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Towards Sustainability? Analysis of Participatory Budgeting in the City of Katowice

Abstract. Cities are essential for implementing sustainable development. Nevertheless, the goal of making cities sustainable is a complex process that includes many social, economic and environmental aspects. The aim of this article is to identify connections between civic participation in local policy making and actions towards sustainability at the city level. It is well established that with the help of governance and the collaborative approach the process of local development is conducted with a better recognition of the needs of the community. This results in a higher quality of life. Moving towards sustainability is therefore the outcome of local management, the governance mechanism and the capacity of citizens to self-organize. This requires awareness and the willingness to cooperate on both sides i.e. on the part of the local authorities and the local community. The author explains how different benefits derived from citizens' engagement affect sustainable development of cities. The analysis is based on a case study of participatory budgeting in the city of Katowice. As it is a learning process, the author evaluates consecutive editions of the participatory budgets in Katowice to determine if this process helps Katowice make a step towards sustainability.

Keywords: sustainable development, participatory budgeting, local development, governance

1. Introduction

It is well established that cities are essential for implementing sustainable development. Nevertheless, making cities sustainable is a complex process that includes many social, economic and environmental aspects. The process of sustainable development should be viewed from a systemic perspective. It is essential

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but is not sufficient, since the process essentially depends on the integration with embedded social networks.

“A nation is democratic to the extent that its citizens are involved, particularly at the community level” [Hart 1992: 4]. Democratization is fundamental for sustainable development. Nevertheless, democratization is not a simple right during public elections. It is the empowerment of citizens and the implementation of governance mechanisms. Regardless of the growing body of knowledge in this field and many examples of good practices worldwide, most economic theories represent the modern world through the eyes of governments. “The government is supposed to have the responsibility, the will and the power to restructure society. [...] Individuals, in contrast, are credited with little or no ability to solve collective problems among themselves. This makes for distorted view of some important economic and political impact” [Sugden 1986: 3].

The mechanism of governance tries to unite different individual realities and turn them into synergy. The local government is responsible for coordination of the process. Nevertheless its role is different from that in standard government mechanism, a concept which places authorities at the centre of the decision-making process. When it comes to governance many local actors are engaged, collaborate both mutually and with the government. The difference between government and governance is formed on the question of the role of public representatives and the size of empowerment of the rest of the society.

The role of communities in urban policy making for many years has remained neglected in Poland. Nevertheless, the growing social movement demanding the ‘right to the city’ has made local policy more community-oriented. Municipal authorities, especially in bigger cities started to be more open to their residents’ ideas. On the other hand, residents felt their actions had a real impact.

Participatory budgeting is a direct tool of citizen’s engagement, which is becoming increasingly popular worldwide. Its “expansion” can also be observed in Poland. Impacts of participatory budgeting on sustainable development are rather difficult to evaluate. The challenge has to do with the complexity of the problem, time frame and reliable data.

The article is focused on how different benefits derived from citizens’ engagement affect sustainable development of cities. The analysis is based on a case study of participatory budgeting in the city of Katowice. As it is a learning process the study evaluates subsequent editions of the participatory budgets in Katowice.

2. Sustainable development and local governance

The traditional way of managing cities does not work very well in terms of sustainable development. One of the main categories associated with sustainable

development is the quality of life. One important question in this respect concerns the responsibility for formulating criteria of the quality of life. Who defines the quality of life in a city and in a neighbourhood? How this question is answered determines policy and has major implications for local development. In the case of governance, this question is determined by people who live and work in a given area. From the perspective of government, this is primarily the task of local government. Developing a city according to the principle of governance means that local government should respond to the needs expressed by citizens, professionals and organisations in the city. All these actors should be allowed to speak and be involved in local development. In this sense sustainability includes democracy and identity topics.

Governance introduces tools of open cooperation to shape familiar conditions of life in the city. It describes the key role of local authorities who engage and coordinate actions of many different local actors. It is based on the general principle whereby local decision-makers, citizens and different social capital organizations work in partnership to create the local environment. Governance provides effective delivery of required services to various local stakeholders. Nevertheless its single greatest virtue is closeness to people who are being governed.

In line with the principles of governance, they do not consider themselves to be the only ones with the right to know and decide. Local authorities show that they are committed to making transparent and pro-community decisions. Governance results in stronger communities and deepening of democracy, which is the fundament of sustainable development. Confidence in democracy increases when the decision-making process is transparent and when there is an opportunity to take part in the process. This contributes to a higher degree of acceptance of decisions made by local government and of the political system in general [Sobol 2006]. Nevertheless, some findings show that there is no evidence of either top-down or bottom-up initiatives being more effective than the other [Van der Jagt et al. 2017].

Regarding the dimension of governance, it is important to show how different tools involve civil society actors in the decision making process. Polycentric governance should be regarded in both directions i.e. government-initiated projects involving citizens and grassroots projects. The biggest benefits can be observed when government and non-government actors are open to cooperation. Increasing citizen input in local decision making contributes to building community capacity and better quality of life [Ostrom 2010]. Bringing people together to identify local problems and solve them collectively starts to create stronger relationships within the community and between elected officials and residents.

An increase in effectiveness is a very important measure, especially from the economic point of view. Nevertheless, governance gives much more. It teaches cooperation, increases responsibility for other co-residents and the city. The im-

portance of the city and its public spaces is higher when its inhabitants interpret them as the commons. The process of co-deciding makes them feel co-owners of public resources.

The arguments in favour of local governance in relation to sustainable development seems to be very strong. The key benefits can be recognized as improvements in democracy and social capital and as a progress in effectiveness and organizational functioning of the community.

3. Mechanisms of empowering the local community

Social capital is key for local sustainable development. I agree with Luís Bettencourt, who writes that: “cities are first and foremost large social networks. In this sense cities are not just large collections of people, they are agglomerations of social links. Space, time and infrastructure play a fundamental role in enabling social interactions to form and persist, and in allowing them to become open-ended in terms of increased connectivity, and sustainable from the point of view from energy use and human effort” [Bettencourt 2013: 6].

Empowered residents are more conscious of their role in the community and in the local development. The perspective of cities as interaction networks requires conditions and tools directed by local authorities. Democratization of cities should go further than the right to vote during public elections. Local planning, “when it is conducted with transparency from the bottom-up results in a place where the community feels ownership and engagement, end where design serves function. Here, human needs will be met and fulfilled, for the betterment of all” [UNHABITAT 2012: 4].

Initiatives aimed at empowering citizens’ in the local development are receiving more and more attention in the public discourse in Poland. Social involvement is becoming increasingly visible and appreciated. City residents are aware that their participation in local affairs can go far beyond the right to vote. Decision-makers also understand that they cannot stay passive in relation to public involvement. The existing policy of ‘openness to residents’ has mostly been limited to providing information. Some units of local government have used the process of public consultation, but in many cases the results did not come up to the expectations.

Civic engagement can be recognized through activity and participation in local development. Participation refers to the process of sharing opinions and making decisions which affect one’s life and the community in which one lives. It should be emphasized that participation in local development is a fundamental right of citizens.

4. Participatory budgeting as a tool of empowerment

One of the most important tools of empowering the local community is participatory budgeting (PB). The process is recommended by international agencies, such as the European Union, the World Bank, UNDP and USAID. They recognize it as a strong tool supporting citizen empowerment, improved governance and better accountability [Wampler, McNulty & Touchton 2018: 3].

Participatory budgeting is a tool of involving ordinary citizens in the spending of public funds. The idea is that the residents come up with proposals to improve local development. In the next step through elections the community decides which ideas to fund. The procedure applies to a fraction of resources from the city budget (in Poland usually less than 1%).

In 2018, the participatory budgets were formalised through legislation in Poland. After the amendment of Article 5a of the Act of municipal self-government it points out: “Within the framework of a civic budget, the inhabitants vote directly for their part of a municipal budget expenditures each year. The tasks selected in the process are included in the municipal resolution.” Participatory budgeting since then is obligatory in cities with district (powiat) rights is obligatory.

There are many positive aspects of participatory budgeting. One important element of the PB concept is that it gives citizens direct causative power. At the stage of proposing projects, as well as during project selection, inhabitants have the right to express their opinions about local investments. PB reinvigorates people’s civic participation and makes residents more involved in the civic life of their communities. As a consequence of broader participation, more community members can learn leadership skills, build connections with other participants and gain trust in the government. In general, PB is connecting community members with one another. American research also finds that PB is an effective way to increase engagement in elections. It shows that people who vote in PB are on average 7% more likely to vote in the subsequent elections (www1). There is also “general consensus that participatory budgeting opens new channels to amplify participation, rather than supplanting the existing forms of citizens engagement” [Wampler, McNulty & Touchton 2018: 26].

Activity of residents in participatory budgeting changes public spaces and in general the “look” of cities. It opens up opportunities to create new spatial solutions and to obtain social approval for their implementation [Sadura & Olko 2017; Bernaciak, Rzeńca & Sobol 2018]. The physical environment offers opportunities to see direct efforts of joint, community teamwork. What is also very important that by co-creating the city people identify themselves more with the changes. They are more useful, more familiar and more acceptable.

In Poland participatory budgeting is quite simple procedure, based on proposing the projects and voting on the proposals. It doesn't introduce much of public debate. In its initial level it is far from deliberation as a way of empowering civil society and management of public resources.

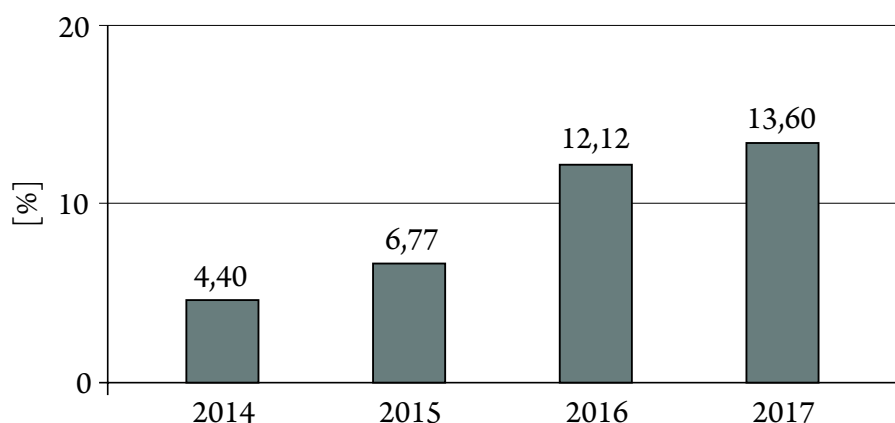
5. Participatory budgeting in Katowice – general outlook

Participatory budgeting was introduced in Katowice in 2014. It was a political decision of the city hall. The term “political” is used intentionally, as it was not only a matter of looking for effectiveness in local management. Social partners i.e. active residents and some non-governmental organisations (NGO) had been calling for PB in Katowice for some years. Finally, the local government was ‘mature’ enough to make this decision, probably as a side effect of political calculation.

2018 saw the fifth edition of participatory budgeting in Katowice. As this procedure is still in progress, it cannot be fully compared with the previous editions. The analysis is based on data related to the processes from the 2014 to 2017.

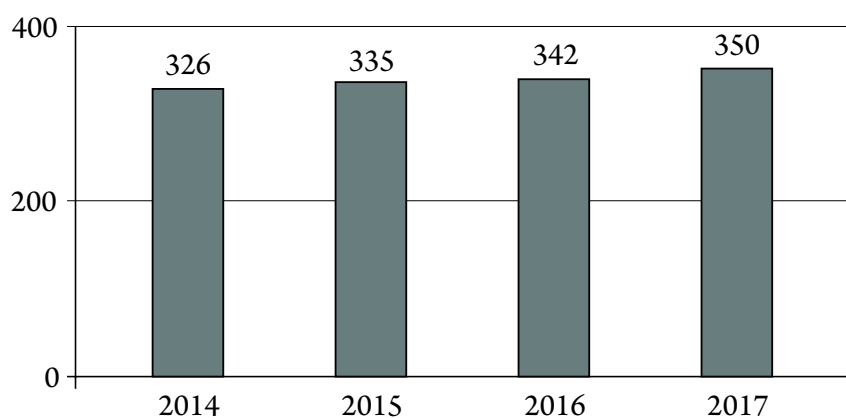
The Charts 1-3 show progress in different aspects of participatory budgeting in the city of Katowice. PB is a learning process. People get learn about their impact on the immediate surroundings and the environment as a whole. The subsequent editions bring new insights based on the evaluation and residents are better prepared for the process. Since the first edition of PB in Katowice, the procedure has been changing each year. The beginning was quite chaotic, with many organizational failures. One of the most important mistakes was an almost complete

Chart 1. Total turnout in participatory budgeting in Katowice in the following editions 2014-2017



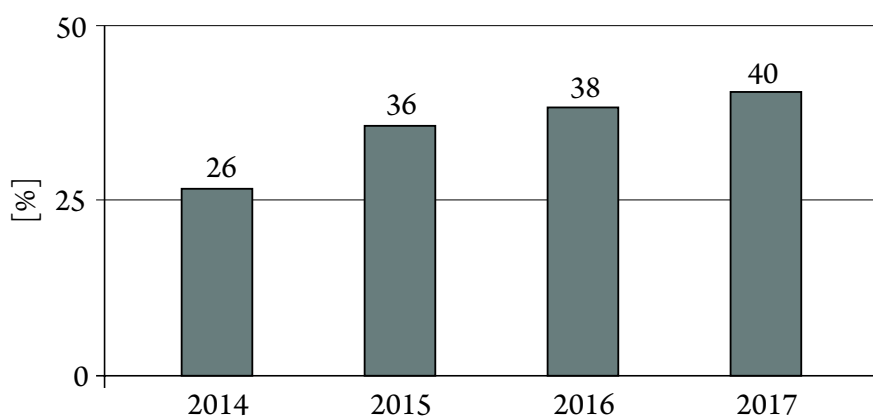
Source: own research based on studies.

Chart 2. Total number of projects in participatory budgeting in Katowice in the editions 2014-2017



Source: own research based on studies.

Chart 3. Relation of the selected PB projects to project proposals in participatory budgeting in Katowice in the editions 2014-2017



Source: own research based on studies.

lack of promotion and information action directed to the local community. The residents were disoriented and even suspicious of those who applied for the projects. The evaluation of the procedure and the adoption of good practices from other cities helped to minimise or eliminate many failures in subsequent editions of PB. The most radical changes included:

- the start of information and promotion campaign in 2015;
- the opening procedure for citywide projects in 2015;
- the implementation of on-line voting 2016;
- the implementation of kids voting in 2018.

The projects listed in Table 1 show the variety of proposals with the highest amount of votes in projects approved for implementation. In relation to the

Table 1. Top-ranked projects in relation to the number of votes in participatory budgeting in Katowice in the following editions 2014-2017

Year	Order	Name of a project	Number of votes	Value (zł)
2014	1.	Construction of walking and cycling route	690	600 000,00
	2.	“The Land of Generational Integration” – playground for play and recreation	525	399 927,00
	3.	Construction of a recreation area – playground with gym	317	391 000,00
2015	1.	Water playground for children next to the municipal beach in the “Valley of Three Ponds”	13 078	1 515 000,00
	2.	Equipment and replenishment of used resources in day-care homes of social welfare	3 363	278 818,00
	3.	Construction of football pitch and athletic track for Gymnasium No 9	2 584	735 666,08
2016	1.	Brine graduation Tower for Katowice	15 151	2 100 000,00
	2.	Construction of a synthetic grass football pitch on the Witosa neighbourhood	6 481	840 000,00
	3.	“Safe Katowice” – Professional rescue equipment for the Voluntary Fire Brigade in Kostuchna neighbourhood	3 816	55 000,00
2017	1.	Construction of an artificial ice rink	14 490	1 545 000,00
	2.	“Safe Katowice” – purchase of middle-sized rescue vehicle for the Voluntary Fire Brigade in Szopienice neighbourhood	7 994	900 000,00
	3.	Cottages for stray cats – shelter and safety	6 346	38 000,00

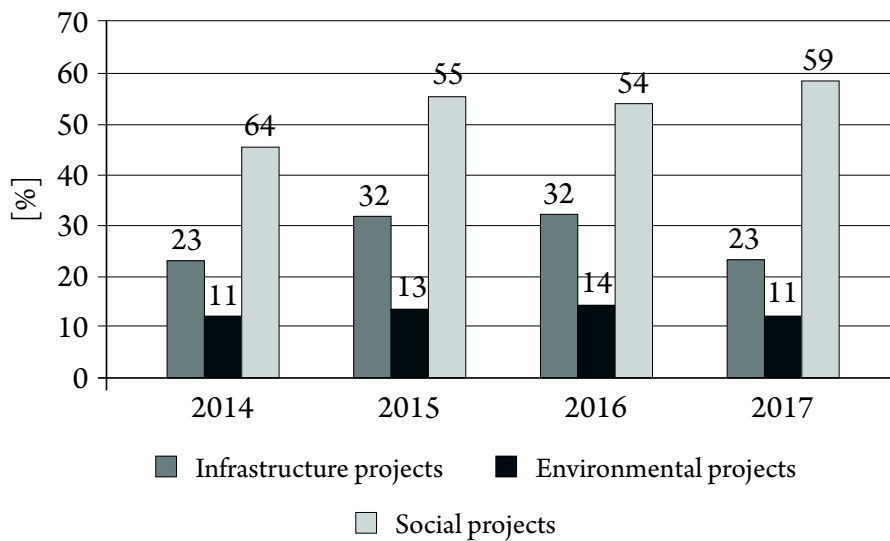
Source: own research based on studies.

above data we can observe the growing number of voters and the growing value of the selected projects. The character of the projects also is associated with residents’ recreational and infrastructural needs. The proposals and choices made by citizens of Katowice show interest in investments that go beyond the scope of standard municipal products and services. Some proposals reflect a very innovative approach to urban spaces. This trend is also confirmed by another study showing that “Creative residents help develop new functions in the city and improve the quality of life” (Bernaciak, Rzeńca, Sobol 2018).

Nevertheless, many projects try to redress long years of neglect concerning basic infrastructure. Other project proposals represent resourceful and innovative approaches to the modernisation and management of urban space. The share of the infrastructural projects is high, ranging from 23% to 32%, many of which involve simple tasks, such as repairing pavements, city toilets and street lightning.

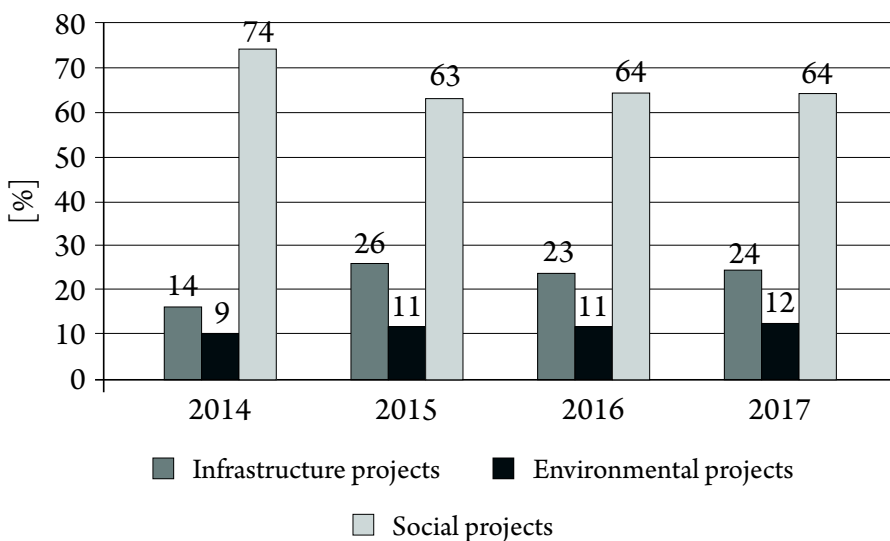
Charts 4 and 5 present the key categories of the project proposals and selected projects in each PB edition in Katowice. It is clear that most of them are social projects (playgrounds, outdoors gyms, football pitches). Residents indicated high deficits in this area. Negligence was especially evident with regard to recreational functions of the city's public spaces. Residents are also interested in

Chart 4. Categories of project proposals in participatory budgeting in Katowice in the following editions 2014-2017



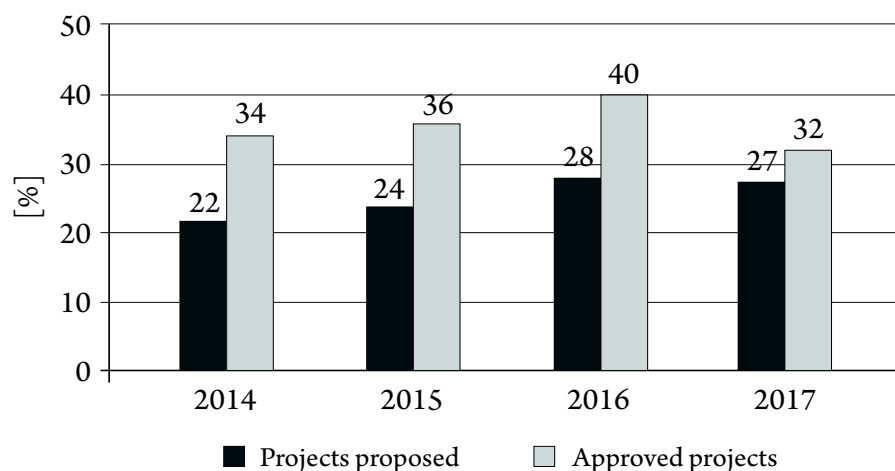
Source: own research based on studies.

Chart 5. Categories of selected projects in participatory budgeting in Katowice in the editions 2014-2017



Source: own research based on studies.

Chart 6. Projects proposed by organisations in participatory budgeting in Katowice in the editions 2014-2017



Source: own research based on studies.

Table 2. The value of PB projects in districts of Katowice in the editions 2014-2017 (in PLN)

District	2014	2015	2016	2017
Śródmieście	795 150	1 292 018	661 184	1 572 382
Brynów Część Zachodnia	479 000	828 262	861 370	828 850
Zawodzie	430 000	697 040	784 000	804 780
Os. Paderewskiego – Muchowiec	390 000	648 700	831 000	784 304
Brynów Część Wschodnia	10 000	533 466	273 602	570 324
Ligota – Panewniki	803 500	1 358 900	1 373 320	1 376 827
Załęże	391 000	655 000	744 640	669 813
Osiedle Witosa	436 869	676 000	779 500	962 818
Osiedle Tysiąclecia	466 154	787 814	1 349 576	1 488 938
Dąb	15 000	459 142	840 580	731 380
Wełnowiec - Józefowiec	460 900	810 650	559 400	779 586
Koszutka	395 000	632 000	593 920	929 416
Bogucice	453 000	812 010	799 500	880 330
Dąbrówka Mała	207 500	490 000	513 597	506 885
Szopienice – Burowiec	479 692	826 377	891 634	867 737
Janów – Nikiszowiec	361 000	665 000	725 000	699 400
Giszowiec	527 500	884 100	1 039 700	967 217
Murcki	291 273	494 487	242 127	494 913
Piotrowice – Ochojec	666 303	1 098 280	1 221 200	989 136
Zarzecze	225 000	301 440	437 400	518 738
Kostuchna	370 000	584 174	650 650	835 467
Podlesie	300 000	322 500	269 410	786 441

Source: own research based on studies.

Table 3. Per capita value of the PB projects in districts of Katowice in the editions 2014-2017 (in PLN)

Per capita value/Year	2014	2015	2016	2017
Śródmieście	28	45	23	55
Brynów Część Zachodnia	33	57	59	57
Zawodzie	36	59	66	68
Os. Paderewskiego – Muchowiec	35	58	74	70
Brynów Część Wschodnia	2	80	41	86
Ligota – Panewniki	27	46	47	47
Załęże	40	67	77	69
Osiedle Witosy	35	55	63	78
Osiedle Tysiąclecia	21	36	62	68
Dąb	2	62	113	98
Wełnowiec – Józefowiec	32	56	39	54
Koszutka	37	58	55	86
Bogucice	32	57	56	62
Dąbrówka Mała	40	95	99	98
Szopienice – Burowiec	33	56	61	59
Janów 2 Nikiszowiec	36	67	73	71
Giszowiec	32	53	63	58
Murcki	56	96	47	96
Piotrowice – Ochojec	28	47	52	42
Zarzecze	89	119	173	205
Kostuchna	36	57	63	81
Podlesie	49	52	44	127

Source: own research based on studies.

environmental projects. Their share in selected projects is steadily growing and ranges from 9% to 12%.

Chart 6 shows the large share of projects proposed by organisations (schools, kindergartens, Voluntary Fire Brigade, libraries etc.). These projects are indicative of large budget shortfalls these organizations are faced with. For them, participatory budgeting is a way of obtaining additional funds to meet their needs. Many projects involve the purchase of equipment and the upkeep of the infrastructure of schools and kindergartens. The large number of such projects in the proposals, and especially among the selected ones, goes against the basic idea of participatory budgeting, which is intended to enable citizen participation. The share of the approved proposals submitted by various organizations ranges from 32% to 40%. Their “lobbing power” is very strong.

The data show that residents of Katowice get more and more engaged in transforming their city. Their scope of activity is also expanding, moving from

concentration on the neighbourhood to other parts of the city. It is the result of changes in PB regulations, but also the consequence of a higher awareness of being the resident of Katowice. In the second edition citywide projects could be proposed. This resulted in more expensive projects. In 2014 the most expensive project was valued at PLN 745,000 zł and in 2015 the figure doubled reaching PLN 1.515.000 for a citywide project of a water park for kids.

The amount allocated for the participatory budget is based on the number of residents in particular neighbourhoods. The final per capita value of the project depends on the engagement of residents in the phase of proposing and voting. It is also the matter of strategic decisions of the local community.

6. Conclusions

Sustainable development is a work in progress. It is a race without the finish line. No city can stop and treat the task of moving towards sustainability as completed. Improvement activities involve looking for new mechanisms to advance towards sustainable development.

Promoting civic engagement and community building is an important task of sustainable development. With the help of governance and the collaborative approach the process of local development is conducted with a better recognition of the needs of the community. This results in a higher quality of life. Moving towards sustainability is therefore the outcome of local management, the governance mechanism and the capacity of citizens to self-organize. This requires awareness and the willingness to cooperate on both sides i.e. on the part of the local authorities and the local community. The overall form of the city is determined by an interplay of many different actors and their actions. In this sense, local development should not be limited to teams of experts and local administration. Residents should know that the city is their right and their responsibility.

The shift from government to real governance is a long term process. It requires social changes: changes in people, in organisations, in their way of thinking, in their attitudes and their expectations. The empowering of residents results in improved social, economic and physical conditions.

Moving towards the sustainable city means giving priority to the community in local development. To make this goal a reality, not just a political declaration, we need adequate tools and instruments. Participatory budgeting seems to be one of such community-oriented tools. It is an effective way to increase engagement in local development. It is an opportunity to learn teamwork. The biggest benefits can be observed when government and non-government actors, especially residents are open to cooperation. Increasing citizen input in local de-

cision making contributes to building community capacity and a better quality of life.

Participatory budgeting shows that residents have the best understanding of the assets, problems and challenges of the local place. Conditions change and new experiences of working together make people more aware of different aspects of local development. PB encourages collaboration and the exchange of ideas. By co-creating the city people identify themselves more with the city. Participatory budgeting provides them with new citizen skills. It also involves knowledge expansion. Many citizens that used to be uninformed come to recognize new paths of local activity. PB is an instrument which proves that local planning can be improved by individuals and communities working together.

Participatory budgeting is a democratic project. The tool allows citizens to intervene directly in government spending. In Katowice it was a catalyst of the latent power of its residents. The process revealed that the grassroots are ready to work for the city and engage in public issues. They are more active in shared decision making in local development. It is probably the most important benefit of governance and social capital through participatory budgeting in Katowice. Democracy is on the rise. Regarding sustainability conditions, it is the greatest advantage that this procedure brings to the city and especially to the community of Katowice.

Nevertheless, the process is not free from failures. A lot has been learned and a lot can be improved. One important lesson is that the residents discuss the prospects of their city more often. Unfortunately, there are still problems in terms of co-operation and kinds of “rival strategies.” In the future, the procedure could be changed from the so called “plebiscite” to a more deliberative process. The idea is that residents would have an opportunity to discuss and debate the needs of the neighbourhood and the city. The strategic approach to participatory budgeting leads to consensus and optimal solutions from the perspective of all residents. Another aspect is that the “civic spirit,” originally associated with the idea of participatory budgeting, requires a departure from deepening “professionalization” of the procedure. The fact is that a significant part of the budget is appropriated by various organisations (schools, kindergartens, Voluntary Fire Brigade, libraries etc.), whose lobbying power excludes typically civic projects.

The experiences of participatory budgeting to date show a lot of promise. Based on the example of the city of Katowice, PB can be regarded as a positive and progressive process. In terms of moving towards sustainability, it brings people together and reflects community values and needs. It improves the quality of life in the city and leads to direct results for the residents.

Sustainable development is a long-term, systematic process. Citizen empowerment is an important factor of success. The necessary civic competences should be gradually acquired through practice. Participatory budgeting is not a remedy

for unsustainability, since not every local decision can be made by means direct democracy. Nevertheless, if citizens get used to the process by which their ideas are heard, voted on, funded, and implemented, they are likely to accept the power and responsibility required to make local development sustainable.

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W kierunku zrównoważonego rozwoju? Analiza budżetu obywatelskiego miasta Katowice

Streszczenie. Miasta są kluczowym podmiotem rzeczywistej implementacji zrównoważonego rozwoju. Jednocześnie transformacja miast w stronę zrównoważonego rozwoju jest procesem złożonym wymagającym integracji wielu aspektów społecznych, ekonomicznych i środowiskowych. Celem artykułu jest identyfikacja powiązań pomiędzy partycypacją obywatelską a ukierunkowaniem miasta na zrównoważony rozwój. Bogaty dorobek badawczy wskazuje, iż współzrządzenie i współpraca mieszkańców sprzyjają lepszemu rozpoznaniu potrzeb społeczności lokalnej. Efektem jest wyższa jakość życia w mieście. Działanie na rzecz zrównoważonego rozwoju jest wynikiem zarządzania lokalnego opartego na współzrządzeniu oraz zdolności mieszkańców do samoorganizacji. Niezbędna jest zatem świadomości oraz wola współpracy dwóch stron tj. władz lokalnych i mieszkańców. W artykule wyjaśniono jakie są korzyści związane z zaangażowaniem mieszkańców w budowanie zrównoważonego rozwoju miasta. Analiza oparta jest o studia budżetowania partycypacyjnego w mieście Katowice. W związku z tym, że jest to proces 'uczący się' analiza obejmuje kolejne edycje budżetu partycypacyjnego w Katowicach. Wnioski wskazują czy dzięki budżetowi partycypacyjnemu dokonuje się w Katowicach transformacja w stronę zrównoważonego rozwoju.

Słowa kluczowe: zrównoważony rozwój, budżet partycypacyjny, rozwój lokalny, współzrządzenie