

FULL TRANSCRIPT (with timecode)

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Journalist Stephanie Grimm speaks with Louise O'Kane and Jez Hall (06.10.2020)

Jez Hall, Director of [Shared Future CIC](#) in Manchester

Louise O'Kane, Planning and Engagement Officer at [Community Places](#) in Belfast

00:00:29:27 - 00:00:45:22

Stephanie Grimm: Yeah, OK. Hello, Jez. Hello, Louise. Could you quickly introduce yourself what do you do in relation to participatory budgeting in the U.K., what your job mission is in that sense?

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Jez Hall: Shall I go first? So, yeah, so my name is Jez Hall. I'm based in Manchester in the U.K., I'm a director of a social enterprise called Shared Future CIC and we host the UK PB Network website. So we support that which disseminates information about PB in the U.K. And we also do sort of consultancy work and advocacy work to promote it. And we've worked with Louis in Northern Ireland and also in Scotland with PB's Scotland Network.

So yeah, basically I'm a big advocate for PB and just try and get it developed as much as possible, wherever possible.

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Louise O'Kane: Hi, Stephanie, my name is Louise O'Kane. I'm a planner and engagement officer with an organization called *Community Places*, and we specialize in three key areas providing planning advice on spatial planning issues, a community engagement, community planning. And then we facilitate and manage and PB Works, which is really the project which is trying to create more of an enabling environment for participatory budgeting right across the region here and supporting some initial processes around PB, sharing good practice.

And we also have the <http://www.participatorybudgetingworks.org> website with resources in peer studies on that. And we have a network of over a hundred people who are interested in participatory budgeting. But it's very early days for PBH in Northern Ireland and Jez has been really vital in terms of really getting it to start to flourish here and in the region.

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Stephanie Grimm: From what I sort of found during my research, it seems to be that it's actually sort of more thriving in Scotland and Northern Ireland than in England actually at the moment. So could you maybe explain how that comes about, what that has maybe to do with the political system in the various parts of the UK? And what are the factors that, from my research, I have the impression that it was more thriving like 10 years ago, maybe before austerity started in England.

I found a few examples about *Tower Hamlets* from 2010, etc., but not so many recent things. So could you maybe explain how that comes? Or maybe my impression is wrong and it's thriving together in England?

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Jez Hall: So, I probably am best placed to answer this one. No, it's absolutely true. The UK has quite an unusual political framework with the devolution of some powers to what you might call regional governments. Scotland would see itself as a nation or Northern Ireland. I think region might be... there's a lot of contesting.

And Wales ... as well have some devolved powers. But we're still a very centralized government or centralized administration with a lot of powers still reserved in London. So, to go back to the history, PB first came to the UK between 2000 and 2005 through civil society organizations inspired by PB Porto Alegre, trying to develop a model that would work at a local authority level, particularly in the Greater Manchester area.

And the organization was called Community Pride, which was linked to church action on poverty. Although there was no particular faith background, there were some connections with people in Brazil. Oxfam had funded an initial learning exchange to Brazil, back in 2000 of which I was one of the members. By about 2008, we got some political awareness, well, perhaps a few years before that, with the New Labour government and as part of various policy initiatives under New Labour that was announced a national strategy by "national" we mean England, Wales for participatory budgeting with funding for church action on poverty, to encourage local authorities to take it on.

And we developed a particular model which was called *participatory grant making*, which was about funding civil society or very local community projects through a participatory budgeting model. And that was quite successful. There was a lot of uptake. And as you say, Tower Hamlets and other cities like Newcastle sort of embraced PB. And we had a lot of experiments at that time. But you're quite right with austerity and the lack of sort of political drive and then the change of government, although there were some attempts to rebrand it as a sort of community budgeting and sort of remodel it for that that new political reality. Really, the drive diminished in the UK funding in England and Wales, funding ended for church action on poverty. And in 2012, basically, the new UK PB network was set up as a small, partly funded, well, it was unfunded network to try and keep the story of PB alive and save some of the resources and learning from that first wave. Coincidentally, about the same time, we had a small amount of legacy funding and we organized a learning exchange bringing some politicians from the USA to the UK and they went on this whistle stop tour. And the most successful part of that was connecting with the Scottish government. And it became connected to sort of the growing nationalism or self-identity that was kind of developing in Scotland. And some people cynically might say because England wasn't doing it, then that allowed Scotland to do it. But it was sort of linked to the independence referendum in 2014 and this idea of rebuilding a new democratic mandate in Scotland.

And that was successful, although independence wasn't successful from a Scottish perspective,

there was then Scottish government sponsorship of participatory budgeting in Scotland. And that has grown over a number of years. And that's where most of the innovation has happened in the last few years. Just to finish that off, there is still activity, PB activity in England and Wales, but it tends to be very small scale and rather unfocused and without the funding for that kind of drive to make it happen and without national policy sort of embracing it.

And frankly, Brexit and many other things have distracted our politicians. It's not really as active as it should be or could be. So that's a broad sort of arc of it. A little bit of that is obviously Northern Ireland is slightly different context. And I'm going to hand over to Louise to talk about that sure.

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Louise O'Kane: So. Well, I guess really PB started here probably about three and a half to four years ago. It was after Noleen Diver, who is a member of our PB Advisory Group, actually heard Jez talking about PB and his experience of participatory budgeting and thought that it really aligned very well with *Triangle housing associations*, the mission and values. So *Triangle* set about doing a community fund, PB fund event with some of their assisted living tenants.

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And it was sort of bubbling away. And at the same time, an organization which is now the Community Foundation for Northern Ireland, was looking to resource innovative processes all around really civic engagement and supporting local people to get more involved with politics and decision making. And three, that we put together a bid for Participatory Budgeting Works Project.

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And I was completely new to PB. Haven't even heard of PB before that process. But particularly we are community places. We're very much focused in and around engagements, of doing placemaking. It seemed to fit really well with us in terms of the opportunity to really empower local communities and to have more of a say and direct local services and just any kind of projects and initiatives within their own local areas.

We were quite keen to move forward with that and community places then and facilitated and managed that process for the first two years with the funding from CFNI. And I was a relatively small amount of funding, but we were able to set up the website and learn from all the really great practice that have been happening in Scotland and PB partners as organization and also support it, that whole process. And we had a range of regional workshops just to let people know what is PB, because it was a completely unknown term, apart from very small example in *Triangle Housing Association*.

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And we were able to get a number, I think it was maybe five PB processes in the first round, mostly through local authorities. So the local councils led by local councils and quite aligned to community planning. A number of the community planning partners were involved and kind of pulling resources around that. After the first ones did it, they have gone on to repeat the process, which is really great to continue to do that again this year, although with Covid perhaps at present there are some challenges there.

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And then a really interesting one was on Rathlin Island. It's our only island here in Northern Ireland. And they were able to use resources from a social enterprise, a local hotel in the area to ask the islanders how they wanted to see the profits that were actually put back into the community. So that was a really fun process to be involved with as well. And so that was really the first two years of it from about. And then we've received resources from the National Lottery Community Fund to really focus in on quality PB processes and putting people in the lead, because like any new kind of thing that comes along, sometimes people say: "Oh, we're doing that."

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And then you talk to them and find out a bit more about what they are doing. And it's like: "Well, that's great. And that's a way of maybe engaging communities. But if people aren't having that final to say, the final decision making, it isn't actually PB." And so we've been really focusing on that and trying to have quality based PB. And we would like to develop a PB charter and something similar to what's happened and developed in Scotland so that whenever people are doing PB, they can really measure their process against the best principles and values of participatory budgeting.

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And so it is flourishing and it is growing, but it is relatively small scale. It has been the small grant making processes. But we are engaged with the Department for Communities and local politicians in terms of having that discussion about how we move PB to have much more of an impact and to be more scalable for the mainstream approaches. And I'm looking at bigger pots of money and engaging larger numbers of people and those kinds of decision-making processes.

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Stephanie Grimm: Yeah. Are there any studies of how it has affected life in the communities in those areas where it has been going on for a couple of years? I mean, for example, one part of, a bigger part of PB seems to be in the US compared to Germany about the inclusion of minorities. Or about the inclusion of people who are usually not part of the political process, who might not even go to vote when there is a national election or something. And it's about basically the way I understand it, breaking social isolation, sort of making people more involved.

Are there examples of Scotland or Northern Ireland or England where you could say this has been going on for a couple of years and this is how it sort of played out?

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Louise O'Kane: In terms of here, there's a number of the processes, for example, Newry, Mourne and Down have repeated the PB process, ask local people about how they find the process. Had they been previously engaged with these types of activities? It's quite small scale in terms of the impact and the resources that were there. But it has been an important aspect in terms of evaluating some of the processes that have gone on and trying to capture that learning and actually ask those kind of questions like: Have new people been involved that perhaps hadn't been involved previously? Or as

you say, potentially minority groupings, et cetera? I guess I think here we haven't really got to that scale yet to really unpick that.

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But I think certainly in Scotland, there have been a number of evaluations by some of the universities, *University of Glasgow* and *University Caledonian*, as well, I think I've done a number of pieces. *PB Works* had an impact evaluation report done just in terms of the impact that the first phase had had. A very recent example is Armagh, a small PB process in a rural community. And they have an evaluation of that.

And we could certainly then send you information on that. But I think that it's really important that we do build in evaluation process and learn about what's the value of PB?

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Jez Hall: So I come in, there's a lot of anecdotal stuff that shows that people who haven't previously participated and more particularly haven't previously spoken. It's not just about that. You've turned up and voted in a PB event, but it's about the agency that you develop the sense of empowerment that you develop. So I think we could point to lots and lots of anecdotal stories and videos and case studies where it does seem that people who would otherwise not feel the democratic processes or participation is for them has have been engaged, have been sort of inspired to take part.

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And if you look at, say, some of the work, particularly in North Asia, around young people's involvement, where they have very high participation rates in the third, quite small, we're talking about eighty thousand euro grant making processes for projects that would support young people's activities and getting somewhere in the region of 75 percent of all young people participating online through platforms, but also very different stories about, you know, community activity and particularly deprived neighborhoods.

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So it was an interesting pilot in Scotland around tackling Islamophobia, which was linking Scotland with particularly female immigrants who were experiencing it either because of ignorance about whether they were Islamic or not, but generally just fitting into that and trying to create new positive narratives around that. We've seen loads and loads of examples that the challenge is, saying, is this actually very significant? Because the sums of money are small and deep impacts take time.

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And often academics when they come and look at these processes are measuring them against, I think, unrealistic scale. I think it's important to ask, how well are we doing our democracy anyway? I remember going on my colleagues coming to Germany in 2005 and looking at the PB in Germany and saying: "That's not PB, that's consultation, that's top down driven by bureaucrats in order to validate the interests of particular groups within society."

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And actually, is this very empowering?" And I think if you look at the global atlas worldwide, you see that there is no one model that works in every context. It has to be lifted as a set of values and principles and then applied within a very different context in different ways. And what happens in Germany wouldn't necessarily work here or in the USA or more particularly in Kenya or in China. But there is a global network of people inspired by that very basic principle that citizens should have direct decision-making power over at least some resources.

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And if they do, they then begin to start to ask questions perhaps about where other resources are, or they start to get a feeling that they are capable and welcome in the democratic participation kind of culture of the society. And so it's part of the set of wider democratic innovations. And we've got online now that's really interesting how it has enabled new forms of people to emerge. But then we also have deliberative democracy and things like that.

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And it's really interesting how PB might or might not link with other democratic innovations like those and really build this culture of active continuous democracy rather than a representative democracy.

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Stephanie Grimm: I'm getting back to the topic, you just briefly mentioned how to involve young people. Is there any sort of particular strategy as to say about, let's say it's implemented in schools? Can they maybe have a say on how a school budget is being spent? Is a part of a political education in school and some places where they can sort of vote on something and experience something?

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Jez Hall: So shall I start and then I'll let you come in? Because we're both working actually on an EU funded Erasmus Plus project around a youth participation. But it's interesting in Scotland, again, they have connected PB with educational attainment and they have a specific fund for schools to reduce the attainment gaps between poorer and richer young people. And they have PB as one of the mechanisms to spend that pupil premium fund as such.

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So there has been that objective policy link made in Scotland. And also that's been quite a lot of active cases of young people being involved through PB. Scotland is unusual in the UK, that they have voting from 16, but what we have innovated in is many of the PB projects, grant making have voting from 11 years upwards or even less seven. So we've started to kind of raise questions around why young people can and can't participate.

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So that's the broad area. Absolutely PB could be a really useful tool to get young people involved in democratic practices and particularly in the U.K. that are not getting involved in mainstream political

processes and not getting involved in elections. They feel very marginalized. We've got climate change and many other things where our leaders seem to be failing young people. So I think there's great opportunity if it was promoted in the right way to fight to give voice, an agency to young people.

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Louise O'Kane: Yeah, I definitely think there's huge potential. And I think that's why we want it to come together with the Erasmus project. And the other partners are Spain and Poland. And they both have a wealth of PB processes, particularly in schools. And it's not something that we haven't had any PB and run school processes here. But I think it's more to do with awareness and people finding out about it and thinking it's not for us. So it's a whole other area of potential for PB here in Northern Ireland.

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And I think there's been some local examples of the PB, for example in the Garvagh Forest School with primary school children. And it's that point you made about actually starting to engage young people at that very early age, about these issues and rights and democracy in society, and that they do have a voice and they can play their part in society. So I think there's huge potential and it's really, really valuable and worthwhile process. And I'd like to see it develop more here.

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And we're currently providing support to a youth led and design PB process in the northwest and southwest area and sort of taking some of the good practice and some of the things that we've learned from PB. And we had these discussions with the people at the outset that if they were going to do a process, that it really should have young people being involved in the design process.

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And they were up for it once we got through all of that. And there's been a group of about between six to eight, and there's sort of that number of core members that have come to each of the meetings and others kind of drop in tonight. I think we also, in terms of how you even design people's processes, you need to work with how young people actually work and the fact that they might want to drop in or out a lot of things as well. And it's been a really, really fantastic process.

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And they've been really, really heavily involved in making major decisions about the whole process. And again, that's another way of giving young people that voice and making those decisions, even in the actual design of the process and actually tailoring it for what will work in **Derry and Strabane**. So, I mean, it's been really, really fantastic. And we are all part of the Erasmus project we've been writing up, some of the **case** studies are Europe, and I'll be including that one as well. And in terms of **youth** making it happen up in **Derry and Strabane**, you can check out the **web page if you want it's** <https://growderrystrabane.com/youthpb/>

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And the closing dates will be the 8th of October. They've already got applications in. So given Covid-19 in terms of restrictions and concerns and a lot of the youth clubs, the education authority, **run youth clubs** haven't opened again. They were due to open at the beginning of September and then they all opposed it. So we were really worried. That's not going to have a big impact on it. But thankfully, I think it is largely to do with the young people actually being involved and sharing the message of PB, the opportunity around the process and peer to peer that will hopefully make the process successful.

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So we will bring it over. So hopefully we get enough applications in right across the council area. But it's an exciting opportunity. And I think the more we can capture these case studies and let other people see the other benefits and asking the right questions about how do we know the PB process has been successful, is really, really important to capture that so that the process can be repeated again and again.

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Stephanie Grimm: And you already mentioned a few rural examples of PB.

Can you maybe both of you answer a little bit to the question on does it need different strategies to involve rural people as opposed to urban people in the process or other interests similar because often the idea comes from deprived areas, which are often more urban areas.

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And I read that Len Duval, a member of the London Assembly, suggested to **Sadiq Khan** the implementation of PB in London again after the Tower Hamlets thing seems to be sort of tied down. Is there any official response to that or how do you see this?

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Jez Hall: There's a lot there's a lot of big questions, and I think it would be really good to look at some of Scotland's because Scotland has got some really remote, remote and rural places and some the way that PB has taken hold in in the Outer Hebrides or in the Shetlands or in the Islands of Ireland shows that it can be operated at that very structurally kind of low level where people know each other and there are strong social networks already.

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And I think that there are opportunities to do PB in very rural communities. There are obviously logistical challenges, but some of those are being overcome by some online techniques as well, although, of course, rural areas tend to have poorer Internet connection as well. And also, there's an intergenerational thing. More rural areas in the UK tend to have an old elderly population who might not want to engage. But there's been loads of examples of PB operating in rural, semirural and also urban situations.

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And that's the flexibility of the model. If you follow a values-based approach and just say there are some core values, this is about real money. This is about citizens actually voting themselves. This has got code design involved in its citizens design, the model that works for them rather than it being imposed upon them. As long as you allow there to be a development of kind of budget literacy so people can learn about where money is going and provide scrutiny. And as long as there's fun and celebration within the process, then it is applicable in any situation.

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In terms of the London situation, I think that speaks to some degree to the political logjam that we have in the UK. So I know that lend they promote that they are all inspired about what had happened in Paris. I don't believe that has gone anywhere. And I think there are some real issues with politicians who are wedded to traditional forms of representative democracy, who see the PB in some way undermines their legitimacy.

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I think that's a mistake. I think that, you know, we see many examples around the world where PB has built trust in the state that some really big studies internationally, that where PB happens at scale over time, people are more willing to pay tax and they are also more willing to participate in other ways. But scaling PB and getting that political drive at a citywide level is really hard work.

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They've managed it to some degree in Scotland. But it's not only politicians, it's also power holders in bureaucracies that fight back against PB. And there's a lot of learning to be done around how you create what you might call innovative, open bureaucratic structures, who don't patronize citizens who don't feel that they have expertise and they're somehow raising up people in a sort of tokenistic way.

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So power is really critical in this conversation. And that's why some of the conversations about, you know, Germany was that this is actually a manipulated democratic process. Is it really empowering? And if people started to get angry, would you actually want to do it any more?

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Stephanie Grimm: Yeah. So when the people in the administration or the bureaucracy who fight against PB, is it because they fear that jobs become redundant if somebody else takes that power, or is it just a power thing or I mean are there sort of what is your experience in making allies instead of enemies in these structures.

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Louise O'Kane: When we mean I actually think that it's not that people necessarily, it's just a different approach and it's a different way of doing things. Sometimes some people really like change

and adapt really well and think this is really exciting and it can reenergize the whole process. And others think, well, we're already doing it in this way and that works. Let's not sway something if it's working well. And so I think there's an aspect of that. So I think it's really important that you do you have champions of PB and that you do have that political leadership and people really saying this is what it is actually about. And certainly some of the processes, it's perhaps been harder as a civil servant, people might think, well, actually, this is an awful lot harder to distribute a small amount of money, but it's not because you want to distribute the money, it's the actual impact you want to make and innovate.

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And so it's looking at things differently. And, yeah, it would probably be easier just to stick to some of the traditional funding mechanisms. But then you're not actually potentially reaching new people or actually having all the other spin off and benefits of what PB can actually deliver. And so, I mean, here I don't think it's necessarily that people are blocking it. It's just that it's something different. And I think we need to reassure people that that it isn't a scary process.

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And I think the more examples we have of it and the more appetite that comes from local communities to say we do want to do things differently. And I think then the local authorities and other agencies have to respond differently. And it's not even saying, like, we need more money. It's then how can we use existing resources more effectively and let them be directed by local citizens? Quite often authorities they have an engagement strategy that says what we want to support local communities.

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Then there's no kind of action attached to that. I think PB is a really useful way for local authorities and other power holders and resource holders to show that they actually mean what they say as well.

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Stephanie Grimm: I read, Jez, in one of your articles and also on this YouTube talk I saw of yours yesterday, that you are a strong advocate, that there's actual voting in the process. I mean, you already said that about that it shouldn't be just consultancy, but have actual impacts. Could you maybe say a little bit more about the benefits of voting in the process or the importance of voting?

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Jez Hall: So it reminds me of a quote I came across in Brazil really early on, which was: "If it feels like we've decided this was made by a resident, it feels like we've decided it's PB. And if it feels like someone else decides it isn't." So I think there's something really important about the symbolic and also practical moment where people come together and exercise direct decision-making power. And if they don't have that experience of actually taking power and exercising power, then there's a whole set of questions about whether this is a manipulated or constructed process.

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Now, what's really important is you don't just vote for one thing. You don't have a binary yes or no. You have a whole set of votes for different priorities. And there's a whole conversation about what is the best voting model to have within it. And I heard another interesting phrase is that: "Well, my first vote goes for the project I want, my second vote goes to somebody like me and my third vote goes to social benefit." So it's really interesting that PB is taken off in Scotland where they also have PR?, both in England we still have first pass the post voting? And I think that's a cultural issue around the country, people thinking voting is about domination and the winner takes all sorts of things. But I do also see the if you don't have a vote, it's really hard for people to know what point their agency was demonstrated or exhibited. And also, I think it can be a fun thing, but you can change the language. You can call it prioritization or support or various different things.

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But I personally think that once you get rid of the vote, you risk it being co-opted into the kind of bureaucratic process. You risk it kind of blending into just general consultation and opinion testing and things like that. So I'm up for votes. But, you know, in a school when we talk about PB in a school and the teachers say they might vote to sack Mr. Johnston, the teacher, because they don't like him, you know what I mean? And that's stupid, isn't it? But those are the tensions.

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The disruptive power of PB. It starts linking people to ask questions. Why is democracy like this? You know, who's setting the rules of this game and how do we do we feel that really this is about us or about validating it? And in the UK context, if you are a young person, particularly if you're a female, you might as well have not had the suffragette movement. You know, in the poorest communities, less than 15 percent of people are voting in local elections in the UK. And that may be the future that you will see in Germany to.

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The over time, people will see the democratic process as irrelevant to solving their real needs.

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Stephanie Grimm: You already mentioned austerity earlier. Maybe one last question for now. Maybe we can continue this some other time, but time budget today is running out. So what are the biggest challenges concerning budgeting and funding? I mean, austerity is a big thing in the last 10 years in the UK. But how do you actually go about? Do you find allies in other parts than the actual political system for your work? Or how do you go?

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Louise O'Kane: Well, for and here in Northern Ireland, I think the key... PB hasn't been resourced, so unlike in Scotland, where there has been a major commitment and resourcing to both actual PB and support. So we are continuing to lobby local authorities and resource holders really to invest in participatory budgeting. And but I think the crucial thing that we're saying is that it isn't about needing a new pot of money. There's lots of resources out there.

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Even in terms of the response to Covid-19, there's been large amounts of money being really thrown at communities to the point where they're saying, well, we don't actually need to apply for all these funding because, you know, there's a whole raft of funding, availability of resources being available to them. And so, we're saying it's not about necessarily needing a new budget but thinking about how we spend existing resources. And I think that's the key thing, that when people hear that, here they go: "Oh, OK." So, it's not something that you want this new money for. It's actually by we actually build into existing resources are allocated and it is only a small portion of that budget. It's not saying that all money from the local authority or housing provider or whoever should be demonstrated in this way. So I know in Scotland, and Jez might be able to say a bit more about this, in terms of there is a little bit of concern that PB linked to austerity would be more about people voting for where cuts would be rather than what PB is really supposed to be about.

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So, I guess you do need to be cautious in relation to that. But I think here, where we're at a smaller scale and it will be crucial that we actually make that leap to more mainstream resources. And so hopefully the period of austerity, which is likely to continue well into the future given the current budget. Yeah, so I think it's there's going to be austerity for a very long time. So I don't think we can allow people to say: "Oh, well, we've got budget cuts everywhere and the impact of this global pandemic and everything."

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So I think we have to say, well, there are some resources out there, so we need to think about how we use the resources.

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Jez Hall: And I'm going to come in on that. So, in the UK, we have the cost of putting a young person in prison for one year after committing a crime is somewhere in the region of of 70 to 80 thousand pounds a year. So that's over a hundred thousand euros. That's about the same as we spend on young girls' education over 10 years in the UK. So, there is a lot of money being spent putting very expensive sticking plasters on problems that don't actually solve anything but just are reactive.

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And some people would question that. That is really in the interests of prison officers and police people and judges not to change that system because they generate their income out of that young person going into prison and that young person going into prison is probably going to come out and be a burden or a cost on the state for many years ahead. So, if through spending sixty thousand pounds in a PB grant process around providing opportunities for young people to get involved in positive activities, we just avert one person from going to prison, from getting involved in a criminal gang, from trying to commit suicide because they feel socially isolated, then we have actually solved the problem.

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But it's very hard to prove the tunnel between a sixty-thousand-pound grant and five years later whether somebody goes into prison or not. So, there's a really good phrase that: "The money is the bait, not the fish." The money that you spend on PB is not actually about what happens as a result of that individual interaction with that cash, small sums, maybe, but it's about how it leaves a legacy and how it builds social capital and relationships and reduces intercommunal tension and encourages people to get involved in democratic processes and builds agency and voice.

00:41:08:27 - 00:41:38:29

And those are soft outcomes. And the problem with the word participatory budgeting is you've got participation, which is about people and budgets, which most people think are about cults or about control and money. And that's where its power is. It's that connection between people and democratic processes that are linked to budgets. There's a really great phrase I picked up on the Internet is, you know: "The truth of a city's aspirations is not found in its vision document.

00:41:39:01 - 00:42:03:15

It's found in its budget. It is at the moment when commit resources, that the truth of where power lies." And I'm sure you've got examples in Germany where people feel that the political construction that you have is actually maintaining social inequality rather than actually solving the problems or tensions within society.

00:42:03:28 - 00:42:08:28

Stephanie Grimm: I mean, your example about the young person in prison versus another scenario brings about my last question, which would be how to nonprofit organizations maybe play a role in the PB process. I mean, that could be, for example, some organization trying to keep young people off the street, stopping them from doing crime or whatever. How do they see the link? Do you have any cooperation with nonprofit organizations like that going on?

00:42:39:06 - 00:43:13:00

Jez Hall: I think there are, and I think that's about culture, so that is a challenge that any budget could be more participatory. So, if you're running a nonprofit for youth participation, are young people actually in government positions, are they actually developing your budget or are you actually just benefiting? And I'm going to be very challenging here from the continuation of poverty because your mission is to resolve poverty. So, what is the culture of that civil society organization? So that's the negative side.

00:43:13:05 - 00:43:50:28

We've often seen that civil society doesn't like PB because they have access to power and money anyway as an organized body, as a bureaucracy in itself. Having said that, civil society, because it's in touch with people and can capture the stories of people who have participated and see how that has led to them. Having voice in agency are really powerful as well. So civil society can be a really positive force in promoting the idea and bringing in free expertise and making sure that accessibility is built into this process.

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We have the example in Glasgow with *Glasgow Disability Alliance* that have been played a really important role in setting the kind of the values for people to make sure it is properly inclusive. So, they have a really positive role. But we have to accept that power exists in any system. And so, it's about whether leaders are prepared to let go or whether they want to hold on to power, maybe because they're just frightened of what will happen if they let go.

00:44:20:21 - 00:44:28:04

Stephanie Grimm: So, yeah, that's very hard, unless you have something to say as a final statement, Louise.

00:44:28:27 - 00:45:01:27

Louise O'Kane: No, just that. Like, I think that's so true. It's not just NGOs or civil. It's equally applied to any organization. It is about... like sharing power basically and not being fearful of that process. And as Jez explained there, any organization could be more participative and could have elements of PB within them. And I think it is a challenge that people need to also look to their own organizations and own resources to see how they could do things differently, if that's part of their mission. So, yeah, well, it's a challenge.

00:45:05:19 - 00:45:08:24

Stephanie Grimm: Thank you very much.