special mention) LOW (The interviewee expresses low satisfaction with his/her current achievement and/or there is evidence that the he/she had problems in this regard) MODERATE (The interviewee expresses mixed feelings, both good and bad, or does not highlight any special circumstances with his/her current achievement) HIGH (The interviewee expresses high satisfaction with his/her current achievement and/or there is no evidence that the he/she had any problems in this regard) *Based on the individuals' feelings and opinions
[Results] Overall satisfaction with employment	NA (No special mention) LOW (The interviewee expresses low satisfaction with his/her current achievement and/or there is evidence that he/she had problems in this regard) MODERATE (The interviewee expresses mixed feelings, both good and bad, or does not highlight any special circumstances concerning his/her current achievement) HIGH (The interviewee expresses high satisfaction with his/her current achievement and/or there is no evidence that he/she had any problems in this regard) *Based on the individual's feelings and opinion
[Results] Overall satisfaction with housing	NA (No special mention) LOW (The interviewee expresses low satisfaction with his/her current achievement and/or there is evidence that he/she had problems in this regard) MODERATE (The interviewee expresses mixed feelings, both good and bad, or does not highlight any special circumstances with his/her current achievement) HIGH (The interviewee expresses high satisfaction with his/her current achievement and/or there is no evidence that he/she had any problems in this regard) *Based on the individual's feelings and opinion

Source: Own elaboration

## 14.4 List of questions for the cross-referenced case list

Table 11. List for each questions related to the interview objective for the cross-referenced case list

LIST OF QUESTIONS RELATED TO THE INTERVIEW OBJECTIVE
[A] What inequality traps exist in the interactions between intermediary institutions (Goiztiri, Gaztebulego, Eretza, and the Municipality of Barakaldo) and vulnerable young people?
[B] What is the role of the different levels in shaping individual life strategies and resulting in social inequalities? Levels: policymakers, the welfare system, intermediary institutions, individual characteristics
[C] How do these roles change over time? How stable are they?
[D] How could these conversion factors/inequality traps be put on the agenda of reflexive policymaking?
[E] What are the achievements and inequality positions (functionings) of the different domains (education, employment, and housing) in a young person's life?
[F] In which way (through which conversion) did the individual reach the current position? [F.1] How are the resources transformed into capabilities (real opportunities to choose from)? How do these opportunities influence the individual's employment/education/housing strategy? [F.2] How do these conversion factors limit or enhance young people's choices? How do individual characteristics influence an individual's chances in life?

[F.3] What was the individual's strategy in choosing from the possible options?

[G] Did the situation achieved (position) in the financial crisis have a long-lasting impact on the three domains? In which way? How stable are these roles in different times and different life stages?

Source: UPLIFT