

CITIZENS BUDGET IN GDAŃSK

Image/photo of good practice/initiative



Description of the good practice /initiative: history, activities, number of involved people, territorial scope, current scale, future plans, impact and benefits (**Max. 400 words**)

Citizens' budget is a tool enabling citizens to choose projects to be implemented in Gdansk each year. Citizens submit ideas and they get voted by the public. Everyone who lives in Gdansk is 16 years old or older can vote. The first edition took place in 2013. The budget for citizens' projects has varied from 9 mln zł (2,25 mln Euro) to 12,5 mln zł. (3,1 mln Euro) - up to 1% of the budget of the City of Gdansk. The turnout was from 13% (year 1) to 10% (year 2, 3). The projects submitted can be of almost any kind as long as they stay within the responsibility of the Municipality.

The process includes a number of stages:

- creation and submission of project ideas
- verification by participatory group (are the projects within the scope?)
- giving each verified project a number (by ballot)
- publication of the ideas
- voting for local-area projects and whole-city projects
- the most voted projects win
- some projects are later implemented by the Municipality (e.g. infrastructure) and some by the citizens (e.g. NGOs),

We perceive the method of working as a good practice, because it includes active role of participatory group of people who take care of transparency and accuracy of the process. The group consists of area councillors, NGO representatives and Municipality. It also involves regular

evaluation and adjustment each year. Citizens' budget enabled us to reach out to people who never before had been involved in community processes and it is very educational, empowering. and simple.

Brief description of how the specific local public service has been challenged (with figures, if possible)

Citizens' budget challenges the whole of Municipality and City Council, because it interferes with logic of bureaucracy. It includes participation of people at all stages of preparation, implementation and evaluation. It has a big impact on people who work in the Municipality whose role it to secure/enable/support the implementation of the chosen projects. It helped people in the Municipality to understand the needs of the people in various areas.

Role of the municipality within the process (e.g. how the municipality facilitates or coordinates the process to systematise/upscale a civic initiative)

Municipality is responsible for implementation of the whole proces of voting and implementing the projects (spending money according to people's voice), key stages:

- preparing the tools for submission of ideas and voting (on-line),
- co-ordinating the creation of the participatory groups (although the representants of citizes get chosen by the Local-Area-Council Board and the NGO Board),
- administration of the process,
- promoting campaign,
- co-ordination of evaluation (survey and consultation-meetings),
- supporting the implementation or enabling and supporting citizens in implementation – usually it means commissioning implementation of the chosen projects.
- reporting

Key attributes (success factors) enabling (municipal) staff to implement the project successfully

- Certainly commitment of the Mayor and the City Councill motivated staff to engage,
- Positive feedback from people who perceive it something to be proud and happy about,
- Engagement of local networks: NGO, local area councils, schools,
- Promoting campaign (although people think it should be bigger)

Links to website for further information on the good practice/initiative and recommendation to a specific partner

<http://www.gdansk.pl/budzet-obywatelski>