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Participatory Budgeting step-by-step guideline



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*Participatory
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step-by-step
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Step 1

Participatory Budgeting Formal Structuring

Based on the main conclusions derived from the research paper, we are recommending the following steps for the implementation of Participatory Budgeting in African cities.

The first suggested step for the implementation of Participatory Budgeting in a specific city, regardless its' population size and administrative organization, is to determine whether it is going to be implemented through a regiment or through a law project that may ensure the creation of the program by a juridical rule.

In its' origins, the program is not normatively and/or legally foresee, such as the case of other participatory channels, as the so called "Policy Councils" (which existence is foresee in the country's Constitution). The existence of PB depends basically upon the political will of the group that is in power in a certain municipality. Because of that, its' perspective regarding temporal continuity varies according to the political group that assumes the public control.

With the aim of conferring greater guarantee of existence to the program, therefore, the ideal scenario would be that in which the

program is normatively delimited. As we saw on the research above, 54.5% of the PB researched cases (that are members of the Rede-OP) do have an internal regiment. We propose as a first step a normative directive establishing an internal regiment for the functioning of PB.

Step 2

Participatory Budgeting Administrative Structuring

The second step for the implementation of Participatory Budgeting consists on the administrative structuring of the program. This process may be divided into physical availability and localization, as well as into human resources availability and localization.

Right after the formal creation of PB, it is necessary to allocate it into the local administrative bureaucracy. Whenever possible, the best solution, in this case, consists on the creation of a Secretary of its own, what tends to confer greater support for its activities and necessities, giving greater agility and trustworthiness to its dynamic as a whole. As shown in the conceptual paper, in 63.6% of the researched cases, belonged to the Rede-OP, PB is localized in a Secretary of its own. Otherwise, being impossible the creation of a Secretary of its own, determine the installation of the program in an already existent Secretary that deals with the thematic of municipal urban planning. This factor is of extreme importance, once PB is a program that demands a human resource that is specialized and compromised to its mission.

The administrative installation of the program, then, must be in consonance with the type of human resource available. Select always

the more responsible and compromised team, the one that may be capable of coordinating the works and the timing cycles dynamics. In more specific terms, the basic professional composition of a PB team, from the local public manager side, should follow the survey below:

- 1 General Coordinator, with skills in project management;
- 1 administrative secretary;
- 1 expert in searching for financial resources;
- 2 urban planning technicians;
- 1 economy and/or fiscal planning technician;
- Technicians from diverse areas that may be called on an *ad hoc* basis.

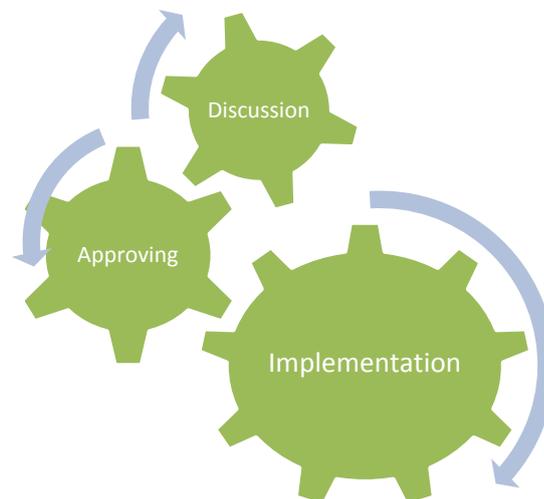
Being possible the creation of a Secretary of its own, pick up human resources from the best Secretaries, giving special attention to responsible, compromised, and skillful people. Otherwise, try to allocate the program in a Secretary which technical personal is preferably linked to the urban planning and fiscal development areas.

Step 3

Participatory Budgeting timing cycle definition

After following the previous steps concerning the formalization of PB and its administrative allocation, it is now necessary to specify its performing dynamics, or, in other words, its process design. Lets initiate this part talking about an element of great importance to the program, which is the definition of its timing cycle of occurrence.

PB timing cycle is the period in which a priority list is debated, approved, and implemented. In more general terms, it consists on the time it takes for a specific venture to be completely built, since its discussion to its effective implementation.



Those three phases will be studied in depth on the steps that follow, especially regarding its implementation. Yet, it is worth a brief explanation of each one of them. The first phase is the one that allows for the direct participation of citizens in the process, with the possibility of voting for the ventures judged priorities. It is composed of PB reunions and meetings. The second phase, the one regarding the approval, consists on the debate and direct negotiation with local public manager by setting up a city representative commission. The third phase is the one of implementation of the approved and prioritized ventures along the whole process.

All phases must be in harmony and consonance for an efficient functioning of the program. Usually, a 1 year period is adopted as reference for the establishment of a complete cycle. In the researched cases that belong to the Rede-OP, 54.5% adopt the 1 year round period. Notwithstanding, there is a significant presence of biannual cases, that have reached 36.4%. This indicates that the 1 year round period might be relatively short for the ventures to be prioritized, debated among all participants, agreed with local government, and, then, effectively implemented. There may be a superposition of cycles

of one year on the next one, embarrassing the evolution of the process.

Due to this fact, make the option for the implementation of a longer cycle, one capable of arranging all those phases without running the risk of embarrassment.

Usually, adopting a 2 year round timing cycle is enough for not running such a risk

It is recommended, notwithstanding, that too long timing cycles, such as the 4 year round period ones, not be adopted. There is a *trade-off* between round timing cycles and the number of potential ventures to be implemented. Therefore, the greater the timing cycle, the lower the number of approved works susceptible of being effectively implemented.

Step 4

Defining PBs dynamic: incentive to direct participation

PB is a program that aims at democratizing budget decision making processes by adopting a perspective of public investments prioritizing by the citizens on their own. Therefore, it must be capable of effectively “giving voice” especially to the less favored individuals in its process. The first phase of PB process must consist, though, on the discussion of budget priorities with the **direct** participation of citizens, which must have the chance of voting for the types of ventures they judge more important.

In order to achieve such scenario, it is necessary to organize meetings with citizens. In the case of the researched cities, meetings were made in 90.9% of the cases involving the Rede-OP on the regions. These meetings should be focused on a wider priority list previously elaborated by the local public manager. This list should not be closed in a first moment, what is to say, citizens should have the chance to suggest ventures and/or works that are not in the list, but they think should be put on voting.

It is not possible, however, to organize meetings in which all citizens come up at once. The way to achieve such objective, in this sense, is to execute the program in a regional perspective, or, in other words,

through the division of the city into specific territorial regions, especially in the case of cities with greater population size. By dividing the city in regions, it is possible to set up meetings and reunions in which individuals from many neighborhoods have the chance to take part and to vote for.

Therefore, the first step for an effective definition of PB dynamics (which is the fourth general step of our guide) consists on the planning of specific regionals that aggregate diverse enclosed neighborhoods in its composition. Right after that, there should be established a period in which reunions/meetings take place in the regionals. At least 1 meeting/reunion should be made in each regional, in which it is expected to be approved a final list on investments priorities, chosen among options previously suggested by the public manager.

Step 5

Defining PBs dynamic: creating the PB Council

Right after the approval of the priorities list in the regionals, it is necessary to accomplish each one of them in order to compose a single final list, which may contain the ventures that will be effectively implemented. The manner to aggregate all lists with the aim of forming a single one consists on the realization of meetings among individuals from all regionals. However, it is not possible that all citizens take part into this process, what urges the formation of a representative commission. The members of this commission will discuss until they get to an agreement on the final prioritizing list.

This moment implies, in this sense, firstly, the running of elections, in each regional, of delegates, that, with the companion of all other delegates from the other regions, may discuss with the government the aggregation of their lists until the approval of a final one, to be implemented. Moreover, in order to this meeting of delegates from each region – and, as well, any decisions taken – acquire a normative and/or even legal status, it is necessary to formalize the meeting instance.

It must be created, based on this process, a Participatory Budgeting Council. Rede-OP experience, as well as the cities with best practices in

Brazil regarding the program, denotes a strong participation of civil society in this Council. Its composition should prioritize the types of participants that follow:

- Members from civil society, especially the ones elected in their's respective regions as representatives;
- Members from the government, especially the ones that accompany all PB process, beyond *ad hoc* technicians from diverse knowledge fields.

It is highly recommended that be conferred the Participatory Budgeting Council a deliberative and not only consultative characteristic. A deliberative characteristic implies the possibility of making factual decisions regarding many questions related to the program, consisting, then, on a channel of direct influence of civil society onto the government actions. The consultative characteristic, for its turn, implies solely the capacity of suggesting ways of actions.

Step 6

Financial Resources for the Participatory Budgeting

Financial resources consist on a crucial condition for the effective implementation of the approved ventures in PB. The source of these resources may vary in two ways. In first place, when the city counts with considerable tax revenue of its own, it is recommended that part of it be directed to PB, as is the case of 63.6% of the municipalities researched and that are members of the Rede-OP. Usually, around 5% of the total Municipal Budget.

On the other side, there is also the possibility that specific projects be structured regarding the ventures approved. In this case, it is necessary to search for sources with partners that support the implementation of the works. These partners may vary from domestic entities, for instance, to international ones. It is suggested that for each type of approved venture in PB, a project that search for resources be submitted to the analysis of those institutions.

Step 7

Making technical analysis of the approved ventures

All ventures approved on the final list of the Participatory Budgeting Council as priorities for investment must be submitted to a technical analysis. All researched cases have had technical analysis. Two are the factors to be checked in this phase.

In first place, the factual possibility of implementation of the approved works. It must be verified whether there are technical conditions for the implementation or not, such as place availability, technical competency of the partners, and, of course, sufficient financial resources.

In second place, it must be verified whether the implementation of the venture runs against any legal disposition or not. Urban rules must be respected in any instance, with the risk of cancellation of the works.

Step 8

Creating a Monitoring Instance

It is important the creation of a monitoring instance for accompanying PB works implementation. In 72.7% of the Brazilian researched cases, there was a monitoring instance. Usually, they are responsible to supervise the evolution of the implementation of the approved ventures.

Monitoring instances are, actually, commissions in which members of the Participatory Budgeting Council take part. It is suggested, notwithstanding, that its composition do count also with members that not necessarily come only from the Council, but also from other specific regions, for instance. The constitution of the instances may take place in the interior of the Council e consist on a important step for the correct accomplishment of the cycles defined for the program.