

**FOSTERING HEALTH SERVICE
DELIVERY VIA PUBLIC FINANCIAL
MANAGEMENT: THE CASE OF
PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING IN
BENIN'S LOCAL GOVERNMENTS**



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BACKGROUND & CONTEXT



- Population: 12 millions (new estimates)
- Member of the WAEMU, thus same budgeting and broader PFM framework (extended to CEMAC region)
- 77 Municipalities of which 6 studied: Cotonou, Adjara, Comè, Covè, Ouinhi and Toffo
- Over 50 ethnicity groups (crucial to understanding of local customs and ‘ways of life’) shared across neighbouring Francophone African countries and beyond
- Framework for PB: e.g. Decentralization law; Municipal Development Plan (PDC)
- Methods: case study (multiple) – fieldwork May-July 2020 with 55 participants across stakeholders



OUR RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. AT NATIONAL LEVEL: SETTING UP AN ORGANISATION FOR MONITORING AND COORDINATION



- Set up a national agency to bring together individuals, organisations (such as National Commission of Municipalities of Benin) and local government departments involved in the delivery of PB projects and in various areas of interventions,
 - Developing a common set of guidelines with statutory backing
 - Ensuring that municipalities are devoting appropriate resources and time in implementation
 - Facilitating monitoring and evaluation (in terms of allocation of local budgets)

- One-size-fits-approach would not be effective,
 - Flexibility to municipalities and community groups in addressing specific local demands
 - Alignment of local cultures, values and everyday lives (see e.g. Uddin et al., 2019; Jayasinghe et al., 2020 for consequences of non compliance with local cultures)

- A policy on a form of future ‘in-kind’ contribution so as to incentivise villages, forums and citizens in maintaining infrastructure selected through PB

2. AT COMMUNITY LEVEL: ADD MORE EMANCIPATORY FEATURES, IN TERMS OF THE SPACE AND VOICE THE PB CAN OFFER FOR LOCAL ENGAGEMENT



- An evaluation of the outcomes of PB-selected projects needs to be carried out and communicated to the local people and decision-makers.
 - A regular appraisal and communication of what has worked (or not) in a wider local context can help local inhabitants and decision-makers become more effective and informed during the PB processes.
 - This will bring community confidence and sustainability when it comes to replicating the PB process in future.
- The community level participation must become a homegrown one and not rely on continued external support.
 - Continued reliance on donors' funding to finance PB advocacy and processes has become problematic in that it does not appear to generate sustainable commitment amongst local community members and the political elites
 - A more cost-effective exercise to train and empower locals. This may help locals/community members embed such structures and become motivated to participate at village/community forums.
- Also, see the findings of Jayasinghe et al., 2020; Alawattage and Azure, 2019; Kuruppu et al., 2016; Uddin et al., 2011.



3. AT INTERNATIONAL LEVEL: PB FROM AN INTERNATIONAL PFM POLICY-MAKING PERSPECTIVE



- Incorporating PB with the broader PFM framework and international (e.g. PEFA) assessments **and** developing of a dedicated country level indicator
- Establish an international community of practice on the use of PB
- There is broad consensus towards embedding ‘citizen’ or ‘public’ participation in fiscal / budget decisions, in national as well as in sub-national context (e.g. Global Initiative for Fiscal Transparency, GIFT, 2018). Other well known ‘democracy’ indicators do not ‘follow through’ (e.g. Economic Intelligence Unit Democracy Index). Generic reference in SDG indicators (SDG 6 and 11).
- Current PEFA indicators: Pillar II (#9) & Pillar IV (#17)
- Evidence from the fieldwork on the relevance of international assessments in national PFM policy-making.
- Multiple variations and influences from the field, as influenced by national policies/actors, role of donor/civil society organisations, elected and administrative officials