



PANEL ON PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING: ROLE OF RESIDENTS IN CITY MANAGEMENT

Mr. **Bachir KANOUTE**, **Moderator of the panel**, introduced the panelists and gave an overview of the world situation of participatory budgets. He believes, we are witnessing a dazzling evolution of participatory budgeting in the world, despite its recent nature. Indeed, the figures indicate, a shift from 1,269 cases of participatory budgets in 2008, at the start of expansion outside Brazil to 2,766 in 2012. The latest census in October 2019 reports 11,825 cases of participatory budgets worldwide. Furthermore, the Moderator believes, cities across the globe are increasingly (Paris, Brussels, New York, etc.) taking up this approach. Thus, all the continents are covered from a geographical point of view, said Mr. Bachir KANOUTE.

Following this introductory note, the four (04) panelists took the floor as follows.

The first panelist, in the person of Mr. Jean Jacques YAPO (Director General of the Union of Cities and Communes of Côte d'Ivoire (UVICO-CI)) reported that the participatory budget started in Côte d'Ivoire in 2004 with support from USAID, that trained the agents in decentralization. Subsequently, the workers got their capacity strengthened by Mr. Bachir KANOUTE in 2018. According to the Director General of UVICO-CI, Côte

d'Ivoire currently has about fifty communes with participatory budget as an alternative management method for communes.

According to Mr. Jean Jacques YAPO, in general, the main issues addressed in Côte d'Ivoire are, among others: How do we get populations involved in decision making? How are populations involved in the development of budgets? How are populations engaged in the implementation of projects? How do populations take ownership of the projects aimed at them?

In reality, two approaches of communal management are recurrent in a general way, according to Mr. Jean Jacques YAPO. Under the first option, the decision is made by the municipality; and in the second approach, the civil society is tasked with advocating for the co-construction of anything falling under the municipal territory. However, the speaker insisted on specifying that it is the second participatory approach that is put forward in the cities and municipalities of Côte d'Ivoire. To illustrate his remarks, the speaker used the case of the municipality of Tiassalé, which according to him is a textbook case of participatory budgeting. He believes, there is a synergy between the people of Tiassalé and their elected representative. Indeed, according to Mr. Jean Jacques YAPO, a municipal forum in Tiassalé, comprising Delegates (neighborhood councils responsible for taking into account all the sensitivities of the population and setting them in priority), the Municipal Council and the populations has been set up. In local governance, the population is placed at the center stage of development. To conclude his speech, Mr. Jean Jacques YAPO recommended that the population take ownership of municipal actions, ensure oversight, in other words, citizen control must be exercised.

Following Mr. Jean Jacques YAPO, the floor was given to **Mrs. ADIKO Gnammon Agnes (Teacher-researcher at the Félix Houphouët-Boigny University - Abidjan, Cocody)**.

Mrs. ADIKO Gnammon Agnès, Program Coordination specialist and field practitioner, focused her speech on the fact that from her experience, there are strong similarities between the participatory budget and a number of strategies developed at the level of communes that are centered on local mobilization. She believes, attention should chiefly be given to the role of citizens in the management of their commune and see how the participatory budget, just as other approaches can enhance the involvement of its constituents. Mrs. ADIKO Gnammon Agnes also reported that there's requirement to highlight the limits of the implementation of participatory budgets at the local level.

However, it should be noted that Mrs. ADIKO only restricted her comment on the first point. Thus, five (05) major points were addressed regarding the strong similarities between the participatory budget and a number of local development strategies. The first point of analogy is community security, which starts with diagnoses and the evaluation of problems and goes through the identification of priorities. She believes above all approaches, the inhabitant, city and community dwellers should be given priority. The second point is that all such local development strategies represent, on the one hand, an opportunity for the populations to make their maximum contributions to the municipal authorities. On the other hand, these strategies are a lever for the mayors to mobilize all their structures for the development of their commune. According to the speaker, we are therefore moving from the old management methods to more innovative ones. Thirdly, according to Mrs. ADIKO, the major innovation is planning. According to her, planning is a principle that starts

from what is, from the way the populations see the problems to identify priorities according to the financial resources available and the partnerships that can be developed. The fourth major point is the impact of projects which, according to Mrs. ADIKO, is based on the principle of resource mobilization. The fifth and last point, according to the panelist, is the quality of the population observatory. According to her, this last point is based on the principle of accountability of populations.

In sum, we note that Ms. ADIKO's contribution started from a questioning with a comparative analysis between what existed and the participatory budget approach. She also highlighted the fact that the participatory budget has been reoriented towards another paradigm, namely community security.

The third speaker, **Mr Diego FERNANDEZ VARAS (Director of the Local Democracy Mission of the city of Grenoble-France)** shared the experience of the city of Grenoble in this field. Indeed, for Mr. FERNANDEZ VARAS, the participatory budget of Grenoble is part of the devices for the renewal of local democratic life insofar as it involves the inhabitants in the public affairs that concern them. According to him, the participatory budget gives the inhabitants a real power to act on the choices of annual investment expenditure. To this end, Mr. FERNANDEZ VARAS indicated that in the 7th^{ème} edition of the participatory budget of Grenoble, the municipality proposed to the inhabitants to decide on an amount of eight hundred thousand Euros (800 000 Euros) of investments. Furthermore, the speaker highlighted some specificities of the Grenoble participatory budget. The first specificity concerns the individualized support of project leaders. The second specificity is a forum initiated by the inhabitants to promote and link project leaders. The third specificity is that the participatory budget is open to all residents of Grenoble without distinction of nationality. The fourth specificity of Grenoble is that the

implementation of the budget offers a framework for exchange to all residents so that they can take part in the city's activities. The fifth and last specificity is that the budget is an evolving system that is constantly being improved with the participation of the inhabitants in strategic choices.

However, the panelist raised two major challenges that the city of Grenoble should address. The first challenge is to strengthen the links and bridges between the participatory budget and the city's other democratic mechanisms. The second challenge is that the city of Grenoble must continue to accentuate the transformative powers of the Participatory Budget by emphasizing the population's choice on increasingly ambitious projects.

In addition, Mr. Diego FERNANDEZ VARAS emphasizes that the 8th^{ème} edition of the Participatory Budget of Grenoble is increasingly ambitious by allowing residents to propose projects up to one million euros (€ 1 000 000). This represents one of the major challenges of this 8th^{ème} edition.

Mr. FERNANDEZ VARAS concluded his presentation by inviting the audience to the 21st^{ème} IOPD Conference to be held in December 2022 in Grenoble.

The last panellist, **Her Excellency Mrs Anne LUGON-MOULIN, Ambassador of Switzerland to Côte d'Ivoire**, gave a brief presentation of the situation in Switzerland in terms of participatory budgeting. According to Mrs. Anne LUGON-MOULIN, Switzerland is part of an extremely broad decentralized governance structure inherited from Swiss history and culture. For the panelist, the structure of the Swiss State allows the participation of the citizen at all levels of government. According to the Ambassador, this approach can be explained by two main mechanisms: federalism and direct democracy. Concerning federalism, the speaker, starting with a brief historical review, showed us that

Switzerland has been built for 700 years from the bottom up by a series of alliances of territories that were all autonomous. She went on to say that they remained so until 1848, when the federal constitution, and therefore the Swiss constitution, came into force. According to the speaker, this state of affairs explains the strong autonomy of the 26 regions and 2,000 municipalities in Switzerland from the financial, educational, health and security points of view, etc. In other words, it is a fact that the Swiss are not only autonomous, but also autonomous. In other words, it was the principle of subsidiarity that prevailed in Switzerland.

On the subject of direct democracy, the panelist said that the Swiss system of direct democracy was the most successful in the world. She illustrates this by saying that in Switzerland, the central state only collects 20% of taxes, and the rest is collected either by the regions or by the municipalities. Furthermore, she explained that citizens can put any issue to a popular vote at any time. This means that people in Switzerland vote about 12 to 15 times a year, according to the panelist.

However, this form of democracy has its shortcomings and even challenges, according to the panelist. Indeed, the world is becoming more and more complex, especially with the advent of social networks and the inflation of topics for discussion. The Swiss federal state would benefit from sorting out the issues in order to limit popular votes.

Following the panelists' presentations, the discussion stage took place. These exchanges focused on questions addressed to the panelists and contributions.

The first intervention from the audience came from Mr. OYOU ALEXIS, who asked what could be done to make African democracy more flexible so that it reaches all strata of society? Following him, the concern of Mrs. SYLLA (President of the Cocody Trade Union Council), who asked the

panelists for the best model of local development strategies to follow in African countries in general, and particularly in Cocody, was recorded. As for Dr. BAMBA (Mayor of Worofla), he made a contribution. In his speech, he stated that in his commune, all strata of society are represented in the Municipal Council. He thus asked Mr. Jean Jacques YAPO (Director General of the Union of Cities and Communes of Côte d'Ivoire (UVICO-CI), to include the commune of Worofla in the list of communes that have adopted the participatory budget. The fourth speaker in the audience, Mr. BOUNAMA Kanté (Mayor of Tabacounda-Senegal), asked whether the participatory budget had only positive aspects. He was interested in knowing the possible limits of the participatory budget. The last intervention from the audience came from Mr. YACE Marc (Mayor of the commune of Cocody), who made a contribution. We note in substance in his words, in response to the question of Mrs. SYLLA, that the municipality of Cocody is already involved in participatory democracy and calls on the civic-mindedness of the people to make it a reality.

Following the various questions and interventions, the floor was given to the different panellists.

Taking the floor, Mr. Jean Jacques YAPO, in response to questions from Mr. OYOU Alexis and Mr. YACE Jean-Marc, thinks that there is a need for capacity building of local government officials. To rebound in the same direction as the Mayor of Worofla, Mr. Jean Jacques YAPO pointed out that we have moved from a centralized state to a decentralized state. He added that everyone should be involved and not just rely on the resources of the Town Hall. Finally, to answer Mr. BOUNAMA Kanté's question, he thinks that only incivism could be a hindrance to the smooth running of the participatory budget.

Mrs ADIKO agreed with Mr Jean Jacques YAPO.

Mr FERNANDEZ VARAS provided an answer to Mrs SYLLA's concern. He thought that there was no better model for local development strategies. In his opinion, the model should be adapted to the needs of its population.

The fourth and last panellist, Her Excellency Mrs Anne LUGON-MOULIN, in her speech, agreed with Mr Diego FERNANDEZ VARAS. For her, each country should choose a local development strategy according to its culture. Furthermore, in response to the question from Mr. BOUNAMA Kanté, Mrs. Anne LUGON-MOULIN thought that the only obstacle to the success of the participatory budget was the creation of unrealistic expectations.