

YOUR VOICE, YOUR CHOICE

Participatory Budgeting Lochaber



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Headlines

- 1,279 people participated casting over 2,243 eligible votes
- People aged 11 – 87 years from a broad demographic and geographical spread got involved in the discussion and decision making process.
- Our young people told us how they wanted to connect and interact with us. We did it their way!
- We made new connections with our ‘seldom heard’ and ‘harder to reach’ young people (and others).
- We used a new and distinct approach which people embraced.

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How we did it – the practical bits

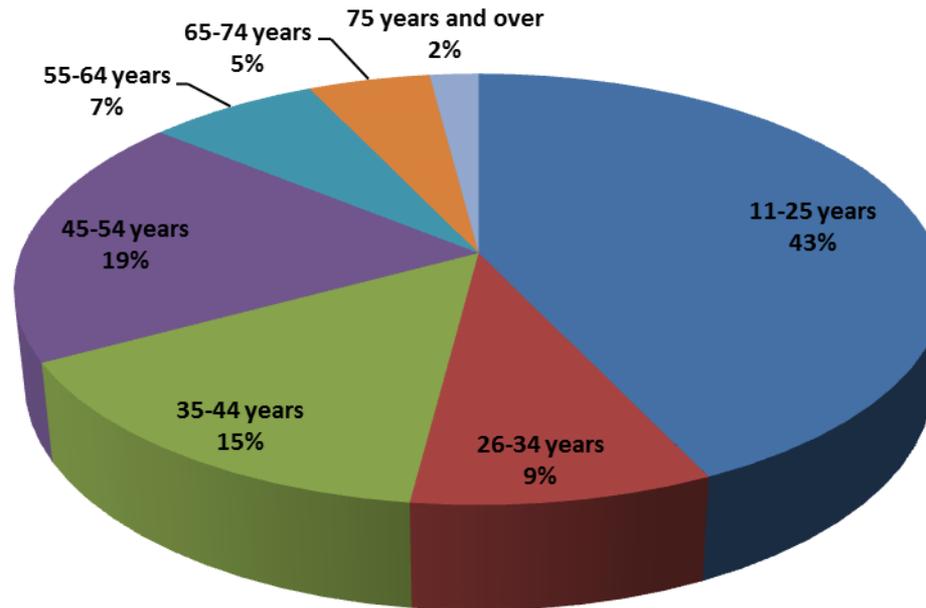
We worked with a core steering group supported by our community planning partners. Young people were our point of reference.

4 stages

1. Call for proposals
2. Pre-assessment of bids
3. On-line and postal voting
4. Young people's panel in each associated school group (ILC) area.

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The on-line and postal **voting age profile** showed a strong voting turnout from young people but also shows the broad age range engaged in the process.



Young people's assessment panels

- 25% weighting
- 4 panels – one in each of our associated school group areas (Individual learning communities)
- 6-7 young people on each panel
- A member of Highlife Highland staff was on hand for each of the panels to ensure the young people were supported in the process

Learning and next steps

Positives

- People liked and embraced 'virtual PB'
- We reached new people
- The area had a buzz about it – people were talking, connecting, deliberating

Negatives

- The assessment panel approach with weighting did not produce a great result for one community. There were a number of factors at play which we now understand better.

Next steps

- Look at delivering PB at that very 'local' (associated school group) level to make it as meaningful as possible – particularly when looking at young people's services.
- Look at using other 'platforms' for voting and discussion eg – young scot card, on-line community forums

Summary overview

Communities can build on existing and active social media platforms that people in the community are currently using. If people respond to e-mail blasts, use them. If youth are using Instagram, use it. Communities should be encouraged to try new approaches – we did it, they embraced it!

Communities can identify ways to turn passive observers on social media platforms into active participants.

Social media platforms are not top-down processes, but collaborative, two-way forms of communication. People can connect across geographical areas and see the impact of the whole process.

Using a combination of traditional community engagement approaches with multiple social media platforms works. Don't be afraid to use different approaches.

Questions

1. What are critical measures of success in a youth PB process?
2. What is an appropriate level of monitoring and evaluation for a youth PB process ?
3. How do you ensure dialogue and deliberation take place when using multi channel processes?
4. As we look to escalate PB how do we continue to engage young people ?