



# WARSAW PARTICIPATORY BUDGET

CASE STUDY REPORT & ANALYSIS



Participatory Budgeting  
for Sustainable Development  
of V4 Capital Cities

Prepared by Inicjatywy

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## FOREWORD

The following report is based on the analysis of the available documentation, evaluation reports and interviews with representatives of the participatory budget's proponents in Warsaw. It is also a result of exchange of opinions and different experiences of the project participants representing local non-governmental organizations activists and experts in the field from the research institution, Collegium Civitas - leader of the project.

We would like to thank all the interviewed people and also the Centre for Social Communication of City of Warsaw, to facilitate the access to some interesting documents. We decided not to give the names of people interviewed but we decided to present some quotations from the interviews to show better the personal impressions and assessment of the process being described in the report.

## HOW IT BEGAN IN WARSAW

In response to the problem of decreasing voter turnout and low confidence, public institutions are becoming more and more open to public to allow them to participate in debates and expressing opinions on decisions taken by the government. Civic participation means a conscious engagement of the citizens in shaping decisions made by political leaders. To reach the aim, representatives of the administration should undertake a dialogue with the inhabitants in order to enable to co-create or evaluate the policy pursued by ruling. Civic participation is therefore much more than participation in elections once for a few years. In practice, it should be implemented through constant cooperation between administration and citizens based on a common analysis of problems and a common search possible solutions.

Participatory budget in Warsaw is described as a process that gives Warsaw residents the option of co-deciding about a part of the city's budget. They can turn on it:

- by submitting their own ideas;
- talking about submitted ideas at meetings of residents and a discussion forum;
- by voting for ideas that they want to be implemented

In 2012, The Cultural Centre Śródmieście (Dom Kultury Śródmieście) together with the Dialog Field Foundation (Fundacja Pole Dialogu) and the Śródmieście District Office in Warsaw, implemented the first participatory budget in Poland in a cultural institution. The institution made possible for residents of Śródmieście (city district located in the center of Warsaw) a co-decision on the development of the entire cultural center's budget for 2013 in the amount of 640 000 zlotys (around 150 000 euro). This budget was innovative in nature, because for the first time residents decided not about a small part of expenses - just like in cities - but about the entire institutional budget of the institution. In the work on the budget participated not only the regulars of the community center, but also other groups of residents - people of different ages, of different social positions, of different cultural backgrounds, with different expectations and needs.

One of the first dedicated and publicized initiatives to start with the PB in the Polish capital was the happening on a "pan" at the metro station „Centrum in April 2013”, organized by Maciej Łapski, originator and co-founder of the Warsaw Social Initiative. The participants of the happening asked the passers-by a question: "For what purpose would you like to spend the city money first?" The choice was: education, pro-family policy, counteracting unemployment, communication and transport issues and construction of new apartments. The happening was mentioned by the local newspapers. However, the initiator of the event did not engage himself in the construction of the future Warsaw PB system.

The first edition of the participatory budget in Warsaw city started in 2014. Nevertheless, the necessary preparations had to start earlier. After the introduction of the PB in Sopot (first city to introduce PB in Poland in 2011), a lot of Polish cities decided to follow this example. Hence, the ideas were also compelling in Warsaw. The initiative to start with a participatory budget for the capital was undertaken by Warsaw activists for democratic participation, local experts and NGOs. The subject certainly incurred political implications. the introduction of PB was certainly helpful to show that the city ruling authorities care about people's opinion and listen to their needs. Thus, it is now hard to say who and which side (local NGO or City Hall) was the main initiator and proponent of the participatory budget in Warsaw. Both sides were active and before starting organizing PB, i.e. from 2009 there were several projects financed from Norway Grants, concerning public consultations and civic participation realized together by Centre for Social Communication (grantee) and NGOs (project main executors).

We were able to distinguish several main proponents of the participatory budget in Warsaw:

- Shipyard (Stocznia)
- Dialog Field Foundation (Fundacja Pole Dialogu)
- Res Publica
- The Batory Foundation (Fundacja Batorego)
- The Foundation for Social and Economic Initiatives – FISE
- From the side of the City of Warsaw the main responsible cell has always been the Center for Social Communication (department of the Warsaw City Hall responsible for contacts with inhabitants and administrating the whole process of PB in Warsaw).



**The Unit for Social Innovation and Research “Shipyard”** was created with the aim of describing challenges of social life in Poland and to search for and promote effective, innovative methods of reacting to them, based on the principles of civic participation. It also aspires to be a place of formation and intellectual development of persons from different environments, ready to engage in public affairs in a way going beyond individual interests. Shipyard wants to be a lively centre of discussions on the importance, nature and conditions favourable to development of social innovations, as well as to become one of the initiators and leaders of wider reflection on the essence and methods of civic participation. Its ambition is to create and test solutions for various social challenges that can be launched into real life practice and contribute to meaningful social change. Shipyard deals with civic participation understood as engaging people in decision-making processes in the public sphere and discussions about issues that have impact on their lives, both at the local and state level.

**The Dialogue Field Foundation** was established in 2011 to support the participation of citizens in public life and to create tools to facilitate this dialogue. The foundation runs classes and



trainings, carrying out social research, supporting dialogue and animating the cooperation between institutions and citizens. In the school year 2015 in partnership with the Targówek District Office of the Capital City of Warsaw the Foundation carried out a pilot project. The activities run then at schools had a real effect. As a consequence of the activities carried out in the third edition of PB in Warsaw, the youth supported by the Dialogue Field Foundation submitted to the participatory budget as many as 25 projects, of which 12 passed the verification and went to vote, and 6 won. For comparison, in the first and second edition of the participatory budget, the youth did not submit any single project, and in the fourth edition only one.

**Res Publica Foundation** supports the development of culture and the level of public debate by issuing three titles: a quarterly *Res Publica Nowa*, a periodical *Visegrad Insight*, and *Magazyn Miasta (City Magazine)* dedicated to urban culture, different aspects of the development of towns and cities in Poland (from urban policy and administration of urban planning and architecture in the design and art in public spaces). *Quarterly* is the first nationwide and interdisciplinary platform for exchange of views and experiences, which helps all communities involved in the work of the Polish transformations of urban space in making wise decisions and actions to improve the quality of life of the residents. The title is addressed to communities dealing with the development of cities wishing to broaden their knowledge and perspectives regarding the environment of their work - from residents and artists to urban planners, architects and activists. It is also distributed among local self-governments and employees of municipal offices. The Foundation runs projects such as City DNA, Free Word Partnership, New Europe 100, debates and events.

**The Batory Foundation's** priorities include improving the quality of Polish democracy, strengthening the role of civic institutions in public life and equalizing opportunities of young people from poor communities. The basic method of the Foundation's operation involves making grants to non-governmental organizations engaged in public benefit activity in Poland and in Central and Eastern Europe. The Foundation also serves as a forum for activity, hosts public debates and conferences, organizes seminars and workshops, issues publications, runs social campaigns, engages in monitoring of public institutions and advocacy efforts. It encourages solidarity and generosity by offering administration of named funds and corporate funds to support initiatives that serve the public interest. One of the operational programme

of the Foundation is Your Vote, Your Choice. The program's goal is to increase public interest in local affairs and to encourage civic participation in public life, including an informed and responsible participation in local and parliamentary elections.

**The Foundation for Social and Economic Initiatives (FISE)** is an independent non-profit organisation. It was created in 1990 by people who were affiliated with the democratic opposition in the times of communist Poland. For many years, the Foundation Board was chaired by Henryk Wujec (democratic opposition activist, Polish MP), who remains a member of the organisation until today. The members of the Foundation's Board included, among other prominent social figures, Jacek Kuroń (1934-2004, twice a Minister of Labour and Social Policy) and Michał Boni (expert of the Center for Social and Economic Research, currently - minister of administration and digitalization). The organisation's headquarters are in Warsaw. The organisation's mission is a systemic approach and acting to increase employment, especially among the professionally inactive groups.

The Shipyard has been spreading the idea of participation. In 2013 it was still a certain abstract tin Poland, but they tried to persuade local governments to think of PB as a new tool that could be implemented. At the meeting in May 2013, organised by the Centre for Social Communication together with the representatives of Stocznia (Shipyard) and activists from The Dialogue Field Foundation which were conducting a pilot project on participation methods with the Cultural Centre of the Śródmieście district). There were also some other NGOs' present and the City Hall and local governments' representatives. The ngos' activists presented PB as a promising prospect, showing the advantages of introducing a participatory budget for the authorities: demonstration of courage, openness, readiness to cooperate with the inhabitants., The presented proposals were judged interesting, nevertheless at that moment they did not reach a fertile ground. The authorities acknowledged that Warsaw was not ready for such activities. The introduction of a participatory budgeting tool would have been associated with a change in the local government's philosophy, creating more space for the inclusion of residents, which in the light of limited resources and the need to respond to the changing reality was not a rational solution.

The situation changed soon after, and a few months later the participants of the May meeting received an invitation from the City Hall to talks in order to implement the participatory



budgeting system in Warsaw as soon as possible. The first edition was supposed to be launched already in 2014: it was then decisive to distribute the budget funds in 2015. This change of attitude has been often associated with the announcement of the referendum on recalling the Warsaw Mayor.

*"I would like to believe this fact [the referendum on recalling and the anxiety of the Mayor] was not the main reason"* claimed one of the interviewee.

Eventually, the referendum held in October 2013 was annulled due to an insufficient turnout. In the eyes of many of the people however, this sudden decision to introduce a participatory budget to the capital was determined by the political situation and a desire of improving the image of the Warsaw's Mayor. The necessity of a prompt declaration and the need of drawing the formal scheme for the procedure of PB in the capital emphasized the feeling. Representatives of the third sector had to decide quickly whether they wanted to take on some of the responsibility for creating the participatory budget in the capital or not. Their decision was positive: it was the only way for the experts to have a chance of a real influence on the decisions and the shape of the PB process.

To prepare Warsaw inhabitants to the new instrument introduction, the City Hall organized a series of debates aiming at preparing the scheme for Warsaw. The first debate in the cycle called "We change Warsaw. Warsaw 2.0" took place on 10 September 2013 and concerned the civic budget in Warsaw. During the all-day conference, about the civic budget planned in Warsaw and the implementation of civic budgets in other Polish cities. Members of housing councils, local non-governmental organizations, social activists and representatives of the Warsaw self-government were invited to participate. According to the original plan, residents of the capital had to decide about the expenses from the municipal coffers, within the limits of district budgets. Initial assumptions predicted that the total amount of funds allocated to residents should not be less than 0.5 - 1.0% of the district's budget. District spending was to be shaped in this way starting from 2015.

Subsequent debates from the cycle "We are changing Warsaw. Warsaw 2.0 " dealt with the subjects related to the citizens' activation and the future of the city in general:

September 16 - Family policy - how to create conditions for families with children?

September 20 - Which way are cities in the world going? How to use the urban space for inspiration / innovation / creation? - TEDxCity 2.0

September 25 - Revitalization - how to help in the renovation of degraded districts?

October 1 - Citizens' Warsaw - how to build a modern civil society?

October 08 - Strategy for the metropolis - how to build a modern and efficient metropolis? If you had 500 million PLN for the development of the metropolis, what would you spend it on?

October 15 - Warsaw Identity - what is Warsaw like? What is the Warsaw brand? What kind of Warsaw would you love to love?

October 22 - Report on the implementation of Warsaw's development strategy - what place are we in?

November 6 - Human dimension of the city - what should a city be like for people?

November 19 - Urban space - 10 places that I would like to change in Warsaw.

November 26 - The economy of the 21st century - how much innovation and creativity?

December 3 - Smart cities - how many technologies in the city?

The debates were supposed to show a change in the official approach of the city and the openness to the dialogue with inhabitants as a decisive step to introduce PB.

The need and desire of a quick introduction of the PB caused that the acceptance and adoption of the already existing solutions were somehow imposed. *"Nobody wanted to risk totally new solutions; it is always easier to adopt a model already existing and functioning somewhere else, even if it is far from being ideal."*

The original idea of non-governmental organizations and independent experts in the field was to introduce, at least to some extent, some mechanism of redistribution of funds, pay attention to poor, more forgotten and needy environments in the city (both in the context of places and communities). It was intended to indicate that there are people who need support who do not take care of themselves. PB was supposed to be an opportunity to get people better off or "beneficiaries" in the competence of the community and cultural to share with other residents, to work out changes.

*“It is not all about building a new cycling path or planting more flowers in the park, but also about inclusion issues, about a mechanism making people think about the others, less wealthy or canny.”*

The pattern originated from South America, but of course it was not suitable for introduction in Poland due to a different cultural model. Nevertheless, South American philosophy was an inspiration, it was to indicate why it should serve the system in general, present the idea of the office closer to people, decisions made in a transparent manner, with the participation and real inclusion of residents. The concept of social justice, however, turned out to be very controversial. There was no consensus that this was to be the objective of the participatory budget.

*“It is somewhere deep in our conscious to think first of all about ourselves.”* From the point of view of the governing people it would be also a question of a deep change in their vision of distribution of prerogatives and consensus for distribution of goods to the less wealthy.

The proposed model to adopt was based on the scheme: “project submission – assessment – voting”.

The City Hall proposed the adoption of a model constructed on a basis of different solutions already existing in Poland in other cities, among others in Sopot, where in 2011 a participatory budget was firstly introduced under the name "civic budget", which was the name officially adopted in Poland. Why „civic” and not „participatory” budget? One can discuss the legitimacy of accepting such a term for naming a participatory budget. The reason for its application was, perhaps paradoxically, the low readability of the term "participatory" for the average citizen, and the also a certain difficulty in pronouncing the word.

It was a bit disappointing that the proposed model was not what the NGOs wanted at the beginning. They had another vision and had to accept a given proposal and just find a technical solution to introduce it in the reality. The biggest problem pointed out by all the engaged stakeholder was a very short time to create the PB rules.

*“What was good, that we all felt responsible for the final shape of the process, we felt that our opinions were taken into account, that anyway we were there for something.”*

Unquestionably, one of the main successes of non-governmental organizations at the beginning of PB in Warsaw was the official establishment of the experts’ body, Council for

participatory budgeting beside the Mayor of Warsaw. The Council has been functioning as an advisory body having an impact on subsequent changes in the existing PB model. The Council consists of experts, people with knowledge or experience in the participatory budget of the so-called representatives of the social side, representatives of the Municipal Office of the Capital City of Warsaw, representatives of the Council of the Capital City of Warsaw and District Councils of the Capital City of Warsaw. The Council consists of 8 representatives of the social side, 6 representatives of the Municipal Office of the Capital City of Warsaw and three representatives of the Council of the Capital City of Warsaw. Members of the Council are appointed by the Mayor of the Capital City of Warsaw. Council members who are representatives of the social side are appointed from among those with knowledge or experience in the field of participatory budgeting.

The tasks of the Council include in particular: consulting and giving opinions on the implementation of the participatory budget in the Capital City of Warsaw and its districts; giving opinions on the results of evaluation and monitoring of the participatory budget in the districts of the Capital City of Warsaw; activities aimed at developing a participatory budget in the Capital City of Warsaw; supporting the implementation process in particular through consulting, advisory and representation activities.

In October 2013, the formal recruitment to the Council for participatory budgeting was completed and on December 5, 2013, the Council was appointed by the mayor's order. The first meeting of the Council took place on 13 December 2013 and on 13 January a regulation was issued on social consultations with the residents of the Capital City of Warsaw regarding the participatory budget for 2015. In the first period of PB's operation in Warsaw, Jarosław Józwiak, the vice-mayor of Warsaw, was also involved in the decision-making process. When the vice-mayor of the city was a member of the team, the decisions were easier to translate into reality. Now when there is no one from the city in the team, the work is harder and it is difficult to make introduce improvements. There is still not enough courage and lack of political will.

The promotion and information campaign was from the beginning in hands of the Social Communication Center, and partly on the side of individual districts. The citywide promotional campaign was mostly conducted through standard channels, through the distribution of

leaflets, posters at bus stops, and advertising spots on the city transport network monitors. The Center for Social Communication also announced competitions for non-governmental organizations to conduct educational campaigns in schools and generally in districts.

From the side of the city officers, from the beginning there was certainly a sense a problem of a too rushed introduction of the system. In consequences people were not prepared for the new tasks (nor mentally nor technically) and new approach. The introduction of a participatory budget was associated with supplementary new and unknown duties for officials. Additionally, officials were accustomed to treating people who came to the office as applicants wishing to settle the matter, not as partners with whom something should be developed. There was definitely a need of special trainings before launching the process, but there was no time to do it step by step.

## THE PARTICIPATORY BUDGET IN WARSAW.

### HOW DOES IT WORK?



*The participatory budget is to enable co-decision about the entire urban space, providing the community with a direct impact on all the aspects of urban life (housing, transport, social, cultural, educational, environmental). This process should not be limited to participate in the discussion or making joint decisions, first of all should prompt down taking in common responsibility for the city. (Wojciech Kęłowski, Budżet partycypacyjny w Polsce: ewaluacja, Instytut Obywatelski, Warszawa 2014)*

**Warsaw city is divided into 18 districts. The PB is realised in all the districts.**

The goals of the PB in Warsaw, following the promotional publications distributed by the Centre for Social Communication:

- Involvement of the inhabitants in co-decision on the nearest surroundings
- Integration of residents around common ideas



- Education of the inhabitants about the city budget and spending public funds
- Developing local awareness, including a sense of responsibility for the future of the local community.

Warsaw PB follows also the basic stages indicated as musts of which should consist a participatory budget. These are:

- developing and submitting ideas
- discussions about submitted proposals
- assessment of the feasibility of ideas
- selection of proposals for implementation

The decision was made at the beginning to introduce a participatory budget in each district of Warsaw, which means that we actually do up to eighteen parallel processes. Immediately, the dilemma arose whether each district should work out its own rules, or should it strive to unify them throughout the city. Both positions can be supported by important arguments. Bottom-up development of principles - at the district level - from the very beginning increases the trust and involvement of residents. On the other hand, the unification of the principles facilitates the educational and promotional campaign about the budget. Finally, the Social Communication Center of the Capital City of Warsaw, after collecting comments from districts supported the second option and decided to significantly harmonize the rules in the city scale.

### **Legal basis of the PB in Warsaw:**

Art. 5a of the Local Government Act - consultations with residents

Regulation No. 1299/2015 of the President of the Capital City of Warsaw of September 15, 2015 on determining the rules for appointing coordinators for the participatory budget, appointing and supplementing the composition of teams for participatory budget in districts, as well as the scope of their activities, as part of social consultations with residents of the

Capital City of Warsaw in terms of the participatory budget to be carried out in a given year (with later changes)

Regulation No. 1660/2017 of the President of the Capital City of Warsaw of October 18, 2017 on social consultations with residents of the Capital City of Warsaw regarding the participatory budget (Regulations for the implementation of a participatory budget in the Capital City of Warsaw in a given year).



*Figure 1: Warsaw districts*

## Where does the money come from on the participatory budget?

The financial resources needed for the implementation of residents' ideas come from the budgets of individual districts. Therefore, they are not additional money, only part of the district's budget allocated for distribution directly by residents.

The districts of Warsaw could decide on a specific amount to be allocated to the participatory budget. According to the guidelines, the Major of the Capital City of Warsaw, it

should be from 0.5% to 1% of the district's budget. Thanks to this, residents know how much they will decide.

The process is assessed and monitored by the Council for Participatory Budget. Their role is to assess the process at all stage and also to indicate strong and weak points and look for possible solutions for improvements.

### **What is common for all the 18 districts?**

1. In each district a team for participatory budget was established, i.e. a group of people appointed by the resolution of the district board to monitor and support its course.
2. The same rules of participation are applied in every district. Participation in the participatory budget is open to all residents of Warsaw without age restrictions. In the PB process in Warsaw can participate each resident of the city, every natural person who lives in Warsaw with the intention of permanent residence, including persons under 18 and foreigners.
3. You can submit projects in any district without any limits. You do not have to be registered in Warsaw and you do not have to live in a neighbourhood to submit a project or vote: i.e. you do not have to live in a given district to submit a project in its area.
4. The verification of projects applies only to the formal aspects and finance. Districts do not carry out substantive verification.
5. You can only vote in one selected district. The voter decides with which district he feels the most connected and where he wants to choose the projects. However, you can do it only in one place.

The Centre for Social Communication is responsible for the coordination of the PB in Warsaw and supervises the different phases and the proper realization of the process in all the districts.

### The district Teams for PB include:

- up to 5 representatives of non-governmental organizations (selected by lot from people present at the meeting)
- up to 6 representatives of the inhabitants (selected by lot from people present at the meeting)
- district councilors (1 from each club)
- representative of non-attached councilors;
- up to 5 representatives of the legislative bodies of the lower-level entities
- representative of the Youth District Council
- representative of the District Council of Seniors
- 4 to 5 employees of the District Office or organizational entities

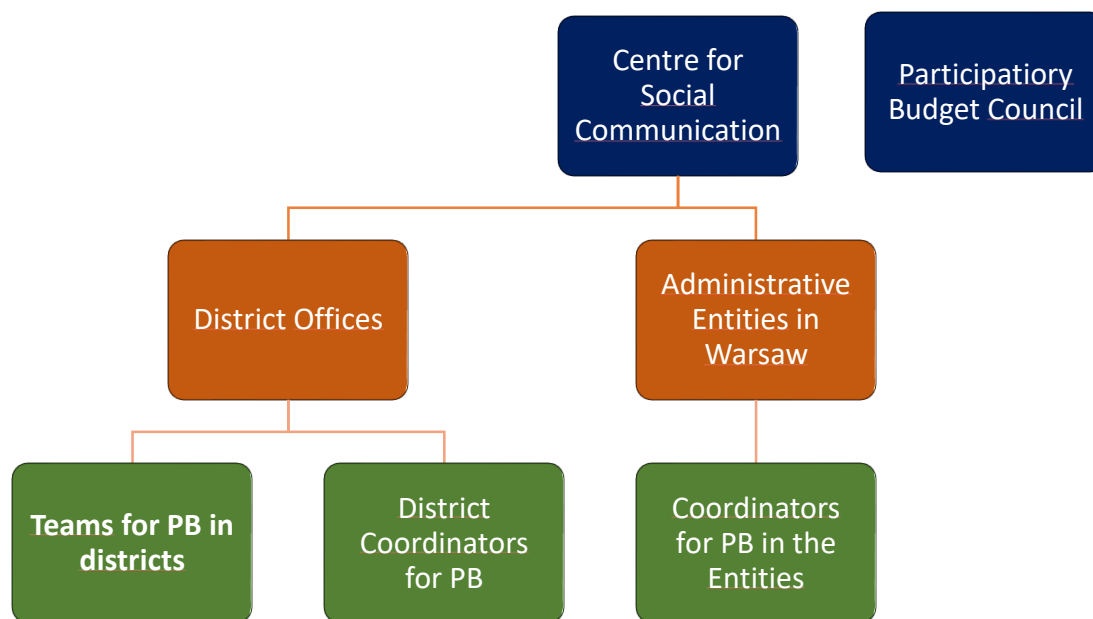


Figure 2: Organizational Structure

The PB Teams' tasks before the call for projects:

- Setting up the rules of PB team's work
- Setting up a definition of public availability of projects in the district - on the basis of the criteria developed by the Council for PB in Warsaw. It means each district decides what "public availability" means in their area – is it a question of utility for all people, openness for all citizens, possible to use by all inhabitants from a specific target group, etc.
- establishing the possibility of submitting projects of a general or local nature
- division of the district into territorial areas
- division of the amount into individual areas (local and general area)
- setting the upper limit of the value of one project or its absence

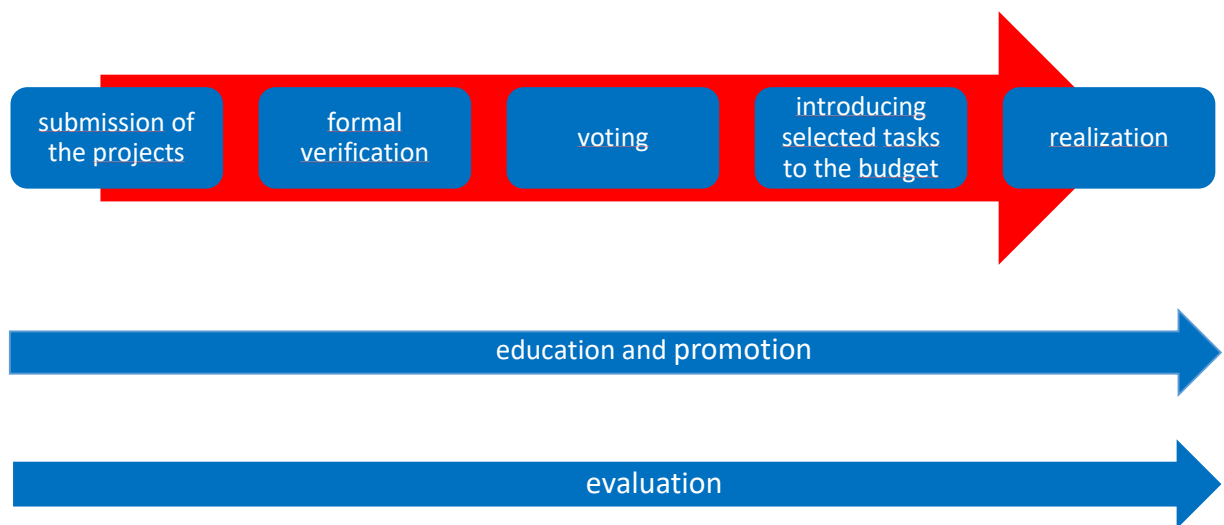
When submitting the project to the PB in Warsaw, all the entities involved in the potential project's realization have to be taken into account and consulted.

We have to be aware of the fact that the idea (project) to implement involve different actors in the city. Amongst the tasks to be executed in the framework of the PB projects, i.e. arrangements of green areas, installation of benches, new sports or recreational equipment and areas, installation of lighting, replacement of pavement or road surface, changes in the organization of traffic, changing the place of public transport stops, new bicycle paths, new parking spaces or new litter bins), we can find tasks that are subject to various municipal institutions (so called "organizational entities"). If one project requires the involvement of more than one institution, the matter gets automatically more complicated. It is also very frequent, that a project requires the involvement and decisions in more than one district. Thus, we can find the tasks of the 18 districts of Warsaw and the tasks falling under the responsibility of the organizational entities active in the city:

- Warsaw Sports Centre ACTIVE WARSAW
- City Roads Administration
- City Property Administration
- Urban Forestry
- Urban Greening

- City Cleaning Services
- City Transport
- Warsaw Nurseries Administration

### The process of the PB in Warsaw:



*Figure 3: The PB process in Warsaw*

- Announcement - information on PB
- Setting up district PB Teams
- Determining the rules of budgeting in the districts and the rules of functioning of district teams
- Project submission
- Public discussions about the proposed projects
- Formal evaluation of the projects – checking all formal requirements
- Preparation of the lists with the projects qualified for the vote
- Promotion of projects - meeting of authors of projects with the inhabitants
- Voting for the projects - making the selection of projects for implementation

- Announcement of the list of the projects selected for implementation
- Evaluation conducted throughout all the implementation process

### **How are the ideas for implementation selected?**

The basic criterion is the number of votes won. Based on this, a ranking list is created. The second criterion is the cost of implementing a given project. Projects that have won the most votes and are included in the overall amount allocated for the implementation of ideas in a given district or area are recommended for implementation.

If any of the residents' ideas took a high position in terms of the number of votes won, but the cost of its implementation is higher than the remaining amount in a given area, another idea from the list that meets these conditions until the pool of resources in the area has been exhausted has been recommended for implementation. It can be even the sixth or seventh idea from the ranking list - it is important that there is enough money to implement it.

In order for an idea to be recommended for implementation, at least 10% of people voting in a given area must vote for it and must obtain not less than 30 votes. Only important voices count.

### **Rules working for the 5th Edition of PB in 2019:**

- The project has to be submitted on a special form: electronic or paper;
- One project can have up to 3 authors;
- The author has to estimate the project costs. A real estimate of the project cost is crucial (it may not exceed the amount per area or limit set by the Team);
- The author has to gather at least 30 signatures of people supporting the idea, including 15 from the area in which the project is submitted;
- All the submitted projects are visible at one website:  
[www.twojbudzet.um.warszawa.pl](http://www.twojbudzet.um.warszawa.pl);
- There are consultation hours in the district offices;

- Warsaw inhabitants have an opportunity to discuss every submitted project at the online forum;
- The project has to be located in the area remaining in the ownership of the Capital City of Warsaw and unencumbered to third parties (unless the District Board decides otherwise);
- The project subject has to be assigned to the tasks of the Capital City of Warsaw, then assigned to the implementation of its districts or units;
- The project realization is envisaged for one calendar year. The possibility of completing the task during the financial year 2019 is very important (allowing the start of preparations in 2018, i.e. project documentation, collection of permits or public consultations);
- The project has to meet the criterion of accessibility;  
The project has to fulfill the requirements resulting from generally applicable laws;
- There is an opportunity to make the necessary changes to the project to adjust it; analysis whether the name of the project reflects its essence and is consistent with the description;
- The project cannot indicate any potential contractor or the mode of its selection.

### **The PB schedule in the 5th Edition:**

- until October 27, 2017 - appointment of the PB Teams in the district
- until November 23, 2017 - defining detailed rules for the functioning of the Team and rules of PB in the districts
- November 30, 2017 - opening meeting
- from 1 December 2017 to 22 January 2018 - submission of projects
- from 23 January to 8 May 2018 – formal evaluation of projects and discussions of inhabitants
- from 26 February to 18 March 2018 - discussion meetings



- from 8 to 25 May 2018 - appeals and re-verification
- from 1 to 30 June 2018 - meetings promoting the projects
- June 15 - 30, 2018 - voting on the projects
- until July 13, 2018 - list of the projects to be implemented

Evaluation - conducted throughout the implementation of PB, but not later than December 10, 2018

### **What is New in the 5th Edition?**

- PB Team members can not submit projects
- opening meeting before the launch of ideas
- more friendly paper forms
- changes concerning the support of submitted projects
- ban on the indication of contractor and mode of its selection
- possibility to designate a contact person
- introducing changes in the project together with the employees of the office
- requirement of at least 30 votes

### **The projects have to follow several rules to be formally accepted:**

- submitted on a special form: electronic or paper
- up to 3 authors of the project;
- estimated project cost;
- a minimum of 30 signatures supporting the idea, including 15 from the area in which the project is submitted;
- consultation for each project is required
- all submitted projects are visible on a dedicated website
- open discussion on submitted projects at the forum

## Voting in 2018:

- The order of projects on the voting lists is set by 1 June 2018 by random lottery
- You can only vote in one district and only once;
- via Internet or traditionally in person at the District Office or other designated voting points;
- For inhabitants with mobility problems and not having access to the Internet there is a possibility of voting by handing over the ballot form to the representative of the Office of the City
- The number of project you can selected is not limited, only the total amount of the project costs may not exceed the amount per area

The graphics below demonstrate some figures related to the Warsaw PB. However, it is important to mention that it is difficult or even impossible to show the real historic evolution of the PB in different years because each year the evaluation system change and different aspects are taken into consideration. The evaluation is done each year under a slightly different angle, which sometimes makes difficult to compare the same features through the following PB editions. However, we have tried to point out some of the visible differences.

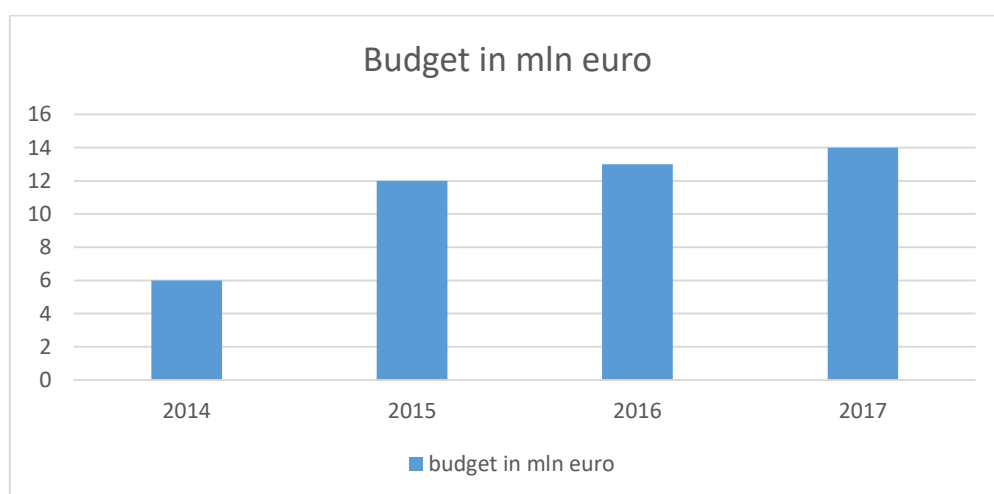
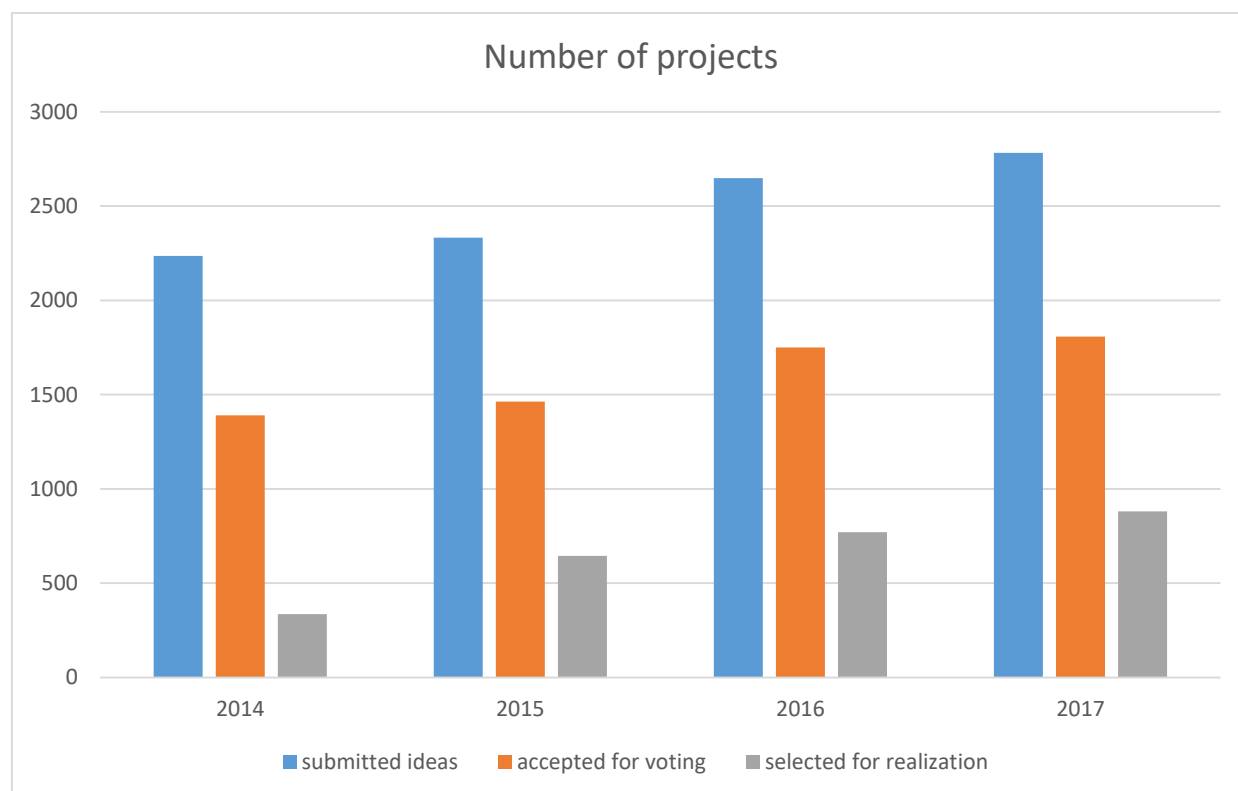


Figure 4: PB budget in mln euros

The budget raised especially after the first year. The City Hall wanted to see if the system will work and if the citizens are interested.



*Figure 5: Number of projects divided into: submitted ideas, accepted for voting and selected for realization*

The number of voters has been dropping each year. However, this fact is the consequence of the change in the voting procedure and requirements. It is not possible anymore to go from door to door with the ballot papers and collect the signatures from incidental people who are not totally aware of what they are signing, did not analysed other project proposals in the district and feel somehow forced by the situation to giving their vote.

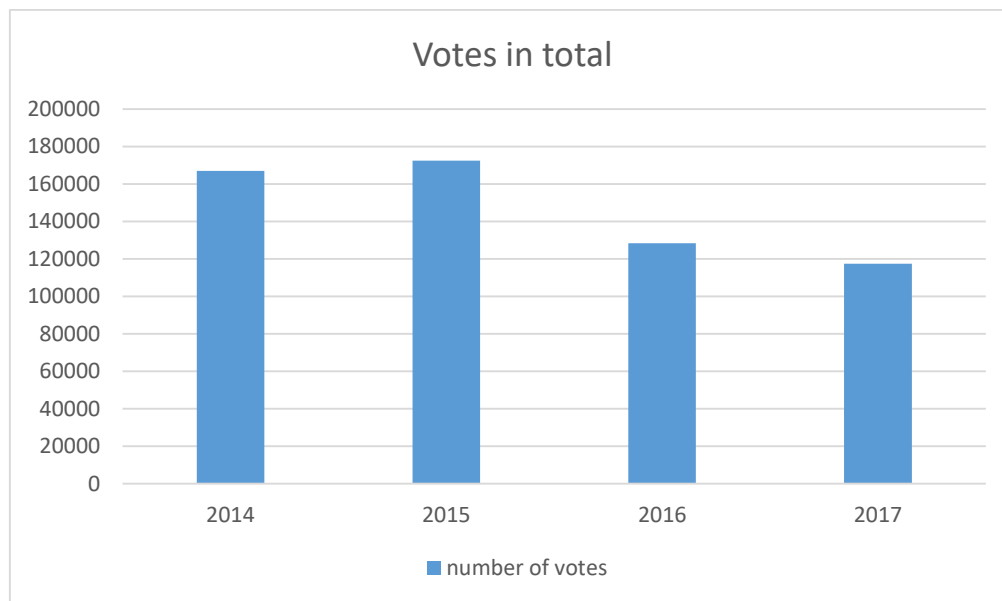


Figure 6: Number of votes in total

*"We have done it purposefully to make the voting procedure more personalised and restricted to the online individually confirmed voting, or personal voting in specifically defined places".*

*"I prefer 10 000 votes from 100 000 votes if only I am sure people are making their own and fully informed decision".*

Now the system is technically improved and the majority of the votes are collected through the online portal.

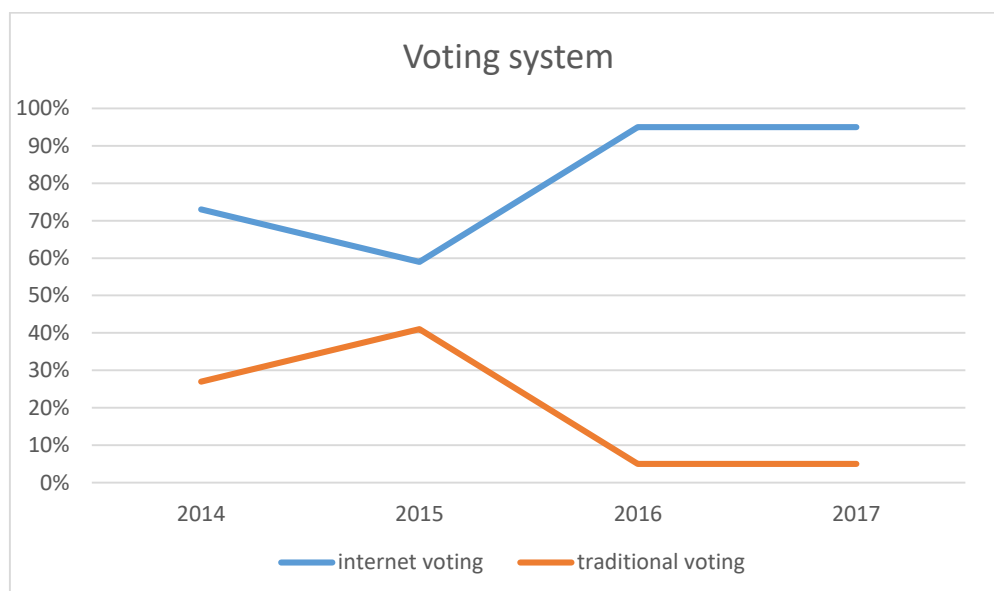
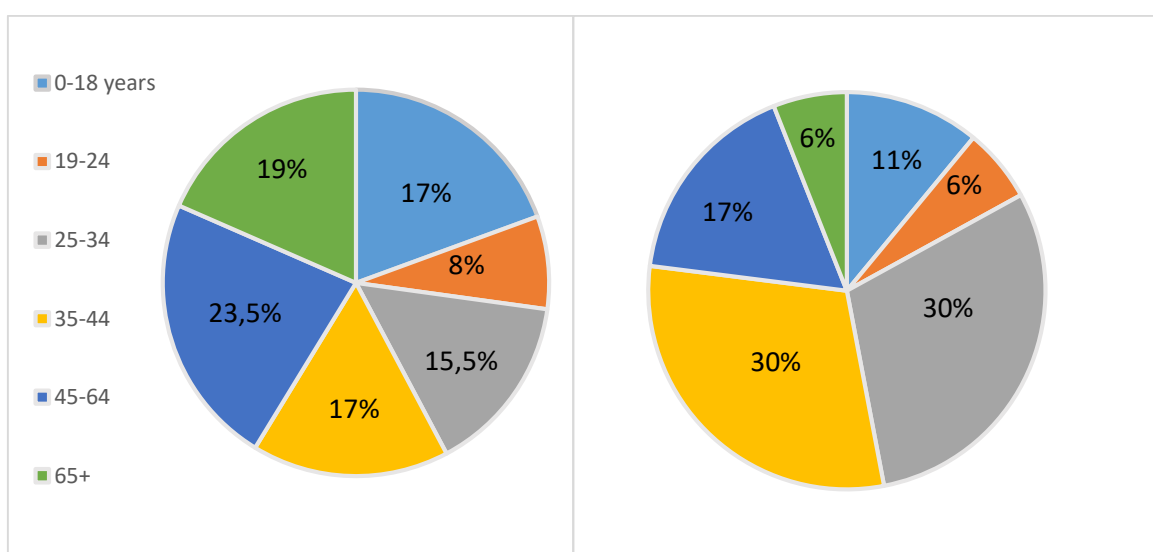


Figure 7: Voting system

The graphs below show the age of Warsaw inhabitants and the interest and engagement of different groups. Analysing the figures, we can state that there is a big need of work to activate elderly and young people. These are the target groups often addressed by special trainings or open workshops organised in the frame of the promotional activities.

The percentage of men and women interested by the PB institution are comparable, however women have been until now a bit more active.



*Figure 9: Age of Warsaw inhabitants*

*Figure 10: Age of voters*

The submitted projects, which go to vote, most often refer to matters related to culture, sport and recreation as well as urban greenery and ecology. In each of these categories there are projects covering their educational activities and improvement of school infrastructure. Projects related to the common space in the districts - small architecture, sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, streets and parking lots, or communication improvement are also frequently reported.

## Projects' categories:

Space arrangements and little architecture
Bicycle and pedestrian facilities
Sport
Nature protection
Green areas
Culture
Education
Social help
Health
Other

## Communication tools:

The Centre for Social Communication is responsible for the coordination of the communication campaign throughout the city: it ensures the consistency of the message in terms of graphics and information. Individual districts prepare only the content for the materials concerning their areas and they decide about their distribution places.

Tools of communication about PB at the city level:

- screens in public transport (trams, buses, subway, city rail)
- posters at bus stops and metro platforms
- press advertisements





Figure 11: Campaign for 2018 (different poster for each stage of the PB process: project submission, discussions on submitted projects, voting)



Figure 12: Advertisement at a bus stop in 2017

Tools of communication about PB at the local level (districts):

- Posters and leaflets in schools, shops, blocks of flats
- Brochures
- Non-standard activities (breakfast for residents, information on sidewalks)



*Figure 13: Information on PB on a Warsaw sidewalk*

Communication about PB throughout Internet:

- Google Network
- Newsletter
- Social media (Facebook - sponsored posts and official profile)

According the evaluation made in 2015, the most frequently mentioned sources of information on the participatory budget in the first years of PB were posters, leaflets and television (29% each), website of the district office (22%), press (20%) and screens in public transport (19%).

The logo of the Warsaw PB stays the same since the beginning. The shape of Warsaw city divided by the Vistula river with cogwheels of different colours on both sides, featuring the districts, different places and active people. The cogwheels evoke at the same time districts or various urban areas, different ideas and cooperation and interdependence of elements of one machine. Opinion polls indicate that most of inhabitants like the logo.





*Figure 14: Warsaw PB logotype*

The specially appointed city officers (namely those from the Centre for Social Communication) who deal with PB in Warsaw organise open conferences, workshops, promotional campaigns, activities for different target groups, special trainings at schools, financed by the Centre for Social Communication (money from the City budget) and realised by the NGOs chosen in the contests. The promotional events are organised in intergenerational local cafes and clubs. Each year volunteers are appointed and acting in the city, at the frequented places and during the city events when a lot of people are coming to spend their free time (i.e. city picnics, breakfast markets). Sometimes the volunteers are disguised as projects (i.e. a lamp or tree) and they encourage passers-by to vote in PB. When the winning projects are selected, there is an open event organised by the Centre with a big gâteau.

Each winning project is labelled to inform inhabitants about the origin of the budget and idea for the initiative. This is also a way of promoting the participatory budget as an existing and working instrument.

The Centre for Social Communication supports the potential project authors by organizing project writing marathons, enhancing for the contact with the district coordinators, publishing an online guide facilitating budgeting the project (price list “How much does the city cost?”) [www.twojbudzet.um.warszawa.pl](http://www.twojbudzet.um.warszawa.pl) . Also the maps and plans showing the owner and responsible institution for the given area [www.mapy.um.warszawa.pl](http://www.mapy.um.warszawa.pl) , and different strategic documents are publically available [www.bip.um.warszawa.pl](http://www.bip.um.warszawa.pl) .

We can find a set of valuable information on the site [www.twojbudzet.um.warszawa.pl](http://www.twojbudzet.um.warszawa.pl) and on the sites of the districts.

After the projects are submitted there are open meetings for all inhabitants in each district. The presence of the project authors is mandatory. The authors have to present their own project and all the projects are discussed. The city officials are present at the meeting.

Of all the respondents who came across information about the participatory budget, 53% knew about the meetings or online discussion forums. In this group, 15% took part in the meeting, and 41% in the discussion on the online forum. People who knew about meetings or forums, but did not participate in them, as the reason most often reported the lack of time (56%).

Voting in 2018: from 15th to 30th June:

- The order of projects on the voting lists is set by 1 June 2018 by random lottery
- You can only vote in one district and only once;
- via Internet or traditionally in person at the District Office or other designated voting points;
- For inhabitants with mobility problems and not having access to the Internet there is a possibility of voting by handing over the ballot form to the representative of the Office of the City
- The number of project you can selected is not limited, only the total amount of the project costs may not exceed the amount per area

### **Evaluation process:**

Every year professional evaluations are being made, which are the basis for reflection, discussion and change aimed at improving the functioning of the process.

Evaluation goals (following the Centre of Communication materials):

Checking whether the assumed process objectives have been achieved:

Objective 1: Including residents in co-deciding about the closest environment

Objective 2: Education of residents about spending public funds

and an attempt to answer a research question:

Does participation in the participatory budget process evoke changes in civic attitudes and what are the cultural and institutional limitations of this method of civil dialogue?

### **Evaluation methods:**

The Warsaw Barometer – evaluation carried out each year by a specialised firm (chosen following a public tender procedure) on a random, representative sample of the capital's residents. Pollsters conduct face-to-face interviews at the respondent's home, using the technique of CAPI (Computer Assisted Personal Interview) . Each of the measurements is carried out on a sample of 1,100 residents of Warsaw aged 15 and over. The maximum statistical error of measurement for this sample size is +/- 3%.

After the first edition of PB the evaluation of the Warsaw PB was subject of a special research project conducted by Barbara Lewenstein, PhD. In the frame of the project were made participative observation in four districts of Warsaw, press analysis and in-depth interviews with the project authors.

Possibility of evaluation by the citizens through a dedicated mail box and an online evaluation forum – the citizens are invited to share their opinions and discuss

Each year the Council for PB analyses the process and on a bases of the evaluations tries to think out the improvements. The changes are introduced each year. Sometimes they are slight and seems meaningless but they are usually changing something significant in the overall process

## THE FUTURE OF THE WARSAW PB

There were no regulations concerning the participatory budgeting in the Polish law system. In January 2018, the Polish government introduced a new law making the “civic budget” a mandatory instrument for the municipalities that are cities with poviats rights. Previous solution allowed flexible shaping of the procedure concerning the civic budget. The municipal council had the power to determine the amount of the allocated budget (usually slightly below 0.5% of the total expenditure municipalities), also the method of reporting and verifying proposals regarding the citizen's budget, the principles of project selection and evaluation process were an independent decision. However, most of the communes have consolidated the developed the model introduced originally in Sopot, based on a four-stage procedure:

1) Defining in the resolution the size of the budget and the course of the procedure;  
2) Submission of projects by residents; 3) Verification of projects in terms of their feasibility and compliancy with the law; 4) Voting of the residents leading to the selection of the final list of projects, With the new law system, the budget will have to be at least 0.5% of the expenditure of the municipality (contained in the last report on the implementation of the budget). In addition, the Act would limit a possibility for officials to reject the residents' ideas. The poviats council in the course of work on the draft of budgetary resolution cannot remove or change, to an essential degree, the tasks selected within the civic budget.

The competence of the commune council (poviats councils, voivodship council) will include the definition of the requirements that the model of civic budget has to meet, in particular:

formal requirements to be met by submitted projects,

the required number of signatures of residents supporting the project

the rules for assessing submitted projects as to their compliance with the law, technical feasibility, meeting formal requirements and the procedure for appealing against the decision not to allow the draft for voting

and the rules governing the conduct of voting, the determination of results and the method of making them public.

The question is if the participatory budget should be an obligation for the local self-governments. Big cities will have now to comply with the existing law, but for sure in the smallest town, there will be a space for different visions and different instrument to introduce. As the law defines the terms for the civic budget, *“Maybe this will be a time for participatory budgets to blossom, which does not have to fit into these frames.”* The adoption of a different name will open a possibility to give over a smaller percentage of the budget.

The evaluations and existing analysis of the PBprocess in the Polish capital, emphasize the weaknesses and strengths. There are several features that can be and are also true when speaking generally about PB, not only in Warsaw:

#### Strengths:

- You have influence on the state budget expenditures
- You have the feeling that you are doing something right
- You participate in local activities
- You develop a proactive attitude
- You promote interesting ideas

#### Weaknesses:

- Not all the needs of the inhabitants can be realized
- Aversion of people to local activities
- Too little knowledge of the inhabitants about the participatory tools
- No ideas or ideas that are not feasible

A lot of controversy has been raised by the issue of the so-called "general accessibility". At what moment can the proposed project be considered as publicly available? Does the purchase of vegetable peeler for kindergarten fulfil a criterion of accessibility, if the kindergarten organizes an intergenerational picnic where vegetable snacks will be served? Is

it necessary to prohibit the submission of projects by schools only because for example the playground, which can be renovated from the budget, is located on the premises belonging to the school and only pupils will have access to it? Perhaps it is worth considering to search for a kind of golden mean, so that no environment or institution can be ruled out.

### Opinions of the interviewees:

*“The participatory budget is a kind of litmus paper which shows how the reality is functioning in the public sphere. By introducing the PB institution we can easily see what is working and what is not.”*

*“The biggest advantage is of course the fact that the institution of PB exists and works in Warsaw. More and more inhabitants know about the process and people are generally in favour of the initiative.”*

*“The participatory budget system in Warsaw showed the problem and obstructions connected with the administrative structure of the capital, the fact that the districts are in a way independent from the City Hall (the mayors of the districts are not chosen by the city mayor but by the districts councils which facilitates political play-acting between left and right. In consequence the decision making process is difficult and time consuming administratively.”*

*“The existing model (not only in Warsaw) based mainly on a plebiscite system shows nowadays a spectrum of obscure problems”*

*“The top-down process is complicated: it is not easy to make happen in reality what you have figure out and decided during an official meeting. Now when there is no one from the city in the team, the work is also harder and it is difficult to make introduce improvements.”*

*“There is still not enough courage and lack of political will.”*

*“The decentralisation in Warsaw is not acting in favour. It is not possible to make everybody on top understand the idea and the intentions.”*

*“The problem is also complicated, because the city officers have not been prepared for the new assignments. It was the problem visible at the beginning of the process, and the situation did*

*not change much during the five years of the PB. We can talk of course a process of natural adaptation of all the actors but there are no systemic procedures.”*

*“The offices where always considered as a place, where incoming citizens where treated as petitioners, a different kind of people who does not understand anything and is difficult to deal with. These clichés are often at the root of the officers’ behaviour and there is a profound need of training and time to prepare them for a different approach. It is of course much generalised opinion and maybe injurious to many clerks, but this stereotype is based on the impressions of the people wishing to submit their PB proposal.”*

*“They (the officers) have to deal with the city officers, and sometimes it is very hard and unpleasant. On the other hand, we should understand it is not always easy for these clerks to deal with new tasks they are totally different from the “normal ones”. The time and understanding is needed from both of the sides.”*

*“PB in Warsaw showed a structural problem related to the fact that districts function as auxiliary units, mayors choose councils and not the president, the process is very long - a long process of flow of ideas, decisions from above to districts, mayors and officials. Decentralization in Warsaw makes the process difficult. The model „apply - select” in this context is very complicated and misguided taking into account the city's administrative system. It is difficult to coordinate a process that is both simultaneous and somewhat independent in each of the 18 districts.”*

*“The plebiscite-like system is also badly assessed, where the notion of the general good disappears, and individual success or the interest of a very narrow group counts.”*

*“The Warsaw model is not flawless, but still, we are having the one of the best models in Poland taking account of the complexity of the capital city administration and multitude of problems we have to face and deal with.”*

*[As for the number of voters] “we should not compare the scale of the participatory budget with for example the scale of the local government campaign where we have a much bigger budget, more people and more money engaged in the campaign. The scale, the goals and the respective results will never be the same and it should not surprise us.”*

*“Of course we should aim a bigger voter turnout and it would be great to attract more people to the PB institution. However, we should be realistic. “It is impossible to expect from all the*

*people to be engaged in the process taking into account its scale and real possibilities: we are fighting over less than 0,5 of the overall budget.”*

*“We should be aware of the fact that Polish people are among the most busy nations in Europe. People simply do not sometimes have time to prepare PB projects. For some people the concept of public participation is totally abstract: we forgot about the participation from the past (people were more eager to help each other without expecting of any personal profit). Nowadays people focus at the individual success. There is little space for community thinking. For 25 years we have been taught to think in category of rivalry and winning obligation: this line of reasoning generates conflicts which are also visible in the participatory budgeting process. We need more time to build relationships, deeper connections and trust.”*

*“In Poland a lot of people had loss everything after WWII: their social position changed from one day to another and they often had to start building everything from the very beginning. So maybe we are just too critical and demanding.”*

*“There is definitely too little emphasis on social consultations, searching for common problems that could be solved with the participatory budget tool.”*

*“More education is needed and a set of lessons should be included into the school program. We should show the example of PB as a tool for participation. Therefore, it would be good to prepare lesson sets and ready-made tools for school. There are already some classes for children in schools - run by NGOs, but if teachers were prepared, it would be less expensive and easier for a wider implementation. That is why there is a profound need of work with teachers.”*

*“We need more public discussions, consultations and debates but if they would not end with a decision and a resolution to adopt it can be considered as loss of time and in this context frustrating and pointless.”*

*“There is still a big need of a city-wide thinking. The PB could be used to indicate some general directions for the city politics. In the current situation we are too much focused on project thinking and there is no strategic approach to the city development. We should stop focusing the project categories and think in terms of the city future and the development priorities to choose. The problem is to find a way to do it properly.”*



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