



PART 1: BASIC DATA

Title of the experience Din Idé – Medborgarbudget i samverkan / Citizens' budget in collaboration		
Name of the city/region: Göteborgs Stad /City of Gothenburg		
Country: Sweden		
Institution presenting the candidacy: SKR (Swedish Association of Local Government and Regions)		
Start date of the experience: Spring 2020		
End date of the experience: Ongoing		
Type of candidacy	Innovation on an existing experience	X
Type of experience	Participatory budgeting	X
Objective of the experience	To achieve higher levels of equality in terms of participation and to incorporate diversity as a criterion for inclusion	X
	Community empowerment	X
	To empower non-organised citizens	X
Territorial area	Neighbourhood	X
Thematic area	Governance	X
	New social movements and associationism	X
	Culture	X
	Local development	X
	Social inclusion	X

PART 2: DESCRIPTION OF THE EXPERIENCE

Objectives

<p>Main objective of the innovative experience:</p> <p>The goal was to ensure that the participatory budgeting process in the area of Lundby was more inclusive, especially of the voices of young people.</p> <p>We wanted to achieve higher levels of equal participation and to incorporate diversity as a criterion for inclusion.</p> <p>The participatory budget is part of Gothenburg City's strategic plan 'Equal City' – which places particular focus on the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating the conditions for inclusion, influence and trust • Creating a good start in life for young people and good conditions for growing up
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**How have you achieved this objective?**

We developed a strategic collaboration between communities, schools and housing companies in the neighbourhood of Lundby which enabled us to involve people of all ages in a more inclusive way. The partnership with schools and housing companies meant that we could work with staff with whom local people had pre-existing relationships with and whom they trusted.

We lowered some of the common barriers to participation:

- Children learnt about the participatory budgeting process in school and subsequently went home and told their parents about it.
- Participatory budgeting activities took place in people’s residential areas making it very easy for people to submit proposals.
- We also used cultural tools to create inclusion in the process – for example through a participatory budgeting dance (using sign language) and having images for each proposal alongside the text information.

By bringing about a strategic collaboration between community school and housing companies in the immediate area, both children and adults are involved. Both staff in the school and staff in the residential area as well as the municipality create commitment and knowledge for the citizens.

To what extent has this objective been achieved?

Compared to other previous participatory budgeting processes in Lundby we received a large number of votes from children in schools where many pupils have other mother tongues than Swedish. We have actively worked to be inclusive of children with disabilities – for example through the use of a dance with sign language and visualisation which also enabled more people to take part.

Anecdotal evidence shows that children were effective in the roles of process multipliers and ambassadors – bringing family members into the participatory budget.

In interviews with children who participated in the process we found that they felt that the process was genuine and that they had a real opportunity to influence decisions.

Through the process we also achieved unexpected insights. One area which emerged as an issue was bicycles. Many residents don’t know how to cycle or can’t afford bicycles. There was also a problem of local youths stealing rental bikes from nearby stations. Following the participatory budgeting meetings were held between local residents, the traffic department, and the provider of rental bikes to identify solutions – for example subsidised bikes and bike workshops.

Dimensions of the experience**Which is the most innovative aspect of the experience?**

For Gothenburg City the most innovative aspect of the participatory budgeting process has been the way it has been developed and delivered through a broad partnership. We have worked with numerous actors who have not typically been involved in citizen participation processes. Different parts of the municipality, private and municipal housing companies and property owners have collaborated to support participatory budgeting with events and



outreach. We have worked proactively with schools, preschools and private and public housing companies.

The starting point is that several actors in an area are involved and contribute as partners in realising the participatory budget. It is also key that the school acts as a trusted meeting place.

Using cultural tools to reach out is also new to participatory budgeting in Lundby.

We have sought to combine and build on existing tools that have been shown to be successful in a new context. The internal collaboration has been significant. The municipality is working in Lundby in many ways, unfortunately in the past often in parallel without linking up. Our process is an example of a joined up approach, building on what already exists and building on existing relationships of trust in the neighbourhood.

To what extent is the procedure transferable?

Our ambition is to spread this way of working in partnership to other PB processes to other parts of Gothenburg. Most areas have schools nearby and most areas also have active housing companies – both of which constitute an underutilised resource in encouraging a more inclusive participatory process.

Already actors in the area of Biskopgården are interested in using this approach in their coming PB. Discussions are being held within the City of Gothenburg to scale up the process to other areas next year. In addition, we have applied for funding to further develop the process to be even more inclusive.

Why do you consider that the experience is feasible?

A stated common goal for the City of Gothenburg is to create an equal city and equal conditions for children growing up. Many actors want to be involved and contribute to improve and develop the area in which they operate, both financially and with other resources. Residents have the strongest ties and relationships with the services that are closest to them in their neighbourhoods – often schools and housing providers.

We also have an established way of working with school as an arena based on co-creative approaches in Gothenburg called community schools. Community schools is an existing partnership in the area between primary schools, preschools, libraries, leisure centres, community associations and civil society actors. This has given us a framework for collaborating widely locally and building on existing bridging social capital and trust.

We have spent a lot of time building ownership of the process and developing relationships, which has been central to the success of the process.

How has the experience been coordinated with other actors and processes?

The aim was always to start with the participatory budgeting process, but not end there. We want to continuously identify areas for joint working and partnership with actors in the local community.

One of the distinguishing factors of this process is the fact that it seeks to coordinate participatory budgeting with other actors who have not traditionally been involved in citizen participation activities.

The process has been linked to other ongoing work in the area. The coordination and project management have been handled by two project managers who have had responsibilities to



keep the whole together, convene all parties and communicate both to the participants in the participatory budget and to participating organisations.

The project organisation has been well-resourced and forward-looking – with a joint project and communication plan and a clear mandate from each participating organization. The project team has thus been able to make quick decisions and act quickly.

What has been the level of co-responsibility?

There have been many different parties that have participated at different levels and in different ways. The staff in preschools, schools, leisure centres and libraries at the municipal level have been very active in promoting the process and in encouraging young people to take part.

The Housing companies and their staff have been responsible for having dialogues with tenants – using the local staff on the ground as the foundation for this.

Youth organisations and an association for children with disabilities have helped with proposals and voting to ensure a more equal and inclusive participation. The student council in local schools were school ambassadors for the citizens' budget at the school.

Local elected representatives also played a role in the process. The chair of the local committee spoke in support of the process and the second vice chair held a speech at the ceremony for those who put forward the winning proposals.

We have also noticed that the process has built capacity among the participants. Young people thought beyond their own needs and submitted proposals that would be of benefit to many in the neighbourhood. We have also seen older people submitting proposals that are aimed at supporting young people. This widening of perspectives is important as part of active citizenship and an example of intergenerational solidarity.

Which evaluation and accountability mechanisms were used?

We have collaborated with the organization Digidem Lab, who have given us process support in the project as part of a wider research project. They have conducted interviews and surveys with students to explore how the process has been for them. They have also interviewed teachers, property owners and project managers. We are conducting an evaluation right now. Questionnaire with teachers and preschool teachers, interview with the student council and interview with property owners. We expect to be ready with this formal evaluation in May.

Even before the formal evaluation we can see anecdotal evidence of the participatory budgeting process in Lundby being able to reach a more inclusive range of participants than we have seen in other areas with more young people active in the process.

A few quotes

A teacher:

"It was easy to include the pupils. The participatory budget is a tangible way to show that their voices are heard and that they can make a difference."

A quote from a student:

"Everyone was able to take part and decide."

"I was with my dad at a riding school this summer, but it was really crowded. So then I had the idea that we should have a riding school here instead where everyone can take part."



Girl, 10 years old (the creator of one of the winning proposals)

Summary of the experience

The area in Lundby where the participatory budget (PB) ‘Din Idé’ (‘Your Idea’) was held is a socially and economically disadvantaged area. In total 60 different languages are spoken in the local school and many parents do not speak Swedish. The municipality finds it difficult to reach out to residents in the area, and there is a lack of trust in public bodies among residents.

In the area there is a community school and several engaged housing companies. This was a good starting point. What was needed was a joint structure and model in order to work in a proactive, mobilising and democracy enhancing way to deal with the complex issues facing the neighbourhood.

‘Din idé’ is a participatory budgeting process run as a partnership between the municipality, the community school and the local housing companies to work together to reach different arenas where children, young people and adults are active in the local area.

It is an approach which allows diverse actors – such as schools, housing providers, community groups, preschools and libraries – to work together to deal with (rather than to ignore) the complexities of the local area. The starting point is the pre-existing local relationships that residents have with individuals in schools and housing companies – relationships that often come with a lot of trust.

By working in a broad partnership, the different actors can work with the residents to build trust and increase legitimacy. If there is trust between residents and one institution – for example the local school, then this can be the starting point for developing relationships and trust between the resident and other actors.

The Din Idé process has used different ways of breaking through language barriers, making the process more approachable and to reach children and young people with cognitive disabilities and difficulties.

Examples of innovative tools used include:

- A Participatory budgeting dance with sign language that the children were taught in school
- Film workshops offered to young people and adults as a way to help them come up with proposals for improving their local area
- Each proposal in the participatory budget has had a picture of visual representation to go with the text

In the first year over 80 proposals were submitted by residents that ranged in age between five and 78 years of age. Over 1000 votes were received and 7 proposals were successful and are being implemented.

We have sought to look at each actor as part of a larger whole. By working with equality as the focal goal we have found a foundation for common work. A positive side effect has been helping to make residents feel safer in their neighbourhoods.



More information:

<https://www.goteborgdirekt.se/nyheter/de-far-150-000-till-starkt-gemenskap/reptik!@yp7n3Zodp15Qf67rVLA/>

<https://vartgoteborg.se/ovrigt/sju-vinnande-ideer-for-lundbys-medborgarbudget/>

<https://vartgoteborg.se/ovrigt/manga-forslag-till-lundbys-medborgarbudget-din-ide/>

<https://vartgoteborg.se/ovrigt/lokala-ideer-kan-bli-verklighet/>

www.goteborg.se/skolanmittilundby