

# Participatory Budgeting in Paris: Act, Reflect, Grow



PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING  
**FILE**  
**16**  
CASE FILES

# Participatory Budgeting in Paris: Act, Reflect, Grow

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## Website [French]

<https://budgetparticipatif.paris.fr/bp/le-budget-participatif-.html>

## File Cover Picture

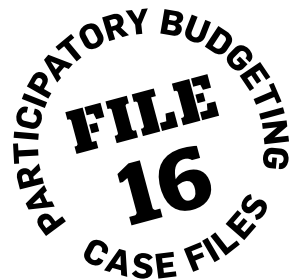
2014 approved project, part of a series of works of art on blind façades. Commissioned artist Fabio Rietim © Courtesy Mairie de Paris

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## 1. Paris, a rising star in a bright PB sky

In recent years, various global and capital cities including Madrid, Seoul, Delhi, Taipei, Bogota, New York and Paris, have either started significant PB processes or expanded along more radical lines [see file 1]. Paris is a latecomer but already shines as a rising star in a bright PB sky. It is worth unpacking the experience from various angles, primarily because of the argument at the core of this book, that PB is conducive to radical alternatives, such as urban agriculture, arts and culture, avoiding evictions and providing decent housing. At the same time, PB can appear as a bridge, or glue, between these various alternatives, and help them to shift from isolated innovations into much more powerful systems that address critical dimensions of our urban day-to-day life. Each PB experience explored in this book presents cutting edge elements and are innovative in their own rights, however Paris remains remarkable in terms of both budgetary issues and participation when compared with its sisters.





Bicycle driven mobile poll boxes, located in strategic public spaces in order to encourage voting. © Courtesy Mairie de Paris

*Important budget per inhabitant put into debate.* Paris has a population of approximately 2.3 million. After gradual increases during the first two PB cycles, in 2014 and 2015, the budget reached €100 million in 2016. Interestingly, Madrid, another PB newcomer, is allocating the same amount for its own PB. However, when comparing the amount allocated per habitant per year, Paris ranks first. PB investment per inhabitant per year in Paris is close to ten times more than what is being allocated in New York [approximately US \$35 million for 8.6 million inhabitants], or in Seoul [approximately US \$46 million for a population over 10 million]. Less than US \$5 are allocated through PB in these two cities per inhabitant, compared to around 50 US\$ per inhabitant in Paris. Madrid allocated €100 million for its 3.2 million inhabitants in 2016, which amounts to \$36 per inhabitant. Paris and Madrid rank towards the top when compared with most PB experiences, however a broader global analysis [Cabannes,

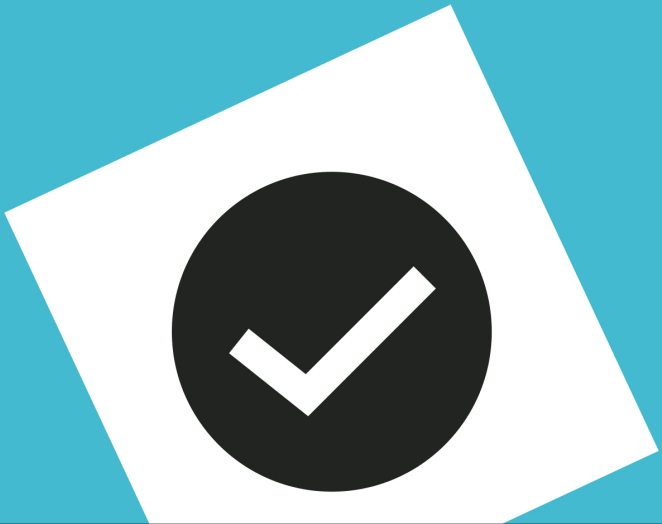


Public presentation and vote for 2016 PB projects. © Courtesy Mairie de Paris

2015] indicates that some small or intermediate cities are debating significantly more resources per inhabitant. For example, in a recent case from São Bernardo do Campo in the Metropolitan Region of São Paulo and the fourth Brazilian city in investment capacities: PB allocated per inhabitant is over three times what is debated in Paris or Madrid (US \$145 in 2015 and 2016 despite a plummeting exchange rate between Brazilian Real and US Dollar). The amount debated and spent in absolute numbers amounted to US \$221 million for the bi-annual cycle 2015-2016. One original and positive aspect of the Paris PB experience was the announcement of an overall PB value of €500 million for the whole 2014-2020 period. This is relatively uncommon, and quite innovative, as it raises a sense of the medium term gains and helps build confidence between the city and its citizens. Citizens are realizing that these resources are quite significant and that PB is a key tool, even if still limited [5 % of total investment] when compared with Paris' overall budget of close to €10 billion. At the same time, opening up a secured medium term perspective allows citizens and grassroots organisations to develop their own strategies and proposals through time.

Paris is among the rare cases where a multi-annual perspective has been introduced, however in this regard Chengdu [see file 15] emerges as the most unique, as citizens can choose either to spend PB resources on immediate actions or use them as a down payment on a collective loan for much larger, longer projects. In Chengdu, the PB allocation for the following years, with a maximum of seven years, will repay this loan. Fortaleza in Brazil pioneered a PB process that in its first year discusses the overall financial budgetary envelope for the whole political mandate, and then each following year debates the earmarked annual budget. However, the reference case remains São Bernardo do Campo, mentioned in the previous section, that designed and developed a unique multi-annual PB, called PPA [Plano Pluri Annual] that translates Multi Annual Plan [Consórcio Intermunicipal Grande ABC, 2013], over eight years corresponding to two municipal mandates.

*Significant level of participation.* Just as important as the B [budgetary aspect] of PB is the P [the participatory aspect]. It will be analysed in more details later on in this chapter, but once again justifies the selection of Paris. The level of participation in the city has grown significantly [from 40 000 voters in 2014 to 92 809 in 2016, which represent 5% of the total urban population. When participants in PB processes in schools are also counted, the number of voters jumps to 159 000. These figures are much higher than in other capitals. However, proportionally, participation can still increase and remains modest when compared with some PB champions. For example in Cascais, Portugal, [see file 6], an intermediate city of 206 000 inhabitants [data 2012] located in the Lisbon Metropolitan Region, 58 567 people voted in 2016 [28.3 % of total population] as part of a PB process. The following section presents some specific and original aspects of the PB experience in Paris. The more salient aspects that make Paris remarkable will be organized around the dimensions largely used to unpack PB at city level: [a] budgetary and financial; [b] Participatory that differentiates both citizen and government participation; and [c] institutional and legal frameworks. Promising outcomes and results achieved are briefly highlighted in section 3, illustrated by examples of projects that demonstrate that “*another city is possible with PB*”. Section 4 explores how this was possible in only three years; a short period of time for PB.



**VOUS AVEZ VOTÉ**  
**PARIS L'A FAIT**

**BUDGET PARTICIPATIF** //////////////////////////////////////  
**BILAN DES ÉDITIONS 2014/2015** //////////////////////////////////////  
Mise à jour en septembre 2016

## 2. Specifics on Paris PB and original aspects

### ***Various PB processes are flourishing in Paris, gradually enriching the process.***

Over the past 3 years, various forms of PB have gradually emerged. This blooming covers four different processes that fall under the PB umbrella:

**[a] A Paris-wide PB** that debated the allocation of €30 million in 2016 for projects for the City as a whole.

**[b] Twenty PB processes** carried out in each of the 20 districts [*arrondissements*] that are part of Paris. It is to be noted that each one of the *arrondissement* elects its own Mayor and councillors. These twenty PB experiences are relatively independent, despite following the same charter [Ville de Paris, PB Charter, 2016], and are spearheaded by the *arrondissement* staff. These processes debated the allocation of €64.3 million in 2016, with significant variations from one district to the other. Interestingly, Madrid is following a similar pattern, with €30 million for projects at the city-scale, and €70 million for projects in each of the 21 districts.

**[c] PB for low-income neighbourhoods** was introduced in 2016 in order to distribute resources to those most in need. Again, the €30 million at stake are divided, half and half, between the city- and district-scales.

**[d] Youth and schools PB** taking place in all public schools; at primary, college and *lycées* level.

In 2017, some spin-offs agreements have been made with RATP [*Réseau Autonome des Transports Parisiens*], the public society for transport, in order to expand PB to a company that is essential for commuters and Parisians all the same. Another agreement is under discussion with Low income Housing Management Companies, which could lead to new PB processes; not discussing municipal budgets but institutional ones. An interesting precedent, from quite a limited number, has taken place over the last 15 years in Toronto, where Toronto Community Housing debated with tenants the allocation of around CA \$5 million in 2016, with \$4.23 million for general capital items including common spaces, and \$750 000 for safety projects.

### ***Basic data on PB financial and budgetary dimensions***

In Paris, over €500 million is earmarked for PB to be debated over the next six years of the mandate, stretching from 2014 to 2020. This amount is all the more significant as, in 2016, Paris transferred the significant amount of €500 million out of its budget to other French cities and regions, as part of the national equity policy. At the same time, Paris is one of the few large French cities that have not increased local taxes. From 2013 until 2016, transfers from central government have decreased by 41%, from €1.291 billion down to €774 million. As a result, PB resources had to be found from constrained budgetary resources and clearly points to the political will that was necessary to earmark €500 million for PB.

### ***PB and Public Participation***

A permanent PB team of nine people conducts day-to-day activities of the four PB processes, part of the Vice-Mayor Office for Local Democracy, Citizen Participation, *associativism* and Employment. This limited staff connects with 50 focal points within the huge city of Paris administration of over 50 000 employees. Because of its high political linkage and its careful administrative design, PB has been able to permeate the whole administrative machinery. For instance, around 300 civil servants were involved in the feasibility study stage with strong backing from the IT office managed by permanent staff.

In order to keep internal coherence and sustained mobilization, a steering committee composed of high-level representatives from PB-concerned directorates within the Paris administration, such as finance or citizen's participation, meets every fortnight. They review each one of the projects proposed by individuals or citizens' organizations that are organized under thematic entries. As a result of this collegial discussion, the projects will be either instructed by a specific directorate or simply rejected. Four eligibility criteria help to accept or reject a proposal: [1] the project needs to have been proposed by a Parisian, meaning a resident; [2] satisfy general interest; [3] be part of the city's responsibility; [4] running costs of the investments related to projects need to be limited and primarily should not imply generating a public job. These criteria for PB are still decided by the city as part of the PB charter and not by citizens as for instance in Seville or in Brazilian cities where the PB Council, including citizens, meets every year and adjust the PB rules and criteria.





Workshop for co-construction of projects, gathering different individuals and associations who proposed similar projects or projects that could develop in synergy. © Courtesy Mairie de Paris

### **Citizens' participation in some key steps of PB cycle: project selection and final voting**

*Citizen's role in Parisian Commission for Project Selection.* Decision-making about PB projects that will be further voted on by citizens appears to be a key moment in the whole process. Specific commissions exist in each of the 20 districts. In addition, a *Parisian Commission* selects Projects at the city-scale. Paris is different from most councils and forums in Latin America that are essentially composed of delegates selected by participants, the decision making commissions. In Paris, either at district- or city-levels we find mixed public/citizens outfits with a short majority of civil society representatives.

The Parisian Commission is composed of nine members from the executive and legislative branches of Paris Government: [1] Vice-Mayor for Local Democracy, Citizen Participation, Civil Society, Youth and Employment; [2] First adjunct in charge of culture, heritage, trades of art, cultural and night enterprises and relations with districts local governments; [3] Vice Mayor in charge of finance, public/private economy enterprises, public biddings and concessions; [4] A representative from each political group that constitutes Paris City Council.

The Citizens counterpart is composed of 10 members: [8] eight people are selected randomly from Parisians registered on the PB web platform: two citizens that are presenting individual projects; two citizens presenting projects on behalf of a collective; two citizens presenting a project on behalf of Neighbourhoods Councils; and two citizens that registered on the web platform; [1] A representative of the Parisian Youth Council and; [1] A representative of the Council of Students from Paris.

This mixed council is particularly interesting as it gathers high ranking city members and gives space to various collectives that have been directly



Street located PB poll box © Courtesy Mairie de Paris

involved in PB, and therefore gives continuity and the opportunity to learn from past experiences. At the same time it connects with the 122 Neighbourhood Committees widely spread in the various districts as well as the main channel for participation at local level in the city. The engagement of representatives from the Youth and students echoes the willingness to engage with youth and give continuity to PB in schools and colleges.

So far the commission has no responsibility on PB project implementation and fiscal control, as with many of the experiences presented in this book. This might change in the future when PB project implementation will become a dominant activity.

*Citizen's participation for final project selection: on line vs "physical" voting.* Another key moment in the Parisian PB cycle is final voting for projects that were screened by the city staff and subsequently selected by the commission we just described. All Parisians residents can vote, irrespective of age and nationalities, for up to 10 projects located where they live or where they work.

Capital cities and more generally cities from the global North have tended to focus on online voting, despite the ways that online interactions limit space for debates and face-to-face discussions. Interestingly Paris has been promoting both online and physical balloting: approximately 200 ballot boxes are located in different spots for direct voting. In addition 50% of the ballot boxes are mobile, drawn by bicycles and held in public spaces such as squares, schools, market places [see pictures 2, 3 and 6]. As a result of this effort towards "physical" voting, the proportion of on-line votes curved down from 62 % of total in 2015 to 49 % in 2016. More importantly, given the increase of numbers of voters in absolute terms, the number of physical voters jumped over the two years.

One remarkable aspect of PB in Paris lies in its capacity to trigger the imagination and the creativity of both individuals and civil society organisations. Citizens proposed around 3200 projects in 2016 and 2600 in 2017, according to preliminary results. These projects are usually initially presented in draft form. Once they are reviewed and selected by the municipal commission, they can be considered as potential projects and each one of them is visible on the online PB platform [PB Paris web site].

The persons and organisations that proposed similar or complementary projects are invited to meet and participate in “co-construction” workshops that often result in much stronger programmes with different projects, or sub-projects [see picture 5]. This explains why a very high number of proposals end up as a much reduced number of eligible cluster of projects: the 3200 proposed projects in 2016 became 219 once clustered into larger proposals. One of the benefits of this process, largely supported by the permanent staff, is that isolated projects, usually located in a specific neighbourhood will gain a critical mass and become city-wide. The example of the “Home for Homeless” program that was ranked first in 2016 will be explained below.

### Legal framework and institutionalization of process

A *PB Charter* adopted by Paris Council [<https://budgetparticipatif.paris.fr/bp/le-budget-participatif.html>] highlights key aspects for people to become informed and participate: who can propose a project; how can you participate; which projects are eligible; what is the selection process; how voting takes place; calendar of key dates; follow up of project implementation and mapping of projects, etc. Unfortunately, the Charter is still formulated by the local government. However discussions are taking place to open the possibility of citizens’ consultation to modify, as in most countries, the rules of the PB game.

A strength of the Paris PB experience that might explain its swift expansion and mushrooming through time relates to the broader and already established Participation System. PB is only one among various participation tools, but relatively well connected to them. Other mechanisms connected to PB are summarized below:

- *Citizen’s councils* [neighbourhood councils, citizen’s conferences, Paris Youth Council, Council for the Night, Council for Paris students,
- Citizen’s map / *La carte citoyenne*, that opens possibilities to participate to training sessions on public engagement or to meeting councillors
- Multiple digital tools such as *Epetition* a platform to launch a petition, or *I commit*, that facilitate linking up Parisians with grassroots and organisations looking for volunteers.
- *Collaborative actions and projects*: re-invent Paris, call for projects for instance on Urban agriculture and farming [*Paris’Culteurs*], and a citizen’s conference on social housing or climate change.



Voted PB Project: Ideas Box for solutions for Refugee Centre. © Courtesy Mairie de Paris

– *Capacity Building and Training*: workshops for citizens, permanent university for elderly and retired, etc.

Past research results suggest that PB experiences that are able to connect with other forms of participation are among the most sustainable through time if and when they avoid draining people’s mobilization from the whole system and emptying these other participation channels of their social energy. It is a risk as today PB, with its exceptionally high budget in relation to other forms of participation, might mobilise citizens, at the expense of other forms. This does not mean, at any point in time that the municipality should reduce the budget for PB, but that they should increase resources earmarked for other forms of participation.

### 3. Highlights on results and some innovative voted-for projects

This section aims at summarizing the evolution of key aspects of Paris PB and more importantly to highlight the type of projects that are actually voted-for. The central argument is that over three years the proportion of projects heading towards another possible city and the reclaiming of the



Urban farming in schools. Project approved in 2014 and currently running © Courtesy Mairie de Paris

Right to the City is quickly expanding.

It started in 2014 when nine projects out of 15 proposed by the city only where voted-for by 40745 citizens. Based upon a budget of €17 millions, their implementation started in 2015. The examples below, for the city as whole, clearly indicate that the programs selected and voted-for [called projects in Paris] became clusters of numerous projects [called locally sub-projects]:

[a] Network of 14 co-working spaces for students- entrepreneurs [€2 million];

[b] 40 vertical gardens to cover “blind façades” all through the city with a €2 million budget [see pictures 13 and 14];

[c] Street arts by local artists and graffiti artists with a €3 million budget [see picture1];

[d] Kits for “pedagogical gardens” for 212 schools [€1 million]



Exemplary PB project under the voted *Homes for the Homeless* vote program: A derelict building is transformed into a centre for refugees and migrants. © Courtesy Mairie de Paris

In 2015, out of 5000 projects submitted either by individuals [2/3 of total] or collectives [1/3], 1500 qualified as feasible. Eight projects were selected for Paris as a whole and 180 for projects at the district scale. The budget at stake expanded significantly from 2014: the 8 projects for Paris amounted to €35.2 million whereas the 180 district scale ones accounted for €37.7 million.

Even if PB is open to any sectors and issues<sup>1</sup>, over 60% of projects were concentrated on four sectors only: the living environment [25 % of total]; the environment [15%]; transport and mobility [13 %] and culture and art [8%]. Interestingly, Innovative solidarity programs for vulnerable groups, primarily the homeless also appeared and were selected. Other selected programs contributing directly to the building of “another possible city” such as urban farming and no-car transport gained high visibility and

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1 Twelve thematic entries in 2015: built environment; Culture and heritage; economy and job; youth and education; nature in the city; Cleanliness; living together; sport; transport and mobility; smart and digital city.



Homelessness is a critical issue in Paris and Parisians expressed their solidarity with homeless, refugees and migrants: the program *Home for the homeless* was the most voted PB project in 2016. © Sophie Robinchon. Mairie de Paris

significant resources. Among the eight projects for Paris as a whole, the following can be highlighted as particularly innovative:

- [a] Support and help for vulnerable people: shower and washing facilities for homeless and poor [see picture 11], left luggage facilities with lockers, etc. [€4.4 million];
- [b] More bike lanes and equipment such as security, lockers [€8 million, 14718 votes];
- [c] Urban farming and urban agriculture [see picture 8]: shared gardens, roof gardening, orchards, educational gardens [€2.3 million].

In 2016, the number of projects submitted decreased to 3160, out of which 1500 qualified as feasible. The number of voters continued to increase to 92 809. For the first time the scale of 100 millions euros of approved projects was practically achieved [€94.4 million]. Three areas are of prime interest in relation towards building another possible city: Urban agriculture and greening the city; Arts and culture; and most importantly **solidarity and**



**social cohesion** [see picture 8]. Four programs clustered numerous radical ideas for a non-commodified city, notably:

- Food, from wasting to sharing
- Solidarity with the homeless
- A citizen’s space [*“kiosque citoyen”*] in every low income neighbourhood
- Fostering civil society dynamics [*vitalité associative*] in low-income neighbourhoods.

***Solidarity with the homeless: PB as a means to build another possible city.***

Out of the 400 plus projects voted over the last 3 years, *Solidarity with the Homeless*, the first choice of Parisians in 2016, is probably one of the most innovative. It clearly indicates that PB can kick off solidarity and radical ideas to address homelessness as an unsolved problem in most cities, primarily large ones, because of the lack of adapted policies [see picture 9]. It illustrates once again the idea that participation and PB are turning individuals into citizens able to prioritize humanitarian and rights-based issues, instead of starting with projects that would selfishly benefit them, their families, or their neighbors. It substantiates the hope that *another city is possible with participatory budgeting*.

The rationale for the program “solidarity with the homeless’ is to increase the possibilities for the homeless to meet their needs and access basic services. The program aims as well to test new forms of individual or collective housing solutions and projects are clustered along four sub programs and a wide array of specific projects:

- 3000 survival and health kits to be distributed to homeless
- Call for projects for architects and planners to envision and design innovative spaces and forms for individual and collective solutions for temporary and/or mobile shelters
- Contribution to the setting up of a refuge shelter for migrants, that is a dramatic issue in Paris and in most European cities [see pictures 7 and 12].
- Designing and creation of an app. listing in various languages practical information on resources to eat, wash, receive medical attention, leave and lock ones’ luggage, and emergency housing.



PB voted project. Traditional and historic “*Bains Douches*” where Parisians can take showers and bath when their apartment is not provided with the service, are now refurbished and improved for servicing homeless people. Here art deco Bains-Douches building located in Oberkambf neighbourhood, © Courtesy Mairie de Paris

An invisible dimension of Paris PB that is worth highlighting is the originality of ideas that were proposed in the first instance, and that were subsequently scrutinized and selected or rejected by the local authority commission, and then developed and clustered into four projects and one program. They are the heart of the innovation, either coming from individuals or from grassroots and civil society organisations. They seem to be the true gold mine to build other possible cities. Selected original projects that generated the final sub programmes illustrate this idea. They are translated directly from the French in order to retain their original concept:

- Shelter for people with no permanent address.
- Habitable structure, Studio Lib, will propose security, comfort and hygiene, and will improve living conditions for those sleeping rough.
- Self built stable habitat for Parisian Romas people.
- *Eleft luggage* for homeless people: public hot spots to digitalise and store information on the net and /or USB flash drive for administrative and personnel data.
- Shelter for pavement dwellers
- An application for migrants designed with organizations working with them in order for instance to gather all information useful for them.
- Solidarity telephone: It looks like a telephone that can be fixed on a lamp post of bus stop that would attract people to facilitate meetings. Its main function is to tape messages and listen to them, and therefore maintain a conversation with anybody living in the street.



One of the project under the *Homes for the homeless* voted PB project is to increase the level of investment for this recently built refugee centre. © Mairie de Paris

– Open space [public bath and shower / *bains douches*]: “I would like to see in *République* neighbourhood a social centre for Homeless and other people in need that would allow them to take a shower, wash their clothes and protect their effects.

Beyond the uneven quality of these drafts and their level of development what remains striking is how PB final proposals have been able to maintain the inventiveness and radical nature of original ideas, expanding

them instead of supressing them. As expressed by the local PB team, one of the major contributions of PB, and the condition for its survival and sustainability lies in its capacity to find out-of-the-box solutions, or at least feasible ones that a city administration could not have otherwise invented or put together.

### ***PB sparking off radical struggles and policies of citizen's initiative***

An interesting offshoot of the PB program on Homes for the Homeless came when two major Civil Society organizations *LDH* [Human Rights League] and *MRAP* [Movement Against Racism and for Friendship among People] addressed an open letter to the Mayor of Paris requesting immediate solutions for hundreds of homeless and for people living in slums [*bidonvilles*] and threatened with short term evictions. This letter was sent in January 2017, i.e. a couple of months after the program Homes for Homeless became the most voted-for in Paris. It highlights the importance of PB; “*Financial resources do exist, as Parisians who expressed their solidarity positioned the PB project Homes for the Homeless as their first choice*”. PB is acquiring for movements not only a financial dimension but a policy and political one. We argue here that PB can become a starting point for broader struggles and for the formulation of policies based on people’s initiatives. This links back to the original definition coined in Porto Alegre [see file 2 in this book] when PB was not only a way to define the use of municipal resources but a political tool to have a direct impact on policy, Whether or not PB will have an impact on Paris policies remains to be seen but is worth following up.

### **4. Why such an expansion and positive outcomes were possible in such a short time?**

- **A Clear political commitment and strong political will** from the Mayor and Paris senior decision-makers: Since the very beginning, Anne Hidalgo, Mayor of Paris, boldly committed herself and her government to ensure that PB was a success and with visible results [see poster, *le changement ça se voit*]. Her foreword expresses this sentiment and her readiness to face potential political obstacles: “*Obviously, starting up such a project means to accepting to face criticism, debates, and challenging opinions. It means as*



One among many Paris dull and blind façade, Rue d'Aboukir. ©Patrick White  
(<http://www.verticalgardenpatrickblanc.com/node/4676>)

*well engaging with a totally transparent process with citizens. But we should neither fear debate [...] nor transparency, as it is under citizen's scrutiny that democracy prospers”.*

- **A significant amount of earmarked resources.** Funds amounting to €500 million over the 2014-2020 mandate mobilized citizens and most importantly various participation channels that were already existing in the city. It also allowed the process to spread across Paris as a whole, but at the same time grounding it in the various districts, schools and colleges and low-income neighborhoods.

- **Learning by doing.** One challenge faced by this PB experience among many comes from its top-down initiative. How to mobilize citizens remains a challenge, primarily in Europe. In a country well known for its long and sometimes winding debates that sometimes slow the action, Paris took a



Vertical garden transforming a blind façade into an urban oasis, rue d'Aboukir. Artist Patrick White. It inspired the PB project "Gardens on walls" voted in 2014 © Patrick White (<http://www.verticalgardenpatrickblanc.com>).

radical opposite approach, both relatively courageous and humble. PB started quite experimentally, shifting long reflections to immediate actions in a learning-by-doing process. Act first, reflect and move up became a motto that was and is permanently repeated, as one of the first PB coordinator expressed: *“Do and think instead of Thiiiiiiiink and [maybe] do!”* The approach is summarized along three guiding principles: [a] Be bold. Start quickly. It won't be perfect right away, but strong forward momentum will contribute to collaboration and meaningful progress; [b] Dynamic evolution. Be ready to be flexible and open to change. Structure and administration might be modified through trial-and-error and [c] Collaborative input: Innovation can't happen in a vacuum. Provide tools for a dialogue between administrative teams and citizens to achieve an effective final product together [Mairie de Paris, 2016].

#### • **Triggering citizens' imagination and desires**

PB quality depends primarily on people's ideas, proposals and engagement. The swift expansion of participation and of proposed projects in all sectors of urban life lies in the appropriation of the process by citizen's themselves. PB probably filled an historical void and a backlog of small and large projects that matter for people. What is remarkable, and probably explains an important people's engagement in a city from the Global North, is the level of pedagogical tools and means that were designed and applied: guidelines on how to present a project; simple and accessible power points on explaining real costs; interactive web platform for citizens to react, expand, add to and improve a proposal; numerous face-to-face and online training workshops supporting the emergence of ideas and project formulation [<http://www.paris.fr/atelierscitoyens>]. Co-building workshops when proposals are on quite similar issues or located in the same place, as well as web-based monitoring and mapping of project implementation. This echoes opinions regularly expressed in Brazil for instance by Pedro Pontual who was one of the main agents for Paulo Freire's educational movement and a PB pioneer, *“PB must be primarily a university of active citizenship”* [Pontual, P, 2004, Era Urbana, see file 23 on must reads on PB].

#### • **Mainstreaming PB within Paris' huge administrative machine [modernization of the administrative system and working modes]**

PB in Paris has dramatically changed public management methods at the city-level, at least in two ways: first the various directorates needed to react

and implement programs much more quickly, in a much shorter time span when compared with conventional ones; the second is that most of the 400+ voted projects over the last three years require the involvement of more than one directorate and therefore internal cooperation between two or more services. The changes required to address these two challenges would not have been realized without the strong political leadership and will from the Mayor.

Another remarkable aspect is how PB has permeated a huge and hierarchical administration employing about 50 000 civil servants. The design as previously described allowed for mainstreaming both horizontally and vertically PB within the system:

- At horizontal level for instance, [a] PB *steering committee* composed of staff from key directorates meets every fortnight and helps for internal communication; [b] the *inter-directorate* selection sessions of eligible projects that concludes on whom should follow up each proposed project stimulates as well horizontal mainstreaming; the official appointment of 50 reference officers in the directorates complemented the in-house mainstreaming of PB.
- At vertical level, for instance, the permanent PB team of nine persons maintains regular contacts in each of the 20 districts with civil servants in charge of the various participation channels, such as the neighborhood councils.

### **PB as a way for reclaiming the Right to the city**

One of Henri Lefebvre key contributions that led to framing the Right to the City theory was that everyday life could be inductive to radical changes in the way to design and build cities [Lefebvre, *La Vie quotidienne dans le monde moderne*, 1968, Gallimard]. Parisians engaging in PB, contributing with their thousands of creative ideas in the different realm of the day-to-day life [*vie quotidienne*] perfectly illustrate Henri Lefebvre's insights and aspirations when he was writing that radical transformation will happen in cities, and not only in factories [as in the Marxist canon] but through the transformation of our day to day life under its multiple forms. The choice of Paris to leave PB open to any aspect of everyday life of Parisians and to implement creative proposals paves the way to reclaiming the Right to the city, precisely as Henri Lefebvre described.



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