

# Ten Reasons to Support Participatory Budgeting

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Participatory Budgeting (PB) consists of a democratic process of deliberation and decision-making on resource allocations. It has been applied in a variety of settings, from elementary school to public housing to an entire city. It is a tool that has made contributions to local governance, participatory democracy, citizenship learning and social transformation. These contributions can be summarized in 10 points:

- 1. PB provides enabling structures, channels and incentives for civic participation and for co-governance, decentralizing power and reviving public trust in political institutions.*
- 2. PB allows for a redistribution of resources based on equity criteria, improving the living conditions in the most neglected areas of the city.*
- 3. PB promotes the democratization of decision-making, increasing transparency, accountability, efficiency and citizen control of municipal governments.*
- 4. PB promotes open public deliberation and dialogue, providing a fresh alternative to the confrontational monologues and the opposition logic that often characterizes formal politics. This new way of doing politics contributes to the re-invigoration of civic life, and to the enlargement and deepening of democracy ("high intensity democracy").*
- 5. PB integrates self-interest and common good, and facilitates a transition from parochialism to a concern for broader issues. It also promotes civic pride and the preservation of public property. Interestingly, it is a model of competition that nurtures solidarity.*
- 6. PB empowers disenfranchised individuals and groups, who gain more confidence in their own agency to change their social reality and their capacity to influence political decisions.*
- 7. PB encourages the revitalization, mobilization, civic engagement and organization of local communities, constantly developing new leaderships and increasing social capital in the process.*
- 8. PB nurtures a new 'politics of recognition' by facilitating cross-community interaction among citizens who previously seldom met, and now have the opportunity to listen to, understand and respect each other.*
- 9. PB is a powerful school of citizenship in which democratic knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and practices are learned "by doing".*
- 10. PB is a new democratic space for 'pre-figurative politics', allowing citizens to 'figure out' some features and dynamics of the future society by experimenting at the local level.*