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Participatory Budgeting in Greensboro

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Participatory Budgeting in Greensboro

Participatory budgeting (PB) has recently been adopted by many cities of the world approximately over 3,000 cities worldwide have so far taken part in participatory budgeting. Participatory budgeting refers to a democratic practice whereby community members of a community directly decide upon the manner in which a section of a public budget will be spend (Quinn, 2017). PB provides an opportunity for ordinary citizens to exercise real decision-making process concerning real money. The procedure was first implemented in Brazil around 1989 and since then many municipal cities have adopted the process. Greensboro was the first city to organize a PB process in South America. After a PB project was presented to the community of Greensboro, residents began the arrangements of how the PB would be brought to Greensboro. Literature discusses the implications of citizen participation in the budget process in Greensboro city of the south.

The implications associated with PB in Greensboro are the ones that concerns improving the city. The main implications realized when Greensboro organized a PB include achieving equity. Through the process the city achieved fair distribution of public money for every district and within the districts. The residents also participated across all the districts which was important in reflecting demographics of residents of various districts in Greensboro. Another significance of the PB was realization of empowerment through inclusion in the entire PB project. According to Nuckols, (2018) given that Greensboro is a city with extreme diversification in terms of demographics, sometimes people are excluded in taking part in other crucial processes. The PB provided an excellent avenue for residents especially those who are usually sidelined along traditional elections and voting to participate in the process. Through PB

democracy was promoted in Greensboro by participation of residents in civic education and the hands-on experience of the participatory budgeting procedure (Larson, 2018).

The relationship of delegates and steering community can greatly influence the process. Kennedy & Scheer (2016) posit that while budget delegates are mandated to prioritize and discuss initial ideas of the project, sometimes they engage in practices that are aimed at diverting the attention of citizens not to participate fully in the PB. As a consequence, the ordinary citizens are denied a chance to decide how their money will be budgeted and instead it is left in the hands of few stakeholders to make final decision. The steering committee is always at realm of PB. Their key role is to make informed decision about the entire PB process. Since they are people selected from within the districts of Greensboro, they could decide to sway the thinking line of the community members to think that the whole process is a witch hand. So, community members failed to take full part.

The two major integrative points in the PB are expos and voting. These events encompass an opening presentation in addition to a science of fair model of exposition where organizing committees demonstrated the project using visual aids such as poster displays (Afonso, 2017). These issues integrate with since at the time of voting community members are expected to show proof of eligibility to participate in the process such use of acceptable IDs.

In conclusion, having discussed the implications of citizen participation in the budget process in Greensboro city of the south challenges such as integrity and accountability emerges to be a public issue. The process is still not handled with honest since relationship is of delegates and steering committee members is seen to impact on the authenticity of the process. The case under study is noteworthy because it pertains the promotion of democratic process in the society.

Democracy is a key element in achieving equity, fairness and accountability standards in the community.

³ References

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