

Citizens' Budget and Local Community: An Insight from Czestochowa (*Belanjawan Rakyat dan Masyarakat Setempat: Kajian Kes dari Czestochowa*)

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ABSTRACT

Participatory budget (citizens' budget) is a relatively new tool used in municipalities to activate the local community. It allows citizens to be involved in the direct decision-making process. These decisions concern mainly the division of budget funds into the most beneficial tasks from the point of view of social development. Citizens' budget should be fitted to each local government unit, and then be executed in accordance with the previously defined implementation scheme. The aim of the study is to indicate the advantages of using citizens' budget both from the point of view of local government authorities and individual citizens in Czestochowa. Czestochowa, as the leader of citizens' budget, is recognizing the residents' contribution as a co-deciding unit for the distribution of budget funds. It has been using this tool for several years to strengthen social relations. In order to confirm the essence of the participatory budget, in terms of proper relations between local authorities and citizens, the study was carried out a detailed analysis of documents obtained from the City Hall of Czestochowa and professional reports devoted to this subject. The most important advantages pointed out in the use of a participatory budget are social integration, transparency, citizens' identification with the specific territory, increase in the level of trust among citizens and good citizen-official relationship. The study also presents individual formal steps, which need to be taken to introduce the examined phenomenon in a local government unit.

Keyword: citizens' budget, participatory budgeting, local community, Czestochowa

ABSTRAK

Penglibatan belanjawan (belanjawan rakyat) merupakan pendekatan baru yang digunakan oleh majlis perbandaran bagi mengaktifkan masyarakat setempat. Ia membolehkan warganegara terlibat dalam proses membuat keputusan secara langsung, terutamanya dari segi peruntukan dana belanjawan kepada aktiviti paling bermanfaat dari sudut pembangunan sosial. Belanjawan rakyat harus disesuaikan mengikut daerah, dan kemudian dilaksanakan berdasarkan skema pelaksanaan yang telah ditentukan sebelumnya. Kajian ini bertujuan melihat kelebihan teknik belanjawan rakyat dari sudut pandangan pihak berkuasa tempatan dan warganegara Czestochowa. Czestochowa, sebagai peneraju belanjawan rakyat, menyedari sumbangan warganegara sebagai unit penentu bersama bagi pengagihan dana belanjawan. Czestochowa telah menggunakan pendekatan ini selama beberapa tahun dalam mengeratkan hubungan sosial. Bagi mengesahkan kandungan belanjawan rakyat dalam konteks hubungan antara pihak berkuasa tempatan dan warganegara, analisis terperinci telah dilaksanakan terhadap dokumen yang diperolehi dari Dewan Rakyat Czestochowa dan laporan profesional. Kebaikan utama pendekatan belanjawan rakyat adalah tercetusnya integrasi sosial, ketelusan, identifikasi warganegara dengan wilayah tertentu, peningkatan tahap kepercayaan di kalangan warga negara dan hubungan baik antara warga negara dan kerajaan. Dapatan kajian juga menyenaraikan langkah-langkah formal individu yang perlu diambil kira dalam memperkenalkan fenomena kajian dalam unit pemerintah daerah.

Kata kunci: Belanjawan rakyat; belanjawan partisipatif; masyarakat tempatan; Czestochowa

INTRODUCTION

Managing a local government unit is a complex and challenging process. This administration is not a hermetically closed enterprise, but the entity is made up of residents of a certain territory. Along with changing standards and

expanding public awareness, the representatives of local government began to think about how to involve residents in the process of decision-making and city management. The participatory budgeting is a legal tool that allows the participation of the local community in the process of managing a territorial unit and the implementation of tasks relevant to civil society. Each local government unit should cooperate with its citizens to use this tool. Participatory budgeting, an exact instrument, requiring an appropriate procedure, is resulting in a number of benefits for both citizens and local authorities.

The citizens' budget is an essential tool for integration, emphasizing the importance of citizens in the process of managing a local government unit. It can be stated that this is the only form where citizens can influence the budget of the entity, and the tasks that should be carried out. The statutory budget of a local government unit is adopted by the municipal council without the involvement of citizens. That is why such a popular tool is the participatory budget, which transfers part of the power into the hands of the inhabitants but in some extent, it also transfers the responsibility to them.

The literature on the participatory budget often overlooks the issues of cooperation between authorities and residents. That is why the study highlights the advantages of using this tool both from the point of view of local authorities and citizens and their joint involvement in the development of a given local government unit. The purpose of the article is to indicate the essence of the participatory budgeting in the process of managing the commune and activating the inhabitants. In addition, the article attempts to show that Częstochowa is one of the examples of the city, implementing the citizens' budget.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The participatory budgeting in Poland is a phenomenon that, although becoming more and more popular, is still quite young and innovative (Szaranowicz-Kusz 2014). This mechanism of cooperation with citizens was used for the first time in 1989 in Brazil (Williams, St. Denny & Bristow 2017). The beginning of participatory budgeting lays in the city of Porto Alegre, which has over a million residents, in south-eastern Brazil (Shah 2007). Porto Alegre was torn apart by conflicts and the impending crisis, so, unfortunately, this mechanism was not created as a result of a positive social attitude. The introduction of the participatory budgeting was politically motivated and was supposed to mobilize the society to fight for influence with the local authorities. In other words, it can be said that it was a mechanism that triggered various types of grassroots initiatives (Pytlík 2017). Porto Alegre is now known both on the local and international arena. As the years went by, more and more countries began to notice the positive effects of the participatory budgeting. Porto Alegre has many followers around the world and some cities of Africa, Asia, North America, Canada and Europe too. It was even introduced in schools, universities and social housing or cultural institutions (Porto de Oliveira 2017). Past researchers, however, point out that copies are usually not as perfect as the original. Ideological values significantly differentiate the prototype from other more technical and implemented in the spirit of political correctness of participatory budgets (Sobol 2017).

Despite this, Dias (2014) defines the participatory budgeting as a new socio-political movement, which has been adopted in many places around the world. It indicates several stages of implementation of this mechanism in other countries (Table 1).

TABLE 1. Stages of implementation of citizens' budget

Phase	Period	Place	Description
The first phase	1989- 1997	Brazil Porto Alegre and Montevideo	More than 30 municipalities started participatory budget experiments (in this time there were two local government electoral mandates in Brazil).
The second phase	1997- 2000	Brazil	More than 140 municipalities started using the participatory budget. This time was known as "Brazilian participatory budget wide expansion".
The third phase	after 2000	Latin American and Europe	Adaptation of the participatory budget to new locations and realities, which was associated with significant changes in the original design.
The fourth phase	2007 -2008	whole world	Building a global network for exchanging experience regarding participatory budget (Brazilian, Colombian, Argentinean, Spanish, German, Portugal, Chile, UK and United States).

The fifth phase	after 2008	whole world	Integration of the participatory budget with the management system of the local government unit -- the whole process is still under construction, but indicators show that it will tend to consolidate in the coming years. It can be said that it is a system with different ways to involve people in the management of public affairs.
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Source: Own study with adaptation from Dias (2014)

In summary, it can be said that the participatory budget has won the sympathy and recognition from different sectors, inter alia society, government, authorities and even entrepreneurs. An example from a small, unknown city was the beginning of a new policy of cooperation with residents in the process of managing the municipality, which had permanently entered into the global economy.

METHODOLOGY

The theoretical considerations, presented in the literature review, have proved that the participatory budgeting has become a global tool and has permanently entered into the process of managing local government units. Although in Poland it has only been used for several years, municipalities have appreciated its importance in the process of cooperation with the inhabitants. It is very interesting to know the practical aspect of perceiving this trend and identify the benefits, and it brings both entities and their residents. We were also interested in the phenomenon of residents' involvement in the next edition of the participatory budgeting and the dynamics of changes in budget involvement over several years.

The research carried out in this article is based on secondary data obtained from many professional sources, including directly from the Częstochowa City Hall as well as reports and studies carried out by state institutions, consortia or enterprises.

The following questions need to be addressed in confirming that Częstochowa is the leader of the participatory budgeting:

1. How did the number of tasks submitted to the participatory budgeting change over the last four years?
2. What amounts were allocated for the implementation of the participatory budgeting in 2015-2019?
3. How many people voted for the submitted tasks over the four years?
4. Does the number of people voting in the participatory budgeting confirm its popularity and interest in it?
5. How many tasks were carried out in Częstochowa under the participatory budgeting over the four years?

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The participatory budgeting is an extremely important tool for the proper management of a local government unit. It is one of the newest and most popular tools used for responsible spending of public finances. Since the introduction of Polish cities in the participatory budget, it can be seen that the effectiveness of the public finance sector has increased in economic and social terms. However, it is worth mentioning that the participatory budgeting does not limit the competences and powers of local authorities, which verify the proposed investment projects. Entities engage residents in sharing the annual budget, so they can have a real impact on what is happening in their city. This is extremely important for the functioning of local governments as open units -- cooperating with their inhabitants.

Częstochowa is a city where the participatory budget develops very dynamically, and it has been considered for analysis. The changes that have taken place over the last few years have also been defined. The conclusions resulting from the position of the city of Częstochowa will serve to prepare further and broader reflections on the participatory budget in Poland. The authors' scientific interests include corporate social responsibility and its implementation on local governments. That is why the analysis of Częstochowa is the beginning of research on the participatory budget and will be the basis for further analysis of this tool in the context of the social responsibility of local governments.

The information indicated in the article concludes that this relatively new tool brings significant benefits and positively affects the assessment of local authorities. Furthermore, citizens feel involved in the decision-making process and partly responsible for local development directions.

It is recommended to use this tool both to conduct transparent financial policy of the unit and for establishing permanent relations with the residents. Given the development of the phenomenon of civil society, this tool may be the best field for cooperation and creating a common public space.

PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING AND ITS SPECIFICITY

Participatory budgeting is also referred to as citizens' budget (the term particularly popular in Poland), and it is a relatively new phenomenon in the process of management of a local government unit. The first such an initiative in Poland occurred in Sopot in 2011. It was a kind of an experiment, which turned out to be a pilot form that gained a range of supporters. It is important that this tool has been used for almost 30 years worldwide. The whole idea of participation of the local community in the share of budget funds originated in Brazil in the municipality of Porto Alegre in 1989 (Shah 2007).

The participation of citizens in making decisions, which are significant for a specific unit, is much easier at the regional level than the national one. Citizens cannot interfere in strategic decisions (e.g. the country's fiscal policy) due to their too excessive coverage. The issue is completely different in terms of the local area where it is significantly smaller, and the taken initiatives concern only the specific community. That community, experiencing the direct impact of the specific initiative, involved in it more intensively than if it would not be affected by it (Rytel-Warzocha 2010). Such motivation is fully justified and explainable since the consequences of such involvement of citizens and their disposal of the budget are visible and tangible.

In the literature devoted to local authorities and management of local government units, one may come across a few definitions of participatory or citizens' budget. Kębłowski (2013) questions the use of such interchangeability in nomenclature. Such an approach is not consistent with the practices applied in Europe, where there is single nomenclature, namely participatory budgeting. In addition, it emphasized that the term "citizens'" clearly suggests that only the people with the status of a citizen may participate in the decision-making process. Thus the people with no registration, students or immigrants are excluded (Kębłowski 2013). Despite some discrepancies, this study uses the term citizens' budget, which has been permanently inscribed in the Polish language.

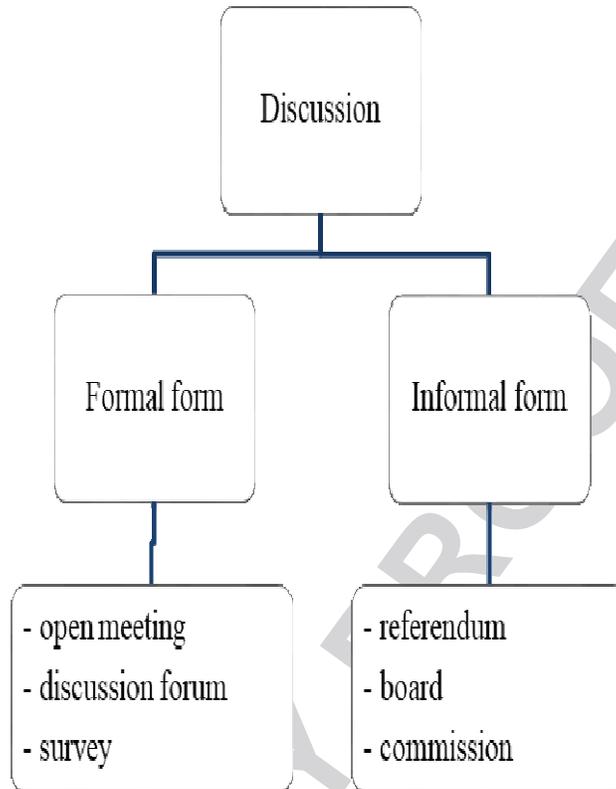
According to Wampler (2007), participatory budgeting should be defined as the process of discussions and negotiations on the destination of public funds. In other words, the citizens' budget is the process during which the needs and demands of citizens meet. As a result, they have a real impact on the budget structure of the specific unit (Dolewka 2015). In the literature, one may also come across the statement that citizens' budget is the way to involve citizens in making decisions. These decisions are a priority from the point of view of the public benefit, the consequence of which is the distribution of public funds, subsequently subjected to general voting (Cipolla et al. 2016).

It can be concluded that citizens' budget is a tool for activating citizens and including them in the process of management of the specific unit (a city or a municipality). The few features that distinguish it against other forms of activating citizens (Kębłowski 2013) are as follows:

1. *Geographically defined area.* There is no limit of range to the local level. This way, all the groups of the local community could equally benefit from free funds. Although the citizens' budget must partially address citywide issues, the initiative cannot concern only one district. The task needs to be general and not too local.
2. *Binding nature.* It is the property distinguishing citizens' budget from social consultations because the tasks/initiatives chosen with the most significant number of votes are implemented with the certainty of 100%.
3. *Constant contact with citizens.* Citizens are regularly informed on the progress in works or possible rejection of the project.
4. *Monitoring.* Citizens have the possibility of supervising the implementation of design works.
5. *Cyclicity.* The process must be repetitive because the citizens' budget is not a single initiative. It is long-term and repetitive from year to year task.
6. *Public discussion.* The discussion is an integral part of participatory (citizens') budget. The public discussion on the budget needs to take place and the dialogue between citizens and officials gains the key role in the long-term perspective.
7. *Limited funds.* Some specific funds are allocated to a specific purpose. This is important that the amount of budget for the particular task should be strictly specified, and only this amount should be subjected to the discussion.
8. *Strictly defined topic of discussion.* It should be clearly defined what task the discussion will refer to.

These properties characterize citizens' budget against the background of social consultations with two main

characteristics, namely, the certainty of the implementation of the selected task and active participation of the society in the whole process of design, execution and monitoring. Therefore, it can be concluded that the citizens' budget is realized by means of discussion with citizens, which may take a few forms (Refer to Figure 1).



Source: Own study with adaptation from Kuriata (2013)

FIGURE 1. Forms of discussion on citizens' budget

The planned and properly held discussion, which may take formal or informal form, depending on the audience, and it is almost the key element of citizens' budget. The right form of discussion gives a guarantee of thoughtful initiatives of significant social coverage and the value for the greater part of the society. It should also be pinpointed that, in order to deliver the participatory budgeting, it is necessary to meet the features indicated above, which strictly characterize citizens' budget. Citizens' budget is a fairly new tool of activating citizens. However, it provides a range of benefits both for local communities and government. Table 1 presents the most important advantages of citizens' budget, for both citizens and local authorities.

TABLE 2. The benefits resulting from the implementation of citizens' budget

Property	Characteristics
	From the perspective of citizens
Use of budget	The budget is used in accordance with the demand reported by the local community. The implemented investments are in line with the will of citizens, and they are the response to their real needs. Thus, the decisions taken by local authorities are better received by citizens.
Social integration	The initiative stimulates a sense of community and general co-deciding on some significant issues. Co-deciding on the implementation of initiatives, which are important from the point of view of local significance, and it allows the integration of residents of the specific area.

Transparency / Clarity	The public decision-making process is the confirmation for transparency in disbursement of municipal funds.
Citizens' identification with the specific territory	Participation in making important investment decisions triggers the feeling of belonging and co-responsibility for the development of the specific area in citizens. The changes in the environment, being the consequence of their co-deciding, have a stimulating effect on them.
High social standing	The people involved in the implementation of citizens' budget often become known as leaders. Such a status allows them to build a strong group of activists around them, taking initiatives for the benefit of the improvement in the environment and broadly understood local social development.
Education of the local community	By means of participation in the implementation of budget tasks, citizens have an opportunity to get to know the process of management of the local government unit. They learn legal restrictions, and they must face some constraints and barriers. Due to this initiative, the boundary between the citizen (resident) and the local government (local authorities) representative is getting blurred and there is an increase in legal and statutory awareness of residents.

From the perspective of the local authorities

An increase in the level of trust among citizens	Minimization of the distance between two parties allows for better understanding and strengthening the mutual relations.
Improvement of the image among citizens	The citizens involved in the budget participation have a sense of co-management of the local government unit. They experience the trust of the authorities, which improves their opinions and judgments.
Evaluation / promotion of new ideas (e.g. co-governing)	The involvement of the local community in some processes also results in familiarizing them with the problems, and the employee of the unit must cope with on a daily basis.
Improvement in the citizen-official relationship	There are built mutual relations/ties based on respect, understanding, cooperation and co-decision-making. Citizens learn the specificity of the functioning of administration, thus having an opportunity for better understanding of arguments referred to local government workers, e.g. in the process of solving some (often very complex) issues.

Source: Own study with adaptation from Fiut, Górnjak, Krasoń-Pilch, Kraszewski (2016) and Tănase (2013)

A range of mutual benefits, both for citizens and the local government confirm the validity of the application of this tool of activation of the local community. There should also be indicated the main objectives followed at the stage of the implementation of citizens' budget. The first stage is the social objective. It consists in activating and creating civil society and equalizing opportunities in public discussion. The second stage is the political objective, consisting of transferring a degree of decision-making on the hands of citizens. This gives rise to some concerns of the local authorities, associated with the loss of control or full power. The third stage is the administrative objective. It consists of changing the role of the citizen concerning administration, from the client to the participant (Rytel-Warzocho 2010).

THE PROCESS OF CITIZENS' BUDGET

The strict catalogue of conditions reporting citizens' budget is not indicated in either legislation or literature on the subject. The use of this tool should be subjected to the specificity of the specific region. Therefore, it is personalized by individual local government units. However, in order to make the process of the implementation of citizens' budget runs smoothly and successfully, it is essential to fulfill a few conditions and act according to a certain pattern. The essential elements of the process of citizens' or participatory budgeting are presented below (Serzysko 2014; Bluj & Stokłuska 2015):

Preparing the Process ("Stage Zero") This is an internal stage concerning mainly the local authorities and the workers of the specific unit. At this stage, there must be taken the decision whether there is the will to activate such a tool at all.

The tasks essential at this stage are:

1. specifying the objective of the participatory budgeting is to serve in a long-time perspective,
2. specifying the area covered by the budget,
3. specifying the amount of budget at the disposal of citizens and the areas it can be allocated to,
4. preparing the information message for citizens on taking such an initiative in the municipality,
5. specifying the legal grounds for the implementation of participatory budgeting.

Determining the Principles of the Implementation At the beginning of the preparation of the whole process, there should be determined the principles, among others, adjusted to the size of the city or its administrative divisions (settlements, districts). It is advisable already at this stage to conduct public consultations for the whole process to be in line with the citizens' expectations. It would be useful at this stage to set up a dedicated team for the implementation and realization of citizens' budget.

Information and Education Activities These activities should be conducted in the course of the whole process. They are very important for citizens. Due to adequately conducted education and information activities, the local community has an opportunity to get to know the principles for the whole participatory budgeting. The local government representatives should use different communication channels and forms of promotion to reach individual groups of recipients. Messages should be adapted for citizens, among others, in terms of their age, place of residence and family status.

Reporting Specific Projects At this stage, some extensive promotional activities are necessary. Citizens should be able to submit projects individually, at the same time, possessing all the required information. The constant control of the incoming projects is also essential, which is aimed at the exclusion of their repeatability. The submitted project should be supplemented with the list of people supporting the specific initiative.

Verifying the Assumed Projects Substantive and practical assessment should be made by both the authorities of the unit and citizens. While the utility and the social need of the project can be transferred into the hands of citizens, the formal and budget issues should remain in the office. Such verification should apply only to formal, legal and technical issues. There is an opportunity to introduce preselection while choosing projects at the moment of dealing with a too large number of tasks, e.g. per one district.

Discussing the Assumed Projects The projects verified in formal and legal terms should be communicated to the public without undue delay. There should also be organized meetings for citizens to familiarize them with the project and its functional features.

Selecting the Project for Implementation The selection of the specific project and its implementation is determined by citizens' popular vote, which should be held in several days so that all the interested parties could have an opportunity to participate in it.

Monitoring Participatory budgeting is to activate the society. Therefore, the role of citizens should not be restricted only to discussions and the creation of new projects but also to the implementation and control. Citizens need to take part in all the stages of the implementation of the specific task. The possibility of the monitoring and control of the progress allows citizens, including the creators of the idea, to get involved more extensively in the project. This option also triggers greater responsibility and involvement in citizens.

Evaluating the Process In order to facilitate the process of the implementation of citizens' budget, it responds to the needs reported by citizens to a greater extent, and it is necessary to conduct the process of its evaluation (assessment). Such an action will allow the elimination of possible errors and inconveniences in the future.

All the stages, if it properly conducted, it would guarantee the successful implementation of exciting initiatives. It is essential for social development to get involved in the implementation of the participatory budget. It should be

pinpointed that citizens' budget is procedural, which means that all the subsequent stages are strictly connected and almost have the resulting nature. The way of the implementation of one stage determines the shape of each subsequent step.

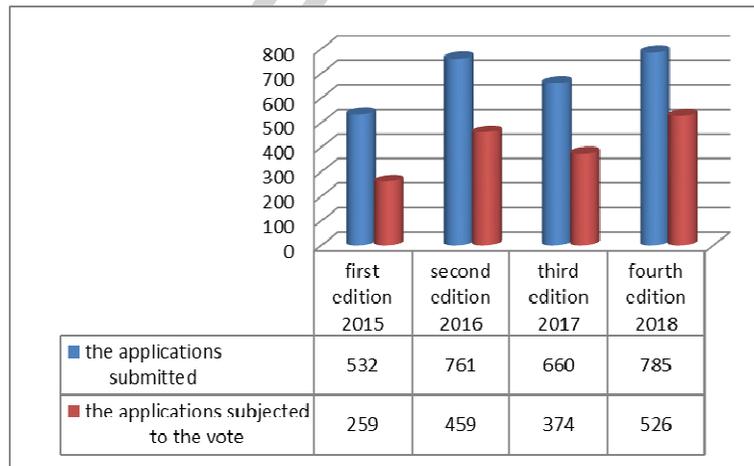
CZEŃSTOCHOWA AS THE LEADER OF CITIZENS' BUDGET

Citizens' budget is an increasingly popular practice for activating citizens and including them in the process of management of the local government unit. High level of participation of citizens involved in these activities proves responsible and forward-thinking citizens playing the role of decision-makers.

Responsible cities, recognizing the role of their residents as the unit co-deciding on the budget funds distribution, have been using this tool for a few years to strengthen social relations. Already in 2011, in Częstochowa, there were taken actions aimed at preparing the local government for the implementation of participatory budgeting. In January 2011, in the City Council of Częstochowa, the office was established for Local Initiatives and Public Consultation. The office was responsible, among others, for the implementation and realization of the following tasks:

1. building the social dialogue by organizing public consultations
2. spreading the idea of civil society
3. establishing close relationships between citizens and the local government

In 2012, in the course of the local initiative, there were started the preparations of formal and legal issues, associated with the implementation of this tool. Another step, already towards strict participation, was the project implemented in 2013, co-financed from the European Union "Jasne, że konsultacje - Consultations, it's clear!". The final preparations were begun already in 2014 as a result of the project - "Consultations, it's clear!". In the first edition of this project, the extensive promotion and information campaign were combined with the stage of submission of project proposals. This stage lasted from 21 July to 30 September 2014. The formal and legal verification lasted for one month and the vote itself took place from 5 to 11 December 2014. The results of the vote were published on 19 December 2014. As far as the schedule of tasks is concerned, it was also similar in subsequent years. In Figure 2, there are presented the data concerning the number of tasks proposed for the implementation within the framework of the citizens' budget over the last few years.



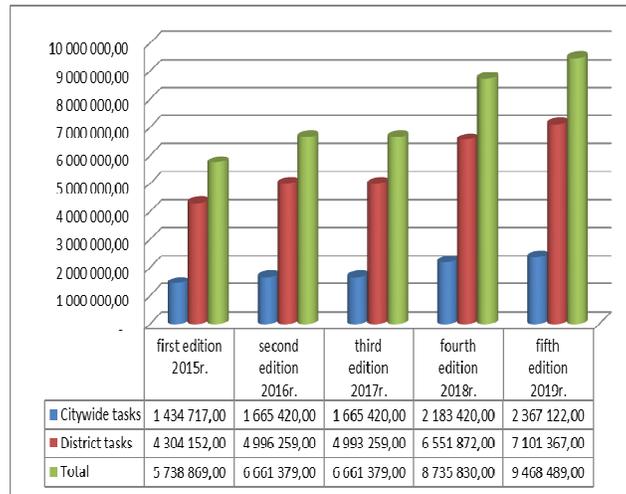
Source: Own study with adaptation from Bank of Poland (2018)

FIGURE 2. The tasks submitted to the citizens' budget in years 2015-2018

It can be concluded that the awareness of citizens and their involvement in the issues of the specific local government unit, in this case - the city of Częstochowa, significantly improved. In the 4th edition, i.e. in 2018, there were submitted over two hundred more tasks than in the case of the 1st edition of the citizens' budget. In addition, the number of applications subjected to the vote in the edition of 2018 was twice as much as in the edition of 2014. This means that there has been a significant increase in the correctness of the submitted applications and the validity

of projects. This also confirms that the citizens more and more eagerly decide on the directions of development of Częstochowa and can identify the areas requiring some improvements and modernization.

The authorities of Częstochowa, while noticing the involvement of the residents from year to year, secured a larger amount of funds in the budget for the implementation of the participatory budgeting. The excepting year was 2017, where it was the same as in 2016. The funds were distributed into two workstreams: citywide and district tasks (Figure 3).



Source: own study with adaptation from Bank of Poland (2018). *4,19 PLN = 1 USD (course of the day 26.03.2020)

FIGURE 3. The number of funds for the implementation of the citizens' budget in years 2015-2019 (PLN*)

It should be pinpointed that significantly greater funds were allocated to district tasks, in 2019 -- almost three times as much. Taking into account the popularity of the tool, the City Council secured the amount of nearly 10 million PLN, i.e. almost twice as much as in 2015.

The residents of Częstochowa, noticing positives and benefits resulting from the involvement in the implementation of initiatives for the benefit of the local community, do not only submit applications but also actively participate in promotional actions and the votes themselves (Figure 4).

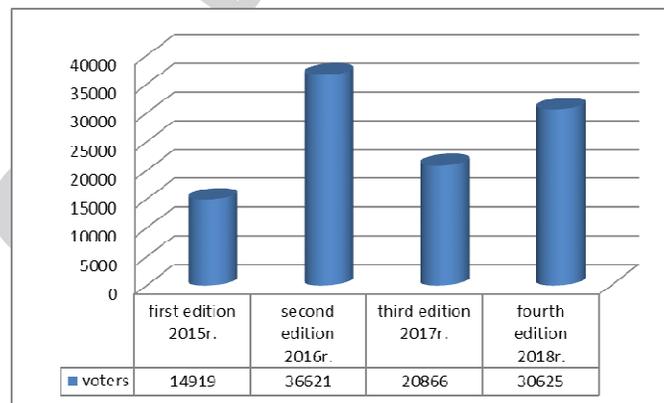


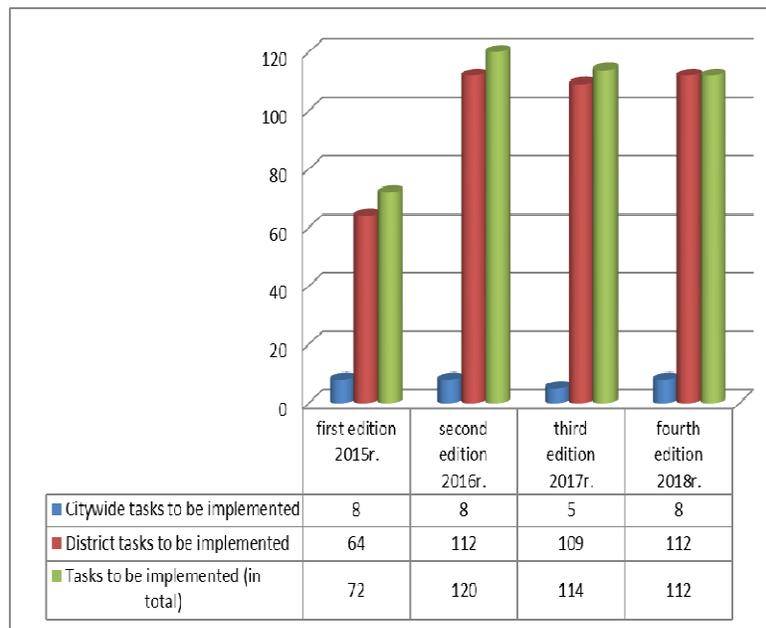
FIGURE 4. Voters in the process of the citizens' budget

Source: own study with adaptation from Bank of Poland (2018).

It can be noticed that in 2017, there was recorded a decline in the number of voters. Such a situation proves a decrease in social activity in this field, which may be indirectly related to the nature of the tasks submitted.

In accordance with the principles in force during the vote, the citizens had an opportunity to choose the most interesting initiatives in two categories: citywide and district tasks. Over the years of 2015-2018 in Częstochowa,

within the framework of the participatory budgeting, there has been implemented a total of 418 projects, 29 of which have been citywide tasks and 397 -- the district ones. In Figure 5, it depicts the distribution of tasks in the years 2015-2018.



Source: own study with adaptation from Bank of Poland (2018).

FIGURE 5. The tasks to be implemented within the framework of the participatory budget

Among the tasks selected by the citizens, as the key ones, with the highest score were the ones concerning:

1. building and improving the condition of roads and road infrastructure,
2. building and modernizing sports infrastructure,
3. modernizing school infrastructure,
4. arranging green areas,
5. organizing city events dedicated to different groups of stakeholders.

Częstochowa, as a responsible and sustainable city, conducts a sustainable dialogue with its stakeholders. The tool used in this study is just citizens'/participatory budget. In the city, for a few years, the funds have been secured, and it allows for the implementation of tasks that is important for the residents. From year to year, the authorities of the city have been attempting to increase the available funds and encourage the citizens to actively participate in this initiative.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Taking into account the significance of the dialogue with stakeholders, more and more often cities allocate their funds to pro-social initiatives. The tool of such a dialogue and the citizens' involvement in the management of the local government unit is participatory budgeting also known as citizens' budget. Getting more and more popular over the last few years, it is to guarantee the local authorities, among others, transparency and clarity. The uses of budget in line with the will of citizens, long-term positive relations with citizens and also the citizens' identification with the specific city/municipality, activation of their involvement and actions for the benefit of the city are broadly understood for local social development. The process needs to be long-term, and not a single initiative, compliant with the development strategy of the specific region. It should be based on the dialogue and discussion with simultaneous fulfillment of all formal and legal requirements. Summing up, it can be concluded that it is a very effective tool for building civil society integrated with the specific region. Częstochowa can be an example of the city, where from year to year, it has been successful in implementing new tasks increasingly, being the consequence of the active cooperation of the residents with the local authorities within the framework of the citizens' budget, how

the involvement of residents in the process of managing the local government participatory budget would be an interesting subject for future research.

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