



# PRAGUE PARTICIPATORY BUDGET

CASE STUDY REPORT & ANALYSIS



Participatory Budgeting  
for Sustainable Development  
of V4 Capital Cities

Prepared by AGORA CE



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## CONTENTS

Preface.....	5
Prague – main facts about the city.....	6
Origins of PB in Prague .....	8
Development of the Participative Budget(s) in Prague.....	15
Preparation of the PB procedure .....	16
Participatory budgeting.....	19
Introduction of PB to the public .....	20
Collecting of the ideas of citizens.....	21
Feasibility check.....	22
Introducing the ideas to public.....	23
People’s vote .....	24
Evaluation of the procedure of PB .....	25
Implementation of the PB results .....	25
Prague participatory budgeting in numbers .....	26
Conclusions.....	29
Participatory budget is a quite new program of citizen participation among many others .	29
Many driving forces, only one methodology .....	29
Popularity of PB is rapidly increasing (from the point of view of number of districts that uses it.) .....	29
Lack of support from city government.....	29
Local character with very limited impacts.....	29
Low level of accountability.....	29
The future of PB in Prague .....	30
In what direction should we go to create a better future in our city?.....	30
Is there an ideal PB model that could be adopted in our city? .....	31

## PREFACE

The following text is based mainly on our day to day work in the field of participatory budgeting in Prague. We also did analysis of the available documentations and interviews with representatives of the participatory budget's proponents in Prague. Namely the representatives of districts Agora works as consultant for PB<sup>1</sup>. Our role in Prague is to promote PB. We participated in creation of PB in 5 districts directly as consultants and our experiences were shared and applied in other districts.

We describe here the methodology used for PB in Prague and what were the trigger effects for its adoption. There are slight differences in the attitude towards PB in respective districts. In the following report we would like to make these attitudes more visible.

The report is divided into three major parts. The first chapter gives an overview of important facts about the Czech capital city. This should help to understand the context of PB in Prague. The second part (pp. 12-26) describes the PB as it started and works nowadays in Prague. The third part rises some questions on possible future of PB in Prague.

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<sup>1</sup> All the municipalities including the 5 Prague districts (i.e. Prague districts n. 3, 6, 10, 14 and Prague-Zbraslav, Prague-Slivenec) where we worked as consultants you may find in interactive map on the front page of [www.participativni-rozpocet.cz](http://www.participativni-rozpocet.cz).

## PRAGUE – MAIN FACTS ABOUT THE CITY

It is important to mention few facts about the capital of the Czech Republic to understand the following information on its participatory budget(s). Prague is not only a city but it is a region with its own regional public authority bodies (assembly, council, mayor<sup>2</sup>) among other 13 regions in the Czech Republic (see figure 1.).



*Figure 1 - map of 14 districts of the Czech Republic*

The Prague city shares its power and duties within Prague districts according to the Law on capital of Prague. There are 57 Prague districts (see figure 2). These districts differ considerably not only in the number of inhabitants (from several thousands to more than a hundred thousand inhabitants from its total number of 1 280 thousands) and its area but also in the power they exercise. This redistribution of power, property, budgets and offices creates a very complex system regarding all the services the municipal offices provide to their citizens on the regional (city) and the local (district) level. E.g. there is the educational system where the grammar schools are administered by the local level offices while secondary schools are

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<sup>2</sup> Moreover, it is important to bear in mind that Czech municipalities have parliamentary system of self-governing. I.e. members of assemblies are voted by the citizens and the members vote for council members who are the executive body of the assembly. There is also system of committees created as advisory bodies for assembly or council.



## ORIGINS OF PB IN PRAGUE

We can see permanent efforts of activists from leftist NGO “Alternativa zdola”, who support the idea of PB since 2012. They interpellated Prague Lord Mayor Mr. Bohuslav Svoboda, they initiated petition for implementing PB in 2013. Despite the efforts of “Alternativa zdola” and initial agreement of Mr. Svoboda to implement PB, this assembly did not introduce the city-scale participatory budget, which remained a minor topic for the Council. The main reason was the personal aversion of the new lord of mayor Tomas Hudeček who replaced the previous one in 2013 and expressed his strong resistance saying “only over my dead body”. The irony of this is that Mr. Hudeček didn’t survive the political changes after the elections in 2014. After his political death new era of PB started.

First participatory budgeting process had started in 2014 in the district Prague 7. It was an initiative of a member of the assembly who was representing the communist party. The assembly agreed to create a fund of 40 000 EUR to be invested. The process of PB had been conjoint with another method of citizen involvement, a discussion forum for citizens to enable to talk about the problems in the city. This forum was also used as a discussion platform on citizens' proposals followed by paper ballot voting. This experiment ended with very controversial results: 62 people took part in voting, but the winning project was unfeasible, and there were no follow up for the forum.

In 2014, the local elections considerably changed the power distribution among the assemblies both the local (district) ones and the regional (city) one. The political parties (Social Democrats, Pirates, Communists, and the left-wing party of president Zeman supporters) had stipulated in their programs support for the PB as a tool for direct democracy and public participation strengthening. Also the regional political movements from different city districts started to promote the idea<sup>3</sup>. It was the time of the real beginning of the PB. Despite a poor support for PB from the City council<sup>4</sup>, the PB started in two city districts in 2015.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.parlamentnilisty.cz/zpravy/tiskovezpravy/Participativni-rozpocet-pronikl-mezivolebni-temata-338293>

<sup>4</sup> Interpellation of the Vice Mayor Kisslingerova done by „Pirate” Michaela Krausová see [here](#)

Districts Prague 10<sup>5</sup> and Prague-Zbraslav<sup>6</sup> started piloting the PB methodology with the support of NGO Agora CE. Both municipalities adopted the “Sopot model”<sup>7</sup> of PB as described in the best practices handbook<sup>8</sup> and Methodology<sup>9</sup> prepared by Agora based on the experiences of Polish cities, mainly Dabrowa Gornicza. The pilot testing of the PB methodology was successful<sup>10</sup> and more city districts started to adopt the same tool.

The city district of Prague 3, Prague 6 and Prague 5 started with PB in 2016. Finally the Prague Council changed its opinion and started to support the PB<sup>11</sup>. The support is in a form of financial contribution to the investments done according to the decision of citizens in the PB



*Figure 3 - Official launch of the PB Methodology by Deputy mayor of Prague Eva Kislingerová (left) and deputy ambassador of Norway Kingdom Monica Stensland (middle), Pavlína Kroupová PR manager of Agora CE (right).*

<sup>5</sup> For more details see the web page [www.moje-stopa.cz](http://www.moje-stopa.cz)

<sup>6</sup> For more details see the web <http://www.participativni-rozpocet.cz/praha-zbraslav/o-projektu/>

<sup>7</sup> We use term „Sopot model” as a term used for polish-like participatory budgets because PB in municipality of Sopot is one of the oldest PB in Poland and inspired many other municipalities working on their procedure (WOJCIECH KEBŁOWSKI & MATHIEU VAN CRIEKINGENB in Dias, 2014),

<sup>8</sup> The version in English is [here](#).

<sup>9</sup> The Czech version of the Methodology of PB for Czech cities [here](#).

<sup>10</sup> Reportage from local TV [here](#)

<sup>11</sup> The support was announced by the decision of the Prague Council on 22. 3. 2016, [downloadable here](#).

procedure. The Prague City obliged to contribute 50% of the amount of money dedicate by district with maximum of 5 million CZK (about 200 thousand EUR). E.g. When a district invested 10 million CZK in citizen's proposals implementation, they will receive 5 million CZK contribution from next year Prague City budget to their next year district budget.

The boom of PB had still lasted in 2017. Districts Prague 5, 8, 14, Prague-Slivenec, Prague-Kolovraty, Prague-Horní Počernice adopted the Sopot model. The very last member of the club is the district n. 11. Where the PB started in 2018. There were no "renegades" until now. All the districts that started the PB are still continuing with the instrument in following editions. Therefore, the piloting municipalities are pursuing with the 3rd edition of the PB in 2018.

Districts that introduced PB in 2015 call without success for a stronger support, namely for coordination from the central level that will help them to overcome barriers of fragmentation of the public administration<sup>12</sup> but it is not coming (see box 1 for illustration of this "fragmentation"). This is case of the "big" districts as Prague n. 3, 6 and 10. On the other hand, the financial support to citizens' proposal implementation attracted new districts to adopt PB in 2016 and 2017.

Lack of methodology guidelines and lack of clear support from the regional level were the reason for such misinterpretation of PB idea that emerged in the district Prague 8 in 2016. The PB procedure has shrunken there only to voting between several projects suggested by the district office itself<sup>13</sup>. Nevertheless, the next edition of their PB in 2017 already fully complied with the Sopot model. It included proposals submission by citizens and a kind of deliberation phase.

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<sup>13</sup> There were no aspect of deliberation as we can see from the article published on the website of the district [here](#) (in Czech).

### Box 1 – Renovation of public spaces of Stop of Prague underground Strašnická - example of the stakeholders in citizen proposal implementation

As already mentioned, public administration of the entire area is divided among many institutions. There are specific institutions (owned, founded and run by City or Districts) responsible for different type of infrastructure, transport, education, culture, real estate etc.

There met 4 different institutions directly involved in the implementation of the citizen proposal. Specifically, these were:

1. **The Prague Public Transit Co. Inc.** who runs the underground as well as the tram lines and buses that cross this important public transport junction
2. **TSK - Technical Administration of Roadways** of the Capital of Prague responsible for engineering and maintenance of transportation infrastructure
3. **Prague City Hall** and its respective departments responsible for the proper implementation of public administrative procedures in compliance with law as well as for coordination of the upkeep through own or hired private companies)
4. **Prague 10 Town Hall** responsible for upkeep of some parts of the space and for implementation of the proposal itself.

The task was to renovate the public space of the station. In the end, there were just few new benches installed, some walls renovated and some cleaning done. For the Prague 10 Town Hall officers it was impossible to fulfil the task planned in the project. They were not able to get in contact with responsible „people” from the other institutions to coordinate simultaneously other tasks coming from the proposal, e.g. getting rid of the old benches (it took 2 years), removing the old tram or bus stop constructions (stands for timetables), removing of advertisement stands from walls of the underground station entrance.



Analyzing the past years in Prague, we can see that the main proponents of PB are the Prague districts themselves. The role of citizens or NGOs (beside the two mentioned) is minor. There are some civil society initiatives and grassroots movements and organizations in the district Prague 6, but their attention goes to urgent issues concerning the district development rather than to a Sopot-like PB.

That means that the public authorities are the main proponents of PB in Prague. In spite of this fact, the whole picture is not completely clear. There are several different proponents ranging from politicians to the officers and private businesses. Motivation of each of these groups is a bit different. With this fact in mind, we can state in general that Prague is adopting more or less top-down process<sup>14</sup> for PB implementation.

The politicians work sometimes as individual proponents of PB, lobbying for PB in their clubs and councils (e.g. the case of Prague 3, Prague 5). In some cases, there is a whole group that is “behind” the PB adoption (e.g. Prague Zbraslav), and sometime the politician plays only a formal, representative role (e.g. Prague 10, Prague 6) and the initiative comes from more hidden sources or from combination of different driving forces. Beside the politicians, there are a few efficient city districts’ officers who remain the driving force of the procedure (the case of Prague 10). There are also perceivable efforts from part of the business sector<sup>15</sup>. PB becomes a strong label. Therefore, we can state that the main proponent is not a person, movement or politician but the brand of PB as innovative and effective tool for citizen involvement. The proponents feel motivated to get a status of municipality having PB. Another important stakeholder for the PB tool is the Prague Institute of Planning and Development, which is responsible for urban planning of the city. The department for citizen participation operates within the Institute that was supposed to come up with a report, recommendations and methodology on PB for the Prague districts already in 2017. Unfortunately, this material is still missing. “We have other important issues and task that has to accomplished and PB is developing on its own” ensures their representative.

In case of Prague-Zbraslav, the entire council consisting of newcomers to the assembly is seeking new ways for the administration of their district. Their motivation was to change the way of communication between district’s office and citizens. From the very beginning, they tried to use as much different participatory methods in their projects as possible. The piloting of PB was a good opportunity to show that their methods of communication and work with

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<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, this statement will be questionable every time. E.g. in Prague-Zbraslav. Looking in detail of policy making here we can see that the proponents of PB were politicians, but before they entered the arena of local politics in 2014 they were just small local citizen movement. Their election program contained also PB introduction. So the question is: “was the PB introduced by citizens or by NGO Agora or by politicians?”

<sup>15</sup> E.g. the voting in the final part of PB as well as other IT services are often outsourced by municipalities. There was the company D 2.1 who took part in the piloting of PB in 2016 and is assisting to other Prague districts since then, and there are some more companies trying to sell their services in the PB procedure.

citizens were different. Their strong interest is visible: we can see them presenting at the public meetings<sup>16</sup>, working in groups preparing the details of the methodology and even using their own communication channels to spread the information about the PB in their town. It shows that here we have a strong and proactive type of politician.

In case of Prague 10 we can see the situation where the agile officer persuaded the politician to support PB in the local council. The role of the politician stays more formal. He supports the PB in the council, advocates its usage and presents the PB in an official way (to media), but he is not present at public meetings or during the working group meetings or even during the final evaluation meeting for citizens and politicians. Generalizing, it is a powerful but passive politician<sup>17</sup>. This type of a politician is also characteristic for the Prague council. They got the power to implement PB but their activities are rather formal without any specific results<sup>18</sup> beside the specific grant scheme for all of the 57 districts with 2 000 000 EUR in total described above<sup>19</sup>.

The third type of a politician is the powerless one who somehow starts the PB but is not supporting enough. He or she is not able to provide enough resources for the procedure, which means not only the amount of PB itself but also the capable coordinator(s), outsourcing of services such as advertisement and PR relation. The result is that PB is sidelined among many other initiated programs.

As a conclusion, we can say that PB implementation in Prague has started due to several factors that were occasionally present simultaneously:

- First, the political parties put the commitment in their program preceding elections in 2014 and were eager to implement PB in their municipalities.

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<sup>16</sup> We can discuss whether the presence of a politician at a public meeting is a tool how to interfere with the public deliberation. From our observation, it was not the case here. Since the district is small, the politician plays more the role of an officer. Therefore, she was the one who was able to respond to the questions on feasibility, to specify the development plans of the district in certain areas etc.

<sup>17</sup> Their motivation is a big question. We can hardly believe their statements of support for PB during (non)formal meetings when it is in contradiction with their activities.

<sup>18</sup> E.g. we can compare Prague to the city of Brno, second largest city in the Czech Republic, where the preparation to adopt PB started in 2015 and after one and half year of negotiations they were able to start their first edition of PB (Sopot model as well) in the beginning of 2017.

<sup>19</sup> In 2017, none of the districts, except for the ones supported by Agora, was able to use this grant scheme, mostly due to poor information and zero methodological help from the city.

- Second, the two NGOs strive actively to promote the PB and offered the best practice of the Sopot model with the aim to make it easy for municipalities to adopt it (this was enabled thanks to the support of IVF and Norwegian grants).

For future development of PB in Prague, we can state the following challenges (these can be seen also as obstacles since we can state that PB in Prague is still in its initial phase):

- Support of the PB on the city level. There are conflicts between regional and local offices regarding competences. Support on the city level means not only finances, but it also coordination and steering the processes.
- Support of the processes on the local level. District's governments do not invest enough resources and finances into spreading PB idea among citizens.
- Presence of deliberative aspects of PB which are only limited to the main aspects of Sopot model i.e. suggestions of proposals by individuals or small interest groups and voting.
- Coordination of PB with other citizen involving and public participation methods used by municipalities. Prague and its districts use many incentives and tools to support citizens and their activities but the more programs they offer, the less ordinary citizens understand the existing policies.

## DEVELOPMENT OF THE PARTICIPATIVE BUDGET(S) IN PRAGUE

While talking about PB process, we can describe four main phases:

1. Preparation of the PB procedure, when the public authority creates and adopts rules and procedures of the participatory budgeting and the selected proposals' implementation.
2. Participatory budgeting itself, when citizens propose their ideas, work together with the officers on its feasibility check, present and discuss the proposals with fellow citizens and vote for the chosen ideas in the final elections.
3. Evaluation of the PB procedure when the feedback from the citizens and officers about this procedure is collected in order to improve rules and procedures form the next PB edition.
4. Implementation of the results of public decision making.

As shows the figure 4, each step needs some time:

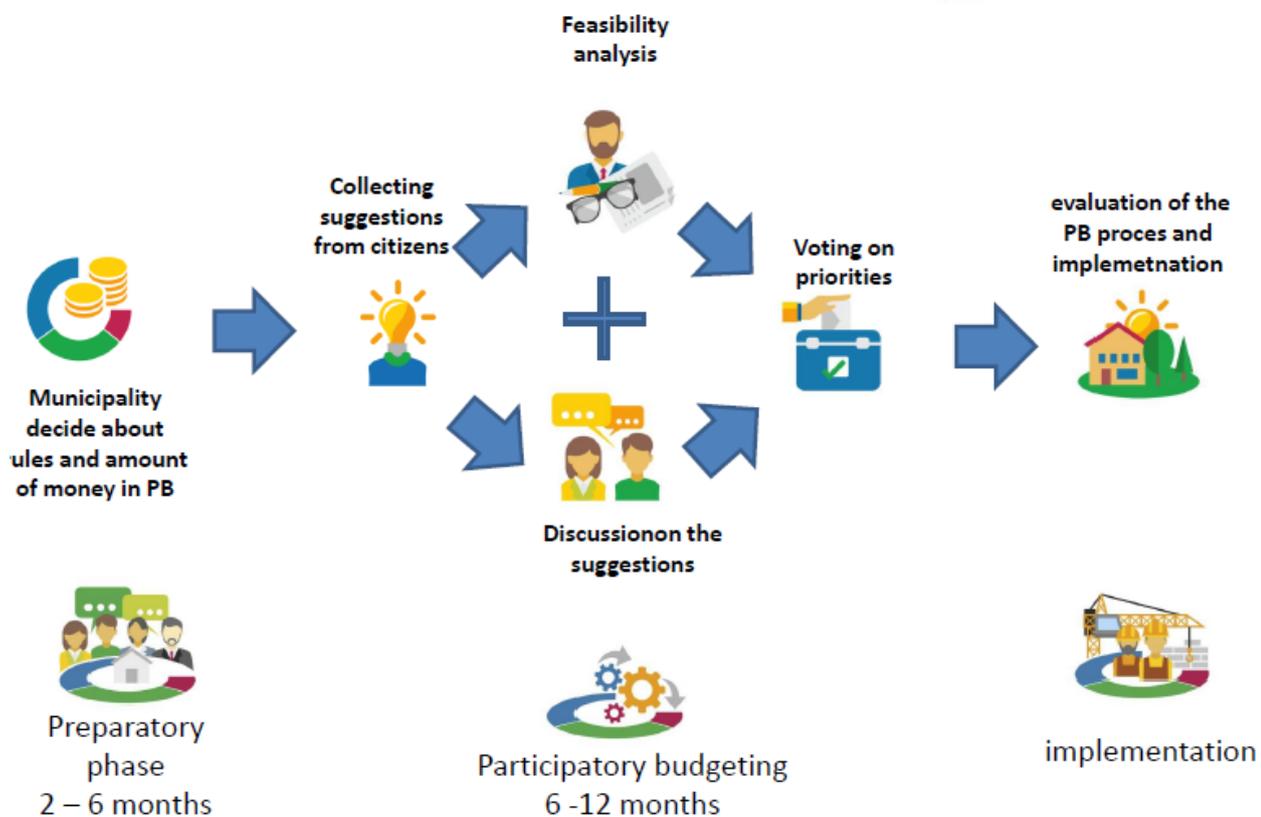


Figure 4 - scheme of the main phases of PB according to Agora's Methodology of PB for Czech cities

Before we focus on each of these phases, we introduce a model that enables measuring the level of participation of citizens in every single step of the process. These levels are the top of the “Ladder of participation” from S. Arnstein (1968) that we adopted (see figure 5).

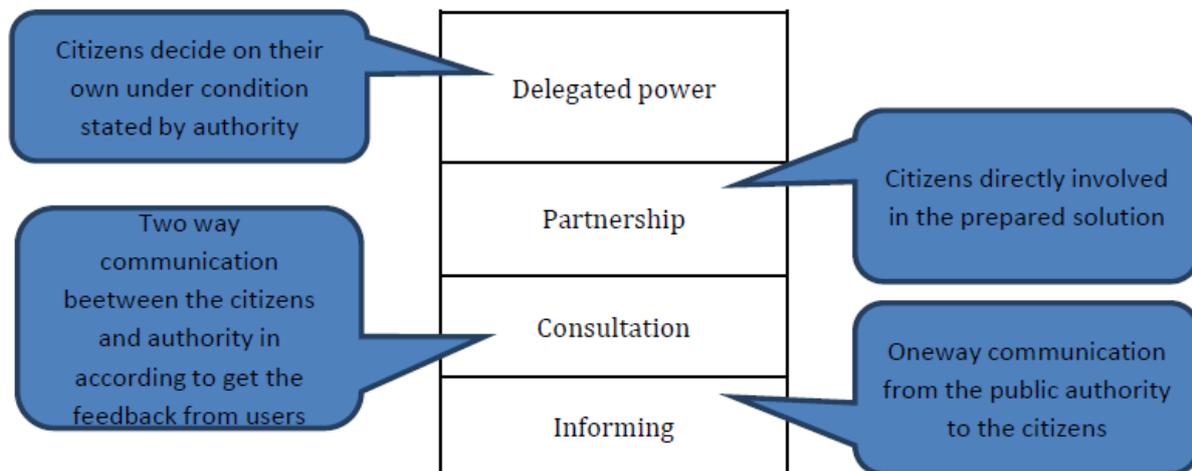


Figure 5 - levels of participation

In each of the steps mentioned above, we can define the achieved level of participation.

## Preparation of the PB procedure

As mentioned above, Prague ran PB in 10 districts at the beginning of 2018<sup>20</sup>. All of them use the same methodology prepared under the influence of the Sopot model. There were differences in the preparatory phases of PB in the districts. Despite the fact that our methodology suggests making this preparation as much open and participatory<sup>21</sup> as possible, only in the cases of Prague-Zbraslav, Prague-Slivenec and partly Prague 10 this suggestion was applied. The other districts mostly used a copy-paste system and adopted the procedures as a result of deskwork of the officer responsible for the PB.

<sup>20</sup> Prague 3, 5, 6, 8, 10, 14, Prague-Zbraslav, Prague-Slivenec, Prague-Horní Počernice, Prague-Kolovraty, See the interactive map here: <http://www.participativni-rozpocet.cz/participativni-rozpocet/>

<sup>21</sup> We suggest creating working group consisting of not only officers, politicians but also local NGO's, representatives of important social and cultural institutions of the municipality. To have a public seminar and discussion as a part of preparatory work and finally to have also special seminar for members of the assembly before their final decision on PB.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that our experience shows that participants' invention and input was quite limited even in the districts where they adopted the participative way of work. They accepted the Sopot model methodology without any tendencies to shift the model more to a consensual one or even to an inclusive one.

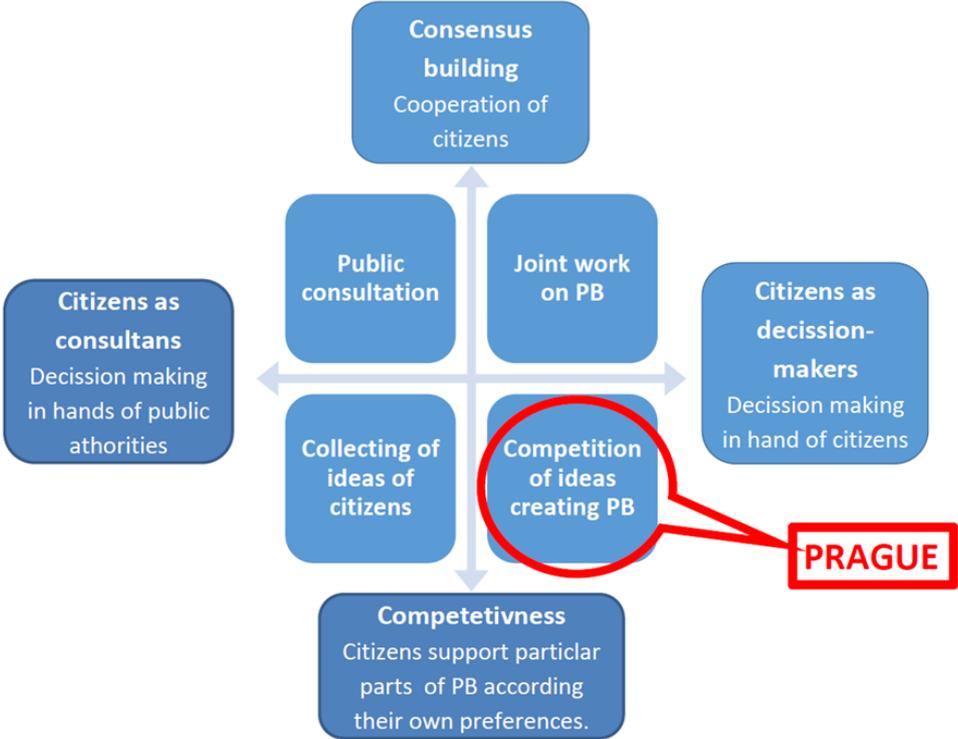


Figure 6 - model of distributing of power and citizen participation

The way PB becomes part of the districts' policies differs a bit from district to district. Adoption of PB is done by the decision of districts assemblies. They adopt it as a procedure and as an obligation to set appropriate amount of money for implementation of the results of the procedure. They decide to implement PB under certain conditions, with a certain timeframe and with certain amount of money. What differs, is who initiates the usage of PB. Sometimes it is the whole assembly, sometimes it is just the district's council.

The time needed for the preparation of the materials varies from several months to several weeks but it is difficult to state that because there is not the same trigger moment for the preparation to be started. E.g. In **Prague-Zbraslav** it was the decision of the council to take part in the project of NGO Agora<sup>22</sup> and start to prepare all the materials for assembly's decision

<sup>22</sup> The decision of the Council of the District Prague–Zbraslav R 17 229 15, from the day 29.6.2015

such as rules and regulations of the nature of the proposals that can be financed from PB, precise description of the procedure of the citizens involvement, breakdown of the running costs of the PB procedure. Preparation of these materials was done together with the working group. This working group consisted of citizens, politicians and officers. In order to create informed consensus about the materials and to give the opportunity to all members of the assembly to take part in the preparation of the PB, the materials were presented to the members of the assembly before the official assembly meeting. A similar procedure was used also in **Prague 10** and **Prague Slivenec**.

In the case of **Prague 3**, there was just a discussion within an internal working group of the district office, i.e. advisory group consisting of officers and representatives of political parties supported by external advisor from Agora CE. The results of the work of this group were presented to the citizens and to the assembly but there was no considerable focus on the problem. The PB was agreed on by the council then, and started immediately.

In case of **Prague 5** it is not possible to find appropriate documentation but the councilor and vice mayor responsible for the PB took part in several seminars of Agora. The documents presented on their webpages were a copy of documents from another districts.

In the case of **Prague 6**, the working group consisted only of officers of the district's office and commercial subcontractors (Agora CE and D 2.1). This advisory group prepared the first edition of PB in 2016 and it was agreed by the council and by the assembly to continue with the second edition of the PB in 2017<sup>23</sup>.

In the case of **Prague 8**, the very first edition of PB was only a kind of public consultation of the municipal projects proposed to the citizens. They were to choose which one of the projects should be implemented from their PB: there was no deliberation and the procedure was a referendum in form of a simple electronic questionnaire.

In the case of **Prague 14**, the PB was developed and introduced only by a small group consisting of vice mayor and few officers with the support from external advisors both from Agora and D 2.1.

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<sup>23</sup> The materials are downloadable [here](#) or here a [document](#) (in Czech)

With some level of generalization, we can summarize the level of citizen participation as shown in figure 7. There we can see that the participation in the PB policy development is quite low.

Delegated power				
Partnership				
Consultation				
Informing				
Prague district	n. 8, 5, 10, 6, 14 Horní Počernice, Kolovraty	3, Zbraslav, Slivenec	None	none

Figure 7 - levels of participation in the preparatory phase

### Participatory budgeting

Once the PB procedure is adopted by district’s assembly, it starts to be implemented. We can see more or less the same main steps in all the districts:

1. Introduction of PB to the public.
2. Gathering the proposals.
3. Feasibility studies of the proposals suggested by citizens.
4. Presenting the feasible proposals and voting.

Most of the districts have their own “man in charge”, a coordinator who is responsible for the PB project. Most of these coordinators are officers of the city district’s office. All of them are only part time PB coordinators. Very often, they have also another function in the district administration. In case it is not a position related to public participation, their competences and performance of the task for citizen involvement can be threatened. At certain moments they are so busy with some other activities they are responsible for, that they are not able to commit themselves to PB. Let us have a look at the main phases a bit more in detail. We will focus namely on participative and deliberative moments of each phase.

## 1. Introduction of PB to the public

There is a variety of PR methods used in the district. Support of PR campaign depends on different aspects, namely: size of the PB, number of inhabitants, interest of politicians. There is poor recordkeeping of the expenditure of these running costs. Mostly the resulting media mix is:

**Printed media:** news in the local magazine issued by the municipality itself, posters and leaflets distributed in the public spaces.

**Electronic media:** web pages of the district office, web page of the PB project, social media.

One of the results of the PB procedures should be increasing the citizens' deliberation. The first step is to strengthen the social capital of the communities to open the possibility to start to communicate. This creates perfect environment for networking.

Main proponents of the communication processes are the citizens themselves. They should "spread the rumors" around their communities. That is why the Sopot model is extraordinarily effective. In some of the districts, Agora actively supports the PB coordinators to create such network or to use them in the initial information campaign. It gives also a possibility to evaluate the motivation of the politicians to use their networks actively to promote PB.

**SPOLU ZA LEPŠÍ 11**

Od 26. 2. až do 29. 3. 2018 se budou moci podávat návrhy projektů cílených na zlepšení života v naší městské části.

**Návod, jak na to:**

- 1.** Městská část Praha 11 vyčlenila částku 4,5 milionů Kč. O využití této částky mohou rozhodovat obyvatelé Prahy 11.
- 2.** Jste starší 15 let? Bydlíte nebo pracujete na Praze 11? Máte nápad, jak vylepšit své okolí?
- 3.** Přečtěte si, prosím, pravidla a najděte 5 garantů, kteří podpoří Váš nápad. Podejte svůj návrh na Úřad městské části Praha 11.
- 4.** Podané návrhy se dopracují ve spolupráci s jednotlivými odbory MČ P11 a projdou analýzou.
- 5.** Představte Váš projekt sousedům a získejte jejich podporu.
- 6.** Hlasování o projektech.
- 7.** Realizace vítězných projektů.
- 8.** Realizované projekty budou sloužit všem.

[www.spoluzalespi11.cz](http://www.spoluzalespi11.cz)

Delegated power				
Partnership				
Consultation				
Informing				
Prague district	n. 3, 8, 5, 6, 14, 11, Horní Počernice, Kolovraty	none	Zbraslav, 10	none

Figure 8 - level of participation in the introductory

## 2. Collecting of the ideas of citizens

The way citizens take steps in the procedure is the same in all the districts using PB. The citizens suggest their proposal via project fiche like form. They can use the electronic or printed version of it. The PB coordinators are available for eventual advice or consultation.

Parallel to this call for proposal, there are public meetings held in every district. Purpose of these public meetings is informative and consultative. People get information about PB and feedback to their questions or proposals. There were several attempts to shift these meetings to more deliberative form but in the context of Sopot model where individuals bring their proposals there is quite limited interest of people to take part in such meeting.

The level of deliberation in this phase is quite small and is constantly declining. In the first edition there are introductory public meeting where the people can discuss together possible ideas to be proposed. These meetings are less and less visited by the citizens. Meeting and discussing is quite time spending for people. Districts use rather the time of coordinator set for face to face consultations. Quite often there are special days of open doors, when the citizens can come and consult their ideas with officers who can quickly estimate feasibility of the citizen's idea. But creating the environment for the communication between the citizens together seems to be very difficult.

From our evaluation in Prague district n. 10 we can see that some of the authors are involving their fellow citizens in this phase on their own. But it is quite rare that they open the topic of their proposal to some wider discussion. Authors of the proposals involve their friends and neighbors much more in the campaign before voting.

Delegated power				
Partnership				
Consultation				
Informing				
Prague district	none	none	All of them	none

Figure 9 - level of participation in the phase of collecting the citizen's ideas

### 3. Feasibility check

In this phase, the most active citizens who proposed their ideas work together with district's officers in order check the feasibility of their ideas. From certain point of view this phase is (or should be) built on partnership between citizens and public authorities. Many times this partnership is formal, the reason being twofold.

First, as already mentioned, one of the biggest problems of the Prague PB is the fragmentation of city administration. Time needed for feasibility check is quite often not sufficient and the citizen's proposals must be rejected preventively or accepted without unambiguous answer whether it will be possible to really implement it. This undermines the legitimacy of PB in the eyes of citizens whose needs and initiative do not give concrete results.

Second, there is a misunderstanding of citizens about their role in PB. In their evaluation of the process, we can read that they feel more like the one who just makes the office aware of some problem or spark some idea for what needs to be changed but they don't want to participate on other tasks and carry the burden of feasibility study together with officers. Simply they do not want to play active role in this phase. We can hear some complaints both from the officers as well as from authors of the proposed projects in districts of 3 and 10. Mostly they blame each other for passivity, non-transparency and lack of willingness to work together. It seems it is based mostly on some personal attitudes and expectations of the citizens and officers and kind of lack of will from some of the officers.

*"these (officers) who are capable and motivated to work with citizens has to manage the processes but they are overloaded by other tasks and these who should work with them (with citizens) are lazy and not able to work with citizens without some management"*

Delegated power				
Partnership				
Consultation				
Informing				
Prague district	none	none	All of them	none

Figure 10 - level of participation in the phase of feasibility check

#### 4. Introducing the ideas to public

During this phase, certain type of PR campaign together with public meeting take place. Districts' town halls are responsible for the PR campaign and organizing public meeting(s) together with the proposals' authors. It can be seen as a kind of partnership for public authority and citizens.

Again, we can see the lack of deliberation in this moment in most cases since the authors already introduced the "final" version of their proposals. Any changes made in this moment would lead automatically to the necessity of repeated feasibility check. During the pilot testing Agora tried to hold the meetings as deliberative as possible but the presence of citizens was quite low and the aim was not to change the proposal but learn the details of these proposals. Since the testing in 2016 Agora suggests to have an open common meeting of authors, officers and citizens in the end of the initial feasibility check period. During that time, there are more options to increase the input in deliberation on the proposals.

Delegated power				
Partnership				
Consultation				
Informing				
Prague district	none	none	All of them	none

Figure 11 - level of participation in the phase of feasibility check

## 5. People's vote

The final step of the budgeting is done by electronic vote in almost an entire Prague. People use electronic form to answer which one of the citizens' proposal they would like to support or refuse. The voting is secret and anonymous. There are a few exemptions where are also personal data gathered (e.g. Prague-Slivenec). There is a system against voting misuse secured by robots and against multiple voting by specific code delivered to participant's mobile telephone in the districts with strictly electronic voting. Results of the voting is obligatory for the districts office and assembly who are in charge of its implementation. From the point of view of participation level, this is a power delegated to citizens to decide on their own how the PB should be spent.

Delegated power				
Partnership				
Consultation				
Informing				
Prague district	none	none	none	All of them

Figure 12 - level of participation in the phase peoples vote

For the number of inhabitants who took part in the final elections see the following chart (figure 13) comparing the two piloting municipalities and their progress in the last three editions of PB.

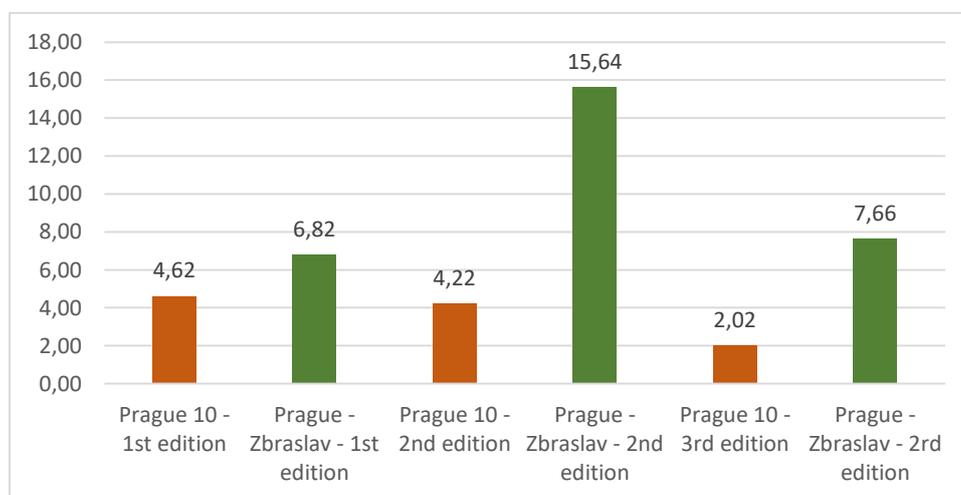


Figure 13 - The turnout in % of total population during the final decision making

## 6. Evaluation of the procedure of PB

The last phase of the PB's participatory part is the (participatory) evaluation of the procedure. To call the procedure participatory, it should be done at least at the level of “consultation”. This is mostly done as a mix of tools involving citizens. During the piloting and in several other districts Agora uses:

- questionnaire distributed to the people who participated in voting,
- meeting of authors and working group open to the public (though with a quite small participation of citizens).

Information from these sources are taken into account by the working group, which suggests changes to the procedure in the following year. Mostly internal procedures are taken into account. Specifically, after the second edition of the PB the problems in implementation of citizen’s proposals became obvious.

Participation of citizens or at least authors in the evaluation besides the districts number 3, 10 and Zbraslav was not detected.

Delegated power				
Partnership				
Consultation				
Informing				
Prague district	n. 8, 5, 6, 14, 11, Horní Počernice, Kolovraty	number 3, 10 and Zbraslav	none	none

Figure 14 - level of participation in the phase of evaluation

## Implementation of the PB results

There are now only few districts experienced in the implementation of PB (3, 6, 10, Zbraslav and Slivenec). We can see big differences in the two piloting districts. Prague 10 where the proposals were quite expensive and Prague-Zbraslav where the price of proposals was more than 4 times less.

Some of the proposals were implemented by the office on its own with no involvement of the author (mostly “small” or schematic proposals). Some of them were controlled during its

implementation by the author and there are even rare cases where the authors work as agents of its implementation (reconstruction of the chapel in Prague 10).

## PRAGUE PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING IN NUMBERS

As a reference we take the year 2017 where all the above mentioned districts had already PB even though some of them have just started. Thus some of the data are from the first and some from the second edition. Data from the third edition of Prague 10, 3 and Zbraslav will be available in mid of 2018.

As a first indicator we focus on “real” expenditures of the districts in the PB (see picture 14). This is just the share of PB in total expenditures of the district from the previous year budget.<sup>24</sup>

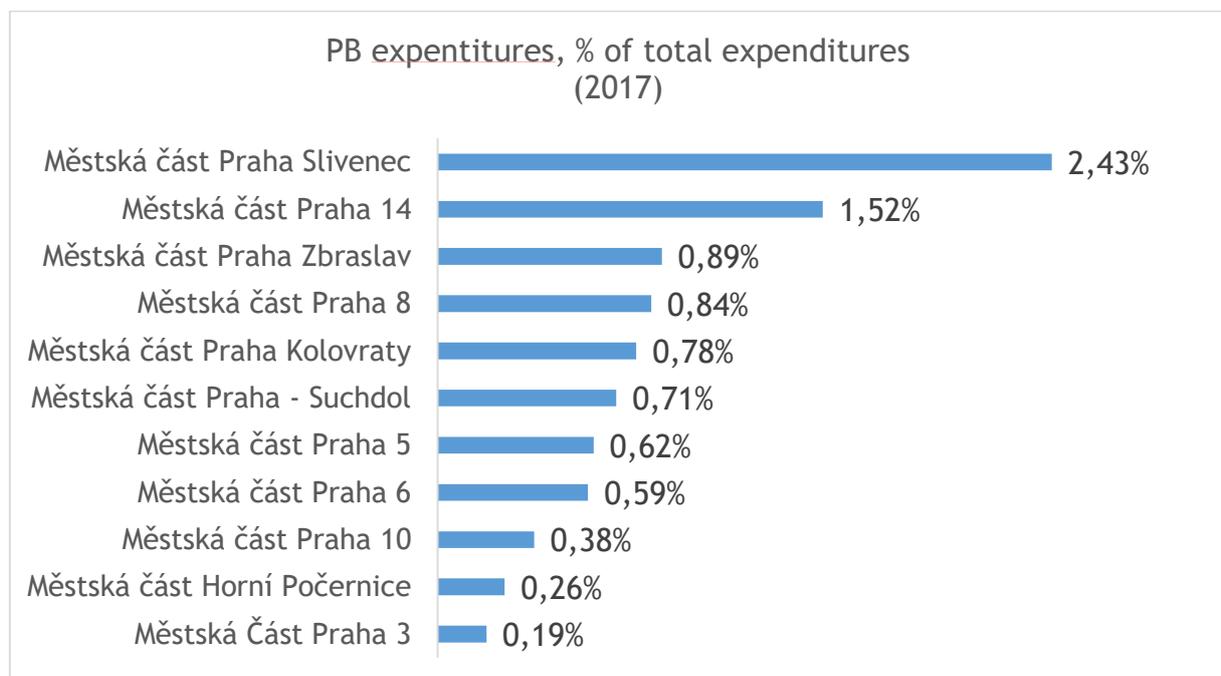


Figure 15 - PB as a part of districts' total expenditures

It is important to notice that this statistic is related to the districts' budgets. Support of the PB from the Prague city budget is just symbolic – it is 50 million CZK (about 2 million EUR), which is 0.08 share of the total expenditures of Prague city. It is important to add that this amount

<sup>24</sup> This indicator should be critical. The district's office has different statute and due to this the money transfer from Prague Magistrate is calculated differently (out of this 53 districts only 20 of them has also „delegated power“ i.e their budget consists also the running cost of state administration).

is related to one-year budget though this support was not used by the districts during two following years).

Second indicant that makes the picture of politicians' investment in the people's power more clear is the amount of money per citizen. The picture is quite similar and we can see it from the graph: Praha Horní Počernice has relatively high expenditures comparing to the total number of inhabitants and in the case of Prague Suchdol it is opposite.

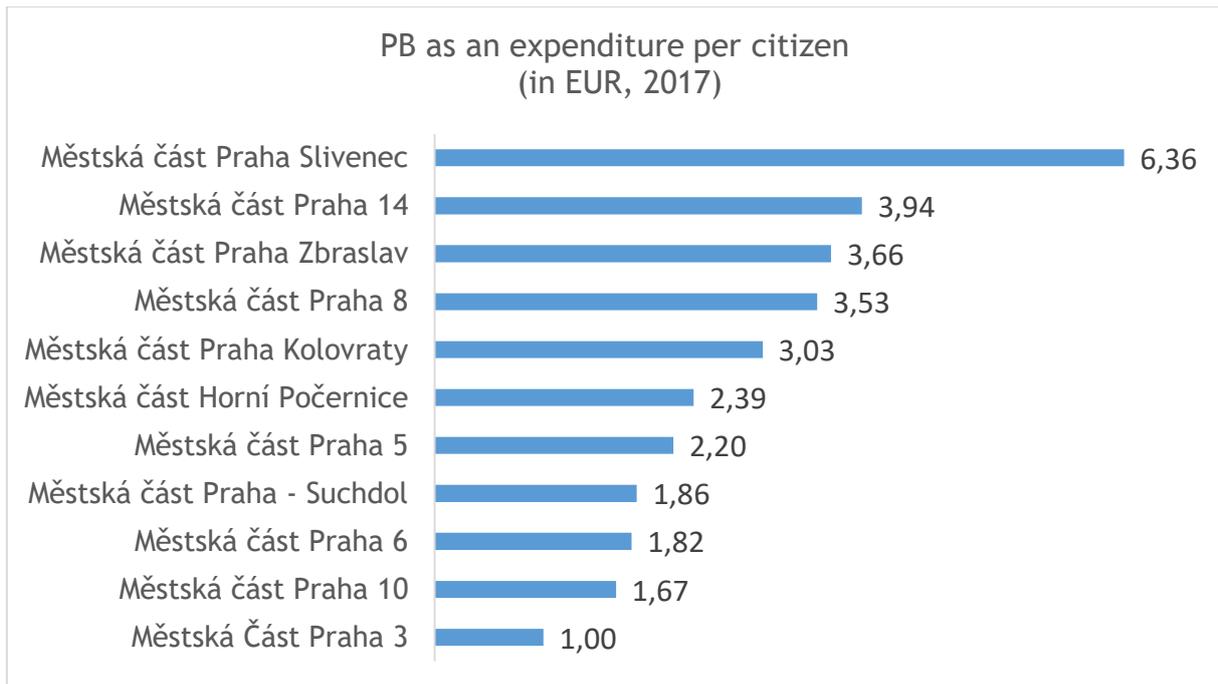


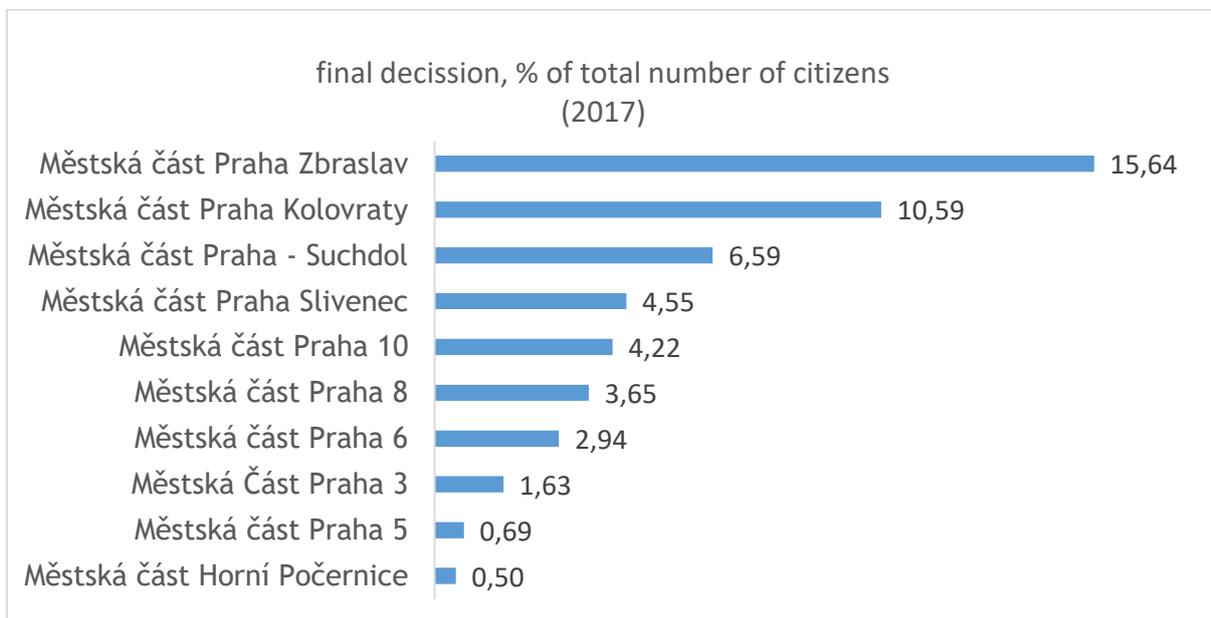
Figure 16 - amount of PB per capita

Another indicator that allows comparison of the level of participation is the number of proposals submitted by the citizens (see the figure 17). From the picture it is obvious that the level of interest is relatively higher in the "small" districts. The only exception is Prague Horní Počernice, where the interest of citizens was quite low. This is surprising because the PB there started after one year of testing the procedure in the grammar schools.



*Figure 17 - interest of the citizen in proposal submitting*

This finding is also supported by the next indicator of citizens' activeness. It is the participation in final voting (see the figure 18). We can see the same as for the previous indicator. The citizens from "small" districts show more interest in this. The only exception is the Prague-Horní Počernice again. We can even see the loss of interest.



*Figure 18 – participation in final voting*

## CONCLUSIONS

Our main conclusions can be summed up in the following five points

- **Participatory budget is a quite new program of citizen participation among many others**

As such it is still fighting for a position in the public policy making. It is highly questionable whether it will be recognized as a universal tool for involvement of citizens.

- **Many driving forces, only one methodology**

There were different stakeholders who were behind participatory budget introduction. As new and new participatory budgets appear on the map of Prague we can see stronger tendency to the labelling of the Sopot model without deeper discussion about an adoption of PB to the context of the unique municipality.

- **Popularity of PB is rapidly increasing (from the point of view of number of districts that uses it.)**

With the upcoming municipal elections (October 2018) we can see a speeding in the PB adoption.

- **Lack of support from city government**

The city districts that has been using PB already for 3 years and/or has to implement difficult proposals show that cooperation with Prague City Hall and its public service providers is necessary and yet quite difficult. Consequently, many proposals made by citizens have to be rejected, their implementation is prolonged.

- **Local character with very limited impacts.**

Most of the Prague PBs are focused only on the minor changes or, better phrased, projects. Maximum costs per one project is about 40 000 EUR. In the case of investments, we can see only minor changes in public spaces (like small playgrounds, outdoor gyms, particular improvements).

- **Low level of accountability**

During the evaluation of the PB proposals' implementation, it is possible to see problem with an accountability both on the side of the city district offices and on the side of citizens. We registered tendencies among officers to ask citizens for sophisticated proposals with specific budgets and designs. On the other hand, citizens quite often send only simple proposals and expect this to be the only responsibility they have.

## THE FUTURE OF PB IN PRAGUE

As mentioned above, the PB initiative is coming from the local districts. There are different driving forces on this level. As we work in several districts as evaluators, we can see that citizens are using this program as it comes from the districts' town halls, without any specific demands for changes of its nature (there is no initiative to shift it more toward the deliberative model). There are some kinds of comments often coming from the opposition in the local assemblies. Some of them are focused on the lack of legitimacy, some of them on the lack of deliberation and some of them treat PB as kind of "tokenism" without any real sharing of the power.

The other source of comments are the officers. They find PB disruptive for the concepts they have.

Both these sources of comments could be positive in motivation of politicians for improving the whole procedure. Now it is important to get them into play and discuss possible changes to hit the goals of participatory budgeting. These should not be just a mechanical use of the tool for decision-making. In such situations (e.g. amount of money given to PB) it would be really only a type of tokenism. The goal should also be to foster well-educated, informed and participating citizens and deep need of analysis on the side of citizens as well as on the side of officers. That means we need more profound exercise of PB that enables civic participation in both of its forms: as citizen involvement and public engagement.

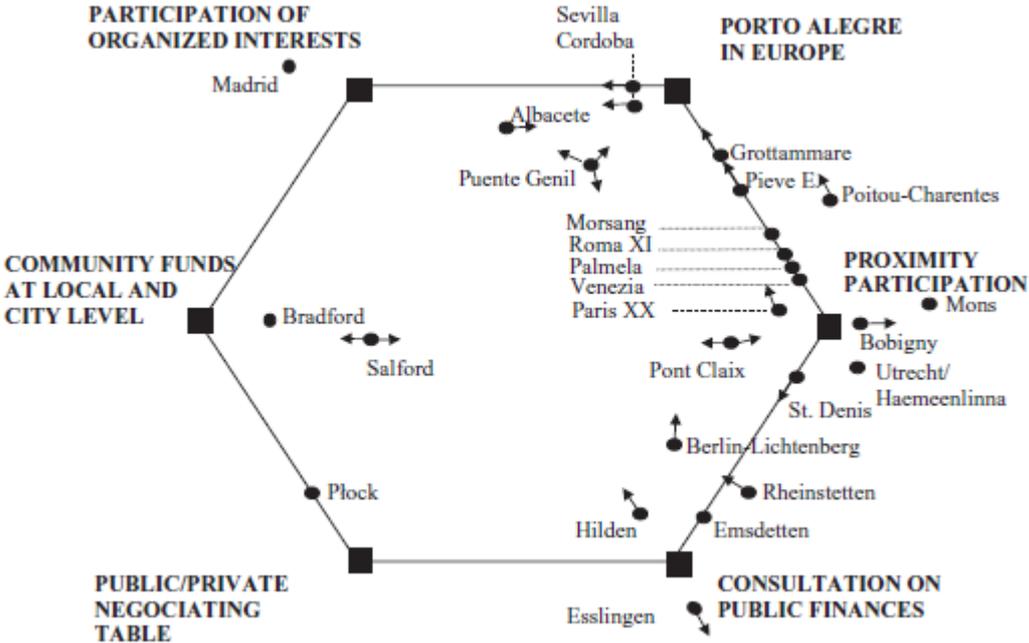
### **In what direction should we go to create a better future in our city?**

PB is still an undervalued instrument in two aspects. Firstly, it creates an environment where the majority of citizens can take their stake in the decision making about their closest surroundings in a quite easy and understandable way. Secondly, it allows a more direct communication between citizens and officers that brings faster very tangible effects. In previous chapter we summarize the main obstacles that are still on this way toward more citizen friendly public administration in Prague.

The main task now is the improvement of internal process management and facilitation between the offices of local districts and office of the city, otherwise the main aims of the PB stay unfulfilled.

**Is there an ideal PB model that could be adopted in our city?**

Prague model of PB is the Sopot model, that is kind of unique and does not comply with narrative of the PB models done by Sintomer (2008). In the situation of the city of Prague it is hard to imagine that the responsibility for the PB process and outcomes implementation is transferred for the citizens themselves and make the model more communal (as we can see in



case of Bratislava Nové Mesto). This would have to replace the whole system of grant schemes that are functioning on level of districts as well as on level of the city of Prague.

Thinking about possible broadening of the impact of the direct decision making on the large scale projects (in a meaning of their consultation) we can point out the ad hoc initiatives of the districts as well as the ones of the The Prague Institute of Planning and Development responsible for conceptual development of the city (incorporated in Prague master plan and the strategic plan as well) but working also on specific spots.

To summarize, we can quote one of the mayors who was working on his local district's strategic plan and where a Sopot-like PB model was adopted. „We as elected politicians are still responsible for the decisions and their impact. We have to defend the interest of the citizens in the city-wide debate. That’s why I consulted the citizens in the strategic plan drafting”.