

Exploring the Role of Participatory Budgeting in Accelerating the SDGs:

A Multidimensional Approach in Escobedo, Mexico



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Message from the Executive Director



Cities and municipalities are frontline actors in our urbanising world. As the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated, it takes a whole of society effort to ensure the well-being of citizens. It will take all of us to survive the deep socio-economic impacts as we adapt to living with pandemics. Whilst it is not the intent of this book to deal with the specific challenges of COVID-19, it does offer new and innovative ways to ensure a "better quality of life for all" from the complex process of urbanisation. It is clear that the pandemic has brought local governments, particularly its alignment with national governments, to the centre of attention. To ensure no one and no place is left behind will require new ideas to strengthen integrated and coordinated governmental actions around the globe.

Weak institutions and poor governance results in equally poor performance, progress, and prosperity of our society. We need a new kind of partnership. What I call the 4Ps: Public, Private and People Partnerships if we are serious about implementing the New Urban Agenda and achieving Sustainable Development Goal 11. Inclusive engagement of all segments of society in the planning and management of cities and communities is one of the main issues to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. As a consequence, it is critical to empower local governments and communities and increase their capacity to promote social cohesion.

As centre of excellence and innovation, UN-Habitat aims to produce cutting-edge normative guidance, facilitate knowledge sharing and develop institutional incentives for learning. This is particularly important to shape an accountable, transparent, equitable, and inclusive decision-making process. Fostering the innovation of governance is a priority, and knowledge is key to developing solutions that can accelerate progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

This report by the Knowledge and Innovation Branch explores the themes of Participatory Budgeting (PB), giving evidence on: how innovative approaches link Participatory Budgeting with Sustainable Development Goals. It does this by describing how multidimensional approaches accelerate a transformation toward the 2030 Agenda. It advocates for how best practices shape new models of governance in cities. To this end, this report, based on the pilot project in General Escobedo (Mexico), demonstrates the achievements and outcomes from this approach.

I would like to thank the authors and the UN-Habitat team for contributing their knowledge and expertise to this publication. I hope it benefits city managers and key partners keen to find innovative methods to enhance participatory budgeting and other bottom-up approaches as a basis for genuine partnerships between public, private and the people to ensure no one and no place is left behind in our urbanising world.



H.E. Maimunah Mohd Sharif
Executive Director
United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UN-Habitat

Foreword



I want to take the opportunity to recognize the valuable work that UN-Habitat is doing in the mission of achieving inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable cities as recognized in SDG11. I thank the authors and the UN-Habitat dedicated team for co-creating this Participatory-Habitat Initiative with our municipality of General Escobedo.

As the mayor of General Escobedo for the third time, I recognize that multiple complexities require guidelines and public policies with practical and transversal lens and applications in practice.

In General Escobedo, we know that objectives can be achieved. An example of this is that in the latest survey published by the INEGI (National Institute of Statistics and Geography), General Escobedo is the second municipality in Mexico, with the police that inspires more confidence and the third with the most effective government to solve the main problems of its territory.

Nonetheless, we want to continue innovating, evolving, and improving public policies that optimize the inclusive and participatory management and planning in our city. As city leaders, we must support the governmental apparatus's evolution to serve our communities better, especially to those that are the most vulnerable. This UN-Habitat Initiative in General Escobedo is of high relevance to this municipality's local history. It lays the foundation for better environments for public participation and innovation and makes it clear that local governments can take smart approaches to accelerate actions of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of stylized cursive letters that appear to read 'CLF'.

Clara Luz Flores Carrales

Mayor of General Escobedo

Preface

It is with immense pleasure that I introduce the Report, "Exploring the Role of Participatory Budgeting in Accelerating the SDGs: A Multidimensional Approach in General Escobedo, Mexico". This report analyses the Participatory Budgeting, investigating a cross cutting approach and a new mechanism to accelerate actions for sustainable development. Focussing on best practices and theories of networking, the authors introduce new ways to shape the decision-making process and city governance to tackle cross-disciplinary challenges, like inequality, inclusiveness, environment, human rights, and sustainable cities. In this regard, they suggest a paradigm shift to develop and restore effective urban governance both in law and in practice for the benefit of citizens.

The pilot project in General Escobedo (Mexico) confirms the main intuition that Participatory Budgeting is a multidimensional policy tool networked with SDGs and targets at the same time. The case of General Escobedo gives further evidence, showing insights and practices to make the decision process more effective. Indeed, this initiative has strong policy implications to advocate solutions to local problems while contributing to peaceful and inclusive societies.

Thank you to our contributors and all UN-Habitat teams for their valuable support. In these challenging times, I consider that such new ideas and knowledge may inspire our actions and our impacts to ensure effective outcomes in line with 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

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