



PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING

CASE STUDIES OF CITIES

DABROWA GORNICZA
WALBRZYCH
BRATISLAVA NOVÉ MESTO
BANSKÁ BYSTRICA

PREFACE

We want to share our experience and praxis of specific tool for Good governance on the local level so called Participatory budget in this brochure. We hope this will help to shift knowledge from the countries, towns and organizations that already adopted this innovative instrument and start discussion about new ways of deepening the democracy on the local level.

The brochure is meant to be helpful for anybody who is interested in implementing of Participatory budget processes. We want to make it short but illustrative enough. For more details please refer to the websites and individual authors mentioned in texts.

This collection of four case studies from Poland and Slovak was produced in the project „Participatory budgeting – different perspective of civic participation procedures among V4 counties“. Main aim of the project is to strengthen local democratic culture among the V4 countries and enable better understanding of the undermining conditions in each of them.

Vojtěch Černý, Agora CE

Partners of the project:

BORIS Association (PL)



Agora CE (CZ)



Utopia.sk (SK)



Participatory budgeting – different perspective of civic participation procedures among V4 counties was founded by IVF.

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DABROWA GORNICZA

DABROWSKI PARTICIPATORY BUDGET (DBP)

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MODEL DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

Dabrowski Participatory Budget is a mechanism which allows residents of **DABROWA GORNICZA** to be involved in defining the part of the expenses from the city budget. It stands out because of discussion forums under local inhabitants and the possibility of discussions with the staff office on the proposals of projects. It is based on transparent rules, developed as a result of 7-month long work and discussion. On 30 January 2013, the City Council in Dabrowa Gornicza adopted a Resolution which set the rules and procedure of consultation with the people the part of the expenditure from the city budget for 2014.

DBP is associated with expenditures which refer to the nearest environment and public space for example district, street or backyard. So DBP model is based on the division of the city into 27 districts, which results from the historical formation of the communities or common names of settlements in urban parts. The Dabrowa Gornicza government established on the basis of annual city expenses on realization tasks at the request of residents in the municipal area, that he could afford to allocate budget of PLN 8 million, which is 1.2% of total expenditures in the budget.

The distribution of these PLN 8 million for individual districts was based on conversion: PLN 30 thousand (amount for each district) + amount based on the number of inhabitants in each district. In this way, the smallest of the districts - Ratanice - numbering 158 people registered, has at its disposal PLN 39 171, the largest – South Mydlisce - has a population of 9295 people and the amount of PLN 569 574.

STAGE I – INFORMATIONAL AND EDUCATIONAL CAMPAIGN

Realizing the fact that the implementation of DBP will require intensive informational and educational activities for the first time, we planned and realized in the period from February to March 2012 the following projects: website www.twojadabrowa.pl and the profile of DBP on Facebook, Consultation Points were established for each of the districts, 1500 posters and 4,000 brochures showing the process were printed, 9 informational meetings for residents were conducted. At the turn of October and November we organized additional campaign about voting for projects. We also established several relationships and television programs broadcast both on TV and on the Internet. The second edition of DBP has been enriched with the organization in districts space for discussion.

STAGE II – REPORTING PROJECTS PROPOSED BY INHABITANTS

In the first edition of DBP projects could be submitted from 8 April to 20 May 2013. To facilitate this task, we created a special instruction, which contains the basic principles and information. The initiative had every resident of the district who has completed 16 years. The project was drawn up on the specific application prepared by the City Council (paper and electronic version). The request must be supported by a group of at least 15 local residents who have completed 16 years. The projects were not limited by any catalogue and it was enough when they were compatible with the tasks of the commune. Although they have to assume the availability and public nature.



>> Citizens consult their project proposals with city clerks (foto: twojadabrowa.pl)

Submission of projects lasted until the last hours of May 20. In total, the residents submitted 250 projects. Each of the districts had filed at least one project, the largest number - 32. Most of the projects - 24% (59) Dabrowa inhabitants made for the renovation of sidewalks, stairs, road surface. 16% (40) was proposals on the playgrounds. Construction of parking covered 10% (23) of the projects, land development conceptions 8% (20), building and renovating playgrounds 6% (15), squares development 4% (8), lighting 4% (8), 2 projects which were submitted to create skateparks. 23%, or 56 projects qualified as the others and they relate to for example building dive sites, equipping community centers, classrooms, organizations of cultural events, building refuse dumps. The next edition of DBP in 2015 are the 236 projects, and for the currently ongoing edition (for 2016), this number has already exceeded 200 projects.

STAGE III – PROJECTS REVIEW AND EVALUATION

From 20 May until 19 August lasted period in which the Administrational Office was verifying the proposals. It required the creation of adequate circulation cards for each of the projects and including into the work of DBP most departments of the Administrational Office. Administrational process of verification and evaluation relied mainly on making these proposals real, which from individual departments required an enormous contribution of work. On August 19 there was published a list of projects submitted by residents for each of the districts together with the opinion of the Administrational Office.

STAGE IV – DISTRICTS FORUMS FOR RESIDENTS (DFM)

In September and October districts forums for residents took place. Their aim was to clarify comments on notified projects issued by the Authority and to start discussions on the submitted projects and consequently to establish a list of the vote. It was also an opportunity for residents to learn about the ideas and projects submitted by their neighbors.

According to the plan 27 meetings were realised in each of the districts. In this way, the lists for a vote in a given district were made. In total, there were 195 of the 250 original proposals on these lists. Districts forums for residents are hallmarks of Dabrowa procedures and most important stage of DBP. In the second edition, thanks to them, the residents of several districts even agreed on a whole list of projects in the amount of the district.

STAGE V – RESIDENTS VOTE FOR PROJECTS

Voting, according to the established procedures was determined in the period from 18 to 22 November.

You could vote:

- electronically via the form on the participatory budget website,
- with correspondence by sending a form to the Administrational Office,
- directly by submitting the form in the Consultation Point for the district.

Voting was open, and every person participating in the vote declared that he is over 16 years old and gave details (name and surname, the declared address, PESEL), which are contained in the ballot paper. Compliance with the facts was confirmed by own signature of every resident. One e-mail address couldn't be used more than once in the vote.

The results have exceeded our expectations: 22 831 votes were cast (22.3% of those eligible to vote). Through the Internet, 7 504 votes were cast, and the by traditional form (paper form) voted 15 327. Unfortunately, it was 2 338 votes - for formal reasons - to be invalid. The smallest turnout in the district was 4%, and the highest - as much as 78% of those eligible. These figures were recurred little lower in the second edition.

STAGE VI – ANNOUNCEMENT OF IMPLEMENTED PROJECTS

Based on the entered data, in each of the districts we established ranking of projects taking into account the number of points scored. To the implementation stage passed only these projects that fit the limit of the money amount granted to the district. In this way, in 27 districts the residents chose 54 projects to be implemented in 2014. In the second edition, the residents chose 70 projects to implement.

STAGE VII – IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDED PROJECTS

These selected projects were prepared by individual departments to implement. In 2014 we completed all 56 selected projects, which today the residents can enjoy. It is worth noticing that the amount of money to realization exceeded the planned PLN 5 million and finally ended with the value of PLN 6.2 million, from what we drawn the appropriate conclusions for the future.

STAGE VIII – MONITORING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PROJECTS

In principle, the selected projects should be carried out in a year. We are announcing their progress in the implementation on the website in the section of each from 27 districts. According to the abovementioned decree we appointed leading cells that

are responsible for the implementation of assigned to them projects. Additionally, every 2 months meetings of the special team for implement projects have to be convened, what enable us to discuss about issues of possible problems with their implementation.

STAGE IX – EVALUATION

Thinking from the very beginning how to conduct evaluation procedures so it will allow to change it during next years, firstly, we were collecting remarks throughout whole year, secondly, we cooperated with external experts (this cooperation is currently implemented within the framework of the project co-financed by the European Union). Thanks to that we forced some changes into procedures.



>> *Evaluation session after first year of DBP in 2014 (foto: twojadabrowa.pl)*

Finally, it should be noted that properly planned work and dialogue around Participatory Budget in Dabrowa allowed reaching a compromise over political and civil divisions, which in the case of this type of innovative process is invaluable. You can check how Participatory Budget was implemented on the www.twojadabrowa.pl website.

WALBRZYCH

PARTICIPATORY BUDGET

Author: Anna Żabska - Coordinator of the WBP in the years 2012-2014



WALBRZYCH is the second-largest city in Lower Silesia. From January 1, 2013, after 10 years, the city regained its status of a borough, which was a crucial event. The president once again became the only host in the city and the city budget increased from PLN 350 million to PLN 600 million.

Walbrzych has a population of 120 000 inhabitants. The city is divided into 11 districts, in which operate the Councils of the Local Government, appointed by the City Council.

The annual budget amounts to approximately 600 million PLN. Investments in infrastructure were the main item of expenditure for several years. In the last two years the infrastructure investments resulted in accomplishment of the two largest of them i.e. Active Recreation Centre Aqua-Spa and Old Mine Multicultural Park .

The first attempt to introduce in Walbrzych the mechanisms of participatory budgeting was adopted in 2012. Mayor Roman Szełemej asked the Higher State Vocational School in Walbrzych, with a proposal to prepare the first city probe, whose aim was to learn the needs of residents and their opinions on projects and investments that should be made in Walbrzych. The probe was a two-step one. The first stage was to carry out surveys. Several students of Walbrzych's PWSZ set off on Podzamcze, the largest district of the city. The students' question was how should be developed a second part of the former high school's no. 5 building which is located on Kasztelanska str. For now, part of this building has already been developed by the Municipality of Walbrzych and there is free from fees an Integration Local Government Nursery for a group of 75 children. The second part of the complex remained far undeveloped. For the realization of the idea of residents, there has been allocated 3 million PLN. In the second stage, residents could choose other ideas submitted by themselves. They voted via the Internet and in shopping malls. About 2,000 residents decided that they want to have a modern educational and cultural centre with a club for seniors. This task entered the city budget for 2013.

In the face of a large social involvement and the positive response of residents, the Mayor has decided to implement the following year, the Walbrzych Participatory Budget (WBP) in extended formula under the slogan „You suggest, you decide“. Appointed coordinator of WBP took up drafting guidelines, their implementation and the completion of the process, according to the following schedule:

March | Elaboration of assumptions WBP – Civic Team

April | Publication of assumptions WBP – submitting of comments

April | A session of the City Council Walbrzych – resolution on consultations

May/June | Meetings with residents in neighborhoods – an information campaign

June | Deadline for submission of projects and tasks of WBP

July/August | Deliberations of verification team

September | Citywide meetings with residents

September | Vote on the projects

November | Submission of Draft Budget

In the first stage the Civic Team was established and was composed of:

- Chairman of the Club of the Walbrzych City Council
- Representatives of Local Government Community Councils
- Representatives of the Culture, Sports, Senior Citizens
- Plenipotentiary of disabled people
- Chairman of the Municipal Council of Public Benefit
- A representative of the Youth City Council
- A representative of entrepreneurs
- Employees of the City Office

The team took up the development of the draft guidelines of Walbrzych participatory budget. Then, this document has been made public, enabling all citizens to voice their concerns. Any opinions of inhabitants were re-examined by the Civic Team, which prepared the final wording of the WBP rules. An important element of the implementation of these principles was the resolution of the Walbrzych City Council on public consultation, which enabled the entire WBP process.

In a draft budget for 2014 there was proposed 4 million PLN under the WBP. The next year it was already an amount of PLN 5 million. The entire stake was divided into local and citywide projects. For citywide projects there was allocated 1 800 000 PLN (PLN 2 000 000 in 2014.) and for local projects there was assigned 2 200 000 PLN (PLN 3 000 000 in 2014.). The pool of funds for local projects had been disbursed in proportion to the number of inhabitants.

YOU PROPOSE

An important element of the WBP informational campaign were direct meetings with the mayor in every district of the city. During these meetings, the President presents the main objectives and plans of the city, as well as discusses with residents in detail the principles of WBP and ideas for the project.

Additional opportunity to talk are separate meetings in schools with young people of secondary schools. In each school, the President encourages young citizens of Walbrzych to submit their own projects and to participate in the subsequent vote. The minimum age for people involved in submitting projects and the vote is 16 years.

At the stage of projects important support for the project is formed in the special Municipal Office Consultation Point, which brings together employees for example from Office of Geodesy, Investment, City urban planner. This allows to verify and improve many reported civic initiatives at early stage.



>> Meetings with citizens in city district Poniatow (foto: Anna Zabska)

In 2013 citizens of Walbrzych reported 121 applications under the WBP, which were then reviewed by the team of people who represented all clubs councillors, NGOs, seniors, youth and officials. The verification team checks the projects only in terms of formality and legality such as:

- 1) Completeness (legibly filled with all the points from the project, accompanied by a list of signatures of residents from Walbrzych (minimum 15) supporting the project)
- 2) Compliance with the competence of communities (whether it concerns own tasks of community)
- 3) The nature of the project (local, citywide)
- 4) The place of performance in public space (whether it concerns community properties)
- 5) The regularity of the cost of the planned tasks
- 6) Stability of the project
- 7) Ability to protect the budget maintenance costs of the project in the following years
- 8) The compatibility of the project with the Rules WBP

In 2013 after verification of the voting 71 projects were qualified. This included 18 projects on the citywide tasks and 53 local tasks. In 2014 a smaller number of projects were reported - 101, however, they were better prepared, because the residents choose from among of 94 projects which were positively verified (74 local and 20 citywide).

After the announcement of the list of verified projects there are organised two or more large meetings for the residents in which designers present their ideas. The promotional campaign starts together with the announcement of a list of positively verified projects. The designers engage in a campaign of door-to-door or promote their projects in social media often on a large scale.

YOU DECIDE

In the voting, which in 2013 lasted 14 days and a year later was shortened to 10 days, only checked citizens of Walbrzych could participate. They could vote only once by selecting the form: via the Internet (www.wbp.um.walbrzych.pl), by mail (by sending a ballot to the City Hall), or personally giving voice in the appointed places. Each district had its own place to vote (mainly placed in school buildings).

Attendance in 2013 amounted over 22%, in 2014 25,41%. These are one of the best results in the country. Distribution of votes because of the form looks as follows: 40% of the votes were cast via the Internet, 58% on the cards thrown to the polls in appointed places, 2% of the votes were cast on the cards sent by mail.

In 2013 the winner of citywide project vote was project called „Reconstruction of John Paul II Stationary Hospice“. In 2014 a project titled „A center of excellence safe driving techniques and motorsport - Motopark„. Among the winning local projects were mainly playgrounds, for example Kid’s Park in Podzamcze district.



>> Kid’s Park in Podzamcze district (foto: Anna Zabska)

Announcement of the results is a solemn occasion and takes place in the city’s Town Hall. Immediately after the announcement of the results the coordinator WBP proceed to the evaluation, what actually means to the assessment of procedures. This is done through public consultation, reporting by the inhabitants of their comments and opinions, which are then implemented the general principles of WBP in the next year.

The role of the winning project designers does not end with the announcement of the results. They play a key role in the execution phase of projects by consulting with the selected in the tender executors and supervise the investment process along with officials.

In summary, you can choose Walbrzych example to point out some reasons why WBP has such good results. Firstly, it's a big commitment and determination of city mayor who organise and participate in frequent meetings with residents what creates an opportunity for a broad debate, which stimulates civic activity in the city.

Secondly, the commitment in the stages of planning, creating and verifying of NGOs and other representatives of social life. This has an influence on greater transparency and credibility of the process WBP.

Thirdly, the creation of a favourable climate among officials and councillors who represent the overwhelming support for the residents, for whom „the maze“ of procedures is often a big difficulty to overcome.

Fourth, wide information campaign in the local media, the use of social media, outdoor advertising.



>> *The example of citylight - poster to be displayed at bus stops*

Detailed information can be found at www.wbp.um.walbrzych.pl.

BRATISLAVA

NOVÉ MESTO

Author: Peter Nedoróčik, Utopia.sk



Municipality of **BRATISLAVA NOVÉ MESTO** together with the Municipality of Bratislava Staré Mesto is today the most lucrative parts of Bratislava. It currently has 44,000 inhabitants and almost every tenth citizen is a foreigner. Its specifics is not only in the composition of citizens but also in its territory, which includes extensive forests (northwest part) in the hills of Malé Karpaty and planes extending to the shores of the Danube River. Municipality has its own local council and executive, chaired by the mayor. Nové Mesto manages a budget of around 15 million €.

BEGINNINGS OF PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING

Civic association Utopia began cooperation with the municipal in 2013 by creating of an Office for participation as an experimental part of the local authority. After a common evaluation of the activity of the Office we, together with the Mayor Mr. Rudolf Kusý, acceded to creation of standard department with all necessary competencies from 1.1.2015. The Office has currently three employees for half time and two employees for a part time job. The Office for participation is from beginning dedicated to two areas of participation – to participatory budgeting (PB) and participatory planning of public spaces. The tasks of the Office include the following activities:

- Preparing and coordinating the overall process of PB
- Preparing and coordinating activities related to participatory planning of public spaces
- Collection and processing citizens' opinions through the questionnaire "Burza nápadov"
- Organizing public meetings
- Organizing and coordinating participatory community
- Individual consultations
- Cooperation with civic associations
- Coordinating work teams within the local authority and its various departments
- Communication and cooperation with local council
- Publicity of individual activities
- Training and consultations with other municipalities and activists in Slovakia and in abroad
- Managing website pr.banm.sk

Participatory budgeting started in its experimental form in 2014. The local council approved the creation of the Office for participation, PB statute, which defines processes, decision-making mechanisms and responsibilities of participators.

In the pilot year of the PB, the council has allocated for the implementation of civil projects amount of € 20,000. The Office for participation, in preparation for the pilot year of PB, carried out the following activities:

- Public meetings aimed at collecting suggestions and effort to make participatory territorial communities – in a particular districts of municipal and thematic focus
- Individual consultations in preparing project documentation
- Media campaign
- Processing of citizens' opinions from "Burza nápadov"
- Process scheme of the pilot year of PB
- Public presentation of projects and public consideration
- Voting procedure, contact and voting points



>> Meeting one of participatory communities (foto: Utopia.sk)

The result of these activities was the preparation of project documentation. To fifteen interesting projects answered 592 internet voters and 176 voters via ballot papers. The activity and creativity of the people who prepared the projects attracted a large number of inhabitants in Nové Mesto and not only here but in other municipalities as well. The website of PB in Nové Mesto visited nearly 3500 viewers last month and several dozen of them were from abroad.

THE PROCESS OF PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING

Decision-making in the process of PB can take place in several stages and/or include several types of decision-making at a time. An important role is played by so called consideration, thus assigning importance to each type of decision-making process. From this point of view, we can imagine PB as several hourglasses joined together, where decision-making is open to the widest possible audience and then narrows for expert views, to reopen again for the opportunity to respond to the widest possible range of people. Generally speaking, the decision concerns to two groups of people: those which the decision directly affect and involved ones, it means those who have interest to make decisions for various reasons. In our case, these are the voting residents of Nové Mesto and project presenters who made decisions in a previous process. Another important criterion is the depth of information about the proposal and expression of (dis)agreement. The more is consent informed, the bigger importance it has. Based on these and other considerations, in the pilot phase of PB, the individual types of voting accompanied by the following percentages:

- Public consideration of project coordinators – 50%
- Ordinary voting – 30%
- Internet voting – 20%

Except of internal logic of the process, this division is also affected by external factors. Online voting has the lowest importance because of possibility of abuse. Ordinary vote has the biggest importance because it requires greater activity and therefore assumes greater awareness. It also allows bigger degree of control by the authorities.

What is public consideration? It is the format of moderated public debate that includes aspect of the common decision. The outcome of a successful public consideration is consensus, but primarily it doesn't arise as compromise but rather as a common finding of new creative solution. Public consideration may have the following scheme: defining the problem – defining the available/possible ways of solutions – finding and identifying of common solutions. In our case, it was therefore the following scheme: needs and problems of the Nové Mesto – the individual projects as solutions proposals – evaluation and ranking of projects such as selection of the best solutions.



>> *Evaluation and ranking projects during public consideration (foto: Utopia.sk)*

We have identified the needs and problems of the Nové Mesto on the basis of completed questionnaires “Burza nápadov”. You were fully informed about these needs as well as about projects in previous edition of Hlas Nového Mesta. To choose the best solutions and therefore the ranking of projects, participants of public consideration chose the following evaluation criteria:

- The target group for which the project is designed and its direct and indirect impact
- Compliance of the project with the preferences of inhabitants of Nové Mesto obtained from the questionnaires “Burza nápadov”
- How many volunteers will participate in the project activities
- Efficient use of funds
- Sustainability of the project in the future and supporting the process of PB

In the end there was not only the competition about the ranking of projects but above all the participants sought the common good for Nové Mesto, which emerged from the set of supported projects. Ranking of the projects is therefore a coherent response to the need of municipality Nové Mesto.

PARTICIPATORY BUDGET OF BRATISLAVA NOVÉ MESTO 2015

First year of PB brought an increase of the amount to € 240,000 and extension about assignments and priorities that have been added to the citizens' projects, whereby the following definitions have been established:

- Citizens' projects are low cost investments (up to € 5,000) that are realized (together) by the citizens themselves and bring new or improve existing public services provided by municipality
- The assignments are high cost investments realized and procured by municipality
- The priorities are thematic areas that determine where should municipality invest the public funds from the budget

Preparation of PB 2015 basically includes the same activities by the Office for participation as in the pilot year but on larger scale. The cooperation of various participators is shown in infographics.

BANSKÁ BYSTRICA

Author: Peter Nedoroščik, Utopia.sk



BANSKÁ BYSTRICA is located in central Slovakia, in Zvolen Hollow, the river Hron basin. History of the city goes back to the 13th century. The importance of the original settlement grew thanks to several families of colonists from Saxony, who created economic, administrative and craft base for the mining production, so much that in 1255 the King Belo IV. Nowadays Banská Bystrica has a population of 78,000 people and is one of the biggest Slovak cities. It consists of 16 districts, which are governed by autonomous administrative bodies with local authorities and the executive represented by a mayor and the municipality.

BEGINNINGS OF PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING

The short history of PB in Banská Bystrica can be divided into two parts: an introductory part, which was unofficial and represented by civic activities, and an official part, which started with the approval of PB status by the local authorities on 10th December 2013 with the beginning of the PB set for 1st January 2014. The introductory part consisted of informal public meetings with the goal of getting acquainted with the mechanism of PB and mapping the situation in the city – what possibilities there are for the citizens to cooperate with the authorities, what services the authorities offer, to what degree and quality.

This preparatory part culminated in a final meeting of citizens, Members of Parliament and officials, where they could attend a presentation of Ewa Markowska-Bzducha from the University of Technology and Humanities in Radom about participatory budget in Poland and another one about examples of this mechanism in Slovakia.

The second part took a form of a workshop where the participants were divided into two work groups which were to think about their own expectations and mainly consider what new possibilities are awaiting them. First work group consisted of the citizens and the second one of the Members of Parliament and the officials. A document was created as an outcome of their meeting. It wasn't an easy process since the first group focused mainly on new possibilities having the expectations of improving democracy and community development while the other group focused primarily on the risks and complications. However, the two groups eventually came to an agreement about the following points:

- Warranty of the process – security of the process (both sides agreed they will need to create trust in order to prevent a situation where they won't be able to realize their plan, either because one side represented by "an official or a Member of Parliament will decide so" or the other side will not cooperate and not submit any projects.

- Defining the competencies (while the citizens expected reinforcement of their own competencies as citizens, the others emphasized the need of clear definition and new distribution of competencies between the citizens, officials and Members of Parliament).
- Common concept of rules and processes for the participatory budget in the form of a statute.



>> Informal public meeting – January 2014 (foto: Utopia.sk)

In the end the statute was created by the Members of Parliament and the authorities and citizens added some comments which were more or less included. It defines the basic actors in the process among the citizens: Participant, Council of Coordination (KooR) as a voluntary body elected by the participants (its task is to coordinate citizens activities and represent the participants against the city authorities), theme group (it should serve as a possibility for the participants to meet). It defines the following steps for PB in Banská Bystrica:

KooR announces PB for the particular budget year;

1. the first discussion forum – defines topics of priority for the projects, size of funds for the individual projects, particular theme groups and a date of the second discussion forum;
2. submission of the proposals – period of preparation of project documents;
3. assessment of the proposals – only formal criteria are checked, done by KooR and corresponding department of the office;
4. the second discussion forum – has two parts: the first one consists of project presentations and the second of the voting. It is possible for people to vote even if they don't take part in the client center of the city office during the following work days.
5. Realization
6. the final discussion forum – using votes it can recommend priorities for the following year and make comments about the projects that were not approved.

After being approved by the city authority the first pilot year of PB in Banská Bystrica started. Thirty-one projects competed for the funds in the following topic areas: Active citizens and Community Development, Greenery in the City, Culture, Youth, Sport and Health. Together they applied for nearly € 100,000. Public voting during the second discussion forum took place on 22nd May 2014 in the Cikker's Hall of the Town Hall where 205 citizens took part and in the Client center where 177 citizens voted. Therefore 382 citizens in total gave their votes.



>> The first discussion forum – February 2014 (foto: Utopia.sk)

The voting was completed on 6th June 2014 in the Client Center within the City Municipality in Banská Bystrica. Citizens gave their votes to the projects that will be supported from the participatory budget of the city. The winning projects were Sport and Socializing Day, Project SUMMER – Culture for People, Community Center in Iliáš and Floorball – the way to Movement and Health. About € 20000 was distributed among the winning projects.

In spite of a heated public discussion dealing mainly with the ways of voting no revolutionary changes in the statute of PB were made and voting is still the only way how to decide the ranking and the support of projects. Also the amount of funds set for PB in 2015 stays the same at about € 20,000. Therefore 20 projects applied for the funds.

COMPARISON OF CASE STUDIES OF BANSKA BYSTRICA AND BRATISLAVA NOVÉ MESTO

As well as in Bratislava, in Banska Bystrica the attempts to introduce PB started in 2013. In both cases the civic association Utopia played an important role at the beginning. However, it responded to two different actors. While in the case of Nové Mesto in Bratislava the incentive came from the mayor of the municipality Rudolf Kusý, in Banska Bystrica it came from three citizens – activists. The fact of where the original incentive came from had a significant influence on the following course of events as well as on the overall form of the PB mechanism. The two following criteria seem to be the most important to compare both processes. First the size of the funds, realization and processes of PB and second Actors, Community and the relations between the citizens and authorities.

THE SIZE OF THE FUNDS, REALIZATION AND PROCESSES OF PB

Both participatory budgets started the first year with about the same amount. The BANM, however, expanded in the first official year both as for the assignments and the original amount of the set budget which grew six times. In spite of the fact that the amounts set for citizens' projects didn't change, the final realizations differ significantly in two aspects: the number of supported projects and their differences as for the range of topics and target groups. While the projects supported in Banská Bystrica relate solely to culture and sport, the projects supported in Nové Mesto touch a broader range of topics. One can find also topics like homeless people, life of the elderly, or greenery and ecology. I believe that both the number and topic variety of the projects have something to do with the processes of PB and the most important part is played by the type of decision making. While Banská Bystrica accepts only voting, the key role in Nové Mesto plays the institute of public consideration, which influences the results of the decision in a tremendous way. During both years the public consideration brought about a major change, which caused the actors to change their perspective and as a consequence their own behavior as well.

The element of competition lessened by attempts of mutual cooperation, which then could be seen in the following two aspects:

- the consideration forum always came to a decision to lower the project budgets in a way so that more projects could be supported than it would have been under the original conditions;
- based on a discussion total needs of the municipality, of which the participants learnt at the beginning of the forum, were taken into account and that led to the fact that during the decision making the actors were able to appreciate topics which they personally did not prefer;

ACTORS, COMMUNITY AND THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE CITIZENS AND AUTHORITIES

The role of the main actor of the processes is another difference between the two PB. In Banská Bystrica it is the Council of Coordination (KooR) – a body consisting of citizens who are elected every year as the representatives of the participants of PB. The central actor in Nové Mesto is the Office for Participation, which became a regular part of the local authority as one of its departments after the end of the pilot year. While the Office for Participation employs people and its members have actual responsibilities in their office, KooR involves voluntaries who get involved in it in their free time and have minimum responsibility both towards the authorities and the actors of PB. For these reasons the possibilities of participants in both processes differ and bring about different outcomes and results as well.

While in Banská Bystrica three public forums took place as well as several meetings of the topic work groups (communities), in Nové Mesto eight public meetings took place in the individual local municipalities, then four public meetings related to a topic and three meetings that marked a climax of the process of PB. Apart from the Office for Participation five other departments of the local authorities got involved in the processes of PB. Another important thing is that the Office also takes part in participatory planning of the public space and in publishing of data and that way it extends the participatory processes into other parts of the social life apart from finance and step by step into other official procedures.