

DEFINITION

Participatory budgeting (PB) can broadly be described as a democratic decision-making process where everyday citizens decide how to allocate at least part of a budget (generally a public budget).

A BRIEF HISTORY

The first full PB process was run in Porto Alegre, Brazil in 1989 following the election of the Workers' Party in 1988 – a progressive political party that ran a campaign based on democratic participation. From the late 1990s, PB appeared in different formats in Central and Eastern Europe, Asia and Africa. The PB process in the US was run in 2009 (Wampler, cited in Boutall 2009).

PB processes now occur across more than 3,000 cities and municipalities across the world (Participatory Budgeting: Next Generation Democracy 2016).

AROUND THE WORLD *PB Case studies*

USA



New York City's PB Cycle

In 2016, over 67,000 New Yorkers voted to allocate \$38 million dollars for locally developed capital projects across 28 Council Districts in New York City. The process is inclusive, with ballots available in multiple languages and the use of digital, remote and pop-up voting activities and options.

More information:
New York City Council
[press release](#)

FRANCE



Paris - the world's largest PB project

In 2014 the city of Paris launched the world's largest participatory budget. Between 2014 and 2020, the city has committed to reserving €500 million to be spent through participatory budgeting. In 2016, 158,964 people voted on how to spend nearly €100 million.

More information:
Participatory Budgeting Project [case study](#) and Participedia [case study](#).

BRAZIL



Recife's- accountable, inclusive PB project

Recife's PB approach includes offering citizens a chance to monitor and track project implementation. Additionally, children are involved in the development of project proposals, and broad participation is encouraged through innovative mobile and electronic voting channels.

More information:
newDemocracy Foundation [case study](#).

ICELAND



My Neighbourhood - turning trust around

Since 2011, the City of Reykjavik has allocated 300 million ISK (approx. \$3.8million AUD) a year to fund citizens' ideas for neighbourhoods across the municipality. The project is part of efforts to re-engage with citizens, rebuild democracy and increase people's trust in government following the banking crisis of 2008. 608 ideas have been approved by citizens in the My Neighbourhood project from 2012-2017.

More information:
Participatory Budgeting Network UK [case study](#), and Citizens Foundation [portfolio page](#) for the My Neighbourhood.

PRINCIPLES *A summary of the principles of PB as described by Wampler (2012):*



VOICE

Active citizen participation

An accessible, deliberative process that is inclusive of diverse perspectives and new ideas. It brings citizens and decision makers together to debate with each other about public resources and priorities.



VOTE

Increased citizen authority

Citizens have direct influence over the budget decision. Authority or ownership is placed in the hands of the community, and citizens make difficult choices about resource allocation.



SOCIAL JUSTICE

Reallocation of resources

By including previously excluded or unheard people in the process, PB can have a redistributive effect on public budgets. Resources are put towards the issues most important to the community.



OVERSIGHT

Improved transparency

A clear, open process that allows citizen oversight. Includes ongoing conversations between decision makers and the community regarding project implementation.

REFERENCES

Wampler, Brian (2012), *Participatory Budgeting: Core principles and Key Impacts*, Journal of Public Deliberation: Vol. 8 : Iss. 2 , Article 12. Available at: <http://www.publicdeliberation.net/jpd/vol8/iss2/art12>

Boutall, Trevor 2009, Participedia, accessed 13 May 2018. Available at: https://participedia.net/en/methods/participatory-budgeting#cite_note-wampler-0

Participatory Budgeting: Next Generation Democracy, 2016, The Participatory Budgeting Project, New York and California. Available at: <https://www.participatorybudgeting.org/white-paper/>