Cascais Participatory Budgeting, Portugal

1. Summary

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| This case was produced by the Municipality of Cascais, Portugal and it was one of the three recipients of the 2017 [GIFT Public Participation in Fiscal Policy and Budget Making Award](http://www.fiscaltransparency.net/use/how-public-institutions-and-csos-are-changing-the-game-the-gift-public-participation-in-fiscal-policy-and-budget-making-award/). |

Cascais has a cleavage problem between citizens, policies and politicians, which translates into more than 60% electoral abstention. In 2011, Participatory Budgeting (PB) was the mechanism the municipality found to bring together citizens, politicians and technicians. PB is a process through which the population takes decisions or contributes to decision-making on the future of a part of the available public resources. It is the most relevant project that Cascais has to promote public participation, and it was born of the need to strengthen civil society, modernize public services and combat corruption, based on accountability, active citizenship, participation, transparency, and the management of resources according to people’s real needs, rather than the self-interest of departments.

The approach used by the municipality entails a legally binding methodology, low cost, with two cycles (decision and implementation) where citizens participate in a range of instances: from the presentation of ideas, to project discussions until the inauguration. PB is accessible to all, promotes social inclusion, gender equality, and integration of all social groups and is a pioneer in developing a new model of public administration.

In 6 years, with a population of 206.000 in Cascais, the municipality has engaged more than 150.000 citizens, has implemented 88 projects (works) worth 15.820.000€ and has strengthened people's confidence in their public authorities. This is the most voted PB of Portugal, and its methodology has been replicated in more than 10 cities and influenced practices in different continents. Citizen engagement involves the definition of priorities in terms of public spending. Therefore, it becomes a permanent protagonist in the public administration. The PB combines direct democracy with representative democracy.

PB requires the direct involvement of citizens at 4 essential stages: identifying the problems and needs of society; annual decision-making on priorities; the implementation of the projects; the monitoring and evaluation of works. The participatory process is based on various mechanisms, including: public meetings on territorial or thematic issues; Internet pages; and phone messaging systems. The methodology rests on the notion that getting people to find common ground through discussing ideas they have for their community will motivate participation, in a way addressing the lack of trust in politicians and the lack of enthusiasm with politics. Thus, in all, there are more votes in the Cascais PB process than in the election of the City Council.

PB improves service delivery and the power of citizens to make their voices heard in local politics. There is a trust that generates mobilization. People approach the municipality because of PB and over time as an outcome, they get increasingly involved. People take responsibility for the management and maintenance of all aspects of projects. They deal with problems and find solutions together and with the municipal technicians. PB –as a new way of decision-making and a tool for active participation-- develops new behaviours in community, leading it to take an active role defining priorities for the use of available resources, ensuring and enabling everybody’s right to participate in developing their territory.

2. Why (For what Purpose)

Participatory Budgeting emerged in the eighties in Brazil, as a way of bringing the poor and excluded citizens into the local budget decision-making process involving them in prioritizing their problems and finding solutions. PB aims to defend those democratic needs that are not being met by government. It promotes governance by the people and, in principle, responsibility. Centralization of power away from the control of elected governments and citizens, has created tension and so generated waves of "democratic discontent" all over the world. It is a general ill feeling, which affects many different parts of the social fabric and that is reflected in many ways, for example, in large public demonstrations, the high rates of electoral abstention and lack of trust in institutions.

In the case of Cascais, the municipality made it one of its government axis to promote an active citizenship, seeking to generate proximity through participatory democracy, fostering a spirit of community and promoting volunteerism and social responsibility, and focusing on the quality of government, in an attempt also of addressing the crisis of representation in democratic procedures. PB can be seen as a local response to this problematic situation. Trust can be seen as the engine of democracy: the delegation of power through the vote. Traditional representative democracy seems to be unable to meet the new societal challenges generated in the contemporary world, and the need exists to mobilize the energy and confidence of people.

Thus, in 2011, a new team was born at municipality, and the PB was based on the Local Agenda (A 21). A Letter of Principles was prepared for PB promoting informed participation to bring citizens closer to decision-makers and contribute to administrative modernization and fostering of a dynamic civil society. These objectives structured a deliberative PB in which participants could submit proposals and decide projects within a stipulated budget. It started with 3% of municipal budget.

In 2013, the Division of Citizenship and Participation was created, which included A21, volunteering, cultural associations, neighbors’ associations and the PB. This division was the result of the Local Government commitment to promote democratic governance, and to increase the participation of the citizens in the management of the territory.

Comparing with other municipalities in Portugal, Cascais stands out for its representativeness, as a high voter rate, amount of investment, number of participants in public sessions, voting model, follow-up work by projects’ proponents, work executed percentage, and a PB team of exclusive dedication show.

3. Authorizing environment

PB is based on two fundamental principles of the democratic rule of law - the Principle of Participation and the Principle of Cooperation of the Administration with Individuals. These principles are present in the Articles 266 to 268 of the Portuguese Republic Constitution.

Cascais’ PB is the result of the municipal executive’s political decision and it is not framed in any national or regional legislative initiative. However, Portugal is the European country with the most participatory budget (it has 118 active participatory budgets).

In 2017 Portugal stands out internationally for creating the first National Participatory Budget in the world. In its objectives we can read "The Participatory Budget Portugal - NPB is a democratic process, direct and universal, through which people decide on public investments in different areas of governance. Through the NPB people can decide how to invest 3 million euros. It should be noted that the participatory budget of Cascais is so impressive that it provides one million euros more than the national participatory budget.

Following the National PB, the government has also created a participatory budget for schools and youth in 2017. These two processes have also been embodied in innovative practices.

4.Who and How

The Cascais PB methodology has two cycles:

* Decision &
* Implementation.

The Decision Cycle has 4 phases:

1. PREPARATION OF THE PROCEDURE (Jan/ Mar)
2. RECEIVING OF PROPOSALS (Apr/May)

PB receives proposals during 9 public sessions in different districts to promote equal access to population.

Participants are checked and registered as residents, workers or students in Cascais and the sessions are translated into Portuguese and English (and their respective sign languages).

They sit at round tables and explain theirs ideas/ projects.

Each table of 7 to 9 participants has a municipal technician that leads the workflow.

From each table, 2 ideas are selected, then presented to all participants in the room. Each participant has two votes to use in 2 different proposals, which he/she wants to validate. The proposals approved per session are proportional to the present participants. There is also the possibility of making a proposal online. The two most voted proposals are presented in the last public session.

1. TECHNICAL ANALYSIS (May /Sep)

Multiservice teams are set up to evaluate and budget the proposals approved in public sessions, according to the eligibility criteria set out in the regulation:

A. Be sufficiently specific and delimited in the territory;

B. Not to exceed the € 300.000,00;

C. Not to exceed 24/36 months of execution;

D. Be compatible with other municipal plans.

1. VOTING (Oct/ Nov)

Once the technical analysis finishes, a final list of projects is announced and the voting begins. The municipality invests in street publicity through outdoors advertising boards, leaflets, exhibitions and through electronic release internet (website and Facebook). The campaign is increasingly being developed by proponent groups in order to publicize their projects and obtain votes.

One mobile phone number allows one vote. Votes are made by SMS and can be used to vote against or in favour of a particular project.

The announcement of the winning projects closes this cycle. Non-winning projects are saved into an ideas bank.

**Implementation cycle**

This second cycle is essentially composed of phases which do not differ in terms of nomenclature from the execution of other works or public investments carried out by the Municipality. The challenge and at the same time its innovative character results from the participation of the citizens in a work in which they are not traditionally involved.

1. PREPARATION OF PRELIMINARY STUDY

This consists in the definition and generic implementation of the projects, trying to adapt the documents of preparation and their respective implementation to the iintentios of the proponents. It is in this sense that the Municipality chose to include in the methodology a meeting with the authors of the proposals before starting the technical work, in order to listen to them, to understand their perspectives regarding the execution and future operation of the investment to be carried out, reconciling all this with the technical and budgetary restrictions, as well as with the legal procedures that the Town Hall must respect.

This preliminary meeting may be open to the entire population, especially the one that is within the scope of influence of the project, if it is a larger investment and with greater impact on people's lives. The objective is to understand the different perspectives on the intervention and to seek the points of balance and consensus.

1. PROJECT DESIGN

This step involves the detailed definition of the works to be carried out or the goods and services to be contracted, and the local authority may use its teams, deliver this service abroad or delegate its execution to another entity, in particular if it is directly targeted or beneficiary of the investment foreseen. Also, at this point, there is a concern to keep tenderers informed and to involve them in the evolution of the implementation.

1. GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT / DIRECT ADMINISTRATION

Here, the Town Hall can directly ensure the enforcement of projects through its services, choose to contract outside, or, alternatively, protocol its implementation with a local institution, especially if it is a direct beneficiary of the work/equipment or is responsible for its future management and maintenance.

1. CONTRACT AWARDING

This is the contract with the performing entity, which in no way differs from other projects and investments made by the Town Hall.

1. INAUGURATION

Once the project has been completed, it will be delivered to the public in a public ceremony, which will be attended by the Mayor of the Cascais Town Hall and by the proponents of the project. The work or equipment contain a signage that is the result of the Participatory Budget.

5. Results and impact

The Cascais PB in its 6 editions had a strong impact in the territory.

This most measured impact was in participation:

Total of votes (6 years) 219.307

Sum of participants in public sessions 4389

Most participated session 210

Total of proposals (9 sessions x 6 years) 975

Total of proposals in plenary (9 sessions x 6 years) 628

Total of proposals/ technical Analysis (9 sessions x 6 years) 289

Total of projects submitted to voting (6 years) 196

Total of works (after voting) 88

The implementation rate had following impacts:

The sum of investment in works during 6 years was 15,8M€.

The 88 projects have the following results:

PB 2011: 12 projects/ 12 completed

PB 2012: 15 projects/ 14 completed

PB 2013: 6 projects/ 5 completed

PB 2014: 9 projects/ 9 completed

PB 2015: 21 projects/ 17 completed\*

PB 2016: 24 projects/ 16 completed\*

*\*Projects take 2-4 years to be completed.*

Numbers of Projects have impact in the following areas:

25 in Education

12 in Urban Rehabilitation and Rehabilitation

11 in Green spaces

10 in Sport

10 in Public road network

7 in Security and civil protection

6 in Culture

5 in Social Action

1 in Environmental protection and energy

1 in Innovation and knowledge

Cascais PB in undergoing an evaluation by an external consultant. Findings reveal that people get involved in the municipality because of PB and then get more involved. New organizations have been instituted due to PB. The "shared conception" of a project, the "proximity of the local authority", the "easy and accessible dialogue" and the "establishment of a new relationship between citizens and local authorities" are some advantages described by people.

The projects implemented have improved citizen’s lives, and today everybody lives less than 1,2km from a implemented PB project.

Other impacts of this action are the skills improvement, raise awareness of procedural constraints, better understanding of public administration procedures. This also leads to a reconsideration of citizen’s leaders, responsibility towards management and maintenance of projects/ works. People are involved, not only in their problems but also in solutions.

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|  |  |  |  |  | PB 2011 | PB 2012 | PB 2013 | PB 2014 | PB 2015 | PB 2016 | TOTAL |
| Participants | | | | | 504 | 395 | 762 | 747 | 862 | 1119 | **4389** |
| Most participation at a session (number of participants) | | | | | 91 | 115 | 174 | 127 | 183 | 210 | **900** |
| Total of proposals  (9 sessions) | | | | | 286 | 223 | 201 | 100 | 81 | 84 | **975** |
| Total of proposals  (Plenary) | | | | | 130 | 147 | 105 | 81 | 81 | 84 | **628** |
| Total of proposals (Technical Analysis) | | | | | 48 | 48 | 47 | 43 | 46 | 55 + 2 (online) | **289** |
| Total of projects ( submitted for voting) | | | | | 30 | 32 | 26 | 31 | 40 | 37 | **196** |
| Total of projects  (after voting) | | | | | 12 | 16 | 7 | 9 | 21 | 24 | **88** |
| Total of votes | | | | | 6.903 | 23.198 | 33.715 | 41.005 | 55.919 | 58.567 | **219.307** |
| Available Budget | | | | | 2,1M€ | 2,5M€ | 1,5M€ | 1,5M€ | 4,0M€ | 4,2 M€ | **15,8M€** |

SEE ADDITIONAL MATERIALS:

The number of votes is only one of them. PB is deliberative and emerges as a decision-making process based on people power, so citizens have a continuous interaction in the whole process, which is the key element of our participation concept:

Communication (bms) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kfH2U2Ws184>

Public Sessions <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sppl0M34dq8>

Technical analysis <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pHidvE7EG10>

Voting <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Kg6qaMgzt8>

Implementation of the projects [www.cascaisparticipa.pt](http://www.cascaisparticipa.pt)