



PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING AND PARTICIPATION IN A NETWORK AN AFRICAN EXPERIENCE

**A PRESENTATION MADE AT THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL PARTICIPATORY
BUDGETING SEMINAR TO CELEBRATE 15 YEARS OF PARTICIPATORY
BUDGETING IN BELO HORIZONTE, 11-12 DECEMBER 2008**

By

Takawira Mumvuma



Introduction

- The practice of participatory budgeting is now being done in a number of African countries as indicated in the map





Positive Outcomes of Practicing Participatory Budgeting in the Network Countries

- Deepening of local democracy
- Promotion and further strengthening of good local governance;
- Enhancing decentralized governance in service delivery;
- Reducing poverty and fighting corruption;
- and promoting solidarity amongst diverse citizen groups;
- Reducing the mistrust between officials and citizens.



What Explains the Successes of some of these Municipalities?

- It can be partly attributed to their being part of a “coalition of the willing” or an “informal network” of municipalities practicing participatory budgeting in Africa;
- At the centre of this informal network is MDPEA playing a crucial role as the “networker”:
 - a. Through its development and piloting of training tools, e.g. a PB Training Companion for Africa, the PB e-learning course for Africa and the radio PB training programme;
 - b. Organizing participatory budgeting training workshop for both elected and non-elected officials, civil society representatives and the ordinary citizens;
 - c. Organizing south-south municipal exchange visits in order for municipal officials to exchange ideas and share experiences of participatory budgeting.; and
 - d. Spreading the word on success stories and participatory budgeting best practices through our newsletter and ALGAF VC sessions.



Benefits of Participating in the Network

- Increased awareness regarding the potentials of participatory budgeting in deepening democracy and strengthening decentralization;
- Increased communication and knowledge dissemination through sharing materials and experiences on participatory budgeting;
- Facilitation of knowledge exchange on participatory budgeting between Regional Centers and other interested institutions;
- Supporting capacity building and training regarding participatory budgeting in areas of decision making, implementing, monitoring and evaluation;
- Increased networking through the identification and linking together teams from cities, NGOs, local governments associations, universities, international organizations and other organizations interested in participatory budgeting. ; and
- Enhanced knowledge development through conducting joint research and developing and piloting training materials and learning tools on participatory budgeting.



Limitations of the Network Arrangement

- Needs more capacity building and the engagement of network specialists to provide guidance and specific guidelines towards formalization of the network; and
- Building the necessary political will and mobilizing all the relevant stakeholders to participate in the network is proving to be a real great challenge.



What Needs to be Done to Strengthen the Network

There is a need for us to shift the network from being informal to a formal entity with well defined rules of the game that provide guidance to its day to day functioning. This means that:

- We must intensify our collaboration with other established networks and peer institutions from other part of the world, particularly Latin America (the Brazilian PB Network and CIGU for example), in order to learn from them; and
- We also need to boosts our capacity to manage the network. This means that we need to seek external technical assistance to enhance our capacity to effectively coordinate the network.



Conclusions

- For participatory budgeting to succeed through the promotion of effective peer to peer learning, the creation of national, regional and inter-continental participatory budgeting networks is the way to go given the positive learning externalities they tend to generate; and
- At the same time more capacity and skills building for coordination institutions as well as building the necessary political will must accompany this process if these networks are to succeed in attaining positive outcomes

THANK YOU!