

Participatory Budgeting, Open Space Session, 2-4pm

Participants formed small groups to try and find answers to the following question 'What do we need to do to make sure that we realise the potential of participatory budgeting now and in the future?'

Small group discussion 1: what is the best way to mix traditional and online methods?

Notes from the discussion group:

1. this can be a multistage process e.g. people commenting on each other's ideas.
2. The process needs to be simple not complex. Is there a danger of using online tools because that's what we should do rather than it improving an already good process?
3. Consider the need for vote verification to ensure that people are not voting online twice.
4. The importance of using online methods as well as traditional off-line methods 'everybody is on it (online) so we reach more people. It's a good way of reaching out'.
5. In North Ayrshire online methods were used for a PB process, youth presentations on projects were followed by online voting, with people given 10 votes each. The conclusion drawn is that online is good but meetings face-to-face are still valuable.
6. A possible way forward:
 - a. collect ideas for projects online,
 - b. present projects online and offer people opportunity to vote on them online,
 - c. host public event with face-to-face voting and announce the totals of the online votes at the same time.

Small group discussion 2: how do we get PB on TV? (i.e. how do we popularise PB?)

1. Social media would be the most effective.
2. Use YouTube PB channel.
3. Use live Facebook feeds.
4. Use a thematic approach, present a problem, get solutions, vote.
5. Need for a promotional program for the basics (30 seconds)
6. celebrity championing each project.
7. One episode each area, moving around each show and broadcast nationally.

Small group discussion 3: getting political buy in at times of austerity

1. staffing resources and budgets are both at risk.
2. Celebrating the stories of journeys of funded groups/communities/individuals (e.g. event) with budget holders/senior managers/councillors.
3. Remember sessions, can ask questions etc opportunity for peer learning/share concerns/myth busting. Show councillors that PB can give them a new role.
4. Internationally tie in international aid packages/funding to PB processes.
5. Formal and informal ways.
6. Bottom-up approach (by citizens).
7. Get them to 'give up' / let go of control and power – how??
8. Clear message (also to our own colleagues?)
9. Need starting point of 'participation is a good thing'!! Otherwise impossible (difficult) to build upon.
10. Present PB as an alternative to traditional politics.
11. Evaluation equals evidence.
12. Raise the bar legislatively – 30% of budget in Kenya. Using PB in Kenya, participation is enshrined in the constitution, legislation defines public participation makes it/them accountable and community is aware of this accountability.