



Participatory Budgeting (PB) and young people in the UK

About the PB Unit and growth of PB in the UK:

With the support of Oxfam's UK Poverty Programme, in August 2000 a small charity based in Manchester called Community Pride Initiative (CPI) organised a study visit to Porto Alegre. After learning how the participatory budget works in practice, several of the participants were inspired to form a "Participatory Budgeting Unit" in the UK. The PB Unit has directly supported most of the participatory budgeting initiatives that have taken place in the UK so far.



Until 2003, discussions about participatory budgeting were limited to Manchester and Salford. Despite some early successes, including improved budget consultation materials, any breakthrough to direct citizen control over significant amounts of public money seemed impossible. Local authorities were focusing their energy elsewhere, and the resources of local councils were tightly constrained by budgetary control from Whitehall and performance management frameworks.

Momentum began to gather in 2003 when policy makers in the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit (then based within the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, which later became the Department for Communities and Local Government) awarded money to stimulate local PB pilot projects. Benefiting from institutional support from the new 'PB national reference group' made up of policy makers and civil servants the PB Unit subsequently extended its work beyond Greater Manchester,

2005 and 2006 saw around 5 new initiatives in other parts of the country, and then in 2007 Hazel Blears, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government personally endorsed PB, and asked all local authorities in England trial PB in some way by 2012.

This has led to a considerable growth of new initiatives. Most of these are home grown variants of PB, often based on what might be called participatory grant making. All are slightly different but share a common theme: decision-making at the community level to distribute public funds. We are now moving away from concentrating on numbers and instead looking to develop best practice and support innovation.

Some PB processes, whilst not being directly aimed at young people, have seen considerable involvement by young people. Though precise figures do not yet exist we believe young people do well in adult processes. They also benefit from programmes targeted specifically at their age group.



Aims of the PB Unit Young people's work



The work has two parts, reflecting the separation between school and community life. We as a secondary outcome hope PB will also help reduce this divide. The separation is partly historical. Community based youth work is led and undertaken by local councils, and schools are more centrally controlled through the national curriculum.

Within schools:

We want to establish a three year project within schools primarily at KS 2-4 (7-16 years). The PB Unit would support 'action research' partnerships with a number of schools and public agencies, focussing on the recent national curriculum requirement for young people to study citizenship.

PB is focussed on understanding how taxes are raised and spent within democratic societies, proposing better ways to spend that money, and deciding collectively the best options out of limited resources.

We will be producing curriculum linked resources, case studies and training materials to enable young people to become more active citizens. We would do this through supporting experienced practitioners working with teachers, school governors and pupils, with the eventual goal of young people directing a meaningful part of their own school budget. We are partnering with the Manchester Development Education Project, who have recently been awarded a small three year grant from DFID to undertake work on PB, financial literacy and social enterprise.

Within the community:

Working with partners such the national Young Advisors charity and specific local authorities to coordinate sharing of experiences. We are promoting the PB Unit Values Principles and Standards, and would like to see this adapted for youth empowerment. A number of PB programs already target young people, or aim to make sure they are represented in PB events. This is not however the case everywhere. We would like to develop new training materials and resources to support better working in this area and develop learning communities. We see opportunities for expanding intergenerational work, for building active young citizens, and the better targeting of resources to projects initiated and involving young people.

Resources for our work remains a critical issue. We are seeking financial support to scale up our work, and have few people free to develop new work and avoid being submerged under the pressures of growing from a small and local advocacy project to a government funded support organisation, with an expectation to deliver work across the country, whilst wishing to remain true to our initial ambition of meaningful empowerment.

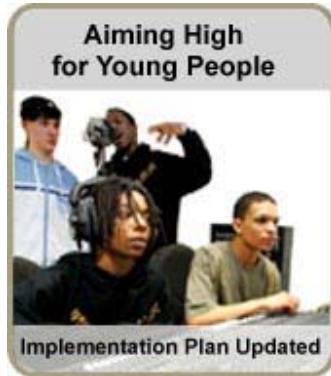


The Policy Agenda in the UK

Youth empowerment work in the UK has enjoyed considerable focus under the New Labour government, who have made a number of significant policy initiatives.

Every Child Matters: Change for Children sets the approach to the well-being of children and young people from birth to age 19. The Government's aim is for every child, whatever their background or their circumstances, to have the support they need to Be healthy, Stay safe, Enjoy and achieve, Make a positive contribution and Achieve economic well-being.

In the related initiative '**Aiming high for young people**' the government wants to



increase young people's direct control and influence. Aiming High set out an aspiration that by 2018 they are actively shaping decisions on at least 25 per cent of local authorities' budgets for positive activities.

All local authorities receive ring fenced money under the **Youth Opportunities Fund** and the **Youth Capital Fund** to support positive activities for YP and build dedicated facilities for them. YOF money and YCF money comes with obligations to involve young people in decision making.

YOF Guidance: Youth opportunities fund good practice guidance and other reports at:

<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/youthmatters/youthfund/>

Communities in control: Published in July 2008 the white paper introduced a range of new obligations and recommendations for local authorities to improve the empowerment of local people. PB was explicitly mentioned, as was the opportunity of working with young people.

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/communitiesincontrol>

Young Advisors gain Hazel Blears ear

Nine young people have been recruited from the Young Advisors initiative to advise the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. Members of the panel meet regularly with the Secretary of State to help shape the design and implementation of national policies. More at

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/news/corporate/994228>

New opportunities: Fair chances for the future : Published on 13 January 2009 by the Cabinet office, which alongside other ideas outlines the role of young people in community engagement. *"The measures in this White Paper provide ... investment and support for people to make the most of their potential throughout their lives: not just one chance at 11 or 16, but lifelong chances to succeed..."* says Gordon Brown.

www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/newsroom/news_releases/2009/090113_newopportunities.aspx



Young Advisors

PB is a pivotal area where we hope to make contributions nationally in community empowerment. Nationally, the YA Charity has been working with DCSF and CLG on how they intend to implement their aspirations of devolving budgets and decision making to young people as detailed in Aiming High and the recent Communities in Control white paper. We work nationally with organisations like YouthBank to capacity build young people to best equip them to inform decision making and budget management and commissioning. On the ground, each YA project embodies true empowerment where trained young people help make sure their communities are improved for the benefit of all.

We have 37 projects nationally, covering all GO regions. Employing over 250 Young Advisors, and having direct access to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government will enable us to make an effective contribution to both this event, and PB nationally.

Gary Buxton, Young Advisors, gary@youngadvisors.org.uk, Sept 2008

Heywood Young Advisors

2008 Publicised an event – ‘£10K up for grabs’ – advertised through posters and postcards to organisations such as boxing clubs, football clubs, bands etc. The first money came from income the young advisors raised by providing services to other public organisations. They decided to use a PB presentation format rather than rely on written applications. Twelve groups made presentations on the day, with the young advisors using a matrix to prioritise how they decided. All groups made their own presentations with a set of common resources (learning from the Newcastle process seen in the Udecide DVD.)

At the **Feel Safe in Heywood Event** on Saturday 28 March 2009 80 people from across Heywood armed with voting handsets cast the deciding vote on how the council and police should spend £20,000 addressing community safety concerns.

Projects were split into three categories; £3000, £7000 and £10,000, a project from each will be awarded with a portion of the cash. Duncan Pearse, Young Advisor lead, from Heywood’s Young Spirit, said: “I think the voters have chosen three worthy winners and we will continue to work with the council and police to ensure these projects are implemented.” Councillor Ted Flynn, cabinet member for community safety, summed up the day: “It was a terrific day! ... It was nice to see whole families, such as the Kirkby family, show their support.



Source: <http://www.youngadvisors.org.uk/>



Newcastle Udecide:

Through its increasingly large UDecide programme Newcastle has developed a number of PB initiatives focussing on young people. For more information on Udecide see <http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/core.nsf/a/projectindex>.



Newcastle's UDecide participatory budgeting pilot for children and young people won the 2008 award for Innovative Engagement from the Academy of Sustainable Communities 'Creating the Future' awards. The judges comments on deciding to give them the award were: "A simple, creative and responsive process that can have a real impact on communities, now and in the future. It also has great adoption potential across different situations."

They won the award because the project demonstrated that it has opened doors to involvement in powerful processes and demonstrated to decision-makers that young people can act wisely. The project coordinators say; "The range of presentations and the work that children and young people in particular have put into them has been both powerful and moving for adults to observe, and highly empowering for the children involved." A U decide participant, aged 9, says: "It's good to let children decide how to spend public money. If it's just adults, we won't get what we need."

Key features in Newcastle

Money came from neighbourhood renewal fund for deprived areas, with young people as part of the overall investment. Emphasised the element of choice, with the purpose of developing decision making processes to convince the local authority that young people are capable of allocating money.

They engaged through school exclusion units and 'marginalised' young people rather than via school councils. They have concerns about having an over technical process as it risks disempowering those with limited mathematical ability. Pioneered use of simple electronic devices.

Each ward has a budget for children's services which in the past went to 'favoured' groups. Wards now have more money and councillors must take the gamble on handing power over to the young people to decide how it is spent.



Newcastle always made it clear to groups that not all would be funded as a result of the PB process – this reflects the reality of mainstream funding.

For more information on Udecide see <http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/core.nsf/a/projectindex>



Case study of Newcastle 2007 Schools Project



£30,000 was available for children in the west of the city to decide how to spend.

Udecide and Investing in Children officers contacted schools to invite them to participate in Udecide. Ballot boxes were placed in 15 schools and 985 children and young people voted for their top priority from the 12 'What Matters to Us' survey themes that CYP reported as their priorities.

Sports and leisure won the most votes and became the spending theme for the project. The school councils consulted their classmates and came up with a project idea with support from their teachers on the spending theme – sports and leisure. They had to show how it would be value for money, benefit the wider community, be good for children and young people. Before the Grand Voting Event, the school councils discussed all the project ideas with their classmates to make sure everyone's views were reflected in their decisions.

60 children and young people from 11 schools attended the Voting Event. They discussed the ideas and whether they matched the criteria, voting 0-9 - the top scoring ideas were announced that day. Unsuccessful project ideas were helped to find other funding. The top ideas received funding and were in place within 4 months.

What did it achieve?

Led by CYP at every stage - choosing the priorities, coming up with project ideas, designing the event, presenting the ideas, voting. Involved thousands of young people in voting for a spending priority, and contributing their views. The information gathered in the priority vote has been shared with other council departments to improve services for CYP. Increased CYP's understanding of local democracy and public budgets.



The school environment proved very responsive to Udecide, due in part to the method's natural links with PSHE and citizenship. Meanwhile, the school council and student voice structures meant that decisions made by the project groups were reflective of a much wider group of children and young people.

CYP also had the chance to discuss the ideas during the week before the event, and gather more views from their peers. Project ideas had to address 3 questions. This encouraged the CYP to think about others in their ideas and scores.

Source: <http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/core.nsf/a/cyppilotyr2west>



Newcastle Children's Fund Project 2008

Aimed to involve young people in the allocation of the city's £2.25m Children's Fund. The Fund aimed to prevent children and young people from developing low self-esteem, having poor school attendance, or entering the criminal justice system

How did it work?

20% of the decision was placed in the hands of children and young people. They would have to score the Children's Fund project ideas against 3 questions at a special conference:



Officers contacted organisations across the city that worked with the target young people. These included Pupil Referral Units, Additional Resource Centres, special schools, the Youth Inclusion Project, a young carers group and a number of BME youth groups; in total 39 settings and 450 young people. Every young person had to complete 3 training sessions with council officers in order to attend the conference. 139 young people attended the conference at St.James' Park to represent their peers. They listened to the project ideas, discussed them and gave a score of 0, 1, 3 or 4 – poor, ok, good, excellent – against each question.

What did it achieve?

- Involved a range of young people in helping to spend £2.25m. These young people represented some of the most marginalised groups of children and young people in the city.
- Set a benchmark for the engagement of young people, showing that with the right method, the barriers to engagement can be overcome. Proved that children and young people can have a voice in complex decision making processes.
- Challenged service providers to think differently about their services and give more priority to the views of young people in the design, promotion and delivery of these services.
- Listened to young people. The final decisions showed a strong match with the decisions made by the young people.
- Raised young people's confidence and capacity to engage in decisions.
- Kept the buzz. Udecide remains a popular method of engagement irrespective of whether young people are direct beneficiaries on the day - 93% said they were having a good time.
- Streamlined the approach. The Udecide brand levered in extra resource from both the public, and community and voluntary sector to meet the tight deadlines.
- Learned that Udecide is a flexible method of engagement which can be applied to more mainstream funding decisions.

Source: <http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/core.nsf/a/cpf2008>



Tower Hamlets

You Decide! in Tower Hamlets: A chance to involve young people

Tower Hamlets has an almost unique demographic. Whereas most Local Authorities are coming to grips with a population that is aging Tower Hamlets has one that is both young and getting younger. In the 2001 census 28% of the population were aged between 0 and 19 and in many of the 8 Local Area Partnership areas (LAPs) which make up Tower Hamlets over 25% of the local population was aged between 0 and 15. For this reason when Tower Hamlets launched its You Decide! PB project it was decided that all people over the age of 11 would be able to vote.

There were a number of challenges involved in this:

- Ensuring that enough young people were willing and able to attend
- Keeping their attention once they had arrived and
- Delivering deliberation between the different age groups present at the event

Using the community networks built up by members of our Neighbourhood Management Team we were able to spread the word about the event via youth groups and organisations. It also helped that some of the items on the menu were for youth services and young people were thus motivated to attend to secure services they relied on. This was a success in Tower Hamlets: 24.6% of those who voted were under the age of 19.

We attempted upon arrival, to split up the young people and place them on tables with people from different communities and age groups. Each table was facilitated by a trained facilitator who attempted to ensure that everyone around the table had a chance to express their opinions. This worked well at many of the eight events and led to the young people being advocates for their services but also helped them think about the important issues to vote for once their services were 'purchased'.

Youth Projects purchased:

- Youth Inclusion Programme: Purchased in all 8 LAPs @ £50,000 - £400,000
- Youth Inclusion and Support Panel: Purchased in all 8 LAPs @ £35,000 - £280,000
- Extended Learning (After school classes): Purchased 8 times (in 6 LAPs) @ £18,000 - £144,000

This project parallels other spending opportunities for young people including but not exclusive of:

- The Youth Opportunity Fund £390,000; Youth Capital Fund £183,000; Youth Capital Fund Plus £452,000
- Young Mayor spend - £30,000 spent on and Local Youth Partnership projects
- Local Youth Partnerships – 12 sets of projects in local communities with a budget of £3500

Antonia Dixey, CYP Participation Officer. antonia.dixey@towerhamlets.gov.uk



Summary of some other UK cases:

Salisbury Area Board's Participatory Budgeting initiative

The Salisbury Area Board had chosen 'young people engaging with disabilities' as its target group for the PB initiative. Cllr Paul Clegg, supported by members of the Salisbury Area Board, initiated the request for £30k from Salisbury District Council. On Saturday March 14th 2009 Salisbury District Council in Partnership with The Salisbury Area Board and the Salisbury Community Area Young People's Issues Group (CAYPIG) held their first Participatory Budgeting event.

For this project a young person is anyone aged 11-24 who may either be disabled themselves or have a caring responsibility for a disabled parent or sibling. The limit for each application has been put at £10000. Young people could apply for the cost of a whole project or can negotiate with decision makers for them to put forward a further percentage of the funding needed. Both statutory and Voluntary organisations can apply as long as the money that is being requested is not for existing mainstream provision and services.

Young people Flash the Cash, Manchester

On 15 November 2008, 19 young people from Cheetham and Crumpsall, Manchester met to discuss how to spend £12,000 on youth activities in the 2 wards.

14 projects had applied for funds from the Cheetham and Crumpsall £12,000 Giveaway.

They presented their idea to a panel of young people at the Flash the Cash event. Young people funded or contributed to 12 out of the 14 projects, ranging from netball kit to documentary making, healthy eating sessions to crafts. When the young people were asked whether they would take part in a similar project again the reply was a resounding "yes!"

The Giveaway is funded by Northwards Housing Wilton Area Panel and supported by partners in the Youth Activities Group.

Information available from Julie Goreham: J.Goreham@northwardshousing.co.uk

Your Norfolk, Your Decision

Young people were closely involved and well represented in Your Norfolk, Your Decision, a £200,000 PB programme led by Norfolk Community Strategy Partnership and supported by the PB Unit.

As well as being included in the resident steering panel young people from the County's Youth Partnership helped produce the DVD of the event, and many projects at the decision day in December included young people in their presentations. Programmes addressing domestic violence, rural isolation, young peoples health, and disabled sports were among those chosen by the resident audience of over 200 people.

See <http://www.norfolkambition.gov.uk/norfolkambition-news/>

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