My personal Journey Through the Service Learning Project

What did I learn ?

-   My insights on the 2022-2023 Budget, Participatory

Budgeting and Public Consultation.

-   What did this semester made me realise and wish to

improve about myself ?

21219710, Chloé SALMON
1st year GIS student

Analysis of the 2022-2023 Budget Main features

The Pandemic
$22 billions dedicated to strengthen the testing and hospital authority
$7 billions for measures and equipment
$6 billions for vaccines
$12 billions in covid-fighting facilities   **=67 billions**
$20 billions reserved for emergency

Boosting economy by investing in industries
$5 Billions on promising industries
$440 millions for key tech lab in HK
$16 millions to promote universities tech start-ups   **= 5,456 millions**

Livability of the city
+5$ billions in GBA district , with 15$billion bonds
35$billions of Silver bonds   **=$55 Billions**
10$billions in green bonds.
4,5$ billions to the sustainable development,
1$ billions will be focusing on the construction industry.

Consumption
−Ease non-domestic owners' spending:
-100,000$/household + 100,000 loan extension
−Consumption vouchers: 10,000$/+18 permanent residents.

International
$135 millions to help HK people in Mainland China
$1,26 billions for tourism   **=$1,395 Billions**

My perspective on it
The different field covered are pertinent however **the repartition of the budget lacks coherence i**n my opinion (for ex: the government is consacring too much money on targeting the covid crisis, and not enough on education or social wealthfare.

What do Hong Kongers think about it ?

Analysis of the PORI Public Consultation About 2022-23 Budget

<50% are NOT satisfied
Why?

Pandemy

-To target the pandemy with more self-isolation facilities and test centers.
-To help increase the workforce demand to employ jobless citizens due to the covid crisis

Industry ≠ Social

Investing = long term
But need for short term measures:
-To provide financial support for low/middle income groups

Livability / Sustainability

-to optimise land and housing
-to implement new housing policies,
-to exploit local talents in an idea of growing sustainability
-to tackle climate change

What Hkers want

Consumption/ Expenditure

- More consumption vouchers
- A relaxation of taxation with the crisis

International/ Revenue

- To stabilize the level of growth and boost the revenues
- To valorise talents and invest on trading

The main aspects of the discontentment

The Public Budget 2022-2023, according to the PORI survey, is described as lacking social justice (housing problems and sustainability

Thus, the Budget fails to satisfy Hong-Kongers, even after their consultation.

What is Public Consultation ?

In theory
PC aims to increase the Gov transparency and enhance communication with the citizens.
Ref: HK Pc Policy (General circular n 7/2008)

In Practice
PC is a way to fake a democracy. The government lacks transparency, true opinions cannot be shared + freedom of expression is limited.

HK Gov is listening
In theory, the Gov listens to the citizens and will then find way to develop policies that meet their requirement.   ↗ Gov's reliability

HK Gov is pretending to listen
HK gov uses Public Consultation to promote the acceptance of controversial policies by faking to listen to the citizens' points of view. ↗ Gov's credibility

Who does it ?
Every citizen should be able to give their opinion in PC exercise to maximize the efficiency of the practice. Information should be accessible to everyone.

Who gets to participate ?
The government is only consulting bureaucrats or compagnies related to the issue instead of the general public or "silent majority"

How to do it ?
The Gov could use suitable informative means like medias, radio, phone…
Citizens could give their opinion with

How is it truly done ?
The Legco does not accept direct public participation, only written submissions, hotlines to gather views or research organisations are allowed

Participatory Budgeting
In _theory_

Ideas get funded

"Real power over real money" (MYMO video) : ideas are funded by public money

Fund

What is PB?
It is a **democratic tool** aiming to increase communities **democratic feeling** by letting them **raise their voices**.

Each year, a part of the Government Budget is dedicated to PB, and it is widespread at a territorial level.

Developing and selecting projects

Work to elaborate the proposals

Vote

Voting fo the most relevant

Public budgeting is giving a voice to minorities that aren't usually heard. Every voice matters more than ever !

Narrowing them down

呢度黑麻麻,
加返兩盞燈
得唔得啊?!

不如響呢度裝個嘿彩架?!

彩福邨
CHOI FOOK ESTATE

可能係香港首個
參與式預算

戶外健身設施?!
我都想試吓啊!

Creativity and Civilian Involvement

People think of which type of project they want for their community.

Brainstorming innovative ideas

PB process

PB requires devotion and investment from both the citizens and the governments. Diverse examples of PB all around the world can highlight us on how it is concretly done.

Participatory Budgeting in the World

Since 1989, over 2,000 communities adopted PB worldwide

Porto Alegre

1988: 21% of the Budget dedicated to PB → Inspiring success, helped the community

Paris

2016: 158,964 people voted a €100 million budget (€10 million to schools)

Seoul

2013: solicited all the members of the community on a campaign against bullying (from children to elderlies)

Beijing

2013: Maizidan, Chaoyan District. Ex: Xianguangli's staircase, Nanli's trash collection point…

Tainan

2018: Installation of leds and public lighting in communal areas

Sevilla

700,000 millions habitants were allowed to discuss 50% of the budget

What makes the Best PB ?

These successful examples have shown that in order for PB to be effective, it needs to meet 3 dimensions:
-**resources** (the government need to be aware of the issues to target for the community and allow enough financial resources to do so)
-**willingness** (the decision makers need to hear the community with an open mindset and value their opinion)
-**practical partnerships** (coordination with other actors such as companies or international community).

What about Hong Kong ?
A focus point on the MYMO PB experiment in Choi Kook Estate

What is Choi Fook Estate Experiment ?

In 2021, the Choi Fook Estate developed surveys about local minor improvements and encourage Choi Kook Estate population to came up with propositions about maintenance work and estate activities. The community came up with 104 proposals and 780 residents participated in the voting.

The benefits of the Choi Fook Estate Experiment

Benefit 1 : Enhance the participation of unheard and margenalized citizens
Benefit 2: Valorise autonomy and influence when participating in district affairs
Benefit 3: Created a democratic feeling and sense of belonging for the community members
Benefit 4: Reduced unpowerness

Why is PB this important especially in HK?

As we learned in our classes, Hong Kong citizens do not get to vote in the political elections, anymore. If the civilian power of decision is reduced, here PB is a way for them to still be involved in local affairs and allow citizens to improve their community together, despite maybe their trad political stand.

However, these PB experiments are still hazardous and rare in Hong Kong, why so?

PB/PC cannot truly work in HK

As explained earlier, the HK gov had difficulties implementing PC and PB. Both can work in a sense that they will indeed, have minor consequences at a territorial level. However, for Hong Kong to implement PC or PB about greater causes like other cities did, it will be too complicated in the city's socio-political context.

Too abstract

Even if PC can have impact on the lawmaking process, the gov lacks transparency. They then use PB as a way for the pop to focus only on minor causes they understand.

Budget ≠ PC

If the development of the budget while acknowledging the pop desire is not meeting it, it shows that PC is lacking gov **willingness**

Accessibility

PC in HK: only addresses to specific stakeholders. PB: even if well intentioned only beneficiate small communities **exceptionally**

Faking democracy ?

So, if in Hong Kong it is this difficult to implement these precious democratic tools, then it can question us on the type of gov the city has, and thus, meet the definition of it studied in class.

Our project and what I learned during all the phases

Our meeting with MWYO

All these reflections about PC/PB/ the Budget helped us develop our own project and concretise what we begun to acknowledge.

Group 2

Group 1

Group 3's preparation

The final meeting

What's PB?

What are our ideas ?

How can we make a good meeting ?

This meeting answered our question and pertinently enlightened us on the upcoming project we will want to develop

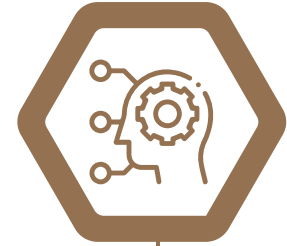Group 1, background work was extremely useful and relevant for us to aliment the final phase of the project with data.

As a team we studied Group 2's proposal and evaluated how pertinent there were, to came up with the best questions possible based on their ideas.

We then had a meeting and shared our ideas, to organise our background work to prepare the best presentation possible.

The last step of our project was the concretisation of everyone's work, with us, Group 3 in the "spotlight"

My work inside group 3 and the skills acquired

Documentation	Study of my classmates' work	Dialogue	Creative planning	Presenting	Discussing and hearing criticisms
During class/different phases of the project I had to educate myself through the documents I found on Moodle+additional personal readings. This part was crucial for me to avoid offending ny of our EM friends.	I listened to my classmates ideas and work with a benevolent look though critical. Reciprocaly, their points of view enhanced my own reflection.	We had all a common goal: to prepare the best meeting possible for our EM friends. Thus, we discussed through shared documents (google docs) or meetings. During the meeting we chatted to make sure that everyone was ready when it was their turn to speak.	This was the part I enjoyed the most in the Project. We came together with no restrictive instructions and we had the opportunity to plan the meeting as we like to.	I wanted to play a key role in the meeting we all worked for. However doubting my improvising skills, I proposed myself to give a "lecture" about PB. I thus, used my presentation making skills to give the EMs participants a quick definition.	Furthermore, the most fulfilling phase of the project must be when we propose our work to EM students. They criticise for example our idea about helpers and it helped us to correct our mistakes.
I learned about diverses notions reused later in or outside the class	It was a teamwork between groups, which gave me a real foretaste of what the working world might look like.	I learned to work in paramount and arrive in a meeting with my idea, thus not to be obstinate about it.	I learned how to be innovative and how to plan an event by thinking more practical than theoretical.	I learned to know my strength in a team and find the task the most adapted to me.	I learned that even if we diversified our point of views within the groups, an outsider perspective is key..

My self-assessment

What I have done well:

Investment
I really think I did my best for the PB experiment to goes as best as possible by providing a clear and inclusive introduction to what's PB.

Team-work
Within group 3, I did bring my perspective while listening to my classmates ideas and output for us to come to a common agreement.

Reflection
I studied in depth Group 1 and 2's work, the Budget, PB and PC example, to nourish my reflection and came out with the best proposal possible

This Service Learning Exercise was not only an occasion to reflect on HK civilian implication, but also to challenge myself.

I truly enjoyed this Exercise, believing that it interested me more than regular assignments and allowed me to develop further skills then the traditional academic ones.

Where can I improve myself:

Confidence
I should have spoken up a little more and give my background work the spotlight it deserves

Take the lead
I now regret to not have taken things in control a little more. However as a 1st year student I did not feel qualified enough to do so and need , here again to work on my confidence

Reactivity
I should have make this in depth study earlier, because I found myself surprised by my own misconceptions after a retrospective analysis of my precedent homeworks..

Conclusion

To conclude, this Service Learning Project was a satisfying, insightful and stimulating mobilisation of what we learned in class. I personally felt involved and motivated, convinced that this method helped me to enhance my understanding of what I studied. I through my researches or the meetings/ lectures paramountly understood the notions of Participatory Budgeting or Public Consultation. This project also made me study in depth the Budget and the EM situation in Hong Kong.

Furthermore, I acquired additional skills like creative planning or how to evolve within a team. I am convinced that those will be useful in my future work-life.

Thus, I am, globally really satisfied with this Service Learning Project, I think that my classmates did a very pertinent and incredible job, and hope that my inputs did participate to the common success we achieved.

Additional sources

Carlson, J. (2017b, June 26). *Expanding the imagination of democracy: PB in Paris*. Participatory Budgeting Project.

https://www.participatorybudgeting.org/pbparis/

D. (2020, July 18). *What is PB?* Participatory Budgeting Project. https://www.participatorybudgeting.org/what-is-pb/

Participatory Budgeting in Seoul, South Korea – Participedia. (2012, May 1). Participedia. https://participedia.net/case/4368

Participatory Budgeting in Seville, Spain – Participedia. (n.d.). Participedia. https://participedia.net/case/4224

Please note that most of my data are founded in the documents that you gave us on Moodle (For the Budget, MWYO's work or PORI's…).