

Editorial

Social participation is an extremely important phenomenon for social pedagogues. They want to prepare young generations for participation, to activate adults who are less committed and at risk of exclusion, to encourage seniors to remain active for as long as possible. They see a need for continuous learning, also based on their own and other people's experience. They see what this participation consists in, what its strong and weak points are, what its potential is, and when it becomes merely a slogan. Many social and educational initiatives aim to involve various groups in social participation. The reasons for this activation are varied, and its methods and forms diverse. It happens that changes are very good, but sometimes the implementation of noble ideas is accompanied by disappointment, conflicts, jealousy and aggression. Sometimes people feel used, cheated and objectified. Such situations are inevitable in every society that practices participation. In social education, however, it is important whether conclusions are drawn from these experiences, and whether thought, including scientific thought, is given to actions that seem to be oriented practically and not very educationally.

A social pedagogue should be a vigilant observer who analyzes the message of social practice, both the one planned top-down and the one created bottom-up. In the concept of participatory budgeting, these two perspectives combine. Monopolistic tendencies to govern the common good are, perhaps only experimentally, toned down by giving the right of co-management to citizens. On a micro scale, locally, in a limited form and with a limit of available resources, but nevertheless, representation gives way to participation.

This experience has been introduced in Poland for several years now and it is a phenomenon which does not only take on the dimension of voting on local financing of citizens' needs. It also brings back the tradition of self-

government, building a sense of responsibility for common affairs and shaping competences which strengthen the sense of individual and collective agency. This is also the premise we, pedagogues, want to achieve, so that children, young people and adults can have the knowledge, skills and willingness to create, together for themselves, something that they think is/may also be important for others. Something that can improve their world and create the feeling that prosperity is not given but co-created. Construction of a path in the park, a concert for children, placing of boxes for hedgehogs, other local ‘trifles’ – this is all the result of thinking about a common place, common space, common needs and common problems. By learning to plan the budget and applying for its implementation, we learn a lot from each other: what is important to us and other people, whether and how we can plan, argue and encourage others to look at our ideas. We learn to accept defeat, select what is important for the local community, look for information about projects and also talk to each other about them. In Poland, research on participatory budgeting is mostly interesting to economists and spatial planning specialists, as well as researchers of civil society. Pedagogics and pedagogues are only just beginning to join this discussion.

Participatory (civil) budgeting is a process in which inhabitants co-decide on the distribution of a specific pool of public funds (gmina funds, local government funds) in a given area by submitting local projects for financing and then by voting on them. It is a form of their participation in shaping the plans of gminas’ investments, but also informing about local needs and collective preferences of the majority. The understanding of the role of participatory budgets in civic education and direct cooperation of citizens with local governments is slowly growing.

In order to fill the gap in the Polish pedagogical literature on participatory budgeting a little bit, we have prepared this monographic issue of the “Pedagogika Społeczna” quarterly.

In the first two texts, their authors (Agnieszka Naumiuk & Michał Bron Jr as well as Daniel Schugurensky) focus on the educational potential of the participatory budgeting process. They describe the assumptions, origins and development of the idea, the first difficulties with its implementation in practice; the dissemination of similar initiatives to different cities and countries; the development of various practical models, their successes and failures, hopes and threats.

The first part of the monograph entitled: *Participatory budgeting as social dialog* ends with a text in which the author (Joanna Bornemark) analyzes the phenomenon called ‘civic dialog’ in Sweden. When planning new spatial

solutions, city authorities are obliged to listen to the citizens' opinions. The author is primarily interested in the philosophical aspects of such dialog. The ideal, strictly respected by Swedish bureaucrats, is 'neutrality'. But, if you want 'civic dialog' to make sense, how can you reconcile 'bureaucratic neutrality' with an understanding of the needs (and emotions) of citizens participating in this dialog? Can the virtue of reason (Aristotelian phronesis) be expected from officials/decision-makers? The author seeks answers to these questions in an analysis of statements made by participants of a training course for city officials of one of the municipalities near Stockholm.

In the second part, entitled: *Participatory budgeting as a challenge for education and democracy*, Paula Guimarães and Rocío Valderrama-Hernandez present, and justify, the thesis that participation of citizens in making decisions that affect them is a tool that strengthens their autonomy and their ability to decide on public issues. It is also a tool for educating citizens. The Lisbon participatory budgeting is a good example of both the actions of city authorities and the learning process of adult inhabitants of the city. The article by Oana Almasan is based on her own empirical research conducted among the inhabitants of Cluj-Napoca. For the author, participatory budgeting is a form of, and an opportunity for 'democracy-learning by doing'. The author concludes that participation in decision-making was very important in activating the social roles of citizens. Paula Kłucińska and Dawid Sześciło discuss, in their article, the legal regulations applicable in Poland regarding participatory budgeting. They also try to determine to what extent these solutions applied in Poland use the governance (co-management) model in a gmina (~municipality). They carry out an analysis on the example of examination of relevant documents in fifteen gminas. Unfortunately, the conclusions are not very optimistic.

The last part: *Participatory budgeting as a school of citizenship* opens with a text that analyzes Brazilian experiences. Danilo R. Streck, Paloma de Freitas Daudt and Leonardo Camargo Lodi describe the experience of introducing participatory budgeting in the Brazilian State of Rio Grande do Sul. They put the most focus on whether and how this phenomenon contributes to development of active and democratic attitudes of citizens. An analysis of budgeting participants' statements and the study of their learning processes show the importance of this phenomenon for the activation of citizens. The authors also draw attention to a negative phenomenon called 'wasting of experience'. Kamil Brzeziński wonders to what extent participatory budgeting is a mechanism that involves inhabitants in the process of co-deciding about the city. In order to answer this question, he analyzes data on the participation of Łódź residents in voting on the budget as well as the resulting experiences. He ana-

lyzes the advantages and disadvantages of the examined phenomenon, devoting a lot of attention to the observed shortcomings of participatory budgeting. Marta Pietrusińska, on the other hand, describes the opportunities offered by participatory budgeting to civic education for adults. Based on an examination of the Warsaw budget, she shows that this potential is not fully exploited. At the end of her article, she proposes an interesting set of concrete proposals to make better use of the educational opportunities of participatory budgeting. Contribution to drawing up a participatory budget does not have to be limited to adult citizens. This is clearly stated in Edyta Widawska's article that concludes our review. The author got interested in whether children and young people are involved in civil budgeting? What forms does this participation take? An equally important question concerns the readiness of adults to subjectively treat children and adolescents in their participation in the life of the local community. The author is looking for answers to these questions on the example of Częstochowa and participatory budgets created there since 2013.

Giving issue 3/2017 of "Pedagogika Społeczna" to our readers, we encourage them to reflect upon and to take an interest in the concept of participatory budgets seen from the perspective of education, broadly-defined education and social impact, integration, building of bonds, learning through experience, shaping of civic competences. Authors from various countries were invited to co-create this issue, which significantly broadened and enriched the perspective of experience and inspiration, thus contributing new ideas to pedagogical thinking about this type of social participation. The authors include the great authority in this field – Daniel Schugurensky from Arizona State University, USA – as well as other Polish and foreign authors dealing with the subject of participation.

We are very pleased that they accepted our invitation and we hope that reading their texts will broaden the readers' knowledge or inspire them to reflect on the need for further pedagogical thought and research on this topic. Social pedagogy has never been indifferent to the social desire to jointly be and create a social reality in which the talents of individuals are combined into groups and local forces that are an expression of the concern for how we live together.

We would like to point out that we used the two concepts – participatory budgeting and civil budgeting – interchangeably in this monographic issue, like in the world literature on the subject.

Michał Bron Jr, Agnieszka Naumiuk