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## Participation of Non-Resident Students in the Creation of Participatory Budget in Wrocław

Jarosław Olejniczak<sup>a\*</sup> Dorota Bednarska-Olejniczak<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Department of Finance, Wrocław University of Economics, Komandorska 118/120, Wrocław53-345, Poland

<sup>b</sup>Department of Marketing Management, Wrocław University of Economics, Komandorska 118/120, Wrocław53-345, Poland

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### Abstract

This paper was mainly intended to enable a preliminary assessment of the factors qualifying the out-of-town full-time students, temporarily staying in Wrocław, for the participation in creating the participatory budget of Wrocław. We can observe that only small group of students voted for participatory budget of Wrocław. Main reason of non-voting was a lack of information about participatory budget and possibility of voting. Some of respondents were also misinformed about possibility of voting. It seems also that that main reason of non-voting is really lack of interest. In introducing participatory budget one of main players is local community. Applicants, non-governmental organizations, district councils, schools or other institutions are able to motivate citizens for voting. In our survey we discovered that these actors didn't play a single minute. Surveyed voting-students had heard about participatory budget from friends, family members, or they had found information from social media, town internet page and posters. The main factors influencing the choice of the projects by surveyed students were in general: descriptions of tasks in the electronic voting system, tasks descriptions available on the town website, information spread by the applicants (online, by leaflets, posters, banners and other ones) and opinions of family members. Summarizing we can notice that main problem is lack of information provided by different town and non-governmental bodies and what results poor acquisition of voters.

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\* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: [jaroslaw.olejniczak@ue.wroc.pl](mailto:jaroslaw.olejniczak@ue.wroc.pl)

## 1. Introduction

The idea of social participation, including a participatory budget, in functioning of the local self-government is not a new phenomenon in highly developed countries. The basic problems inhibiting the citizens' activity at co-creating the participatory budget are: its relatively weak legal empowering as well as the citizens' low awareness of their chance to take part in managing the commune. It may result in passiveness, or disbelief and unwillingness of the citizens to participate in the processes of choice of significant from their point of view investment enterprises to be carried out by the communes. It is related to the fact that despite a few years of Polish experiences in creating participatory budgets and many local self-governments which have undertaken the effort, still for many units of the local self-government the social consultations held on the grounds of communes councils' resolutions are of non-binding nature, and verification of the notified projects is within the municipal officials competence. This article is intended, on the one hand, to present the process of creating the participatory budget in Wrocław, and on the other hand to enable a preliminary assessment of the factors qualifying the out-of-town full-time students, temporarily staying in Wrocław, for the participation in creating the participatory budget of Wrocław.

## 2. Research methods, scope and purpose of work

The article consists of two parts. In the first one, the procedure of creating participatory budget in the city of Wrocław in 2014 is presented<sup>1</sup>, as well as the changes introduced in the procedure at selecting the new projects in 2015. Analysis of the above procedure is aimed at indicating the existence of high possibilities for each Wrocław citizen's co-participation (also without other citizens' support) in creating projects with a chance of carrying out. As it has been mentioned, the idea of participatory budget is not new, but in view of the lack of legal framework it is necessary to present solutions applied in a given local community for obtaining a better point of reference for the carried out surveys. The article presents available resolutions of the City Council of Wrocław, decisions of the City Mayor, information materials from the Public Information Newsletter of the City of Wrocław and the city website.

The second part of article presents the survey results obtained by questioning students of Wrocław economic universities in the period from January to March 2015 regarding their attitudes on a possibility of participation in preparing the participatory budget for the year 2014. The surveys referred to the students studying temporarily in Wrocław (not resident in Wrocław), since the aim of analysis was establishing to what extent they avail themselves of the opportunity to co-participate in creating the participatory budget, which was created by the Council of the City of Wrocław.

The survey was attended by 189 full-time students mostly from second year of bachelor studies. 160 of them were not from Wrocław – and that was our target group. The gender of surveyed students was not representative of youth population. About 2/3 of them were female (104) and 1/3 ( 56) male (this is rather typical relation between number of male and female in Wrocław University of Economics among student groups). Selection of the sample was intentional – it was assumed to be “pilot” survey. In the survey, a questionnaire of 16 questions regarding participation and attitude to the idea of the Wrocław City participatory budget was included. In majority of questions, the participants were able to justify their responses.

The first group of questions referred to the assessment of the procedure concerning selection of projects for the participatory budget. The questions regarded both a general assessment and technical elements, such as the way of voting, time for submitting projects, the city and citizens information policy.

The second group of questions concerned the reasons and types of choices made by the surveyed, as well as reasons for a possible non-participation in social consultations, as well as proposals regarding amendments in the budget's further editions.

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<sup>1</sup> Previously discussed in Bednarska-Olejniczak, D. - Olejniczak, J., 2015. Budżet obywatelski i uczestnictwo młodych obywateli w działalności gmin na przykładzie studentów uczelni ekonomicznych Wrocławia. In: Jedlicka, P (Ed.) 2015 Mezinárodní vědecká konference Hradecké ekonomické dny 2015, Sborník konferenční příspěvků., Hradec Králové 2015, vol 1, pp. 62-74

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