

Participatory Budgeting: a powerful and expanding contribution to the achievement of SDGs and primarily SDG 16.7

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Introduction and summary

After a brief definition of Participatory Budgeting (PB) and its evolution over the last three decades, this essay explores in section 1 its links with some Sustainable Development Goals, primarily SDG 16 *Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels*, and focuses on PB capacities to meet SDG Target 16.7 *Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels*. It stresses as well that PB contributes to attain other SDGs, in particular SDG 11¹ (and primarily its target 11.3). Section 2 highlights through short narratives and overviews, how and to what extent some Local and Regional Initiatives successfully implement PB and meet various of SDGs targets and cross cutting principles, primarily *leaving no one and no places behind*. Based on lessons from past and current PB practices section 3 suggests eight recommendations to strengthen LRG capacities to support PB practices as a way to achieve SDG 16 and its 16.7 target. It concludes that given its huge potential and contribution to localizing SDG 16.7, PB could be a relevant indicator to monitor this target.

1. Participatory Budgeting and its links with SDGs, in particular SDG Target 16.7

Participatory budgeting is, at its core, a form of decision-making that actively involves the citizenry in prioritizing spending of public resources: “*PB is a mechanism or a process through which people make decisions on the destination of all or a portion of the public resources available or else are associated to the decision-making process*”². Beyond this general definition, PB experiments span a broad spectrum: from symbolic participatory gestures with little transformative impact, to vectors of structural change in cities’ governance systems. The latter have reconfigured relationships and responsibilities among actors and institutions in the public domain – and have led to measurable improvements in the quality of life of their citizens³.

One can distinguish four phases of PB evolution. The years 1989 to 1997 were marked by a period of *experimentation*: starting in Porto Alegre, Brazil, and a few other cities (Santo André in Brazil and Montevideo in Uruguay), new forms of participatory and representative forms of decision making of public resources were literally “invented”. This was followed, in a second phase, by a “*Brazilian spread*”, when more than 130 Brazilian municipalities adopted the model, with marked variations. With the new millennium, came a stage of *expansion* beyond Brazil and of *diversification*, with existing models being profoundly adapted⁴. Under this later phase, PB has gradually spread throughout Latin America, followed by Europe and, since 2003, the African continent. All through the 2010 decade a phase of *consolidation* and *universalization* can be observed, as PB occurs in all regions in the world, with a noticeable

¹ SDG 11: Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable] and SDG Target 11.1: By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums and SDG Target 11.3: By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries.

² Genro, Tarso, De Souza, *Ubiratan 1998, Presupuesto Participativo: la experiencia de Porto Alegre*. CTA; EUDEBA, Buenos Aires

³ Cabannes, Y, Lipietz, B (2018). *Revisiting the democratic promise of participatory budgeting in light of competing political, good governance and technocratic logics*. Environment and Urbanization 30(1): 1-18.

⁴ Cabannes, Y (2003), *Participatory budgeting and municipal finance, Base Document*, Launch Seminar of URBAL Network No 9, Municipal Government of Porto Alegre.

massification in Asian & Russian LRGs, Arab and North American cities being the latest newcomers to the fold.

PB has been a major innovation in participatory governance worldwide, with more than 6,000 experiences listed across 40 countries in 2018. This conservative number covers: [a] great regional differences, with for instance quite a limited number still in Arab countries when compared with Latin America; [b] a very high number of experiences in few countries, such as the ones with National Laws on compulsory PB at LG [South Korea, Dominican Republic] or LRGs levels [Peru] that sum up over 2600 “official” cases in these three countries alone; [c] a very swift spreading in some countries that turns difficult its monitoring such as in Russia that expanded in over 50 out of its 85 federal regions in a couple of years or in Indonesia where a recent law opens up the possibility of PBs in its 73 000 villages. What remains clear, and of direct interest for the achievement of SDGs is that over the next decades, the number of LRGs practising different types of PB will continue to expand at a sustained rate, and therefore should be taken into account.

Here are some illustrations that beyond the challenges of computing give a sense of the massive scale that PB has reached over the last three decades

Seasoned PB specialists do highlight the permanent difficulty to compute the actual number of PBs taking place, for instance in **Brazil**: “*the 423 cases raised by the last RBOP survey (2015) probably include some experiences that can loosely be called PB, since the study did not adopt a single model ... it is still not possible to provide conclusive answers about the number of PB in Brazil*”⁵. The important aspect here, is that despite numerous “authorized voices” on the democratic fatigue in Brazil, the reality on the ground indicates that PB still captures LG and civil society’s imagination and their number have never been so high. Similarly, a recent essay on **African** PB only gives estimate: “To-date *estimates* indicate more than 500 cases”⁶ and in **Cameroon**, the most recent data amounts to a significant 107 PB experiments, “*but the reality could be much beyond*”⁷.

In the **Philippines**, the *Grassroots PB program*, formerly Bottom-up Budgeting succeeded in the mid 2010s to expand to virtually all the Local Governments Units (1633 in total, in 2015)⁸. However, the number of projects actually implemented is notably low and would need a closer examination to include or not all these experiences. Conversely, some experiences are notably under estimated: Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan Province in **China** with an estimated population of 20+ millions of inhabitants, practices PB since 2008, and funded over 100 000 PB projects. It is usually counted as one experience. In reality, this “single tree hides a huge forest” of independent experiences taking place in about 2600 peri urban villages and in around 1400 urban sub-districts. Therefore, for this Metropolis alone, the number of 4000 would be more appropriated.

The case of **Poland**, very little documented so far, is illustrative of a massive number of experiences through multiple PB modalities that can take place in villages, peri-urban municipalities, urban municipalities or Regional capitals in a sole country: “*A unique form of budgetary participation is the Village (Sofecki) Fund, functioning since 2009 in the rural and*

⁵ Fedozzi, L., Furtado, A & Rangel, R. (2018) *Participatory, Budgeting in Brazil: Elements for a Brief Evaluation*, in Hope for Democracy (ibid)

⁶ Kanouté, B., Som-1 JD (2018), *Participatory Budgeting in Africa: A Kaleidoscope tool for good governance and local democracy*, in Hope for Democracy (ibid)

⁷ Communication with the NGO ASSOAL and RNHC, the Network of inhabitants from Cameroon (March 2019) that support 27 of them: “*107 PB might be quite a conservative figure, as various institutions such as UN Women, SNV, The Delegation of the European Union, GIZ, etc have either launched or supported financially PB at local government (communes) level*”.

⁸ Santos, Renze C.E., (N.D) *Participatory Budgeting and the Philippines: A Cursory Survey of Selected Participatory Budgeting Experiences the Philippines*, National College of Public Administration and Governance, last downloaded March 20th 2019, <https://www.academia.edu/25459170/>

urban-rural municipalities.... that in 2016 was practiced in 1457 municipalities out of 2175". In addition, "it is now in between 200 and 250 [urban] municipalities⁹" and in most regional [voivodeships] capital cities under different modalities.

PB Links with some SDGS

PB Links with SDG Target 16.7 *Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels*

Responsiveness. One of the common features of PB is to fund projects with local public resources that respond to citizen's priorities, either through a pre-established list of eligible projects, defined by the LG, that participants will chose from, or more commonly from a list of project ideas resulting from people's assembly and that, once developed into eligible projects will be prioritized through citizen's vote. They are normally implemented during the following year.

Inclusiveness. Most PB have open up channels of participation towards organised or non-organised civil society [both models exist] with a demonstrated capacity to reach social groups that had historically benefitted less, if at all, from local governments attention. Even if very much still need to be made, a significant number of Local and regional Governments have been successful in reaching out and including the most vulnerable and disadvantaged social groups. Some prominent cases will be introduced in the next section. PB with social focus, according to the city on the elderly, women, young people, ethnic minorities, refugees, migrants, LGBT+ allow to conclude that PB, under certain conditions, is powerfully contributing to the inclusive dimension of SDG target 16.7.

Participatory process. Even if only a percentage of the population participates [and this percentage varies quite a lot from city to city], the very essence of PB, lies precisely in its participatory nature all through the process, with quite different levels of participation and deliberative intensity. A distinction needs to be made between the first cycle of PB, that stems from the political decision to assign a define amount of public resources to debate, up to the definition of the projects that will be funded. The second cycle of PB starts when resources are actually available, ending when the project is actually implemented, be it a "brick and mortar" project or a social & cultural & economic activity. Large number of evidences indicates that civil society participation during this second cycle is essential for optimising public resources, reducing costs, and eliminating corruption. Both cycles have a strong impact on the modernization of local government administration and tend to generate more effective institutions, even if limited in a first instance to manage a limited amount of public resources. In addition, active participation during this second PB cycle appears to be essential to reinforce trust among social groups with a limited tradition of participating or a reluctance to so.

Representative decision-making. This issue addresses the nature of PB, either *consultative* where people are invited, either online and/or in face-to-face meetings, to give an opinion and make suggestions, or *binding* where their vote is final in deciding on projects. The common current wisdom is that binding PBs are much more powerful for building trust and long-term engagement. Moreover, they tend to be more sustainable and less often interrupted (Dias: 2018)¹⁰. A second element to consider in order to link up PB and SDG 16.7 is whether or not citizens, through different modalities such as a specific commission, elected delegates, voluntary groups, mixed public/community groups (Cabannes: 2004)¹¹, will continue

⁹ Bednarska-Olejniczak, D & Olejniczak, J (2018) *Participatory Budgeting in Poland in 2013-2018 – Six Years of Experiences and Directions of Changes*, in Hope for Democracy (ibid)

¹⁰ Dias, Nelson (Organization), 2018, *Hope for Democracy. 30 years of Participatory Budgeting Worldwide*, Faro: Oficina

¹¹ Cabannes, Yves (2004) *Participatory budgeting: a significant contribution to participatory democracy*. In:

participating during the implementation of the voted project. A third element to consider in relation to representative decision making relates to whether PB participants are only representative or registered civil society organisations [Peruvian model for instance] or if participation is universal [Brazilian model] or a mixture of both. In addition, some PB, in order to improve a representative decision making process are electing delegates during the assemblies that will play an active role all through both cycles

PB Links with SDG 11: *Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable* and SDG target 11.3

PB Contribution to provision of basic services [and therefore to SDG target 11.3], primarily in low income settlements is unquestionable as basic services are in most cities the priority set up by citizens. According to the cities: roads, ways, opening of alleys, paving of streets are usually the most common, along with by waste water management and treatment, energy and public lightning or storm rainwater drainage. Other basic services such as transport and mobility, potable water supply or solid waste management are voted by people as well

A research reviewed PB in 20 cities from different regions and examined over 20 000 PB funded projects worth over US \$ 2 billion in three years that show how PB has contributed in each case to improving basic services delivery and provision and in bringing innovations in how these are delivered and to whom. Results indicate that PB projects are cheaper and better maintained because of community control and oversight during the implementation phase that constitutes the second cycle of PB¹². In doing so PB contributes to *sustainable human settlement planning and management* [Target 11.3].

2. LRG Initiatives to ensure successful PB processes

2.1. “At all levels”: PB takes place effectively in human settlements of all sizes and at quite different scales.

One of the major challenges stressed by SDG 16 and primarily SDGs 16.7 is that it should be achieved **at all levels**. A unique feature of PB that squarely meet SDG 16.7 imperative is that it might happens from the smallest street level or neighbourhood, up to Regional or even national levels (i.e. recent national PB experiments in South Korea or Portugal). It happens in human settlements of all kinds and all sizes:

[a] Villages such as Pongokk with a few thousands of inhabitants, Indonesia;

[b] Small urban centres: such as Molina de Segura, in Spain;

[c] Intermediary Cities like Chefchaouen in Morocco;

[d] Populated municipalities located at the periphery of metropolitan regions such as Valongo, Metropolitan Region of Porto, Portugal;

[e] Regional capitals of different sizes such as Porto Alegre, Brazil, Rosario, Argentina, Ilo, Peru or Seville, Spain where PB was rooted historically;

[f] National capitals and global cities that are growingly engaging in PB, usually through quite advanced processes, despite their complexities and despite – or because of – the challenges they face. This is the case, of New York, Paris, Madrid, Yaoundé, Mexico City, Taipei or Seoul to name a few. This emergence results from bottom up, or top down initiatives or a combination of both;

Environment & Urbanization. Participatory Governance. Vol. 16 N°1, April 2004, IIED: London

¹² Cabannes, Y (2014) Contribution of PB to provision and management of basic services. Municipal practices and evidence for the field, IIED Working Paper: London.

[g] Metropolis of 10 million and above such as Chengdu, China or São Paulo, Brazil (currently interrupted).

In a growing number of countries PB develops at **sub-municipal levels**, as in the 49th ward in Chicago that pioneered PB in the USA, or in NYC where PB expansion took place at *wards* levels. Yaoundé, Cameroon offers a similar example of PBs processes taking place and multiplying at *Commune d'Arrondissement* only; The recent experiment of St Petersburg, Russia started in five selected wards, and is repeated at that level only whereas another modality exists for Russian regions and districts; in Penang, Malaysia, Gender PB works at sub-municipal elected districts (Seberang Perai). In Lisbon, and some other Portuguese LGs, PB takes place at both municipal and "*Juntas de freguesias*" [parishes] levels. These PB experiments are particularly pertinent for attaining SDGs 16.7 as PB at "sub-municipal scale" tends to be more *inclusive* and *responsive* to quite diverse social groups and enhances *citizen's participatory decision-making*. One limit, though, is that this tier of governments enjoys still quite limited amount of public resources.

Another tendency, quite asymmetric to the one just described refers to the growing number of PB spearheaded and/or implemented by **Regional Governments** [be them called State, Province or Regions]:

- They might be an upscaling of PB taking place at lower governments tiers, as in the case of Penang, Malaysia that just voted in march 2019 a Penang State level policy on gender PB budgeting after years of experiment and lobby at sub-municipal and municipal levels;
- Or a top-down decision as in Russia where the Ministry of Finance supports Regional Governments [Krai] of the federation in their efforts to implement PB at district, village and city levels.
- It can be as well, as in Jalisco State in Mexico or Los Rios Province in Chile, a political decision taken at Regional level.

Such experiences bring another powerful contribution for achieving SDGs 16 and primarily 16.7, as well as SDG 11 [and mainly 11.3] for various reasons that would deserve a comprehensive monitoring: [a] they tend to bring *participatory decision making* and *representative decision making* to very small villages and rural districts that would not be attained otherwise. This is hugely the case with LISP [Local Initiatives Support Program] the local brand of PB in Russia¹³; [b] They allow to channel limited public resources to the poorest regions and most vulnerable ones. This was the case in Jalisco State where PB, locally called *Vamos Juntos*¹⁴ [Let's go together] shifted from five sub-regions [the poorest ones] on year one to the next five on year two, etc. In doing so, the PB process was more *responsive* to rural inhabitants and historically excluded first nations and developed a remarkable *inclusive* capacity, in line with SDG 16.7; [c] In addition, the recently trained and ad'hoc enthusiastic young team that was set up to conduct PB/ *Vamos Juntos* in such remote areas and small municipalities turned the government *more effective*. Instead of a large staff that would have been technically and financially difficult to set up in a short time, a smaller unit, with few high-level officials assigned, could rotate from sub-regions to sub-regions and accumulated knowledge and skills all through the years¹⁵.

¹³ Sources available if needs be

¹⁴ Cornero Hernandez (ed), (2017) *Vamos Juntos. Hacia una Sociedad más participativa y corresponsable*, Gobierno de Jalisco

¹⁵ CIESAS, (2018), *Evaluación de Resultados de la Estrategia Vamos Juntos*, Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social, Guadalajara: Evalúa Jalisco

Toro Morales, C, (2018), *Evaluación de Resultados de la Estrategia Vamos Juntos, Resumen de informe final*, CIESAS (Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social) / CIDIGLO (Consortio de investigación y dialogo sobre gobierno local), Barcelona: Comunicación Congreso OIDP, 2018

2.2. PB as a powerful tool to meet SDG imperative, “leave no one behind”

A large number of innovative solutions¹⁶ have been experimented by LRGs to include and benefit specific excluded and disadvantaged social groups: homeless (i.e. Paris, São Paulo), LGBT+ (various Brazilian experiences), migrant workers (i.e. Taoyuan, Taiwan, see below), Youth (multiple experiences, see Valongo, Portugal below), women (i.e. Solo/Surakarta, Indonesia, Seville, Spain), ethnic minorities in cities (i.e. São Paulo, Brazil or Rosario, Argentina), extreme poor (i.e. Yaoundé, Cameroon), disabled (i.e. Sanxia district, Taiwan; La Serena, Chile); rural communities in cities (i.e. Quito or Cuenca, Ecuador; Chengdu, China) etc.

Participatory budgeting for migrant workers: learning from Taoyuan, Taiwan

Among the limited number of cities that have been giving a specific PB focus to the inclusion of migrants, refugees, or ethnic minorities (Seville, New York, Penang, to name a few), Taoyuan (2.3 millions of inhabitants) in Taiwan remains one of the most innovative with significant earmarked resources (about US\$1 million in 2017) for migrant workers from Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, “marginalized politically and suffering from cultural discrimination.”¹⁷ The sectors eligible for funded projects had to fall under a broad concept of leisure which valued migrants’ culture, art, and sports. All projects were soft projects, meaning no physical equipment or amenities. At each stage of the process, from programming to implementation of selected proposals, migrant participants were directly involved, demonstrating that PB *with* the excluded, as opposed to *for* them, is feasible. It brought in a short time extremely positive tangible and intangible effects such as: changes of attitude and perception among the Taiwanese population and Taoyuan civil servants; better understanding between migrants, the municipality, and Taiwanese nationals; recognition of the value of different cultures; and reduction in discrimination.¹⁸

2.3. Increasing the inclusiveness and decision-making power of the youth over public expenditures

Participatory budgeting involving young people began in 1997 in Barra Mansa Brazil, and from there spread out and continues multiplying ever since, primarily across Latin America, Europe and North America. Today, specialized PB focusing on young people, are implemented successfully in hundreds of primary schools, secondary schools, colleges of all sorts and even in universities (Argentina for instance). In parallel, a large number of cities have lowered the age of PB’s participants in order to have younger generations able to engage, participate and vote in city based PBs. Such measures are a prime contribution to meeting SDG 16.7 on the long run: they *distribute power* to younger generation belonging to deprived and non-deprived social groups, they constitute a powerful civic school for deliberation and participation, and foster, as evidence strongly suggest, future civil Society participation. In doing so, Children Youth PB are fully in line with the four indicators contained in V-Dem’s Institute policy brief for measuring SDG target 16.7¹⁹. The experience below illustrates such contribution.

Youth Participatory Budgeting: Learning from Valongo, Porto Metropolitan Region, Portugal

¹⁶ Cabannes, y (2019), *ibid*

¹⁷ Case study prepared by Kai Ling Luo, Research Fellow, European Research Centre on Contemporary Taiwan, Germany and Shizhe Lai, Senior Executive Officer, Taoyuan, Taiwan (2018)

¹⁸ *ibid*

¹⁹ V-Dem Institute (2017), Policy Brief No #10, *Measuring responsive, inclusive, Participatory and representative decision-making at all levels in SDG Target 16.7* with V-Dem data, Gothenburg, Sweden.

Over the past six years, Valongo Municipality (±100 000 inh.) located at the periphery of Porto Metropolitan Region [1.8 million] in Portugal has made huge efforts to include young people through a **Youth Participatory Budgeting [PB]** in all public schools, with strong emphasis on those located in rural districts, therefore least serviced. Additional efforts since 2018 were made to benefit the elderly through an innovative inter-generational PB project associating elderly and youth. A parallel initiative, quite unique and innovative was the launching in 2018, and repeated in 2019 of another PB stream, “**I matter**” directed to the civil servants working in the municipality, through which they select projects that will improve their working conditions. This directly impacted target 16.7. “**build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions**”, with a limited amount of resources. Another single aspect of the initiative is that *the majority of the PB team, including its senior officer, are women, and this is clearly a woman’s led process, quite noticeable in the Portuguese context [hits 16.7.1]*

As a result, since 2014 around 270 ideas were proposed, more than 100 became eligible for voting and over 12 000 Young People [from 6 to 35 years] voted. In relation to the project *I matter*, 70 % of Valongo 570 civil servants participated and voted in the “*I matter*” PB process, and the most voted projects were women’s proposals. The four complementary indicators [V-DEM policy paper] for 16.7 have been positively attained: deliberative component; Participatory component; Civil Society; Power distribution and reversion]

So far, these initiatives have worked well. However, the limited amount of resources put into PB debate might fire back the process, if the level of requests continues to grow and expand to different social groups. The answer from the local government has been very wise: when projects demands were similar in more than two schools, or over the years, these projects requests were included in the normal budget and reproduced in all schools (for example, the ongoing work and development of high-technological classrooms in every public school, as well as the implementation of outdoor sports equipment).

2.4. “Leaving no place behind”: PB contribution to social and spatial justice

In order to leave not only *no one behind but no place behind as well*, various LRGs are channelling more resources, from a common PB pot at city scale, to the more disadvantaged districts (e.g. Rosario, Argentina), neighbourhoods (Seville, Spain), or smaller areas (e.g. Belo Horizonte, Brazil, within its regional PB modality), in a perspective of social justice and spatial justice. They are different from conventional city-based or district-based PB where money is evenly allocated throughout the territory. Under this modality, PB is focused on predefined deprived areas, such as low-income housing rental compounds (e.g. in Paris or Penang for instance) or rural districts within municipal boundaries (e.g. Chengdu, China or Cuenca, Ecuador), or villages generally remote and/or poor (e.g. Arzgir District villages in Stavropol Region, Russia). In these cases, specific resources are predefined through different techniques. Such PB for specific disadvantaged areas may be standalone PB (Chengdu and Cuenca during the first years) or be part of combined PB (Paris, Cuenca recently).

2.5. Impact of PB on policies and programs at national, city, and village levels that upscale the achievement of SDG 16.7

As explored in the study on the *role of PB in addressing the needs of disadvantaged / vulnerable groups*²⁰ PB practices have generated an impact on programs and policies through multiple ways: [a] Mainstreaming of PB projects into municipal programs and policies (e.g. Rosario, Argentina); [b] Participatory budgeting as a mechanism of municipal and institutional

²⁰ Cabannes, 2019, op cited, World Bank, unpublished

changes leading to greater attention to disadvantaged groups (e.g. Paris, France or Taoyuan, Taiwan); [c] Participatory budgeting as an engine to shift from an isolated participatory practice to a system of participation benefitting the excluded (e.g. Quito, Ecuador or Penang, Malaysia); [d] Impact of PB on regional laws and institutional reforms (e.g. Molina de Segura or Seville, Spain, to name a few only); [e] Impact on national PB policies (e.g. Peru or Indonesia). The capacity of PB to generate impact on policies and programs is very little documented so far, despite its critical interest in showing how they allow for an upscaling of the achievement of SDG 16.7 and without question of SDG 11.3. Two examples will be briefly described

Participatory budgeting as an engine to shift from an isolated participatory practice to a system of participation benefitting the excluded [c]: Learning from Quito, Ecuador

Citizen Assemblies and Participatory Budgeting process in **Quito**, Ecuador. Beginning as far back as March 2016, the Metropolitan District of Quito (MDQ), taking into consideration a strong mobilization and demands of Civil Society [neighbourhood associations, women's movement, indigenous movements] has enacted and implemented an **ordinance (OM 102) promoting and regulating the Citizen Participation and Social Control Metropolitan System (CPSCMS)**. This system has a territorial approach, considering that the MDQ consists of 32 urban districts and 33 rural districts, and integrates various forms of socio-organization. The project innovates in the creation and improvement of processes involving the different mechanisms that it is composed of.

It institutionalized PB practices benefitting further vulnerable groups in the following ways: Recognition and support of ancestral forms or organizations and collective land ownership for First Nations [art 9 and Title III, Cap 1, Art 23]; Citizens' oversight and control of actions conducted by the public sector [Cap III, Art 11d]; Citizens' participation in debates and the design of PB [Cap III, Art 11f]; Setting up a unique Metropolitan System of Citizen Participation and Social Control through 11 interconnected mechanisms; Increased protection and power to rural parishes, usually the most deprived [Title III, Cap 1, Art 26], including *cabildos abiertos* [Sec IV], a traditional form of public hearings and open sessions introduced in colonial times.

Impact of PB on regional laws and institutional reforms [d]: lessons from Seville, Spain

Seville PB experience was the starting point for a long and winding process that finally led to an Andalucía Region Law on Citizen Participation, approved in 2017, which consolidates citizen participation in budgetary definitions, and benefits women and the youth. However, the gains obtained in Seville through PB from 2004 to 2011 for other disadvantaged groups such as migrants, refugees, and GLBT+, and included in the first version of the law drafted with the direct involvement of PB staff, were dropped from the final version. On the more positive side, through this law "The Regional Government of Andalusia [Junta de Andalucía] will foster the promotion and dissemination of participatory budgeting processes" [art 24, item 3].

3. The way forward

In order to support participatory policies and implement PB processes as a way to achieve SDG 16 and its targets, evidence gathered so far²¹ strongly suggests the following set of measures that need to be tailored according to regional & local specificities and to the level of consolidation and upscaling of PB:

²¹ These limited lessons and recommendations are primarily based on evidence gathered on the field examination and experts' interviews contained in: Contribution of PB to provision and management of basic services, municipal practices and evidence for the field (2014) and Another city is possible with PB (2017)

[i] More financial decentralization and resources at local level in order to significantly increase resources channeled to PB;

[ii] Linking better PB practices and their *bottom up* proposals with Local and Regional Planning in a more systemic way;

[iii] Increasing people's autonomy and empowerment, that remains a key challenge: PB delegates should be better trained and learning should happen within civil society, and not primarily within civil servants, as it is often the case;

[iv] Better dissemination of sound information from international & national association of cities and local governments and PB municipal champions on PB as a powerful way to achieve SDGs and primarily SDGs 16, 10 and 12. Such international and national campaigns would bring a much-needed change of awareness and attitude on the part of many LRGs, and would help to upscale and expand PB good practices.

[v] Increase the participation of disadvantaged & vulnerable groups in PB processes and at the same time channel more PB resources towards them. Sound, affirmative and specific measures should be taken based on the accumulated experience so far by numerous LRGs.

[vi] At institutional level, a major empowering measure might be to have citizens and disadvantaged groups participate in the definition of the PB rules that are mostly defined by LRGs. These self-determined rules – *autoreglamento* in the case of Seville – represent a decisive devolution of power to the community sphere, setting in place the conditions for the emergence of a fourth power, alongside the legislative, executive and judiciary.

[vii] Innovative forms of local governance through PB elected councils or committees with significant representation of disadvantaged groups should be systematically promoted.

[viii] The positive impact of PB on social policies and administrative reforms strongly suggests that one should define from the outset of a PB process how to obtain such policy impact for the benefit of the citizenry. As shown in various examples²², it is only through policy reforms that PB can actually upscale to meet *at scale* existing challenges and contribute *at scale* to SDGs.

As a final comment, while considering its huge and growing occurrence in thousands of LRGs annually, and its direct and positive impact on various SDGs and primarily on SDG 16.7, Participatory Budgeting could be considered as a relevant indicator to monitor SGD 16.7 target.

²²see *The role of Participatory Budgeting in addressing the needs of disadvantaged / vulnerable groups*, section 2.8 on impact of PB on more socially oriented policies and programme (Cabannes, 2019, unpublished report for the World Bank)