

Original article

Methodological proposal for the implementation of participatory budgeting as an instrument for managing local development



Propuesta metodológica para la implementación del presupuesto participativo como instrumento para gestionar el desarrollo local

Proposta metodológica para a implementação do orçamento participativo como uma ferramenta para gerenciar o desenvolvimento local

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ABSTRACT

Social participation in the management of local development is vital for its success and sustainability. The involvement of all local actors in their own development is a maxim for the government and Cuban society today. In view of this challenge, the objective of this research is to design a methodological guide for the application of participatory budgeting as a tool for participation in the management of local development in Cuba, based on the "Por tu Barrio" experience of La Oficina del Historiador de la Ciudad de La Habana. For this purpose, the following methods were used: historical-logical and systemic-structural, from a mixed methodological perspective. Based on the systematization and evaluation of the exercise, a methodology composed of five fundamental stages was proposed: preparation, organization, development, evaluation and feedback, and the lessons learned were determined, highlighting that the participatory budget should be developed in articulation with the rest of the public management instruments, that the municipal government should set itself up as a leader and that the neighborhood identity, the socio-demographic characteristics and the culture of participation condition the model. The relationship of the tool with the Municipal Development Strategies was also analyzed, showing the singular elements in the Cuban

context for its socialization and replication. This research, due to its scope and object, constitutes a scientific novelty and an important reference, not only for studies on the subject, but also for local governments that determine the implementation of participatory budgeting in Cuba.

Keywords: local development management; social participation; participatory budget.

RESUMEN

La participación social en la gestión del desarrollo local es vital para lograr su éxito y sostenibilidad. Que todos los actores locales se involucren en su propio desarrollo constituye una máxima para el gobierno y la sociedad cubana actual. Ante este desafío, la presente investigación tiene como objetivo: diseñar una guía metodológica para la aplicación del presupuesto participativo como herramienta de participación en la gestión del desarrollo local en Cuba, a partir de la experiencia "Por tu Barrio" de la Oficina del Historiador de la Ciudad de La Habana. Para ello se utilizaron los métodos: histórico-lógico y sistémico estructural, desde una perspectiva metodológica mixta. A partir de la sistematización y evaluación del ejercicio, se propuso una metodología compuesta por cinco etapas fundamentales: preparación, organización, desarrollo, evaluación y retroalimentación y se determinaron las lecciones aprendidas, resaltando que el presupuesto participativo debe desarrollarse en articulación con el resto de los instrumentos de gestión pública, que el gobierno municipal debe erigirse como líder y que la identidad barrial, las características sociodemográficas y la cultura de participación condicionan el modelo. También se analizó la relación de la herramienta con las Estrategias de Desarrollo Municipal, mostrando los elementos singulares en el contexto cubano para su socialización y réplica. Esta investigación, por su alcance y objeto, constituye una novedad científica y un importante referente, no solo para los estudios sobre el tema, sino también para los gobiernos locales que determinen la implementación del presupuesto participativo en Cuba.

Palabras clave: gestión del desarrollo local; participación social; presupuesto participativo.

RESUMO

A participação social na gestão do desenvolvimento local é vital para seu sucesso e sustentabilidade. O envolvimento de todos os atores locais em seu próprio desenvolvimento é uma máxima do governo e da sociedade cubana atual. Diante desse desafio, o objetivo desta pesquisa é elaborar um guia

metodológico para a aplicação do orçamento participativo como ferramenta de participação na gestão do desenvolvimento local em Cuba, com base na experiência do "Por tu Barrio" do Escritório do Historiador da Cidade de Havana. Para isso, foram utilizados os seguintes métodos: histórico-lógico e sistêmico-estrutural, a partir de uma perspectiva metodológica mista. Com base na sistematização e avaliação do exercício, foi proposta uma metodologia composta por cinco etapas fundamentais: preparação, organização, desenvolvimento, avaliação e feedback, e foram determinadas as lições aprendidas, destacando que o orçamento participativo deve ser desenvolvido em coordenação com o restante dos instrumentos de gestão pública, que o governo municipal deve ser o líder e que a identidade do bairro, as características sociodemográficas e a cultura de participação condicionam o modelo. Também foi analisada a relação entre a ferramenta e as Estratégias de Desenvolvimento Municipal, mostrando os elementos únicos do contexto cubano para sua socialização e replicação. Esta pesquisa, por seu alcance e objeto, constitui uma novidade científica e uma referência importante, não só para os estudos sobre o tema, mas também para os governos locais que determinam a implementação do orçamento participativo em Cuba.

Palavras-chave: gestão do desenvolvimento local; participação social; orçamento participativo.

INTRODUCTION

In each of the spheres in which participation is developed, it constitutes an action that has to do with human needs and aspirations and the capacity of people to become aware of these needs and seek solutions in their localities.

In the specialized literature there are various criteria on the relationship between social participation and the management of local development, including an approach to the different tools or instruments of participatory management in terms of their conception and usefulness, but it is scarce to find studies describing the development processes of these instruments and even less methodological proposals on how to implement them from experiences studied, most of the research remains in the diagnosis, systematization, or analysis of participatory tools.

On the other hand, local governments are aware that development management should be with real participation and popular control, but how to do it, what tools to use and how to implement them? These are challenges still on the table, a motivation that drives the present research whose objective

is to design a methodological guide for the application of participatory budgeting as a tool for participation in the management of local development in Cuba, based on the "Por tu Barrio" experience of La Oficina del Historiador de la Ciudad de La Habana, which makes it not only novel in the social scientific field, but also necessary for the times we live in.

In Cuba, the relationship between social participation and local development has evolved positively, although at different rates of appropriation in the governmental, academic and research contexts. It is worth highlighting the current moment, where there is a new Constitution of the Republic that promotes more comprehensive and consolidated visions on both concepts, but with greater emphasis on their implementation in each Cuban territory, which is strengthened by Decree 33/2021 "For the strategic management of territorial development" (Council of Ministers, 2021), where participation and popular control take a leading role from its materialization through participatory management tools such as public consultation, participatory planning and participatory budgeting.

The latter represents a novel element in the management of Cuban local budgets, therefore, eager for conceptualization, diagnosis and methodological proposals that allow its application in Cuba.

Consequently, to diagnose the participatory budgeting experience "Por tu Barrio" of La Oficina del Historiador de la Ciudad de La Habana in the Cathedral Popular Council of the municipality of La Habana Vieja, to determine the lessons learned and to design a methodological proposal for its socialization and replication in other Cuban territories. The theoretical-methodological foundations synthesized in this article constitute a scientific novelty and an important reference, not only for studies on the subject, but also for local governments that determine its implementation, doing so from the social sciences imbues it with a holistic and integral look, capable of capturing the social reality that is revealed.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

For the research that gave rise to this article, a mixed methodological perspective was used, that is to say, both quantitative and qualitative procedures were employed, since it allowed correcting the biases of each one separately, since most of the theorists studied recognize the contribution of better ways of explaining social problems from this combination.

Among the methods used are the historical-logical method for the possibility of systematizing the entire methodological process of the experience studied, each of its phases and essential moments

to know the sequence and evolution of the same. On the other hand, the structural systemic method established the judgment for the identification of the variables and fundamental indicators to be taken into account for the methodological proposal as a result of the research.

By means of purposive sampling, a sample composed of experts in the field of social participation and local development belonging to social research groups and centers, and key informants such as members of the coordinating group of the "Por tu Barrio" exercise, decision-makers and actors participating in the participatory budgeting experience and residents of the Catedral Popular Council of La Habana Vieja as direct protagonists of the experience, was determined.

In order to achieve the objectives presented: to diagnose the participatory budgeting experience "Por tu Barrio" of the Oficina del Historiador de la Ciudad de La Habana in the Catedral Popular Council of the municipality of La Habana Vieja, to determine the lessons learned and to design a methodological proposal for its socialization and replication in other Cuban territories, the following techniques were used:

The analysis of documents that proved to be feasible for the research, because through it, a greater approach and analysis of the specialized bibliography on the topics of social participation and management of local development through the participatory budget tool was achieved with views from the theoretical and methodological field both at the international, regional and national levels. In addition, specific documents of the territory were accessed, as well as work materials and programs of the Oficina del Historiador and documents that collect the participatory budget experience carried out in 2014: books, digital texts, documentaries, call folders, reports of grassroots meetings, among others.

The semi-structured in-depth interview with key informants such as the managers and coordinators of the exercise "Por tu Barrio" of the Oficina del Historiador de la Ciudad de La Habana: specialists of the Master Plan and International Cooperation Directorate, present in the planning, execution and monitoring of the participatory budget experience analyzed, with the objective of identifying the stages and methodological process developed.

The focus group composed of formal leaders such as district delegates, community project leaders and representatives of the participating citizens, which was used to learn the perception and opinion (positive and negative) of the people involved in the participatory budgeting exercise "Por tu Barrio",

which allowed delimiting benefits, limitations, satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the development process and results of the experience.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The concept of development has been the subject of various sciences, such as history, demography, economics, sociology, among others. It has gone through dissimilar conceptions that have ranged from a reductionist and economicist vision, to a view that emphasizes development as an integral concept, in which the human being and the satisfaction of his or her needs constitute the supreme objective.

In 1948, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) was created, which constituted the first important body of doctrine on development originating in the Third World. ECLAC introduced a different perspective, one that considers that underdevelopment is not explained by the characteristics of a particular nation, but by international economic intertwining, and around this hypothesis the terms center and deformed periphery are enunciated.

In the 1960s, concern for the social aspects of development continued, based on criticism of economic growth, which had generated significant costs in underdeveloped countries, being incapable of reducing unemployment, inequality and poverty in the Third World. In contrast to the purely quantitative nature of growth, development was defined as a process involving qualitative aspects of the human condition in a country, region or continent.

This premise has been in force since then, as evidenced by the First Human Development Report, produced by the United Nations Development Program in 1990. The purpose of this report was to overcome previous approaches and address the link between human beings and development, proposing a rethinking of the concept of development and how to measure it; in this sense, it goes beyond the economic perspective of growth to analyze indicators linked to human development.

However, the approach to development, from a local perspective, emerged in the 1970s in Europe. The new proposals arose in a context characterized by structural change in the international economy, the push for globalization, the onset of the debt crisis and the impact of the readjustment of the neo-liberal model. Desperate to find new answers, few would deny in such a context the need to rethink development issues and to contribute to their review, improvement and readjustment to the new demands of contemporary reality.

The local development proposal does not constitute by itself a general framework for the exercise of a new form of governance for a nation, but rather contributes, within a broader development model, the perspective of rescuing the place and potential of the locality.

Based on the study of Arocena (1995) and to which the author adds, for a local society to exist, it is necessary the presence of certain conditioning factors that are expressed at three levels: social, economic and cultural.

In view of the above, it was necessary in this research to identify the essential elements of the concept of local development, since most of the authors consulted make an effort to make them clear in all their analyses:

The process character of development, sustainability as an essential requirement for development, the centrality of social actors, both individual and collective, understood as subjects with the capacity for reflection. The usefulness of concrete instruments for planning and concertation of strategies for the construction and negotiation of development agendas among different actors and the participatory nature of development, as a collective construction of horizontal relations that should exclude the possibility of intervention by an alienating power and external manipulations, emphasizing the self-organizing qualities of the actors.

The theme of social participation is nowadays a common place in the Social Sciences; it is an optimistic projection, related to a new mode of social construction, truly democratic, which achieves different power relations.

The author agrees that participation constitutes a political, social and human right, as stated by the United Nations Development Program, where participation constitutes a transversal axis, affirming that participation "should be an essential element of development, the right of the population to decide on what influences their lives, implies the distribution of power in society and the transformation of the concept of development, which should be centered on the human being, who becomes considered both the driving force and the object of development, and who is attributed the capacity and need to participate actively in the processes of expanding his or her own opportunities: thus, the human being is both the end and the means of development, its objective and its essential agent" (UNDP, 1998).

After examining various definitions of participation formulated from different spheres and levels, it has been possible to recognize two major trends: those that focus on power relations and specifically on access to decision-making, and those that contemplate a broader spectrum of forms of participation, conceiving them as the real possibility of taking part in a process, which arises from a perceived need, has a specific purpose and responds to certain interests.

Participation should be analyzed in different dimensions: subject of participation: this dimension indicates who participates; object of participation: indicates what is being participated in; objective of participation: every participatory act has a purpose, scope or transcendence of participation: to a certain extent this dimension can be considered the result of the combination of the two previous ones; forms or levels of participation: this dimension is the most important of all because it makes it possible to know the role played by the parties in the participatory process.

The forms in which participation is manifested express "different degrees of involvement in this process" (Linares Fleites, 2004). Among them are: information, consultation, elaboration of proposals, decision making, implementation, control and resistance.

The participation of the population in the different stages of a development plan elaboration and management process legitimizes the municipality's actions and strengthens the stakeholders' capacities (Llona, 2001).

Participatory management for local development is understood as the know-how of municipalities and local organizations (Jiménez Guethón et al., 2021). It is a dynamic process, where the different local, public and private actors articulate their interests around a common objective.

Local democracy implies popular participation in its entirety, i.e., the possibility of the inhabitants of a municipality to directly influence matters that concern them, such as intervening in the elaboration, approval, implementation and control of local public policies.

Instruments such as strategic planning, consultative councils, local management units, open councils, public hearings (Díaz Legón & Iglesias Pérez, 2022), among others, have gained importance for the implementation of social participation. Within this catalog, the participatory budget also stands out as a mechanism that involves popular participation and social control.

The Participatory Budget experience emerged in Brazil in the 1970s, in the municipality of Lages. In the 1980s, many cities adopted popular participation in the elaboration of the budget law, as was the case in Vila Velha, Angra dos Reis and Porto Alegre (Cornwall & Coelho, 2007).

According to El Troudi et al. (2005), the participatory budget "is the process through which the population participates in defining the values of income and expenditures of the municipal public budget to be invested in the localities, and indicates in which areas investments should be made and which works should be prioritized", a concept that was considered in this research.

Based on the diversity of existing experiences and methodologies, in general terms, it can be said that the Participatory Budget has the municipality as its natural environment, as the political-territorial instance closest to citizens and the place where they express their immediate needs (Díaz Legón & Iglesias Pérez, 2022), and also constitutes a public space in which local authorities and citizens interact directly, which comes to life through different stages. When determining the expenditures to be undertaken, through the Participatory Budget, it is intended that the residents of a municipality determine their problems, prioritize them so that they constitute the reference for the deployment of government and administrative activities.

The Participatory Budget aims at democratizing the budgetary procedure at the municipal level.

In Cuba, the discourse on local development and social participation has permeated the academic research framework. In 1959, with the triumph of the Revolution, there was a change in the socio-economic model that prevailed in the Island, where the human being began to play a leading role in the development of the country.

There is a clear vocation for the inclusion of the territorial approach in the design of economic and social policies, although it had the limitation of taking place under highly centralized conditions, leaving very little room for local self-transformation options, giving way to a centralist-verticalist culture.

However, since the crisis of the nineties, the relevance of the local territorial scenario has strongly emerged as a space for social heterogenization, for the expression of disadvantages and inequalities and for strategic decision making, which led to the generation of development processes and social dynamics involving the local levels. Experiences such as the Workshops for the Integral Transformation of the Neighborhood and the creation of the Popular Councils extended to the whole

country, which represented an advance in the decentralization process and the institutionalization of a popular government at the base and the development of new forms of popular participation.

On the other hand, initiatives such as the Local Human Development Program were promoted from 1998 to 2012, extended throughout the country, with the purpose of making available an instrument to favor and increase the coordination and impact of integrated local development processes (Muguerca Montes de Oca et al., 2023), through cooperation and innovation actions.

Since 2010, Cuba began a process of updating its economic and social development model from the VI Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba, with the approval of the Guidelines of the Economic and Social Policy of the Party and the Revolution, which was strengthened with the National Plan for Social Economic Development 2030 and the current Constitution of the Republic of Cuba approved on February 24, 2019, giving a leading role to the local level for comprehensive development.

Added to this is the political will of the leadership of the Council of State and Ministers to advocate participatory local development, considering strategies that strengthen municipalities and communities in the creative search for solutions to their needs, based on their potential, a purpose that deserves special recognition since the implementation of Decree 33/2021 "For the strategic management of territorial development" (Council of Ministers, 2021) and the construction throughout the country of Municipal Development Strategies (EDM in Spanish) as an integrative and necessary proposal for local development.

The logic of intentionally considering the EDM as an essential instrument is based on aspects such as those presented in the "Methodological Guide for the elaboration of the Municipal Development Strategy", whose construction synthesized the contribution of several Cuban think tanks specialized in the subject. Here it is stated that the EDM determines the development route in the municipality by stages, specifying the goal from a political decision (Brito Montero & González Sousa, 2023) and considers both activities of supramunicipal interest and those related to internal potentials and capacities that can directly respond to the demands and expectations of the local population.

However, in spite of the efforts and policies designed, Cuba still needs to implement local development, adjusted to the specific conditions of the territory, in order to raise the levels of satisfaction of the needs, expectations and quality of life of its inhabitants, with greater citizen participation and popular control.

A good practice is La Oficina del Historiador de la Ciudad de La Habana, founded in 1938, which has had a special legal status since 1993, which has given it the necessary authority to promote sustainable local development.

In order to guide the integral development of Havana's Historic Center, five fundamental policies were dictated by said Office, which become inalienable principles (Iglesias Pérez & Cruz Sosa, 2019): to make culture the transversal axis of the integral development of the Historic Center; to protect the inherited heritage by rehabilitating the territory through a Special Plan for Integral Development, with legal force, that reconciles the conservation of cultural values with the needs of sustainable socioeconomic development; to provide the territory with a technical infrastructure and services that ensure its operation, in correspondence with contemporary needs; to achieve an integral self-financed development that makes the investment in the recovery of the Heritage recoverable and productive, promoting a local economy that guarantees sustainable development; to conserve the residential character of the Historic Center, guaranteeing the permanence of the resident population according to the parameters of habitability, densities and quality of life that are most appropriate.

Taking into account this last policy, in the comprehensive management of the Historic Center of Havana, social participation is recognized as an effective and determining element in its rehabilitation (Iglesias Pérez & Cruz Sosa, 2019) since the involvement of all local actors directly influences its results and sustainability. The participatory management of the Historic Center of Havana takes into account a series of political, economic and social aspects that belong solely and exclusively to the Havana territorial space, because of its history, its people and, above all, its cultural legacy.

However, despite the magnitude of the results and the value of the methodological process developed by La Oficina del Historiador de la Ciudad de La Habana to achieve them, it is recognized by its promoters and researchers that there is little socialization of this management model and its instruments of participatory management, a problem that this research also solved with the diagnosis of the participatory budget exercise, which allowed the construction of a methodology that will enable its replication in other territories, results that, for this article, are presented through questions and answers.

Main conceptual and methodological elements of participatory budgeting as an instrument for managing local development, based on the study of the "Por tu barrio" experience of La Oficina del Historiador de la Ciudad de La Habana in 2014

What is participatory budgeting?

It is a participation mechanism that allows the residents of a territory to decide on the allocation of part of the public budget for the improvement and transformation of the community.

Where does it take place?

In a given territory, whether at the municipal, popular council or neighborhood level.

Who can participate?

All local stakeholders: decision-makers, neighborhood leaders, state institutions, public and private companies, cooperatives, self-employed workers, local and community projects, mass organizations, political organizations and the population.

How will they be able to participate?

- providing opinions and proposals for solutions to problems of the territory;
- selecting the most beneficial proposals for the territory and its people;
- monitoring and controlling the implementation of the selected proposals.

What proposals may be submitted?

Those that are: priorities of the territory; beneficial to the community, feasible to carry out, in accordance with the available budget.

What is the available budget?

The budget approved by local government agencies for this purpose.

Where does the budget come from?

- of the State;

- of International Cooperation;
- of the corresponding percentage of the Territorial Contribution for Local Development;
- funds for local development projects;
- own funds from new forms of non-state management.

What are the stages for the development of the exercise?

The following stages and their methodological proposal are based on the analysis of documents related to the "Por tu Barrio" exercise and the interviews conducted with the group coordinating it, inputs that join the theoretical and methodological systematization of the research that precedes this article and the author's contributions.

1 - Preparation Stage (up to 2 months)

During the "preparation" stage, the entity responsible for the implementation of the participatory budget will assess the relevance of the instrument and identify potential partners (local, national and international).

Formation of the management group

The institution responsible for carrying out the participatory budget should create a management group, whose functions will include researching the state of the art and trends related to the instrument (concepts, benefits, and main experiences); evaluating the relevance of carrying out the exercise and coordinating training actions. It is recommended that this group, which will eventually constitute the embryo of the Coordinating Group for the whole process, be made up of a multidisciplinary team of between five and seven people.

Evaluation of the relevance of the participatory budget

The Management Group will conduct an analysis of the relevance of the implementation of the participatory budget. To this end, it will evaluate the theoretical framework corresponding to participatory budgeting, the experiences that have been developed nationally and internationally, the institutional, legal, social, economic and political context of the territory and the different scales of government, among other aspects that will allow it to identify the pros and cons of implementing this management instrument, from the availability of financing, to the capacity and knowledge of

decision-makers and citizens to become involved in a participatory management process, or the real possibilities of creating them in the short term.

Awareness-raising and training of stakeholders

Awareness-raising and training actions are transversal to the entire participatory process, and should be oriented to both public managers and citizens. Depending on the stage of development of the participatory budget, the objectives, audiences and means are defined.

Workshops involving national and foreign experts, reconnaissance and exchange missions, the preparation of informative and didactic materials on the subject, and the development of exchange and socialization meetings can be very useful.

Approval of the participatory budget exercise

The first stage culminates with the official recognition of the relevance of the participatory budget by the Municipal Government and its consultation with the provincial or other available instance. For this, it is first necessary to officially present to the Municipal Assembly of People's Power (AMPP in Spanish) and the Municipal Administration Council (CAM in Spanish) the report on the relevance of the participatory budget and hold a meeting for its evaluation and approval, which must be endorsed in an agreement.

2 - Organization Stage (up to 2 months)

Once the decision has been made to promote the participatory process, the organizational model and execution schedule are agreed upon and planned.

This stage begins with the formalization of the Coordinating Group, the participants and their roles, details regarding the territorial scope of application, the budget available, the work schedule and the communication strategy.

Officialization of the process coordinating group

The Coordinating Group should be composed of the members of the Management Group and will be joined by representatives of local institutions and the citizenry. It can also be made up of formal leaders (presidents of Popular Councils, district delegates, presidents of Revolutionary Defense

Committees) and informal leaders (neighborhood leaders, local project coordinators). It is recommended to include specialists knowledgeable in investment processes, foreseeing the eventual selection of priorities that include construction works of certain complexity.

The Coordinating Group must be formalized through an agreement of the governing body involved, specifying its members, the institution it represents and its responsibility in the process.

Each meeting of the Coordinating Group will generate minutes, clearly specifying the status of the schedule, the agreements, the responsible parties and the date of compliance.

Elaboration of the methodological document of the process

At this stage, the participatory budget process is planned, since the objectives to be pursued, the scope and territorial scale of application, the schedule of activities, the human, technical, material and economic resources required and the indicators to evaluate the process and its impacts are defined. To this end, the starting point is the Diagnostic Report, the characterization of the municipality and its People's Councils is deepened, and then the variables for the selection of the territory where the process will be applied are determined and evaluated.

The participatory budget can be carried out at the level of the entire municipality, at the level of a People's Council, a district or a neighborhood, depending on the characteristics of each territory, especially the resident population and its distribution.

Design of the communication strategy

The participatory budget requires total visibility and transparency throughout the process, which implies that citizens and the rest of the actors involved have information available to analyze, decide, monitor and evaluate. Once the territorial scope of the participatory budget, the available budget and the work schedule have been defined, it is possible to design the communication strategy for the process.

For the design and implementation of the communication strategy it is important to have a team of communication specialists, as collaborators or by contracting the service.

Officialization of the participatory budget process

In order to formalize the development of the participatory budget, once the methodological document and the communication strategy for the process have been prepared, the CAM will evaluate and approve them. The members of this body must make the final adjustments to the process, approve the communication campaign and determine the date for the public launch of the participatory budget.

3 - Development Stage (2 to 3 months)

Once defined and approved for what, where and how to carry out the exercise, the stage of the public participatory budget process begins.

Public launch of the participatory budgeting exercise

The public launching of the process is intended to officialize the beginning of the exercise and to involve citizens in particular. All local stakeholders should be aware of the development of the participatory budgeting exercise at this time for its good performance. Prior to the public launching of the process, it is recommended to hold a meeting with formal and informal leaders of the selected territory: presidents of Popular Councils, district delegates, political and mass organizations (Communist Party of Cuba, Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, Federation of Cuban Women, Union of Young Communists, Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution), community leaders, representatives of public and business institutions located in the Popular Council and the local population.

The official opening of the exercise to the community should be done in an attractive way, where in addition to the formal presentation of the process, cultural activities should be carried out with the participation of cultural groups and local community projects that represent the most genuine values of the community.

Identification of problems of the selected territory

After the public launching of the process, the main problems in the selected territory are identified. For this purpose, the diagnostic reports should be used, which are periodically updated by its executive, and workshops with the community are recommended. Local authorities, political and

mass organizations, formal and informal leaders of the territory, representatives of the public and business sectors and the local population should participate in these workshops. These workshops should be conducted by the Coordinating Group and the collaboration of experts in facilitation and teamwork techniques is recommended.

The purpose of these workshops is to define community priorities based on the problems or needs diagnosed by the local stakeholders themselves.

Determination of projects to be implemented

The identification of projects should involve as many residents as possible. To this end, it is recommended that community meetings or grassroots meetings be held to which the entire population is invited. The communication and planning of these meetings should seek the representativeness of the various social groups in the territory. The objective of these meetings is to determine the proposals or ideas for solutions that the residents and participants in general have to contribute to the solution of the problems of the territory, considering that they can be executed with the available financing and the group of criteria established in the expert workshop, which are explained at the beginning of each base meeting.

The meeting should be chaired by an official of the AMPP, led by the coordinating group and may be supported by experts in facilitation and participatory techniques.

The number of community meetings depends on the number of inhabitants of the territory. It is recommended to hold meetings per district and, in the case of districts with more than 1,000 inhabitants, to convene several meetings.

Choice of the project to be implemented

After the completion of the base meetings, the Coordinating Group prepares the final list of proposed projects. It is recommended, as a first step, to verify that they meet the requirements defined for the process. Once filtered, group the projects into two categories: those that require a budget for their fulfillment and those that only require the direct action of an institution or the articulation of several institutions, without funding.

Projects requiring a budget should be evaluated to determine the approximate amount of funding they may require. This makes it possible to corroborate the real possibilities of implementation and facilitates the selection of the population, since, depending on the available budget, it can decide on a single project that consumes the entire budget or share it to implement several proposals. For this analysis, it is recommended to incorporate other specialists from the Finance and Pricing Directorate or from investment groups of the territorial directorates (education, health, sports, culture). Once this evaluation has been completed, a list of proposed projects and their approximate cost of implementation is published, and the project or projects to be implemented with the available budget are selected.

The election process can be carried out in different ways: counting of votes received at the grassroots meetings, surveys of the population, public voting. The first requires that the proposals be put to a vote at the grassroots meetings and the rest require a new public call for direct citizen participation. The method applied depends on the characteristics and conditions at the time of application.

4 - Execution Stage (from 10 to 24 months)

Creation of the Supervisory Group

At this point the Supervising Group is activated, which should be composed of 4 or 6 people, and may include formal and informal leaders of the territory and citizens selected from the proposals made by the citizens at the grassroots meetings. They must monitor the implementation of the work and make periodic reports on the implementation process, which will be presented to the meetings for the process check-up convened by the Coordinating Group. At these meetings the supervisory group will also demand information on details of the process and measures to adjust the schedule if necessary.

Officialization of the institutions responsible for the implementation of the project

Once the project to be implemented and its profile (health, education, sports, culture, transportation, or other) have been selected, the institutions that will participate in the investment process (investor, designer, investment manager, builder, etc.) are determined. They may be assigned directly to the investment groups, projects and construction companies of the municipal directorates, or they may be put out to bid or tender. This must be formalized by agreement of the CAM.

Technical preparation of the project

Once the project to be implemented has been selected, the technical task of the project and the feasibility study are carried out. The process must be governed by Decree No. 327 of 2015, which regulates the investment process and is applicable to all investments made in the national territory by legal entities.

Project implementation

Once the investment has been submitted for approval by the relevant and formalized bodies, the work begins and is monitored by the Supervisory and Coordinating Groups. Periodic checks and monitoring meetings are proposed to evaluate the progress of the work, on a quarterly or monthly basis, depending on the context and the total planned execution time.

Inauguration of the work

Once the work is completed, the public inauguration ceremony is held, convened and presided over by the AMPP and the responsible institution, in the event that they do not coincide, and conducted by the Coordinating Group. The entire population residing in the territory will be summoned, especially the beneficiaries of the work in question, public authorities at municipal and provincial level, investors, builders, Academy, community projects. It is recommended to summon the press media.

5 - Feedback Stage (up to 4 months)

Monitoring of the implemented project

The projects implemented as a result of the participatory budget should be monitored after their execution; for this purpose, it is recommended to apply the indicators proposed in this research, with the participation of the Coordinating and Supervising Groups. Surveys should be conducted among the population and direct beneficiaries and, likewise, any complaints or comments should be received through the channels of attention to the population. The results will contribute to the process evaluation report.

Preparation of process evaluation report

At the end of the monitoring period, an evaluation report must be prepared containing a description of the stages completed, the list of projects proposed, those selected and implemented, the main achievements and obstacles of the process and recommendations for new exercises. The Report will be prepared under the leadership of the Coordinating Group and must be submitted for approval to the CAM, after which it will be made public for the evaluation and adjustment of the public. The final version will be included in the process file and it is recommended that it be published in printed and digital versions.

In addition to the methodological proposal shown above, the following lessons learned were identified in the focus group applied by the author as part of the research techniques used, which, in the Cuban case, may constitute a success factor to be taken into account when replicating this participatory management tool for local development in other territories:

- Participatory budgeting should not be developed where the importance of collective management processes is unknown.
- Territories capable of forming multidisciplinary teams have a good starting point for the implementation of participatory budgeting.
- It is important that it be approved by the pertinent government agencies, where it should be recorded as an institutional agreement.
- The participatory budget should be developed in coordination with the rest of the public management instruments and the local development process.
- The communication strategy is fundamental to ensure the success of the participatory budget.
- The municipal government has the challenge of setting itself up as the leader of the process and leading the intervention of the different stakeholders.
- Neighborhood identity, socio-demographic characteristics and the culture of participation condition the model, planning and management of the process to establish and implement the participatory budget.

The research also showed that it is necessary in the current Cuba to establish the relationship of this tool with the Municipal Development Strategies, since the participatory budget allows the implementation of the strategic lines for the development of the territory, establishes a fixed space of participation for the permanent consultation of the aspects corresponding to the execution and

evaluation of the Strategy, enables the collective construction of plans and programs of the same and creates alliances and spaces for consultation between the different local actors (Iglesias Pérez, 2022).

It also allows for the updating of the territorial diagnosis, stimulates the participatory choice of how and in what to use part of the contribution to local development and makes possible the collective construction of the Project Portfolio that is an essential part of the Strategy.

There is no doubt that social participation is indispensable in the management of local development, making people feel that they are beneficiaries and more than that, executors of their own development, is a requirement of the territorial bet in Cuba.

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Conflict of interest

Author declares that she has no conflicts of interest.

Authors' contribution

Maidolys Iglesias Pérez wrote the manuscript and approves the version finally submitted.



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