

PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING WORLD ATLAS

PARTICIPATORY PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

DEBATE ENGAGING CITIZENS IN DISCUSSING
REVENUES: CHALLENGES, EXPERIENCES AND
LESSON LEARNED



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PARTICIPATORY PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

GROTTAMMARE



I. Name of the country where the experience is/was located

Italy.

II. Name of the City

Grottammare.

III. Name of the Region

Marche.

IV. Name of the organization that promoted the experience

Municipality of Grottammare.

V. Typology of the organization that promoted the experience

Municipal Government.

VI. Name of the process

Participatory Partnership Agreement (Accordo di programma partecipato).

VII. Dates or year(s) in which the citizens engagement happened

2006.

VIII. Was the experience formally part of PB?

No, it was a parallel/separate process, even if this place had an ongoing PB.

IX. Short description of the methodology of the experience

In Italy, the “partnership agreement” is an urban planning tool that allows to involve private companies in the implementation of public policies. Being a negotiating tool, sometimes it involves a high level of decision-making power, so giving a key-role to the Mayor that can decide which are the conditions that the private actors have to fulfil and respect. Partnership agreements are considered extra-budgetary tools, because they produce wealth for the city, but through compensations that are usually produced directly by the private partner, and not through financial resources transferred to the municipal budget.

In Grottammare, in 2006 there was a need to use this kind of administrative tool in order to decide about the transformation of an ex-industrial brownfield, and those who were in charge of the city at the time - in line with the participatory processes that were already functioning in other sectors of the administrative action (participatory budget, participatory urban master plan, etc.), decided to involve citizens in the main decisions, so to grant more transparency to the process and also to maximize benefits to the city, in response to concrete needs of citizens.

X. Short description of the results of the experience

The wide discretion of partnership agreement negotiations generated fear of committing mistakes or reducing citizens’ trust in the Town Hall action; thus, promoting a participatory process that could involve hundreds of citizens was considered as a natural guarantee factor. As a matter of fact, participating citizens gave a clear mandate to the Mayor who, during the negotiation process, had clear boundaries for not deviating from what citizens had expressed during a series of public assemblies that were held in Grottammare.

These “contention walls” – clearly designed during the public meetings through which the participatory process took places - set the following: that the private intrapreneur that wanted to transform the area into a residential estate, in order to get the formal permit for such a landuse variation, need to grant:

- The requalification of a commercial site of 2,800 sq. meters that had been declining during the last 20 years;
- The construction of 85 covered parking lots;
- The requalification and equipment of new green areas;
- The ceasing of 6 apartments of 50 sq. meters each to the municipality for hosting independent/self-sufficient elderly citizens;
- The pedestrianization and requalification of two streets in the town.

An important specificity of the participatory process was the fact that the Mayor asked to citizens what he has to do in case the private stakeholder would not agree on all the five compensations requested, and got a strong mandate of not conceding the landuse-change permit in that case. Possibly, such a clear mandate reinforced the capacity of negotiation of the municipal executive that – without the participatory process – would have been in doubt on if accepting anyway a lower number of compensations.

It is worth to underline that, despite this strong mandate had a formal positive effect on the conclusion of the agreement, not all conditions were finally met in concrete terms, due to the incoming economic crisis.

XI. Some data on participants

5 meetings and over 350 citizens involved. No details have been collected on the type of citizens that participate.

XII. Weblink or other sources

There is no web-memory anywhere on this participatory process, but it is described in the book by Allegretti, Giovanni; Frascaroli, Maria Elena (2006), Percorsi Condivisi. Firenze: Alinea

XIII. Name and address of the person who answered the questions

Luigi Merli, Mayor of Grottammare from 2004 to 2013.
Support offered by Pierpaolo Fanesi (civil servant at Grottammare Municipality)

