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Inequality with and for Future generaTions

Deliverable 2.2

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Authors	Noel M. Muniz, Usue Lorenz (DF, Orkestra; University of Deusto)
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Summary

This document has been prepared following the methodological guiding principle proposed in the UPLIFT *Methodological Guidance and Work Plan for WP2*. Its purpose is to identify, study, and analyze the different socioeconomic drivers related to the territorial inequality present in the **Functional Urban Area** (FUA) under study — the city of Barakaldo, Basque Country; Spain.

This work sheds light on the functioning, harmony and coordination of the policies and key stakeholders actively linked to and fundamental for the design, adaptation, implementation, and assessment of the programs, actions and measures that emanate from territorial political strategies to reduce inequalities and promote social inclusion, equity, diversity and cohesion in local communities.

Likewise, this report is drawn on various primary and secondary regional sources of information that bring together data and material pertaining to the time periods between 2007 and 2020. It covers, thus, the economic and financial crisis that erupted in 2008, the subsequent post-crisis years of recovery, and the Covid-19 pandemic, all relevant periods for the purposes of the research.

On the other hand, it is relevant to mention the following findings identified in the territory:

- During the time span examined, and despite continuous economic fluctuations and social changes, the territorial public entities responsible for the design and implementation of policies related to the socioeconomic dimensions here studied (**education, employment, housing and other dimensions -social protection, youth, and migration-**) have been capable to reacting in time responding to the needs and demands of the vast majority of the Basque Country's population. As it will be seen throughout this document, most of these political measures were highly relevant for the community, demonstrating a great impact on local social inequality, while a few, without being inefficient, failed to achieve the expected results.
- A significant political harmony and collaboration is certainly observed between the three levels of governance existing in the territory (the **Basque Government**, the **Provincial Council of Bizkaia**, and the **Municipality of Barakaldo**), as well as a great respect for the competences that in terms of laws and political strategies each level holds related to the socioeconomic dimensions stated above. In spite of this, representatives from the different levels declare being aware of the latent possibilities of improving this relationship through a more fluid interaction and communication, taking strongly into account the opinion of the local communities.
- The significant number of public-private organizations, and of those from the third sector —supporting public management and taking part of the institutional network that implements, executes and provides feedback in the territory- is significantly remarkable: **observatories specialized in socioeconomic studies** (*Basque Housing Observatory* —Etxebide-, *Basque Youth Observatory*

—Gazteukera -, *Basque Immigration Observatory* —Ikuspegi-, etc.), **research institutes** (*Basque Women's Institute* —Hemakunde-, *Basque Employment Institute* —Lanbide-, *Basque Institute of Statistics* —Eustat-, etc.), **public-private companies/agencies and local social centers** (*Barakaldo Urban Management Society* —Eretza-, *Barakaldo Development Agency* —Inguralde-, *Barakaldo Youth Information Service* —Gaztebulegoa-, etc.), **associations/foundations** (Association of Accompaniment to People at Risk or in Situation of Social Exclusion in Barakaldo —Goiztiri-, etc).

- Regarding youth-oriented policies, the thematic transversality with which this particular social group is treated is palpable by the existent main laws associated with equality, inclusion, and social protection in the territory (***Basque Housing Law*** —Law 3/2015, of June 18, on housing-, ***Basque Law of Social Services*** - Law 12/2008, of December 5, of Social Services-, ***Basque Law of Vocational Training*** —Law 4/2018, of June 28, on Vocational Training-). Despite this, the territory is expected to have its own ***Basque Youth Law*** before the end of 2021. Something similar happens with the strategies and public policy plans implemented in the territory, such as the ***Basque Employment Strategy***, the ***Basque Housing Master Plan***, or the ***Basque Inclusion Plan***, etc.
- Finally, in terms of innovation applied to the design and implementation of territorial policies, it is fundamental to primarily outline: a) the ***Basque Housing Law*** (3/2015, June 18), which explicitly recognizes for the first time in the entire Spanish State the right to enjoy adequate housing, transferring to public powers the mandate to promote the conditions and regulations to make it effective; and b) the ***Income Guarantee and Social Inclusion Law*** (Law 18/2008, of December 23) —being ahead of the Spanish State's model in twelve (12) years-, recognizing the right to have financial means to meet the basic needs of life when these cannot be obtained in sufficient amounts from employment or from social assistance regimes, while receiving personalized support for labor and social inclusion through compulsory participation in an inclusion agreement.

1 General description of Barakaldo Functional Urban Area

Most of the information and socio-political and economic data considered for the analysis of this Functional Urban Area (FUA) was from the Basque Country (Euskadi) due to two fundamental reasons. The first one is the elevated level of competences that the entire territory holds with respect to the Spanish State, transferred to their governments from the *Statute of Autonomy of the Basque Country* (1979), with very few substantial competences retained by the State Government. Secondly, because the Basque Country counts with a vast source of information on its three different historical territories that allows its comparison and territorial analysis.

On the methodological subject, ten (10) in-depth interviews —four (4) interviews with the Basque Government, two (2) interviews with the Provincial Council of Bizkaia, and four (4) with the municipality of Barakaldo, six (6) and four (4) being women and men, respectively- were conducted , from November 2020 to March 2021, with policymakers familiar with the territorial process of formulating social policies/strategies for local welfare at the different levels of governance in the territory. Additionally, more than one hundred and fifty (150) reports and documents were compiled, studied, and analyzed on local *Education, Employment, Housing and Other Dimensions (Social Protection, Youth, and Migration)* from September 2020 to August 2021.

Besides, the documental analysis the study has been complemented with the use of multiple statistics identified, selected, and compiled in a database that gathers about 200 different variables related to the study FUA.

As final step, the information obtained has been internally shared and validated in various circles of reflection by the Deusto Foundation's internal team —**Orkestra, Basque Institute of Competitiveness; University of Deusto**. Some difficulties and limitations were present in conducting this research in the field due to sick leave of some of those interviewed for COVID-19 and the strenuous and time-consuming social actions in which the vast majority of policy makers involved particularly during the outbreak process of the pandemic.

Finally, in conducting the research and fieldwork, a gender sensitivity approach was taken into account that was very useful, mainly in the correct use of language, in the appropriate approach to the questions used in the in-depth interviews, and in the inclusive management of the groups studied and analyzed at risk of inequality and social exclusion.

Regarding the levels of governance, the first one, given its general competences managed, is the **Basque Government**, carrying out the exercise of its governmental functions in the three historical territories or provinces: Araba, Gipuzkoa, and **Bizkaia**.

The second one, already located within our FUA, is the **Provincial Council of Bizkaia**, bearing very high autonomy in fiscal and tax matters, infrastructure management, and in social welfare.

Finally, the last one is the municipality —e.g. the ***Municipality of Barakaldo***-, which enjoy local competences/autonomies: the administration of public land, the management of municipal taxes and payments, the creation of public-private entities to support local management, the individual or complementary implementation of policies and/or local programs to support local community, etc.

The aforementioned explains the way in which the FUA of research has been structurally organized for the social analysis of Barakaldo: a) the *Municipality of Barakaldo*, as core FUA); b) the *Municipalities of Sestao, Portugalete and Santurtzi*, as peripheral FUA); c) and the *Grand Bilbao District*, as general FUA). This functional urban structure proposed for the FUA of Barakaldo is fundamentally due to the territorial influence among each other, and not precisely to the competence and/or political level of each. For the latter, the FUA has been divided into three levels: The Basque Government (territorial powers), Provincial Government (regional powers) and Municipal Government (local powers).

On the other hand, Barakaldo is a river-port town in Bizkaia with a little more than 100,000 inhabitants today (98,497 in 2019); it is certainly a suburban area of the Grand Bilbao. As a former industrial hub, Barakaldo lost most of its industrial jobs gradually until 1980s, facing shrinkage and then stagnation of its population after reaching its peak of almost 124,000 people in the late 1970s. Nowadays, the migration trends of the past —clearly marked by migrants from other parts of Spain- significantly influence the current population structure of Barakaldo.

In this respect, despite the large stores and shopping centers recently developed, Barakaldo still maintains its capacity to concentrate the local commercial activity, recovering the level of individual income prior to the 2008 crisis —substantially lower than the average personal and family income of Bizkaia and Euskadi.

According to some local experts, some gap of inequalities still persist in the territory, particularly in two sub provincial areas of Bizkaia: Meatzaldea and Ezkerraldea, belonging Barakaldo to the latter. This territorial phenomenon is fundamentally due to the post period of industrial reconversion process that still persists, to some extent, in these regions. A reconversion that has tried to transform itself from mining and the metallurgy industry to technological and digital tercerization, but not at the desirable pace. However, these gaps of inequalities seems to have increased since 2008, reproducing in an intergenerational manner.

housing rental costs, may complement it. Most of its beneficiaries are women, but all need to prove they have lived in the territory for at least three years.

For those excluded, although in some cases it acts as a complement to the previous one, the **Minimum Living Income**, a Spanish Government measure, represents a response that mainly seeks similar objectives, more generalized, with no territorial restriction, but with a downward differential that can be around 25%, when comparing the level of income support.

The Social Emergency Aid Package

The Basque Government provides funds to the municipalities, such as Barakaldo, to deliver an emergency response to urgent and occasional social needs. They receive the funds depending on the local employment and population receiving *Income Guarantee*.

New measures launched to respond to the vulnerability situations raised by the Covid-19 crisis

The **Territorial Dialogue Forum**,—a space led by the Basque Country Government and formed by multiple local administrations and social key actors- rapidly implemented relief measures (food, economic aids or internet service) on the most vulnerable groups — housekeepers, caregivers, sex workers, etc. - to tackle exclusion. Indeed, this crisis has fostered a more agile and networked response to citizens in vulnerable situations.

2 Findings

2.1 Education

2.1.1. Economic drivers for inequality and country policies

The regional government´s autonomy and power to oversee territorial education

The Basque Statute of Autonomy (1979) grants the Basque Country the capacity for self-government as an Autonomous Community in Spain, recognizing its political and financial autonomy, as well as a vast legislative and executive framework of powers and competences in aspects such as taxation, health, citizen security, education or internal territorial organization, among many others. Education, thus, is a Basque Government´s competence, while the municipalities just partly maintain local infrastructure and janitors in primary school.

In general terms, it could be said that the Basque Country enjoys an educational system of quality; in fact, Euskadi has 72.5% of the students in Mathematical Competence in PISA 2018 at the medium levels of performance (levels 2, 3) and high level (4), more than the average of the countries of the OECD (65.1%)¹(ISEI-IVEI, 2021). Regarding its affordability, the access to free public education is guaranteed as of infant stage (two years old). The non-university education is classified as follows²: **early childhood education**, (2-6 years; non-compulsory); **basic education** —from primary school (6-12 years) to- fourth course of secondary (12-16 years)-; and **vocational training and baccalaureate** (post-compulsory education). In the latter, students experiencing any disabilities can access the **Transit Programs to Adult Life**, which furnishes the possibility of being trained up to 20 years old.

At present, the *Basque Government* is developing the new **Basque Education Law**³. Its objective is to structure a unified **Basque Educational System** based on the principles of quality, equity, efficiency, while promoting social cohesion, citizenship, and respect to identity of public and subsidized centres⁴.

The **Basque Education System** has worked towards an inclusive schooling based on everyone´s right to enjoy the opportunity of an instruction of quality:

The **Basque Public-School Law Education**⁵ defines the public school as “a plural, bilingual, and democratic one; at the service of the Basque society, socially and culturally rooted in; participatory, compensatory of inequalities, and with the suitable environment to integrate diversity”.

¹ Diagnóstico del sistema educativo vasco (2021): <https://isei-ivei.hezkuntza.net/documents/635622/0/Diagn.+Sistema+Educativo+2/5186804d-a033-d3dd-23af-f5204995fbb2>

²Family Guide [Online], 2021. [Consultation date: May 12, 2021]. Available at: https://www.euskadi.eus/contenidos/informacion/sistema_educativo_vasco/es_def/adjuntos/Guia_para_las_familias_c.pdf

³ <https://www.euskadi.eus/gobierno-vasco/-/proyecto-ley/21-ley-de-educacion/>

⁴ Euskadi.eus

⁵ Law 1/1993

The **Basque Educational Concert Scheme for Private Education**⁶ regulates the support with public funds of private centers for the provision of regulated non-university education in the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country. This Law links different plans and actions for an inclusive education, diversity and coexistence: *the development of the I Strategic Plan 2012-2016 for the attention to diversity, the I Plan to improve the schooling of Roma students (2012-2015), the I Action Plan for students with high intellectual abilities (2012)*, etc. The Basque Government plans to strongly continue working toward a more inclusive and equitable school within the period 2019-2022⁷ through its Framework **Plan for the Development of an Inclusive School**.

According to **Ehige**⁸ (the most representative parents' association), the singularities of the territorial education system, compared to the European ones, are as follows:

High representation of the dual education system (public/private).

Overfunded private network. This institutional interpretation is the product of the high fees that, in some cases, these schools charge families, despite receiving significant subsidies from the Basque Government (see The Basque Educational Concert Scheme for Private Education. Decree 293/1987, Order of May 27, 2020).

Freedom of choice of centre without any limit.

Bilingualism not guaranteed.

Foreign population in the Barakaldo education system

According to the Basque Government in 2018, almost half of the population with foreign origin, residing in the Basque Country, lived in Bizkaia (100,611 inhabitants), representing the 8.8% of its whole population, settled mainly in the area of the Great Bilbao, our FUA.⁹ In fact, the foreign-born population in Barakaldo is similar to the general representation in the whole territory of Bizkaia (Agintzari, 2021) (See table 1).

Table 1. Ethnic/immigrant population in Barakaldo and FUA

	Total 2019	East Europe	Rest of Europe	Magreb Countries	Rest of Africa	South America	Rest of America	Asia and Oceania
Barakaldo	7.244	1.066	316	1.147	632	2.723	827	533
	100%	15%	4%	16%	9%	38%	11%	7%
Grand Bilbao	60040	8.045	4.015	8.587	5.671	20.324	7.484	5.914
	100%	13%	7%	14%	9%	34%	12%	10%

Source: EUSTAT. Estadística Municipal de Habitantes (EMH)

As observed in the table 1, the most representative group of migrant population corresponds to the South American people for both Barakaldo and the Grand Bilbao (38% and 34%, respectively). This is explained by the recent migrations coming from Latin American countries

⁶ The Basque Educational Concert Scheme for Private Education. Decree 293/1987, Order of May 27, 2020.

⁷ The actions are collected in the Framework Plan for the Development of an Inclusive School 2019-2022

⁸ <https://www.ehige.eus/eu/>

⁹ Eusko Jurlarritza (2018). LA ESCOLARIZACIÓN DEL ALUMNADO DE ORIGEN EXTRANJERO EN EL SISTEMA ESCOLAR DE LA CAPV. Available at: https://www.ikuspegi.eus/documentos/formacion/La_escolarizacion_alumnado_origen_extranjero.pdf

—such as Venezuela or Nicaragua- given the use of a common language and relatively easy entrance through national frontiers.

2.1.2 Statistical analysis of inequality at the local level

During the course 2017-2018, high net rates of schooling both in *infant education* (at an early age)¹⁰ —at 2 years of age, 93.5% of the boys and girls are in school; and at 3, 4 and 5 years, that rate exceeds 99%, which is known as a full school enrollment rate- (Eusko Jaurlaritza, 2019). When it comes to the post-compulsory education levels —period from 16 to 29 years old-, the specific net school enrollment rates for youngsters between 16 and 17 years old reach the 99.7% and 97.8%, respectively (ISEI-IVEI, 2019), managing efficiently the dropouts¹¹. The high-education-level (tertiary education) rate in the territory of Euskadi (30-34 years) is 57.1%, higher than the EU general goal set for 2020, which is 40% (Eurostat, 2018).

On the subject of **Early leavers**¹² (Table 2ab) from 2007 to 2019 reveal a general improvement, but with differences in gender and origin: the Basque Country shows a 8.8% rate (2019, Basque Country), the lowest early school-leaving rate in Spain (17.3%, Spain). In the Basque Country, men show a worse performance compared to women (see Table 2a), which seems to be associated with a higher level of socialization among young males, in the opinion of one of the policy-makers interviewed. However, this is not very clear. While at the national level, where data is available, the foreign-born students show a worse performance when compared to natives (see Table 2b); this can be explained due to the elevated level of mobility among migrants, plus some socioeconomic reason that may push young migrant people to find a low qualified job as soon as possible. Unfortunately, there is no data for Barakaldo on this subject.

Table 2ab. Early school leaving rate of the population between 18 and 24 years by sex (Basque Country) and of foreign-born compared to native students (Spain)

Table 2a (Basque Country)				Table 2b (Spain)		
	Total	Men	Women		Foreign born	Natives
2008	13.9	16.6	10.9	2008	47.6	28.6
2013	8.5	8.8	8.2	2013	41.3	20.8
2019	8.8	9.6	8.0	2019	35.7	14.7

Source: EUSTAT. Encuesta de población en relación con actividad (PRA) and INE. Explotación de las variables educativas de la Encuesta de Población Activa

On the other hand, the **Education level of the population reached in lifetime** (2007-2019) shows that it has improved, but with differences by territories, levels of education, gender and origin of the population (see table 3).

¹⁰ In 2017-2018 course, at 2 years of age, 93.5% of the boys and girls are in school; and at 3, 4 and 5 years, that rate exceeds 99%. it exceeds the state average and that of most European countries

¹¹ Eusko Jaurlaritza - Gobierno Vasco. (2019, April 9). La Consejera Uriarte presenta el Diagnóstico del Sistema Educativo Vasco. Gobierno Vasco - Euskadi.eus. <https://www.euskadi.eus/gobierno-vasco/-/noticia/2019/la-consejera-uriarte-presenta-el-diagnostico-del-sistema-educativo-vasco/>.

¹² Eustat. Encuesta de población en relación con la actividad (PRA). Survey on the Population in Relation to Activity. Internal reference code: 2136

Table 3. Education level of the population of the Grand Bilbao, 2019

Illiterate	Without studies	Primary	Professionals	Secondary	Middle-upper	Higher studies
0.3	2.3	30.0	17.8	22.0	7.3	20.3

Source: EUSTAT. Municipal statistics on education

In Barakaldo, for instance, the Illiterate population and without studies¹³ has decreased almost in a half during the period of 2010-2019 (from 955 to 550 subjects and from 3,980 to 2,753 subjects, respectively). In this sense, Barakaldo shows a lower percentage of population with primary education in 2019 compared to 2010 (36% versus 41%), with no differences within local districts, but a higher percentage with respect to professionals and higher studies (20% versus 16%, and 14% versus 11%, respectively)¹⁴.

According to the municipal register of Barakaldo, women slightly overrepresent in 2020 the overall illiterate local population (66.0%), the one without some (57.4%) or with primary studies (52.9%), the middle-upper level of education (64.3%) and the higher education (56.6%). However, the rate of women with professional training is only 43.3% (Agintzari, 2021).

The former can probably be explained by the number of older women who lacked opportunities for studying in their youth and, on the other hand —with respect to the remaining data-, those women belonging to younger generations that have been increasingly incorporated into the labor market and the education system, with men being the ones who still continue suffering the most in facing the post-industrial conversion process of the territory. The latter, associated with professional training, may respond to the traditional division of productive/non-productive work, with a volume of women exclusively dedicated to housework and child rearing.

Regarding the **Report of The Situation of the Basque education System 2018-2019**¹⁵, the region shows a higher public expenditure when compared to the national level: a) the education expenditure represented in 2016 more than 5.31% of the Basque GDP, above the State and European averages (4.3% and 4.9% respectively); and b) the expenditure per student in non-university public centres is €9,054 per student, which represents the highest disbursement at national level.

2.1.3 Analysis of the main socio-economic processes and local policies influencing inequality

An overview of local inequality trends

¹³ Eustat. Municipal statistics on education: https://en.eustat.eus/bankupx/pxweb/en/english/-/PX_3651_ni03b.px/table/tableViewLayout1?rxid=08abcec1-e8d2-4142-9980-995c16d49a89

¹⁴ Eustat. Municipal statistics on education: https://en.eustat.eus/bankupx/pxweb/en/english/-/PX_3651_ni03b.px/table/tableViewLayout1?rxid=08abcec1-e8d2-4142-9980-995c16d49a89

¹⁵ Eusko Jaurlaritz - Gobierno Vasco. (2019, April 9). La Consejera Uriarte presenta el Diagnóstico del Sistema Educativo Vasco. Gobierno Vasco - Euskadi.eus. <https://www.euskadi.eus/gobierno-vasco/-/noticia/2019/la-consejera-uriarte-presenta-el-diagnostico-del-sistema-educativo-vasco/>.

In the Basque Country, the early-leavers indicator positively decreased, translating into a lower number of early leavers mainly in the period after the 2008 crisis. This ratio rose slightly afterwards up to 2019. Nonetheless, while at the national level it seems to be confirmed the fact that “this education indicators do not seem to be sensitive to the economic cycle”¹⁶, the fact remains unclear for the Basque Country.

According to local interviewed experts holding posts in the employment services, the investment in education in the Basque Country for youngsters do not seem to have a real translation into local labour market. In this sense, in Euskadi, a more educated individual is not directly supposed to report higher prospects of income to develop his/her individual life. This certainly generalized perception among the interviewees may find its explanation in the striking number of highly qualified young people who, despite their extremely high qualifications, do not manage to achieve sufficient monthly income to be completely independent from the family nucleus, even deciding in some cases to emigrate towards countries like Germany or England.

On the other hand, there are still numerous circumstances that hinder the creation and maintenance of a sustainable and inclusive educative system in the region (Alzola & Vigo, 2019). Concretely, Alzola and Vigo (2019) argue that education system overlooks the vulnerability situations of some students, other than those associated with disabilities. These vulnerabilities are in a greater extent of social nature: lack of support or adequate care in family households, situations of gender violence, etc. Those young people, who are being affected by these circumstances, generally do not go in search of personal support neither in the educational system, nor in the people who exercise their guardianship, nor in those responsible for the related social actions that are implemented in the territory.

Alzola et al (2019) argue that in those schools wherein most of their students have a low socioeconomic and cultural index (a segregation ratio), segregation exerts a direct effect and negative influence on the academic performance of all their pupils. As stated by one local expert on education policy, despite education inequality has been reduced over time, it persists among migrants in Barakaldo because of certain difficulties: acquiring knowledge in Euskera, changes of residency —favoring drop-offs and early leaves-; and the digital illiteracy and/or lack of technological resources.

On the other hand, the schooling field is very connected with social issues, such as social cohesion and coexistence —a shared place that gathers youngsters from multiples origins and cultures-, where the municipalities have competences and room of manoeuvre. Local experts affirm that, despite the existence of several local programs that support the inclusion of migrants in Basque education system, it is not enough to integrate them in society.

Municipalities such as Barakaldo are positively moved to complement the support that the Basque Government provides for it, deploying for that part of its own resources. This happens

¹⁶ Deliverable 1.3 Atlas of Inequality in Europe. The Uplift Project

in some inclusion programs for migrants that pursue embracing Euskera culture (*Programs of attention to diversity/Programs to promote interculturality*¹⁷). In this sense, municipalities do not count on with enough resources to respond to local specific needs in education, so coordination with the Basque Government needs to be strengthened in this respect.

The COVID-19 crisis and education inequalities

During Covid-19 pandemic, education inequality has emerged intensively among some families, mainly migrants, because of the lack of digital devices, infrastructure, access to internet, and digital skills. This has affected the most vulnerable families and youngsters since the aids that arrived from the regional support programs required the submission of unmanageable forms from the schools. Overwhelmed by the overload of work —and the adaptation to COVID-19 restrictions, health requirements, limitations of groups, etc.—, the centers have failed to submit the demanded proposals, letting many potential beneficiaries down. This relevant description of what happened during the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic was reported coincidentally among several of the education specialists who were interviewed and approached independently.

Finally, as principal and specific policy at the local level, or programmes or interventions that specifically cater at the student population, especially those that are in a more vulnerable situation, it can be mentioned the program called the *Programs of attention to diversity and the promotion of interculturality in schools*¹⁸, framed in its latest version for the period 20021-2022 and whose main objective is the development of programs to promote interculturality aimed at immigrant students and linguistic reinforcement of newly incorporated students. The actors involved are mainly public schools and migrant children and youth. The funding is delivered by the Basque Government to the schools so that they in turn carry out the programs. The Basque Government itself conducts a process of monitoring and evaluating these biannual programs that has remained unchanged in its last calls, producing a high impact on the integration and knowledge of the Basque culture of these young migrants, according to the opinion of one of the interviewees specialized in education.

2.2 Employment

2.2.1 Economic drivers for inequality and country policies

The groups mostly affected by unemployment

Local unemployment figures show that the groups mostly affected are **women** —with inactivity rates higher compared to men—, **migrant groups** —for reasons such as little training, lack of regularized administrative records, few homologations of studies carried out, etc.—, **young people beginning their working life** and/or with low qualifications, **people over 45 years old** —for reasons such as low qualifications, promotion of early retirement, local

¹⁷ Programs of attention to diversity / Programs to promote interculturality; <https://www.euskadi.eus/programas-de-atencion-a-la-diversidad-programas-de-promocion-de-la-interculturalidad/web01-a3hinklu/es/>

¹⁸ See at: <https://www.euskadi.eus/programas-de-atencion-a-la-diversidad-programas-de-promocion-de-la-interculturalidad/web01-a3hinklu/es/>

deindustrialization, digitization, etc. -, and **long-term unemployed people over 50 years of age**. They experience more difficulties in the labor market, affecting their employability, while running risk of dynamics of social exclusion with dependencies on public aids, transcending the following generations and becoming chronic.

This situation is not new in the territory; it already existed before Covid-19, but the 2008 crisis raised it to structural dimensions. Over the years, the territory has been recovering from unremitting unemployment; however, at the same time, certain groups within local population were unfortunately emerging, stagnating in an unemployment situation that has continued to this day under the form of a structural chronification: a social exclusion from work that tends to be inherited by the next generations in their families.

The policies managed by the Basque Government have been oriented towards the objective of reducing this chronification for more than a decade, noting the effects of the implemented actions on reducing social cost of unemployment. With the Covid-19 crisis, as a conjunctural event, critical unemployment has been generated in a massive way, affecting particularly the foregoing groups.

In recent years, young people have suffered deterioration of employment quality. They have been influenced by city transformation towards a more service-oriented society based on the commerce of big surfaces, which demands low skills and pays reduced salaries, meaning social exclusion and job availability. Local interviewed policy makers corroborate this situation.

Youth is composed of a small subgroup of highly qualified people; by those who would be out of the NEET's consideration, but with basic qualification; and a subgroup so-called NEETs. According to the opinion of the interviewees in this social realm, in Barakaldo there is a drain on local "talent" to other municipalities and parts of Europe, making urgent linking local companies to potential native talent. Unfortunately, there is not data available that defines this structure among local or national youth.

On the other hand, working conditions have worsened since 2007. There is a prevalence of temporary employment, wages have fallen significantly (18-25%), conditions of job stability and quality of employment are lower, there is a higher number of contracts with reduced hours, and there is a notoriously reduced presence of unions, which have lost strength in collective bargaining processes. This limits the life projects of the Barakaldeses, particularly young people, migrating at the slightest opportunity. According to **Lanbide** —the Public Basque Employment Service- 90% of new contracts are temporary, part-time and in the service sector.

The 2008 crisis marked a milestone concerning employment quality, which has not improved since then. There is a quantitative variability, translating into more posts, but not an improvement in job stability or number of stable/permanent contracts. There is a dualization of the labor market: people with higher qualification and satisfactory working conditions versus people with low and medium-low qualifications at risk of labor exclusion.

In another vein, the ease of mobility between municipalities in the Grand Bilbao has favored the employability of its residents. There are no isolated urban cores and the transport network is truly efficient and affordable. This has been an advantage, given Barakaldo's geographical position, just 9.5 kilometers from the city of Bilbao, while being highly connected by bus, train, subway, highways, etc. As a result, a large part of the economically active population of Barakaldo works outside the municipality, mainly in the Grand Bilbao area, in the industrialized areas of Bizkaia.

Barakaldo has invested a great deal in terms of urban planning and aesthetics, access to ports, services, and communication and transport, collaterally causing an increase in housing prices in purchase and rent.

Some neighboring municipalities have benefited from the local migration of industries due to their recent municipal establishment of favorable land classification regulation, attracting these companies to their territorial circumscriptions. Barakaldo is trying to reverse it by attracting new companies and facilitating means.

Inequality and digital skills among young people

Since 2008, young people have taken a huge leap assimilating digitization as an essential part of their lives, while improving their capacities to work in emerging markets owing to a greater training. This has not been reflected in the working conditions of youngsters.

The Covid crisis has highlighted the need for basic digital competence, even with a noteworthy digital proficiency in some groups. The existing gap between young people with and without digital skills —youngsters with reduced abilities in handling computer packages or basic in internet browsing and searching, among others- needs to decrease to favor the social and economic reconstruction of Barakaldo.

On the other hand, urban configurations are closely linked to economic conditions and these in turn to the employment situations of their people. In this sense, given its unfavorable employment ratios, Barakaldo is currently part of the **Shock Plan** led by the Basque Government to counteract the socioeconomic imbalances of the *Left Bank of the Great Bilbao* and improve the *regional unemployment rate*, the *training index*, and the *index of RGI* (Income Guarantees), among others.,

In Barakaldo, inequality, even in the digital sphere, is significantly marked by the current socioeconomic situation of the family units rather than by the lack of skills; that is, people probably hold the skills, but are unable to train or develop them because of socioeconomic situation.

Indeed, there has been a significant commitment to promoting entrepreneurship by the **Provincial Council** (DFB) and its public company **DEMA** (*Regional Employment and Entrepreneurship Agency*), which has borne fruit. However, Bizkaia has the challenge for the coming years to implement a strong strategy of more continuous and permanent intelligent

reindustrialization. The pandemic has highlighted the dangers of the tertiarizing economy, marking differences in the impact of inequality between territories.

Barakaldo, since the 80s, has been committed to a service-based sector strategy; however, this economic sector has not really brought wealth to the municipality. In this context, **local governments** - together with the **Basque Government** and **Innobasque** (the *Basque Innovation Agency*) - have decided, especially in the last five years, to redirect efforts towards more strategic sectorial options such as the advanced, digital (industry 4.0), innovative, and intelligent industry.

In another vein, regarding the permeability of territorial strategies, three basic mechanisms of promotion emerge from the general active employment policy of the *Basque Government*: the **Public Employment Service** (*Lanbide*) —with implantation in the whole territory-, the territorial **dialogue with public institutions** —provincial councils and local governments-, and the **connection with local public-private gatekeepers** working with beneficiaries. These routes yield direct actions from multilevel governments and in collaboration with other inter-institutional levels and social agents.

Likewise, provincial councils and municipalities can intervene by executing planned actions from the Basque Government (from top to bottom) and, in other cases, they act “bottom up” with their tailor-made employment plans.

However, in general, there are global planning proposals promoted by the Basque Government and stated in the **Basque Employment Strategy** and/or the **Strategic Employment Plan**, with presence in the different local and regional plans.

Therefore, there is formally the desire for collaboration between the different levels of governance in the territory, but this is not perfect at times because the procedures are very slow or because the legislatures are short to implement the policies.

2.2.2 Statistical analysis of inequality at the local level

According to the data obtained for the study FUA corresponding to the periods between 2007 and 2020, the figures related to the labor market provide the following picture.

Employment and its fluctuations by groups and economic sectors

In Barakaldo, the total percentage of people employed out of the total number of potentially employable ones for 2007 was 48.80% —58.55% men and 39.73% women- (see Table 4). Likewise, for the years 2012 and 2019, employment continued to prevail more in men than in women, but progressively to a lesser extent; this may be due to the continuous and greater incorporation of women into the labor market year after year.

Table 4. Percentage of people employed in Barakaldo by gender and youth (aged 16-24)

		Total	Men	Women	16 to 24 years
Barakaldo	2007	48.80	58.55	39.73	36.58
	2012	46.01	51.62	40.82	23.97
	2019	48.41	53.36	43.93	23.77

Source: EUSTAT. Estadística municipal de población activa

Comparing the data of Barakaldo with the peripheral FUA's ones (the municipalities of Sestao, Portugalete and Santurtzi), the numbers were noticeably unfavorable for the latter: for instance, in 2006, the periphery registered a comparatively 1.72% less between employed subjects of the total potentially employable, with similar proportions for both sexes and young people between 16-24 years of age (see Table 5).

Table 5. Percentage of people employed within the FUA's periphery by gender and youth (aged 16-24)

		Total	Men	Women	16 to 24 years
FUA Periphery: The municipalities of Sestao, Portugalete and Santurtzi	2007	47.08	57.47	37.45	35.47
	2012	42.92	48.63	37.67	22.79
	2019	44.74	49.70	40.24	21.91

Source: EUSTAT. Estadística municipal de población activa

In 2011, this negative difference widened between FUAs, with a similar percentage reduction for both sexes, but with just a decrease among young people aged 16-24 years (see Table 4 and 5). Finally, 2018 comparatively registered a percentage decrease that was reflected in the same way for both sexes, but which was certainly small comparatively among young people aged 16-24 years (see Table 4 and 5). Perhaps the best employment indicators of Barakaldo in relation to its periphery are due to reasons such as the high concentration of large commercial areas in the municipality, a greater number of people with high and specialized qualifications, a greater number of people residing in the municipality but they work in Bilbao (main urban hub/pole of employment in the FUA), etc.

Regarding the origin of the people, the historical territory of Bizkaia recorded in 2015 a higher employment rates for native individuals in comparison with those registered for foreign-born people (see Table 6). Conversely, the figures for the years 2017 and 2019 changed positively for the foreign-born subjects (see Table 6). The reasons that could help explain this change can most likely be found in the fact of a higher qualified migration with technical and professional knowledge more adjusted to the demands of the territory, predominantly from Latin America with a common language that facilitates labor insertion, and with an urgent need to work in whatever way to meet the basic needs of their migrant and native families.

Table 6. Percentage of people employed in Bizkaia by origin

		Foreign born	Natives
Bizkaia	2015	42.9	47.8
	2017	54.1	48.5
	2019	55.0	49.5

Source: Lanbide

In relation to employment by key economic sectors in the territory, out of the total number of people employed in 2010, 2015, and 2019 in Barakaldo and its periphery, a greater male presence in employment persists for both territories, which is more noticeable in the industrial and construction sectors (see Table 7). On the other hand, the presence of women in the service sector is noticeably observable also for both territories (see Table 7). This fact can be explained due to a traditional presence of men in local industry and construction, but not that of women; on the contrary, the presence of men is usually less in services, at least in these territories.

Table 7. Percentage of people employed in Barakaldo and periphery by economic sectors

Barakaldo		Grand total		Industry			Construction			Services		
		Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
		2010	54.79	45.21	15.74	13.31	2.43	11.68	10.84	0.84	72.34	30.49
	2015	51.81	48.19	13.99	12.10	1.89	7.46	6.79	0.66	77.81	32.69	45.12
	2019	52.03	47.97	13.10	11.30	1.81	7.63	6.97	0.66	79.03	33.57	45.45
FUA Periphery: The municipalities Portugalete and Santurtzi	2010	55.30	44.70	15.88	13.40	2.49	12.07	11.14	0.94	71.73	30.53	41.19
	2015	52.54	47.46	14.57	12.58	1.99	7.59	6.96	0.63	77.28	32.77	44.51
	2019	52.60	47.40	13.87	12.03	1.83	7.66	7.00	0.66	78.19	33.33	44.86

Source: Udalmap. Departamento de Economía y Hacienda de Gobierno Vasco.

Presently, the main industries/economic activities are the commerce and service of large surfaces and a progressive growth of new technology and digital transformation companies¹⁹.

In 2015 and 2019, the behavior of employment in Barakaldo was very similar in the case of the industrial sector, with variations that did not exceed 0.8%. The percentage of variation was even lower for the service sector; however, the construction sector did register a significant drop, which by 2015 was 4.25% compared to 2010, a trend that was maintained in 2019. The peripheral FUA was similarly affected during the same laps of times. The construction sector has not recovered today the pace that it brought in 2010.

Temporary employment: a sign of precariousness in the labor market

Finally, and for the entire territory of Bizkaia, the percentage of temporary employment registered with respect to the salaried population between 16 and 29 years old was 43.9% in 2008, 52.7% in 2013, and 62.7% in 2019; while the percentage of part-time work in the same age range was 7.8%, 21.2%, and 31.3% for the years 2008, 2013 and 2019, respectively.

¹⁹ See *BIC Ezkerraldea* at: <https://bicezkerraldea.eus/>

A quick look at the unemployment in the study FUA

With respect to longitudinal unemployment data for the Grand Bilbao, Barakaldo and its periphery in 2008, 2013, and 2019, it can be observed how similar the data for the Grand Bilbao and the Barakaldo are, in comparison with the sensible differences with the ones for the periphery (see Table 8). Likewise, it is interesting to observe how the unemployment rates were more significant for women with the exception of 2013, which coincides with the pre-recovery years of the 2007/2008 crisis. However, unemployment among young people aged 15-30 was generally more pronounced for the entire series studied, perhaps due to the strong economic influence exerted by the service sector in the territory with a large presence and demand of the female labor market (see Table 8).

Table 8. Percentage of people unemployed in Grand Bilbao, Barakaldo and periphery (by gender and youngsters age 15-30).

		Total	Young age group (15-30)			
			Men	Women	Men	Women
Grand Bilbao	2008	10.6	45.3	54.7	28.52	19.97
	2013	21.2	51.9	48.1	21.55	19.05
	2019	13.7	44.2	55.8	16.85	16.53
Barakaldo	2008	9.6	48.0	52.0	27.82	19.77
	2013	20.4	51.6	48.4	20.25	18.65
	2019	12.9	43.6	56.4	16.30	15.79
FUA Periphery: The municipalities of Sestao, Portugalete and Santurtzi	2008	12.0	44.0	56.0	27.87	19.31
	2013	22.3	52.0	48.0	22.31	19.19
	2019	14.8	44.5	55.5	17.44	16.93

Source: Udalmap. Departamento de Economía y Hacienda de Gobierno Vasco.

Finally, in Bizkaia, in 2015, the percentage of unemployed was 44.3% and 14.7% for foreigners and natives, respectively, being in 2017 27.6% and 11.7%; and 23.3% and 9.9% in 2019, respectively.

2.2.3 Analysis of main socio-economic processes and local policies influencing inequality

Finally, regarding policies influencing inequality, the Provincial Council of Bizkaia (DFB) works promoting employment and territorial entrepreneurship, facilitating labour insertion and propelling active employment policies based on complementarity with the Basque Government. This allows the DFB to target certain groups: the **Lan Berri** program —promotion of employability for people with *insertion difficulties*: people over 45, in social exclusion, in long-term unemployed, etc.-, and the **Youth Employability Program** —promotion of employability among different groups of young people). The DFB's political trend is to focus on job reintegration, providing workers to local companies, and establishing accompaniment processes to employment, designing scenarios for the measures in terms of training, guidance and intermediation.

At the **municipal level**, active employment policy initiatives (e.g. hiring, training, orientating, and prospecting) are implemented through calls for grants conceded by the Basque Government; first, submitting those applications contextually adapted to the needs, demands, and interests of the local population; and secondly, including a part of co-financing provided by the local government to carry them on. With the Provincial Council of Bizkaia, the complementary management of funds is similar: local entities usually communicate each other in advance to address the points the call will include, providing contributions and suggestions to the policy promoter.

Transferences of active employment policies from the State to the Basque Country

In 2009, there were transferences of active employment policies to the Basque Country from the Spanish State. Months later, the Basque Government transferred the management of the income guarantee to a recently created **Lanbide**, this being a very innovative measure within the context of a regional territory, since this monthly income guarantee, launched in 2008 for the first time in the whole State, had been managed from the Basque Government owing to the so far absence of a specialized public institute for its distribution and regulation.

Political balance of territorial governance levels

The three levels of governance in the territory (the Basque, the Provincial of Bizkaia, and the local Governments), act in a complementary way in the territory. The Basque Government proposes a strategic, legislative, and regulatory framework for the entire Basque Country in political and strategic matters. The local administrations, although it is true they do not have the necessary resources to meet the demands of the community, they do manage to implement various programs promoted by other administrative bodies, programs that demonstrate the limitations in terms of capacity for autonomy, capacity for organization, and capacity for intervention.

The Provincial Council of Bizkaia manages its own active policies mainly through its own funds and public-private collaboration with various entities.

The coordination of governance levels have evolved, but still have room for improvement; such is the case of the need to improve the prioritization of local interventions to avoid overlaps, repeated or oriented interventions to the same group. A possible *Basque Employment Law* may lead to ordering the intervention of the different institutional agents, giving the corresponding importance to each of them.

The Covid-19 pandemic

The current Covid-19 crisis has significantly slowed down the local economy of Barakaldo, affecting youth largely. Likewise, private companies are looking towards the future cautiously, which is affecting the short-term hiring for youth.

Additionally, the concern for certain economic sectors, such as commerce and hospitality, is even greater in Barakaldo, mainly due to the effects of previous crises on them and consumption changes.

Many of these family businesses won't stand the economic damage and, eventually, they will go bankrupt, ending up in more unemployment. This situation will accentuate when the ERTes (**Records of Temporary Employment Regulation**) Covid-19 concession conclude. Despite the fact that this crisis has a very significant impact on young people, the recovery in employment among them has occurred much faster in the labor market than that among older people.

At first, due to the precariousness and temporary nature of the contracts, young people had left the hiring system much faster, but when the labor market and the economy started to recover a little, the previously expelled young people are gradually returning. Thus, people over 45 years old, who were initially the least affected, now their ability to re-enter the labor market is diminished. This may happen because young people have greater digital skills and abilities, etc.

The capacity of reaction from governance levels to crisis—in terms of social protection- has been surprising, being much more effective, suitable, and concrete than during the global financial crisis of the previous decade. In this sense, the Covid-19 emergency and the 2008 crisis have been very different: the Covid-19 crisis has come unexpectedly—not being a structural outcome of the economic situation-, at a time of growth for the Basque Country, accelerating some social processes in Barakaldo such as the fragility of the tertiarization of economy, the large-scale commerce, the digitization, etc., magnifying the problems Barakaldo already had regarding employment.

Policy areas to improve and innovation in policy frameworks

Among the priorities identified in the territory is the need to better assist people over 45 who are excluded from labor market, this being a population with much still to contribute to society and the fabric business. Another observable priority is young people in matters related to some specialized training, but above all, where society has to influence is in the working conditions offered to them in general.

In both cases, efforts should be oriented to continue working on digitization, but in a cross sectional way, which means employing an all-embracing perspective that helps reduce the digital gaps between local young collectives, accelerate the generation of their digital capacities, and provide them with tech-oriented job opportunities, while promoting those actions linked to business creation and local entrepreneurship.

In terms of policy innovation on labor inequality, perhaps the most innovative measure is the implementation of the *Youth Plan*, with lines that come from the *Youth Guarantee System* and the *European Youth Employment Strategy 2014-2020*. It defines territorial strategies to address emancipation and autonomy, working conditions and quality employment, entrepreneurship, labor inclusion, etc.

But innovation may emerge from implementing practices employed in other time period; that is to say, complementing hiring policies with professional experiences, adjusting the way you implement the measure, varying personal attitude of the spearheads leading the actions, etc.

It may surface from regional governments, allowing local actions to carry out, whereas granting greater flexibility in their implementation. Beyond the current regulations of the public administration, innovation may yield from distinguishing in more detail the assistance provided according to the needs of each municipality: modifying predetermined allocation percentages, determining a greater or lesser number of months for the training of people according to their profiles, or even being able to also adjust the number of possible months of hiring.

2.3 Housing

2.3.1 Economic drivers for inequality and country policies

Housing competencies are mainly the responsibility of the Basque Government, leaving open the possibility for municipalities to develop their own housing and social income promotions.

Municipalities can plan the land for their own use and/or assign it to the Basque Government for social housing promotions, establishing in advance the target beneficiary group. However, for this, it has been necessary to enact the *General Urban Management Plan* that provides the necessary powers to the Municipalities to regulate the transformation of industrial land into land for tertiary and residential use.

Only those municipalities with powerful tax revenues can afford to implement an active housing policy in their territories: *construction of municipal housing, development of rental housing, construction of endowment accommodation, etc.* This is the case of Barakaldo.

Unemployment levels, together with a low urban and building quality, has shaped Barakaldo urban context for decades. In the 1990s, a favorable economic cycle led to a significant improvement in living conditions and housing: from 1998-2008, more than 12,000 homes were built in Barakaldo. It produced an urban lightning: some proceeded to buy, while their siblings (people belonging to the same families) had access to apartments under favorable conditions of official protection —almost 40% of the new housing that was produced in that decade in Barakaldo had a protected price.

Between the years 2006-2008, Barakaldo built up to 1,000 new homes per year, which absorbed a large part of the highly paid youth construction employment.

With the crisis of 2008, construction stopped suddenly. The economic cycle entered into recession, increasing unemployment especially among young people, whereas reaching tremendously high rates between 2010 and 2016. This, together with the lack of credit to access a home, stopped the construction of protected housing and generated late rates of emancipation (Observatorio Vasco de la Juventud, 2020).

After 2008, this housing development model ended, the development of homes stopped, and there was a profound loss of employment. From 2012 to date, these trends still continue, with people who cannot find a stable job and/or contracts beyond 3 months in duration. Finally, in recent years, the housing rehabilitation market has re-emerged, absorbing part of the previous unemployment without formal qualification, but with experience in construction.

Regarding the arrears and eviction practices in Euskadi before and during the Covid-19, the procedures were fundamentally regulated by the Urban Renting Law (LAU) and by the banking regulations on foreclosures. Once implemented, both regulations produced in the Basque Country for the year 2019 1,049 cases of eviction, significantly reducing this data for the year 2020 to 669 cases²⁰. This decrease was mainly due to the post-Covid measures taken by the Governing Council of the Basque Country that approved a *Compensation Order for Landlords and Owners Affected by the Suspension of Eviction Procedures for Vulnerable Households*²¹. These grants are intended for those who had started the process to recover their rented or sold home (banks) and who saw how it was suspended by the measures of Royal Decree-Law 11/2020, of March 31, 2020²² promulgated by the Spanish State, and that, among others issues, orders the protection of people in vulnerable situations in the face of eviction during the pandemic.

People must be over 18 years of age or legally emancipated —from the age of 14- to access a housing, as well as a stable income that allows them to pay the corresponding disbursements. However, the housing inequalities emerge with the difficulties of employability and in some cases with the modalities of access to the first dwelling. The latter have been different depending on the socioeconomic period of Barakaldo: until 2008, it was relatively easy to access a first home; since 2008, with the economic crisis, everything changed, and difficulties began until today, which is when access is delaying the most.

In Barakaldo, as of that year, the access modality became mainly buying in 80%, and renting in the remaining 20%, especially among young people because they did not have savings equivalent to 20% of the price of housing, thus increasing the demand for rent and lowering the demand for purchase. In the last 4 years, this trend has continued, but due to a certain opening of credit, some young people with stable employment have been able to access the purchase of housing, mainly second-hand and of some age -homes over 60 years old-, and/or to protected housing.

In Euskadi, there is no discrimination in access to housing for reasons of sex, origin or sexual orientation. Under equal economic conditions and access to credit, all people are in theory equal. In access to protected housing, it does positively discriminate in favor of vulnerable groups such as women who are victims of gender violence, having these more points in the evaluations of access to social rental housing or housing awards.

The housing council of the Basque Country's Government, which diagnoses the difficulties of the different groups to access housing, has introduced in recent years various criteria of positive discrimination of access to housing for young people under 35 years of age. The Basque Government reserves a quota for them, increasing their chances of accessing their own

²⁰ Consejo General del Poder Judicial (CGPJ). See: <https://www.epdata.es/datos/desahucios-estadisticas-datos-graficos-cgjp/228/pais-vasco/308>

²¹ Gobierno Vasco. See: <https://www.euskadi.eus/servicios/1202701/web01-tramite/es/>

²² Gobierno de España. See: <https://www.boe.es/buscar/act.php?id=BOE-A-2020-4208>

place to live, while prioritizing those who have been on the list for more than 4 years regardless of their age. Likewise, there is social discrimination that is transferred to certain groups such as migrant families with difficulties in renting a home —e.g. reluctance of the owner to rent it.

Another group is that of the elderly who live in degraded neighborhoods/areas with difficult accessibility, living in homes with very little energy efficiency and public accessibility —e.g. residents with lower incomes, homes without a lift, reduced urban mobility, etc.). For some local experts in the social field, these people should be considered as subjects discriminated by society because their housing conditions determine the level of social relations and the mobility they can physically procure, which implied the number of visits to their family doctors, the supermarkets, the pharmacies, etc..

The need to launch additional financial aid aimed at these communities is one of the priorities of the territory: for rehabilitation works, to improve accessibility, to make them more efficient in energy terms, to turn them into more inclusive, etc.

Traditionally, the power groups in the housing market have been the users and promoters, but this has been changing in recent years, with new players entering the arena, such as investment funds. The legislation of the Basque Country already provides for this circumstance by making modifications and normative changes to the regulatory framework that affect the purchase of land and the promotion of rental housing, hampering the housing investment funds. For years, housing has been a speculative market for small investors and companies; now, this speculative nature is focused on the rental market because the purchase is no longer a priority for various socio-economic reasons previously explained.

Regarding the housing stock in Barakaldo, it is worth to say that since 2012-13 the situation has been recovering little by little, presenting a somewhat encouraging outlook for the future. In addition, the quality of new housing has improved significantly; however, the difference between free homes, whether new or protected, lies in the finish of their facades and interiors, as well as in certain construction materials used in their interiors and bathrooms.

On the other hand, deprivation in housing by certain social groups does exist and it is directly related to the type of housing; for instance, young people with employment tend to access new homes, moving and concentrating in these modern areas.

Nonetheless, heterogeneity occurs in some parts of the city, but not in others. In this respect, the worse the conditions and degradation of the physical neighborhood and the urbanized environment, and the larger the social network in that area, the higher the levels of social segregation. In these types of urban areas, people who are acquiring certain economic possibilities leave, while those who stay do it because they have no other choice. This is not new. In fact, in certain moments of crisis, it worsens, whereas within expansive cycles in which there is more job offers, people move more.

For this reason, the municipalities in the territory have the challenge of trying to generate more friendly urban environments, where people can feel at ease and not socially forced to abandon

their residences, strengthening the social community, whilst making it more bearable, constructive, inclusive and sustainable (SDG 11; Agenda 2030).

Finally, in relation to local urban interventions, these have traditionally been subject to the prevailing notion that, in favorable economic cycles, cities had to expand, but this conception has changed. Now, the purpose is to requalify the cities inside to avoid consuming land and future mobility problems, thus remaking the city from the inside and regenerating the urban fabric.

2.3.2 Statistical analysis of inequality at the local level

In the municipality of Barakaldo, in 2011, 85.5% (85.7% in the Periphery) of the households owned their own place of residence, only 8.8% (8.9% in the Periphery) lived under conventional rent, while 5.8% (5.5% in the Periphery) did so under subsidized or social rent. In 2016, these numbers became 87.1%, 10.9%, and 2.0% (87.6%, 10.4%, and 2.0% in the Periphery), respectively.

In the Grand Bilbao, in 2011, 85.6% of the households owned their homes; this figure grew slightly to 85.9% in 2016. On the other hand, 8.6% lived under conventional rent, reaching 12% in 2016, being 5.8% and 2.1% for socially protected rent in the years 2011 and 2016, respectively.

On the other hand, in 2013, 45.2% of young people between 15 and 29 years of age, actively searching for housing in the Basque Country, stated that they had truncated expectations of emancipation —45.1% men and 45.2% women, respectively-, while in Bizkaia, it reached 49.8%. In 2016, this percentage increased to 46.0% for the Basque Country —50.2% and 41.7% in men and women, respectively-, being 49.4% in Bizkaia for the same year. Finally, in 2019, the percentage fell to 40.3% (42.9% and 37.6%, respectively) while in Bizkaia the percentage fell to 44.6%.

The coexistence units receiving *Social Emergency Aid* (household recipients of Social assistance) in the municipality of Barakaldo represented 8.0% in 2008, 11.9% in 2013, and 27.7% in 2019. For its part, in the Peripheral FUA, the behavior of these figures were more constant: 14.9% in 2008, 13.1% in 2013, and 17.4% in 2019²³. Unfortunately, these figures will potentially soar in the territory due to the severe imprint of Covid-19 pandemic on most people at risk or in social exclusion.

Regarding the prices per square meter of private housing in Bizkaia, in 2008 this was 3,045.6 euros/m², 2,507.0 euros/m² in 2013, and 2,358.9 euros/m² in 2019. For social protected housing, prices in the same territory were 1,224.5 euros/m², 1,108.7 euros/m², and 1,154.4 euros/m² for

²³ UDALMAP; Departamento de Economía y Hacienda de Gobierno Vasco. Indicadores Municipales; Unidades convivenciales receptoras de Ayudas de Emergencia Social (%o habitantes). See: <https://www.euskadi.eus/indicadores-municipales/web01-a2ogaeko/es/>

the years 2008, 2013 and 2019, respectively. Urban land, meanwhile, reached a price of 328.1 euros/m² in 2008, being 257.5 euros/m² and 244.8 euros/m² in 2013 and 2019, respectively.

Finally, the average conventional rental price in the municipality of Barakaldo was 607.5 euros in 2016, reaching 637.8 and 675.9 euros in 2018 and 2019, respectively. In the Peripheral FUA, the average price reached 579.8 euros in 2016, 604.8 euros in 2018 and 632.0 euros in 2019; while comparatively in the Grand Bilbao, the average rental price in 2016 was 674.9 euros, and 702.8 and 704.3 euros in 2018 and 2019, respectively.

2.3.3 Analysis of main socio-economic processes and local policies influencing inequality

The *Basque Housing Law* (2015)²⁴ is a benchmark worldwide for its recognition of its social function and support in the emancipation of life cycle of Basque citizens. From its guiding principles, the Basque housing strategy and its consequent ***Housing Plan of the Basque Government (2018-2020)***²⁵ emanate, which, although insufficient and improvable—given the current situation of the housing market in Euskadi- is totally pioneering in the Spanish State.

The Basque Housing Law stands out for recognizing the subjective right to housing, a right that can be demanded from the public administration, which must respond once the conditions are met. If this right cannot be satisfied at certain moment, the territorial public administration must provide support to the recipient to pay the rent of a dwelling.

It is a subjective right since it is identified with the powers of action that a person has, such as the power recognized to a person by the legal system with a unitary and independent meaning, leaving the possibility of its exercise and defense at its discretion.

Another very important milestone is that social protection housing, whether in property or rented, never loses its protected nature; in other words, they are considered officially protected homes for life, which leaves out the prevailing speculation in local housing market. For social housing, the prices are established by the administration, directing its orientation towards people who have a certain limited level of income, having the possibility of a single property. Now the protected condition is in perpetuity, even if they are not owned by the Basque Government.

Within this law framework on housing, a new decree on the ***Ability of Housing Design Conditions***²⁶ is now being worked on, which seeks to improve the habitability requirements of

²⁴ Comunidad Autónoma del País Vasco; BOPV núm. 119, de 26 de junio de 2015. Ley 3/2015, de 18 de junio, de vivienda. See: <https://www.boe.es/buscar/pdf/2015/BOE-A-2015-7802-consolidado.pdf>

²⁵ Departamento de Planificación Territorial, Vivienda y Transportes (Gobierno Vasco). Plan Director de Vivienda 2018-2020 See: https://www.euskadi.eus/web01-a2etxebi/es/contenidos/informacion/2018_20_0/es_def/index.shtml

²⁶ Departamento de Planificación Territorial, Vivienda y Transportes (Gobierno Vasco). Proyecto de Decreto que regula las condiciones mínimas de habitabilidad y las normas de diseño de las viviendas y alojamientos dotacionales en la Comunidad Autónoma del País Vasco See:

new homes, introducing factors that were already envisioned before the pandemic of the Covid-19—that the characteristics of the house allow to reside in a comfortable way, favoring work and the use of "multipurpose spaces", while making greater use of outdoor spaces such as balconies and terraces.

Finally, in terms of housing policy, the paradigm shift that is happening today in the Basque Country happens to be major, where rental is being strategically prioritized over housing for purchase; while the new protection housing that is made for purchase will come from the private initiatives.

Another innovative addition to the housing arena in the Basque Country is the industrialized housing, which is recently being introduced by various companies in the territory, mainly due to cost savings and turnkey delivery times.

Declination of the local access to housing. Inequality in the typology of the access

The socio-economic changes in the territory have also caused variations in prices, bringing with it inequalities in the type of housing access. For instance, those who cannot buy have to rent and those who rent decide to whom to offer their property, preferring natives to migrants in many of the cases, under the misconception that the former give a greater sense of stability and security. This is indeed considered social discrimination.

In this sense, the Basque Government detected years ago a declination in housing access — modality of access and adjudication- and in housing construction regulations, promulgating the **Decree 4/2016 on the Basque Country Land Management Guidelines to residential quantification**²⁷—based on Law 2/2006 on **Land and Urban Planning**²⁸-, and prioritizing the type of housing to be built. Under the umbrella of this law, the Basque Government assured the purchase of land for social rental housing and began the process of penalizing vacant dwellings (e.g. increasing the IBI -direct tax on properties-).

At the municipal level, in parallel, there were established more ambitious policies for rehabilitation and promotion of rent. In this sense, The Barakaldo city council provides specific aid through the **Barakaldo´s Urban Development Society called Eretza**²⁹. The society, which depends on the city council, is dedicated to the promotion of new housing of public protection and rehabilitation. Eretza 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

https://www.euskadi.eus/gobierno-vasco/contenidos/proyecto/20191217_proyect_vivienda/es_def/index.shtml

²⁷ BOPV Decree 4/2016, Nº 25, order: 548 on the Basque Country Land Management Guidelines to residential quantification. See: <https://www.legegunea.euskadi.eus/eli/es-pv/d/2016/01/19/4/dof/spa/html/webleg00-contfich/es/>

²⁸ BOPV Ley 2/2006, de 30 de junio, de Suelo y Urbanismo. See <https://www.euskadi.eus/y22-bopv/es/p43aBOPVWebWar/VerParalelo.do?cd2006003776>

²⁹ Eretza. See: <https://www.eretza.com/es/rehabilitacion/>

of owners of the entire property and can be non-refundable (without the need to return the amount provided) or aid to pay a loan. The calls for this program are annual.

Although it is true that city councils cannot mediate in the rental market, they can support through direct subsidies, promulgating ordinances and regulatory bases of social aids for the payment of rent and urban rehabilitation. In the case of the latter, the problem when intervening lies in the fact that the owners and the *Horizontal Property Law* regulate how to agree to the rehabilitation, which is why housing rehabilitations tend to be complex and not very agile processes.

Barakaldo does not hold the autonomy or resources to independently address housing inequality. For this reason, all investment and promotion of policies for accessing to social housing have to be conducted in cooperation with other territorial governments with the competences, such as the *Provincial Council of Bizkaia* and/or the *Basque Government*, which is possible with joint political will. In this sense, the Basque Government strategically promotes the maximum number of social housing for rent, not for reasons of preference in society, but for prevailing socioeconomic conditions, the current requirements for a mortgage, the purchase prices in the market real estate, etc.

Likewise, the Basque Government implements different programs —the ***Bizigune program***³⁰ led by the public-private society Alokabide³¹; promoted by Etxebide³², the *Basque Housing Service*- to encourage the rental of unoccupied homes by paying a monthly fee to their owners and guaranteeing monthly collection timely, returning the home as delivered. If it has had any damage, it is repaired and delivered in perfect condition. The timeframe call for this program is permanent.

More than half of these beneficiaries already receive rental aids, having access to the *Supplementary Housing Benefit*³³, which is € 250 per month and is associated with the *Income Guarantee Rent* (RGI)³⁴. Otherwise, they may receive the *Economic Housing Benefit*³⁵ that is not linked to the RGI. The difference between these three programs is that the supplementary and the economic housing benefits are social aids oriented to complement the monthly payment and/or rent of a dwellings, while the income guarantee rent is an monthly economic support

³⁰ Programa de Vivienda Vacía “Bizigune”. Alokabide, Gobierno Vasco. See: <https://www.alokabide.euskadi.eus/que-es-el-programa-bizigune/>

³¹ Alokabide. Sociedad pública del Gobierno Vasco para el desarrollo de la función social de la vivienda a través de la política de alquiler. See: <https://www.alokabide.euskadi.eus/home-alokabide/>

³² Servicio Vasco de Vivienda “Etxebide”. Gobierno Vasco: <https://www.etxebide.euskadi.eus/x39-etxebide/es/>.

³³ Lanbide. Prestación complementaria de vivienda (PCV). See: https://www.lanbide.euskadi.eus/ayuda/-/ayuda_subvencion/2015/prestacion-complementaria-de-vivienda-pcv-2015/

³⁴ Lanbide. Renta de Garantía de Ingresos (RGI). See: <https://www.lanbide.euskadi.eus/rgi/-/informacion/rgi-legislacion-y-normativa/>

³⁵ Etxebide. Prestación Económica de Vivienda. See: https://www.etxebide.euskadi.eus/x39-contdsv/es/contenidos/informacion/etxecont_requ_dsv_subhome/es_def/index.shtml

provided to people at risk of social exclusion to guarantee a minimum income to cover their basic need to live with dignity. The framework call for all of them is annual.

Finally, there are also the *Social Emergency Aids*³⁶, which are of the order of 63,000 cases — of which 55% were women and 45% men³⁷ - in Euskadi, for the year 2020, supported annually by the Basque Government, but managed by the municipalities. The Social emergency aids are economic non-periodic benefits, intended for those people integrated in a household unit whose resources are insufficient to meet specific expenses of an ordinary or extraordinary nature to alleviate situations of social exclusion. In protected rental housing, families never pay more than 33% of their income, which is impossible in free-market housing for a person with low income in the Basque Country.

On the other hand, the Basque Government has recently included in its strategy called Housing Master Plan 2021-2023 (Departamento de Planificación Territorial, Vivienda y Transportes, 2021) making the rental market more attractive for new private investors, encouraging them to move from the traditional speculative purchase to the purchase to rent, controlling prices with agreements and with rents that are affordable. It is about attracting investment funds that invest with low and long-term returns, which does not sound very attractive for investors, but it is thought as a social measure in accordance to the housing needs in the territory

Similarly, the *Comprehensive Housing Rehabilitation Aid* program³⁸, which is annual, offers very important non-refundable grants if energy efficiency and accessibility reforms in buildings are undertaken. In this sense, the *European Next Generation* funds will mainly direct its efforts to urban rehabilitation and regeneration, increasing the number of grants and favored poor homes.

Great hope is now placed on *European Next Generation* funds for the rehabilitation of homes and neighborhoods through specific multi-level programs. The pandemic, in this sense, has accelerated this necessary process of urban improvement, hoping to have a very significant impact on the territory.

Finally, according to one of the interviewee specialized in housing, in the very near future, the Basque Government plans to establish a *Guarantee Fund* - complementary to the existing one for accessibility aids - that will allow people who cannot afford the payment of rehabilitation, especially if they are elderly ones with low pensions, to access the fund. It will associate the

³⁶ Departamento de Igualdad, Justicia y Políticas Sociales; Gobierno Vasco. Ayudas de Emergencia Social (AES) 2020. See: https://www.euskadi.eus/ayuda_subvencion/2020/ayudas-de-emergencia-social-aes/web01-tramite/es/

³⁷ Irekia. Noticias Departamento de Igualdad, Justicia y Políticas Sociales. Gobierno Vasco. See: <https://www.irekia.euskadi.eus/es/news/67587-mas-000-personas-familias-beneficiaron-2020-los-ocho-programas-desarrollados-dentro-del-fondo-inor-atzean-utzi-gabe>

³⁸ Departamento de Planificación Territorial, Vivienda y Transportes. Gobierno Vasco. Ayudas a la rehabilitación de viviendas. See: <https://www.euskadi.eus/servicios/0048213/web01-tramite/es/>

amount granted as a mortgage charge to the home; thus, if the home ownership is transferred, it will bear a charge that will remain alive for up to 10 years.

We could not find any available information/data for the monitoring mechanisms, policy/program changes overtime, and impacts of the projects aforementioned in this section.

As mentioned previously, the highest degree of competence in housing in the Basque Country corresponds to the Basque Government; however, local administrations direct much of their efforts and resources to promoting rental housing developments. Communication between different levels of competence is increasingly fluid, but in housing matters, it should translate into collaborations that sometimes do not occur.

There is also a resounding consensus that all political levels have a lot to say on this subject. In this line, the Basque Government plays a very important role in the territorial housing policy due to its regulatory capacity; and municipalities, for their part, are key in the contextualization and implementation of strategies and programs due to their ability to reach the citizen directly. Indeed, when it comes to intervening in the business fabric —dynamization of trade- and human —sociocultural dynamization-, municipalities are the most relevant actors through their actions, applying the same criteria for the general urban conditions of their streets, squares, areas, etc. However, when it comes to transversal regeneration actions in the neighborhoods, the responsibility and effort is multilevel, with the three administrations of the territory intervening. In this sense, the Provincial Council of Bizkaia does not act on housing; but it could do so if, strategically, it considers to intervene due to urgent needs in Bizkaia, participating exclusively in the construction and management of mobility infrastructures that improve the human dynamics of the neighborhoods.

For this reason, each territorial level has the capacity to act on housing inequalities, but there is no inter-institutional collaboration plan that establishes a set of joint actions as complex as the reduction of housing inequality in the territory.

Certainly, the Covid-19 pandemic is currently influencing housing inequalities in Bizkaia, with negative forecasts for the near future. Their affections are causing a noticeable increase in the economic and social vulnerability of certain groups at risk. Based on this situation, territorial governments have acted in different ways.

One of these actions has been the establishment of temporary aids complementary to the monthly rent payment, aiming this support to those people who, due to the Covid, are in a situation of economic vulnerability —payment of 50% of the monthly rent. This aid is applicable to tenants residing in Officially Protected Housing, in housing rented by private owners, and in unprotected housing pertaining to the free housing market. The condition of vulnerability is credited for being unemployed, or for reductions in income equal to or greater than 60% in the case of self-employed workers.

For its part, the Basque Government has launched two specific lines of support through exemption from paying rent for those tenants of protected housing whose property belongs

to the Government itself and/or through aids for the payment of rent in unprotected housing. In both cases, the beneficiaries have to prove that they have suffered a decrease in income due to Covid. The grants can last for six months, being subject to extensions.

On this premise, in legal terms, there seems to be sufficient consensus in considering that there are enough regulations to further influence the fight to reduce housing inequality in the territory. Despite this, there are different areas for improvement that should be locally prioritized in the oncoming years.

One of these potential priorities is the lack of a comprehensive action plan that directly involves the different levels of governance, avoids the dispersion of efforts, and emphasizes the importance and leadership of the municipalities, while enabling teamwork between the related municipal agencies.

Another issue that may be worth reflecting on is the rigidity of fiscal policies in the area of housing, which makes moving to a different place to live very expensive, which is not the case in other European countries. Nevertheless, the main problems the Basque Government knows it has to deal with are fundamentally two: the *low income* that makes impossible to access to an unprotected home for purchase/rent and the increasingly high *rates of late emancipation among young people (young people getting access to a dwelling for the first time to initiate their own independent lives)*.

In this sense, the Basque Government has tried in recent years to provide solutions that might reduce this social predicament. Proof of this is the "**Gaztelagun**" Youth Aid Program, which finances rent payments up to 50% of their price to people age 18-36 years. Another line of work is focused on social housing promotion that the Basque Government develops or that it attracts to include in the social rental program, establishing a specific quota of up to 40% offered to young people under 36 years of age for their access.

There are also *endowment dwellings*, which are promotions of apartments under a social rental scheme for young people. These homes have a rotating nature, being able to stay in for no more than 5 years, easing the first access to housing among young people. However, the great territorial strategic commitment of the Basque Government is based on ensuring a sustainable public stock of long-term protected rental housing.

Finally, we must not forget the homes classified as official protection that, being private, have a price controlled by the administration and can be sold and/or transferred, but not at any price or to any buyer.

2.4 Social protection and migration

2.4.1 Economic drivers for inequality and country policies

For the elaboration of this section, it has been decided to keep the focus of "*other dimensions*" on *Social Protection and Migration* given their closed links between each other, which explain their influence in analyzing social inequality in the FUA's territory.

The **Department of Equality, Justice and Social Policies** of the Basque Government is the one in charge of directing social services, family policy, youth, equality, justice and human rights. Additionally, the Basque Government counts on the **Department of Labour and Employment** to direct labour market and social security, employment and inclusion, and Social Economy. The latter legislates in the Guarantee of Income system for inclusion, a fundamental measure for combating inequality —monthly grant to meet basic needs for those with insufficient resources and find a job opportunities³⁹.

The Basque Government reacted flexibly to the COVID-19 crisis, displaying a remarkable capacity to react and activate the Basque social protection model, demonstrating its readiness to serve the most vulnerable, while addressing social emergency, family conciliation, and exclusion⁴⁰.

Within the territory, migration policies fell under the **Migration and Asylum Unit of the Department of Equality, Justice and Social Policies** of the Basque Government. It is a new administrative unit that was formerly part of the Family and Diversity one, showing the relevance migration is gaining lately⁴¹. It offers support to the *Forum for the Integration and Social Participation* of migrant citizens, proposing policies related to the integration and social participation of foreign born, etc.

Locally, municipalities are in charge of orientation services, providing information about available supports, and the assistance of initiatives that come from private associations.

In the 60s and 70s, the foreign people that arrived to Barakaldo were from other regions of Spain, experiencing not many other hardships compared to the locals, except for the use of Euskera. From some years now (2007/2008 up to now), the migration specifically from Latin America, Maghreb Countries, and East Europe has exponentially burst (Ikuspegi, 2020). Most of these migrants do not enjoy a regular legal situation, being limited to work or access to full health public service, etc.

Barakaldo concentrates a high density of this population partly because of its standard of living and the relatively reduced price of housing compared to other areas of the Grand Bilbao.

³⁹ The terms of reference of this measure can be found in (in Spanish only): <https://www.lanbide.euskadi.eus/rgi/-/informacion/preguntas-frecuentes-sobre-la-rgi1/#:~:text=%C2%BFQu%C3%A9%20es%20la%20Renta%20de,a%20encontrar%20una%20salida%20aboral.>

⁴⁰ EITB Euskal Irrati Telebista. (2020, May 6). Beatriz Artolazabal: "El modelo de protección social vasco está funcionando". EITB Radio Televisión Pública Vasca. [https://www.eitb.eus/es/radio/radio-vitoria/programas/radio-vitoria-gaur-actualidad/detalle/7214592/beatriz-artolazabal-el-modelo-proteccion-social-vasco-funciona/.](https://www.eitb.eus/es/radio/radio-vitoria/programas/radio-vitoria-gaur-actualidad/detalle/7214592/beatriz-artolazabal-el-modelo-proteccion-social-vasco-funciona/)

⁴¹ Eusko Jaurlaritza - Gobierno Vasco. (2021, January 27). Xabier Legarreta será director de Migración y Asilo en el Gobierno Vasco. Gobierno Vasco - Euskadi.eus. [https://www.euskadi.eus/gobierno-vasco/-/noticia/2021/xabier-legarreta-sera-director-migracion-y-asilo-gobierno-vasco/.](https://www.euskadi.eus/gobierno-vasco/-/noticia/2021/xabier-legarreta-sera-director-migracion-y-asilo-gobierno-vasco/)

Youth policy is rooted in the practice of the education professionals

There are not many studies and theoretical conceptions in Spain that refer to youth policies, being this research field very much focused on the practice of youth technicians rather than on the conceptualisation of it. That has resulted in a prolific production of methodologies, guides, and policy management materials (Soler, 2015; Escamilla, 2020) linked to youth plan design, systematization of the practice, youth participation at local level, local equipment and infrastructure management for youth, or youth programs and plan evaluation.

The Gernika Statute gives autonomy to Euskadi for legislating and elaborating norms on youth, while managing resources for its enforcement. Soon, a new regulatory framework will be launched intending to amend legal limitations⁴². For instance, municipalities will be able to exercise their own competences in matters such as planification, organization and management of youth policies⁴³.

It also recognizes that leisure and services are not the only responses to the new pressing challenges of youth, such as precariousness, emancipation, including measures to enable autonomy and integration for young people in society. Additionally, it considers youth from 12 to 30 years old, prioritizing emancipation for subjects between 25-29 years. Finally, it recognizes the crosscutting nature of its content and the need of coordination between departments and institutions, while broadening the channels of participation and dialogue of the Basque youth by creating stable soft spaces at the local level.

2.4.2 Statistical analysis of inequality at the local level

While the total population of no more than 15 years in the region increases (from 2.1M in 2005 to 2,2M in 2020), the youth population aged between 5-29 is decreasing in absolute terms as well as relatively to the total population (from 15% in 2010 to 13% in 2020). The absolute population of youth decreased in the period 2009-2015, and then started to recover in a positive trend but still recording a population that is below than that marked in 2012. In Bizkaia, where youth represent 12.6% of the population according to the provincial council, the trend today turns out to be similar, even if the recovery trend starts slightly later, in 2017.

This decrease is partially explained by the fertility rate of young women. Both, the region and the province register a very low rate, around 23%, which is well below the EU-28 rate (50.6%).

15.2% of the young people residing in the Basque Country are of foreign origin (46,018 people). In previous years, young foreign population in the region increased considerably until 2012, when it started to decline until 2019.

⁴² i.e. the Decree 14/1988, of February 2, which creates the Coordinating Center for Information and Youth Documentation of the Basque Country; Decree 211/1993, of July 20, regulating the official recognition of Youth Information Services, etc.

⁴³ Paragraph 36 of article 17 "Competences of the municipalities" of Law 2/2016, of April 7, of Local Institutions of the Basque Country.

Youth poverty in the Bizkaia has increased since the financial crisis of 2008. For instance, the percentage of population living in households at risk of poverty, headed by a person under 35 years of age, registered 12.4% in 2008 for both men and women, while in 2019 these ratios recorded 17.3% and 21.7%, respectively, being the latter for women even higher than this ratio for the total population in the same territory (20.6%)⁴⁴.

2.4.3 Analysis of main socio-economic processes and local policies influencing inequality

Within the territorial governments, different actors operate on migration playing diverse roles. The Basque Government, for instance, through its dependent organizations, such as **Biltzen** and **Ikuspegi**, integrates local actions and analyze information for policymaking and raising awareness.

Biltzen is a public organization attached to the Department of Equality, Justice and Social Policies of the Basque Government, whose most salient program, known as **Eraberean** (Network for Equality and Treatment and Non-Discrimination)⁴⁵, is aimed to promote the integration and enjoyment of citizenship rights by all people residing in the Basque Country, regardless of their origin, racial and / or ethnic, language, religion, etc. Likewise, it promotes the capacity of Basque society to manage cultural diversity in an inclusive manner and the coexistence between the cultural groups that comprise it, promoting awareness and the fight against discrimination, racism and xenophobia, as well as any other form of intolerance and hatred of difference.

Eraberean is a network funded and led by the Basque Government and by various third sector organizations, which have already been working significantly in the field of immigration, the promotion of the gypsy people and LGTB groups, and which intends to develop actions and information services, advice, guidance, etc., so that people can assert their rights when they are being violated by discriminatory treatment. Its baseline of organizations acts by detecting discriminatory situations and attending to discriminated people and groups, putting its focus preferably on the private sphere, while combining a preventive, pedagogical, and social awareness approach through programs and actions of awareness, training of agents, creation and dissemination of outreach materials, advice, etc. It counts on with its own internal monitoring mechanism and its relevant social impact in Euskadi can be acknowledged through its annual reports of implemented actions⁴⁶.

⁴⁴ Departamento de Empleo y Asuntos Sociales del Gobierno Vasco, Encuesta de Pobreza y Desigualdades Sociales (EPDS). Riesgo de pobreza en hogares jóvenes. Internal reference code: 5357. Available at: <https://www.euskadi.eus/informacion/encuesta-de-pobreza-y-desigualdades-sociales-epds/web01-s2enple/es/>

⁴⁵ Eraberean. Network for Equality and Treatment and Non-Discrimination. See: <https://biltzen.org/eraberean-red-para-la-igualdad-de-trato-y-por-la-no-discriminacion>

⁴⁶ Biltzen. Memoria Anual 2019. See: https://biltzen.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Memoria_Biltzen_2019_cas_def.pdf

Furthermore, three other networks —**Aholku Sarea**, **Eraberean Network**, and the **Migration Forum**- advise recommendations, exchange knowledge and experiences, and reflect and debate on matters linked to migrants.

On the other hand, at local level, the municipality of Barakaldo works closely with **Inguralde** —the local development agency-, **Eretza** —the local agency for housing- and other non-profit organizations that directly work with migrants in the welcoming and integration process, such as **Goiztiri**. In this sense, Barakaldo collaborates with a strong network of actors that pertain to private associations and entities from the third sector.

Goiztiri, for instance, leads the program called **Mundutik Mundura**⁴⁷, which is aimed at young immigrants institutionally protected during their minority age who, due to their situation of special vulnerability, require support that facilitates their social insertion, providing them with a socio-educational framework of accommodation and coexistence that allows them to define and consolidate their life project, so that in the short or medium term, they can join social life independently, while providing services such as co-pay accommodation, socio-educational support in employment and / or training, legal and health services, etc. This continuous project, as others led by this organization, receives funds from multiple institutions of Bizkaia: the Basque Government, the Bizkaia Provincial Government, the Municipality of Barakaldo, and many other private foundations. It has its own internal monitoring mechanism and its relevant social impact in the Basque Country can be recognized through its annual reports on actions carried out⁴⁸.

When the migration phenomena became noticeable in the region, the Basque Government started to cover partially the salaries and expenses of migration technicians in order to help the municipalities analyze, understand and advise how to solve the specific social problems of this collective. The Basque Country's government also funds municipalities to launch locally initiated initiatives addressing migrant's inclusion. For instance, *Lortu* is a program run by Goiztiri that offers a six-month service for the integration of foreign people. The Basque Government directly manages the funds for housing rehabilitation delivered to people in serious situation of social exclusion.

Youth, migration and social protections are policy fields that demand regional and local public/private actors' participation in the implementation of programs and actions that require personal contact with beneficiaries. This network and its interconnections need to be managed smoothly and agile in order to find an efficient model of network.

Youth policy is addressing the total youth population, without considering the existing inequalities within its set of cohorts.

⁴⁷ Goiztiri. Proyecto Mundutik Mundura. See: <https://www.goiztiri.org/index.php/es/areas-de-trabajo/inmigracion/mundutik-mundura.html>

⁴⁸ Goiztiri. Memorias Anuales. See: <https://www.goiztiri.org/index.php/es/publicaciones.html>

3 Innovative post-crisis policies

The example of innovation that will be described below corresponds to a youth policy model—selected from a pool of nine (9) different regulations, strategies, programs or territorial political actions- as part of a planning and implementation process that combines different regulatory frameworks. , but clearly interrelated with each other. This is the program of ***Accompaniment for Emancipation and Transition to Adulthood*** aimed at young people from Barakaldo.

Its innovative consideration has been granted at the discretion of some of the local policy makers who were interviewed in depth, while the case selection has been carried out by the UPLIFT Barakaldo research team based on the following very particular premises to its approach: a) holistic and process-oriented; b) coherent and transversal; c) contextualized and personalized; d) local and inclusive; and e) both physical and virtual. We then proceed to the exposition and justification of the case.

The **Accompaniment Program for Emancipation and Transition to Adulthood** has been implemented in Barakaldo since 2016 by **Gaztebulegoa** —Office of Information, Participation and Support for Youth-, a public center managed under the direction of the area of Culture, Education, Euskera and Youth of the Municipality of Barakaldo. This accompaniment program works with young people between 18-35 years old as target group since 2016, with the objective of accompanying youngsters into their emancipation process and transition to adult life.

The outmost innovation traits are:

- A holistic and process-oriented approach to accompany young people through their concrete life aspirations, assisting them in pursuing the position wanted in society: guiding them in the type and profile of education or technical training they require for achieving their personal goals, recommending to them the kind of public aid they can go to for support, suggesting to them participating in existing support programs that complement the payment of housing rent and/or purchase of protected housing, helping them in their job search and in obtaining a job in the municipality, etc. It is holistic since provided in a way the recipients realize by themselves inequality is a construct composed of multiple social dimensions that need to be addressed progressively at certain points in time and level of advancement, as a process that demand a tailored pace consistent with user's necessities.
- A coherent and cross-sectional approach that take advantage of the most relevant and innovative laws —the Social Services Law (December 2018), the Law for the Guarantee Income (December, 2008), and the Basque Housing Law (June, 2015)- on social territorial norms, strategies, programs, and actions —related to education, housing, employment, health, and social protections, among others- to properly respond to users' complex and transversal demands.

- An accompaniment that starts with a multidimensional diagnosis of the youngster's situation and aptitudes —drawn on diverse social dimensions- to set a context-based and personalized social strategy to accomplish emancipation: employability, level of training or education, degree of social relationships, and state of emotional wellbeing, among many others.
- It is local and inclusive because it was locally created by Barakaldese's technicians from their own experiences of what they understood could be more fruitful for future users' goals, even though they knew it would be highly time and resource demanding; and inclusive because it offers the programs even to those young migrants who do not enjoy most of the legal rights needed to receive the full set of services.
- The program has been furnished both virtually and in-person since 2006, years before the Covid-19, with interactive videos and online individual and group meetings.
- It has its own internal monitoring mechanism that is supervised by the Municipality of Barakaldo, and its relevant social impact in Barakaldo can be recognized through its annual reports on actions carried out. It is economically supported by the Municipality of Barakaldo and partially from the Basque Country's Government.

As previously mentioned, this initiative began in 2016 as a complementary response to the set of actions that were being carried out in the territory to alleviate unemployment caused by the 2007-2008 crisis. At the beginning of 2015, it was locally observed that the progressive improvement in the recovery of local employment was not similarly registered to the same extent among young people; on the contrary, youth unemployment was taking hold in society.

With the *Accompaniment Program for Emancipation and Transition to Adulthood*, a response was achieved to a certain extent, but with the limitations expected for such a comprehensive service certainly involves. However, the program has continued its functions facing the new challenges associated with the Covid-19 crisis, adapting the approach and incorporating the most recent political measures to tackle its effect on youth, while financially performing a balance between expected inputs and outputs.

On the other hand, the main actor-networks who have promoted this initiative in Barakaldo has been mainly the Gaztebulegoa's facilitators, the local young community, the Municipality, a network of local voluntaries, the local public-private institutions that support social services (Eretza, Inguralde, etc.), and the local network of non-profit organizations (e.g. Goiztiri). It also receives the support from other territorial governments' representatives when it is required, but it is sporadic.

As a result, the project has accompanied more than 200 young people in their personal emancipation processes, being almost never focused just on one timeframe, but rather progressive and at different moments of the young subject's personal progress. Another achievement of the program is to make young people realize that the solution to their demands does not depend solely and exclusively on a single social dimension, but on multiple ones that interact to curb their aspirations for life. Finally, the program has served to incorporate young

people into the social agenda of the city, opening the doors to citizen participation in a conscious and motivating fashion.

These facts, among some others, can categorize this program as a success story that preserves as its main lesson learned the need to contextualize, personalize, be transversal and work in constant local collaboration, although such a degree of intensity in the service provided translates into a high demand on time and resources.

4 Discussion and conclusions

The present report aims at identifying, studying, and analyzing the different socioeconomic drivers related to the territorial inequality present in the **Functional Urban Area** (FUA) of the city of Barakaldo, Basque Country (Spain).

It sheds light on the functioning, harmony and coordination of the policies and key stakeholders actively linked to and fundamental for the design, adaptation, implementation, and assessment of the programs, actions and measures that emanate from territorial political strategies to reduce inequalities and promote social inclusion, equity, diversity and cohesion in local communities.

It is drawn on various primary and secondary territorial sources of information that bring together data and material pertaining to the time periods between 2007 and 2020, thus covering the economic and financial crisis that erupted in 2007-2008, the subsequent post-crisis years of recovery, and the Covid-19 pandemic, all relevant periods for the purposes of the research.

Regarding the information obtained, there were identified, predominantly among local youth, the main trends on inequality in the study FUA associated with the social dimensions herein treated. In this sense, regarding **education**, the most salient trends that influence inequality were the *elevated regional government's autonomy and power to oversee territorial education, the Basque Education policy and system rooted in an inclusive and quality education, the strong integration of foreign population in the Barakaldo education system, the significant efforts allocating resources and coordinating multi-level actions to reduce inequalities, and the regional and local resilience demonstrated to face COVID-19 in the education context.*

Likewise, the most prominent trends in **employability** were the territorial identification of concrete groups mostly affected by unemployment during 2007-2020, the predominant precarious working conditions linked to low salaries and an elevated number of temporary contracts, the efficient road communication and urban transport network interconnecting the Grand Bilbao with Barakaldo, the continuous need to improve the digital skills among young people, the existence of inequalities in geographical terms in the territory, the outstanding promotion of local entrepreneurship, and the positive permeability of multi-level territorial strategies.

Regarding those trends identified in the **housing** social dimension, it is worth to mention the existence of a General Urban Management Plan that works regionally and locally and help realize the rationale behind local competences and strategies, the close correlation between local unemployment and housing inequality, the current difficulties in accessing a dwelling for the first time and initiating a personal emancipation process, the still existent discrimination in access to housing for reasons of origin or sex/sexual orientation, and the speculative trend that

is being oriented towards rent, and the existent deprivation and spatial segregation in local housing.

When it comes to the trends in **other dimensions**, such as **social protection and migration**, it is relevant to mention the evolved and improved Basque social protection system, the dynamic and resilient territorial reaction linked to social protection actions during COVID-19 crisis, the progressive local relevance of migration policy toward a more integrative approach, the migrant's profiles changes over time that have made social inclusion harder, a youth policy drawn on the practice of the education professionals, and the harmony within the competences levels regarding Basque Youth Policy.

On the other hand, the urban report sheds some light on how the crisis of 2007/2008 and current Covid one have impacted on local population, particularly on young people, influencing mainly on a more inclusive and digital education relied on an improved multi-level coordination, a precariousness of working conditions with reduced wages and unstable contracts, a local housing market with one of the most elevated prices in Spain, and a territorial response that demonstrates conjoint dynamism and resilience *to socially protect those people highly exposed to socioeconomic changes*.

During these periods of changes, the three Basque level of governance have demonstrated the adequacy and capability of territorial and local policies to tackle the specific problems emerged from two clearly differentiated crises: unemployment, educative reconversion, social and protected purchase and rent of dwellings, awareness campaigns in favor of cultural inclusion and the fight against xenophobia, etc.

Today, the room of maneuver of local authorities regarding the design and implementation of policies has positively evolved thanks to the progressive cession of responsibilities —bounded to implementation- from the Basque Government to the municipalities; however, there are still more to do concerning the local demanded request of chances to adjust and customize the local actions in accordance with the municipal context. In this sense, there is no doubt that the territorial articulation of the different levels of governance has significantly advanced, particularly for those dynamics between public, private and NGO actors.

Additionally, despite the recent process of "*Open Government*" initiated by local municipalities, such as Barakaldo, the local participation of young people and its encouragement to involve more actively in policy-making is still a challenge to achieve by local authorities and society. For that, it is recommended furthering the quality or efficiency of local policies putting more emphasis on contextualizing the action in accordance to the concrete demand of specific social collective, and, and progressively increasing youth participation through the promotion of soft spaces that procure the environment to exercise participatory and reflexive policy-making.

The study also revealed some gender inequalities observed in educational achievements, and labour market integration, among the residents of Barakaldo and the Basque Country. Women show mixed educational achievements with lower levels of early school leaving rate, lower levels of professional credentials, and slightly higher levels of illiteracy. In what regards labour

market integration, it is easy to see that women are in a more vulnerable position, with higher unemployment rates, and higher rates of employment in the service industry, this is, a sector of activity with more precarious employment trajectories. Maybe as a consequence, households who have younger women (less than 35 years old) as household heads tend to show higher percentages of risk of poverty.

Finally, it is essential for conducting field research, such as the one presented here, to have an approach that is sensitive to the holistic inclusion of gender in the context. Having done so in our case allowed us to maintain a correct use of language at all times, an even more precise approach to the questions prepared for the in-depth interviews, and the permanent vision of inclusive and gender-sensitive management, particularly in those groups with a higher risk of social exclusion. For this reason, we extend our recommendations to future research groups so that they adopt this scope.

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Annex

The table below contains data/indicators that are able to display social inequalities in a way that is the most comparable with other urban areas. Each urban report includes this data table, which is also intending to show not only the scale and dimensions of inequalities in the functional urban area of Barakaldo, but indicate also the scale of missing data that makes any comparative research difficult to implement.

	National data (Spain/Basque Country)	Regional data (Bizkaia)	FUA data (The Grand Bilbao)	City level data (Barakaldo)
Population				
Population in 2007/2008	45,668,938/2,157,112	1,146,421	868,484	96,496
Population in 2011/2012	46,727,890/2,193,093	1,158,439	872,826	99,685
Population in 2018/2019	47,329,981/2,207,776	1,152,651	858,236	98,497
Population aged 15-29 in 2007/2008	8,819,170/354,176	188,068	101,071	9,832
Population aged 15-29 in 2011/2012	7,508,878/310,207	162,550	104,449	10,393
Population aged 15-29 in 2018/2019	7,296,779/296,432	150,921	111,744	11,440
Income/poverty				
Gini index 2007/2008	32.4/25.2	27.6	22.849	---
Gini index 2011/2012	34.2/25.3	25.2	23.3	---
Gini index 2018/2019	33.0/26.7	28.8	25.8	29.4
Equalized personal income quintiles (mean for the 1st quintile) 2018/2019	6,267/10,131	---	---	---
Equalized personal income quintiles (mean for the 2st quintile) 2018/2019	10,815/14,855	---	---	---
Equalized personal income quintiles (mean for the 3st quintile) 2018/2019	15,015/19,123	---	---	---
Equalized personal income quintiles (mean for the 4st quintile) 2018/2019	20,358/24,465	---	---	---

⁴⁹ Data series for the left bank of the Grand Bilbao.

	National data (Spain/Basque Country)	Regional data (Bizkaia)	FUA data (The Grand Bilbao)	City level data (Barakaldo)
Equalized personal income quintiles (mean for the 5st quintile) 2018/2019	29,907/40,020	---	---	---
At risk of poverty rate 2007/2008	19.8/9.1	---	---	---
At risk of poverty rate 2011/2012	20.8/13.3	---	---	---
At risk of poverty rate 2018/2019	20.7/10.0	---	---	---
At risk of poverty aged 15-29 2007/2008	18.1/--	---	---	---
At risk of poverty aged 15-29 2011/2012	25.3/--	---	---	---
At risk of poverty aged 15-29 2018/2019	26.5/--	---	---	---
Housing				
Share of housing below market rates (social housing) 2008/2009	9.3/--	--	--	--
Share of housing below market rates (social housing) 2011/2012	9.4/--	--	--	--
Share of housing below market rates (social housing) 2018/2019	8.7/--	--	--	--
Average housing price/average income 2007/2008	--	--	--	--
Average housing price/average income 2011/2012	--	--	--	--
Average housing price/average income 2018/2019	--/--	--	--	--
Education				
Early leavers from education and training 2007/2008	31.7/13.9	--	--	--
Early leavers from education and training 2011/2012	23.6/8.5	--	--	--
Early leavers from education and training 2018/2019	17.3/8.8	--	--	--
Share of inhabitants aged 15-64 with a maximum ISCED 1 (2) education 2007/2008	48.9/--	--	--	--

	National data (Spain/Basque Country)	Regional data (Bizkaia)	FUA data (The Grand Bilbao)	City level data (Barakaldo)
Share of inhabitants aged 15-64 with a maximum ISCED 1 (2) education 2011/2012	46.4/34.7	34.6	34.0	39.9
Share of inhabitants aged 15-64 with a maximum ISCED 1 (2) education 2018/2019	39.6/30.6	30.4	30.0	35.6
Enrolment in upper secondary school 2007/2008	5049.2-50.18/--	--	--	5145.42-54.58
Enrolment in upper secondary school 2011/2012	50.03-49.97/--	--	--	49.57-50.43
Enrolment in upper secondary school 2018/2019	49.36-50.64/	--	--	50.52-49.48
Employment				
NEET youth aged 15- (24)29 2007/2008	5216.0 (13.2-18.9)/53 11.0 (9.0-11.0)	--	--	--
NEET youth aged 15-(24)29 2011/2012	24.0 (23.4-24.5)/21.0 (24.0-18.0)	--	--	--
NEET youth aged 15-(24)29 2018/2019	16.0 (14.3-17.7)/13.0 (13.0-13.0)	--	--	--
Employment rate 2007/2008	53.3	51.3	--	48.8
Employment rate 2011/2012	44.3	46.5	--	46.0
Employment rate 2018/2019	50.3	49.8	--	48.4
Employment rate aged 15-29 ⁵⁴ 2007/2008	8.4	29.4	--	36.5
Employment rate aged 15-29 2011/2012	4.3	15.7	--	23.9
Employment rate aged 15-29 2018/2019	5.3	19.6	--	23.7
Unemployment rate 2007/2008	13.7	4.3	5510.6	9.6

⁵⁰ Values for men and women, respectively (Spain).

⁵¹ Values for men and women, respectively (Barakaldo).

⁵² Total values and by men and women, respectively (Spain).

⁵³ Total values and by men and women, respectively (Basque Country).

⁵⁴ Full set of series for aged 16-24.

⁵⁵ Values for the Left Bank of the Grand Bilbao.

	National data (Spain/Basque Country)	Regional data (Bizkaia)	FUA data (The Grand Bilbao)	City level data (Barakaldo)
Unemployment rate 2011/2012	25.7	16.7	21.2	20.4
Unemployment rate 2018/2019	13.7	11.0	13.7	12.9
Unemployment rate aged 15-29 2007/2008	29.0	13.056	24.2	23.8
Unemployment rate aged 15-29 2011/2012	53.0	40.6	20.3	19.4
Unemployment rate aged 15-29 2018/2019	30.2	24.0	16.7	16.0
Share of precarious employment 2007/2008	--	--	--	--
Share of precarious employment 2011/2012	--	--	--	--
Share of precarious employment 2018/2019	--	--	--	--
Share of precarious employment ⁵⁷ aged 15-29 2007/2008	--	43.9-7.8	--	--
Share of precarious employment aged 15-29 2011/2012	--	52.7-21.2	--	--
Share of precarious employment aged 15-29 2018/2019	--	62.0-31.3	--	--
Health				
Life expectancy 2007/2008	81.3	83.6	83.0	82.8
Life expectancy 2011/2012	82.8	83.1	83.0	82.4
Life expectancy 2018/2019	83.6	81.5	83.4	82.6
Teenage birth rate 2007/2008	3.1	--	--	0.8
Teenage birth rate 2011/2012	4.2	--	--	0.7
Teenage birth rate 2018/2019	6.6	--	--	0.8

⁵⁶ Full set of series for aged 16-24 (Bizkaia).

⁵⁷ Full set of series for Temporary employment rate and Part-time employment rate.