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Topic

1. When drafting the municipal budget, special attention should be given to the sensitivity of three particularly vulnerable categories that were the subject of this research—youth, women, and national minorities.

Goal

To assist municipal authorities in ensuring that the local budget is more effectively utilized for the implementation of public policies related to youth, gender equality, and national minorities.

Opportunities to Align the Local Budget More Closely with the Public Policies Relevant to the Target Groups of the Project

- In accordance with the Budget Law, the local government regularly allocates funds under the category "Youth and Recreation".
- The local budget provides financial support for travel expenses of high school and university students.
- Under the budget item "Local Economic Development," financial assistance is allocated through the Help program, which supports youth internships and equipment procurement.
- For the second consecutive year, the municipal budget has been structured as a gender-responsive budget.
- The municipal government provides financial and logistical support for the implementation of educational programs aimed at empowering vulnerable groups—youth and women—economically.
- In accordance with the Law on Local Self-Government, specific budgetary funds are allocated for the functioning of national minority councils and activities aimed at preserving the national identity of minorities residing in the municipality.

Value Chain

- The inability to generate more dynamic employment opportunities contributes to the significant migration of young people to larger regional economic centers and EU countries.
- Youth account for approximately 25% of the total registered unemployed in the municipality, while women make up 53%.
- Women in agriculture in the municipality of Bac are heads of registered family farms in 35% of cases. Most of them live in rural areas and lack significant systemic support that would enable them to develop more rapidly and become more competitive.

- Youth migration reduces the percentage of the working-age population, which directly impacts local community development.
- Public policies have not introduced long-term measures that would effectively reduce migration and increase women's economic inclusion.
- Members of several national minorities make up more than half of the total population of the municipality and exercise all the rights guaranteed to them.

Process Management

The Municipal Assembly of Bac has a normative and institutional framework that articulates the interests of the vulnerable groups targeted by the research.

- The Youth Council, the Gender Equality Commission, and the Council for Interethnic Relations serve as important mechanisms, as do local action plans.
- The Budget and Finance Department, along with other municipal departments responsible for issues related to the focus group, play key roles.

Challenges and Limitations

- Limited local budget.
- Misalignment of national public policies with the financial and human resource capacities of local government, affecting their implementation.
- Mechanisms for mitigating unemployment, migration processes, and economic gender discrimination are not exclusively within the jurisdiction of local government.
- The global security, economic, and political situation, as well as rapid technological changes, impact the overall conditions in local communities.

Sustainability

- The budget of the municipality of Bac, in accordance with the Budget Law, allocates funds that support the activities of the target groups.
- The capacities of local government are also directed towards securing additional financial and logistical support from national and international funds.

Social Cohesion

- The gender structure of the population is balanced.
- The proportion of young people in the total population is declining, while the number of elderly is increasing.
- The local government fosters synergy between young and older populations through special support programs, such as home care assistance for the elderly.
- In collaboration with national and international funds, the municipality supports the employment of harder-to-employ categories, including youth, women, and especially members of the Roma population.

Recommendation

Enhance the existing level and quality of support from the local budget for youth, women, and vulnerable groups by reassessing priority goals in budget planning and its individual allocations. Consult the Youth Council, the Gender Equality Council, and the Council for

Interethnic Relations during this process. Continue activities aimed at educating youth and women in project application skills. Increase efforts to attract financial support from national and international funds.

Topic: Stopping the Declining Employment Trend in Agriculture

Goal

Given the educational potential and ownership structure of agricultural land, seek a synergy model that combines the real capacities of the local community. Agriculture in this region is a significant resource that could improve the status of the categories covered by this research, particularly young people, thereby reducing youth emigration for work abroad.

Opportunities for the Local Budget to Support Increased Employment in Agriculture

- Approximately 10% of the municipal budget of Bac is allocated annually for "Agriculture and Rural Development".
- These funds are distributed through public calls aimed at increasing agricultural competitiveness.
- The local government provides logistical support for applying to national and international funds intended for agricultural development.

Value Chain

- Agriculture is the leading economic sector in the municipality of Bac.
- The municipal development plan prioritizes intensive crop farming and the expansion of arable land under organic production.
- The missing component in intensive agriculture is the lack of processing capacities for its products.
- The age structure of agricultural workers and the structure of family farm owners are unfavorable.
- The potential future leaders of agricultural production are graduates of the agricultural high school in Bac.

Process Management

- Municipal Budget and Finance Department
- Department of Economy and Agriculture, as well as the Local Economic Development Office
- Municipal Assembly's Agriculture Committee

Challenges and Limitations

- The age structure of those employed in agriculture is unfavorable. The majority of family farm owners are elderly.
- Farmers lack the necessary skills to apply for funding opportunities available for agricultural development.
- The average size of arable land is small and does not generate sufficient income for significant agricultural advancement without external support.

- The absence of adequate processing facilities reduces competitiveness and agricultural income.

Recommendation

Conduct a direct assessment of the real situation and needs in agricultural production by analyzing data on the average farm size, age structure of farm owners, and other relevant factors. Based on these findings, establish priorities and realistic possibilities for directing funds from the local budget's "Agriculture and Rural Development" allocation. Additionally, consider the needs of rural communities regarding social and healthcare services and existing communal infrastructure, which requires an intersectoral approach. Continue the initiative for allocating agricultural funds from national and international funds.

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