



SEATTLE  
PUBLIC  
SCHOOLS

# Participatory Budgeting Report

Exploration of a Participatory

*12.15.20*

# AGENDA



**A:** Background



**B:** Our Approach



**C:** Our Findings



**D:** Discussion and  
Recommendations



**E:** Q&A



# BACKGROUND

## Zithri Ahmed Saleem | Designer and Researcher

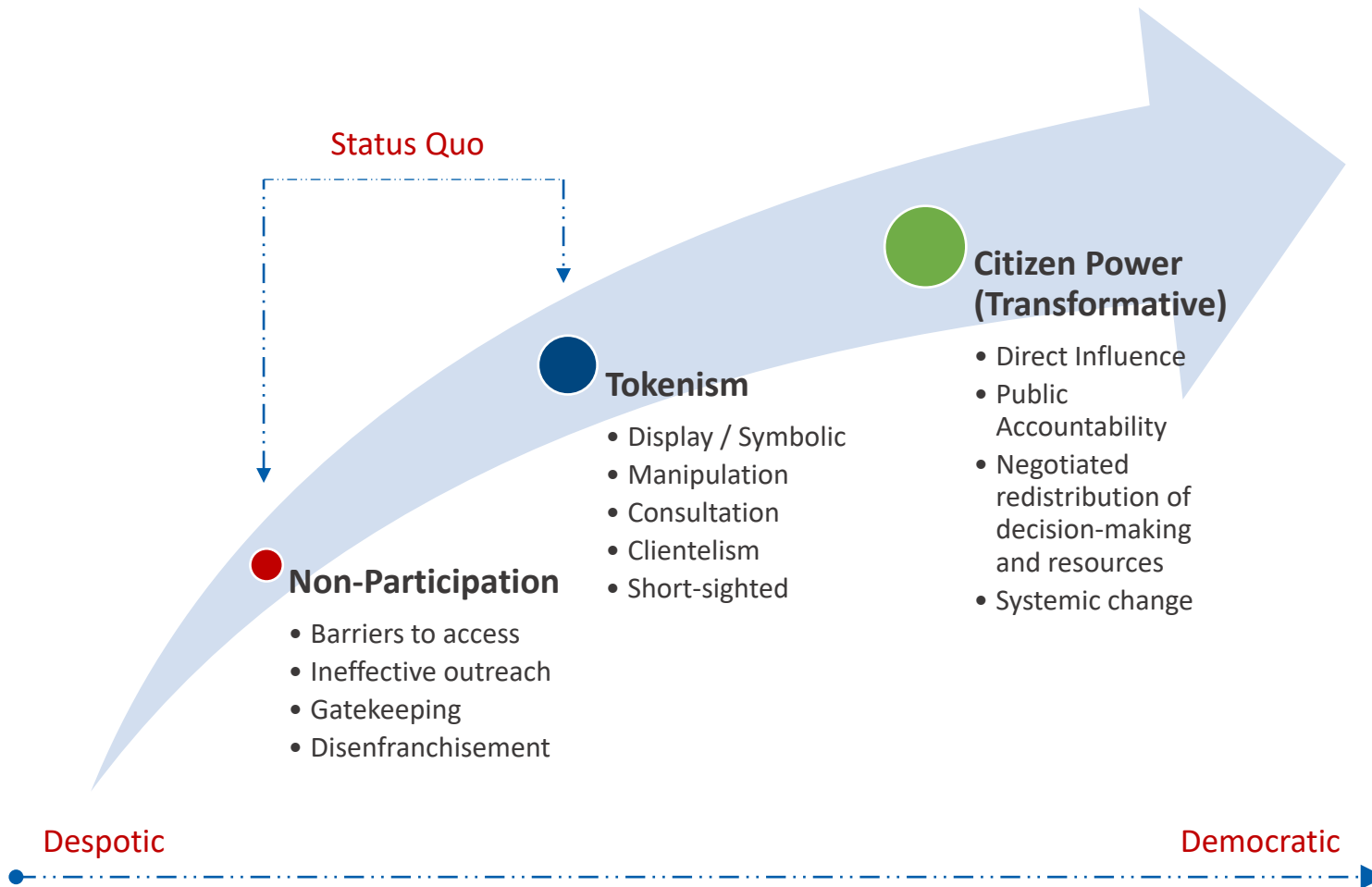
- Information and Learning Sciences
- Design and evaluation of policies and interventions considering human and technological factors (ICT)
- Anti-oppressive researcher (AOR) methods considering the roles factors such as race, class, gender, and geography can play institutional inequities
- Primary research focuses on how leaders in the US and EU conceptualize inclusion in an increasingly technology-mediated and globally connected world





# WHY PARTICIPATION MATTERS NOW?

# Arch Of Participation



## DISRUPTING INSTITUTIONAL PATTERNS

Institutional patterns of participation tend to serve privileged populations and stakeholders at the expense of vulnerable ones, even with the best intentions. In worse cases, institutions invite citizen participation only after they have secured the interests of privileged stakeholders and the institution. We cannot honor our commitments to equity, inclusion, and democracy if we do not critically rethink our ideas, complicity, and practices around participation.



# Participatory Budgeting

- **Notable References:** Porto Alegre (Brazil), NYC City Council, Food Coalition (CO), The World Bank, City of Seattle w/ KCEN
- **Action-Leaders:** Participatory Budgeting Project (<https://www.participatorybudgeting.org/>)
- **A Design-Intensive Undertaking:** Requires capacity building for both institutions and community stakeholders

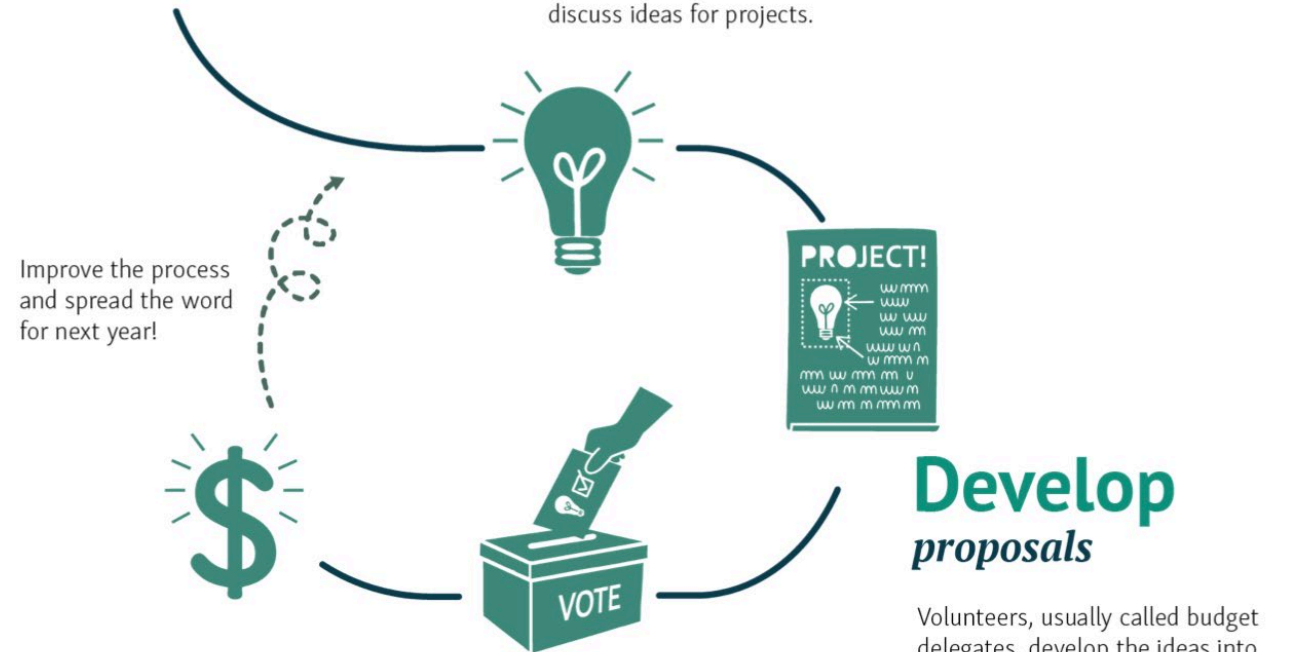
Graphic to the right taken from *Participatory Budgeting*. (2020, June 1). Organizing Engagement. <https://organizingengagement.org/models/participatory-budgeting/>

## Design the process

A steering committee, representative of the community, creates the rules in partnership with government officials to ensure the process is inclusive and meets local needs.

## Brainstorm ideas

Through meetings and online tools, residents share and discuss ideas for projects.



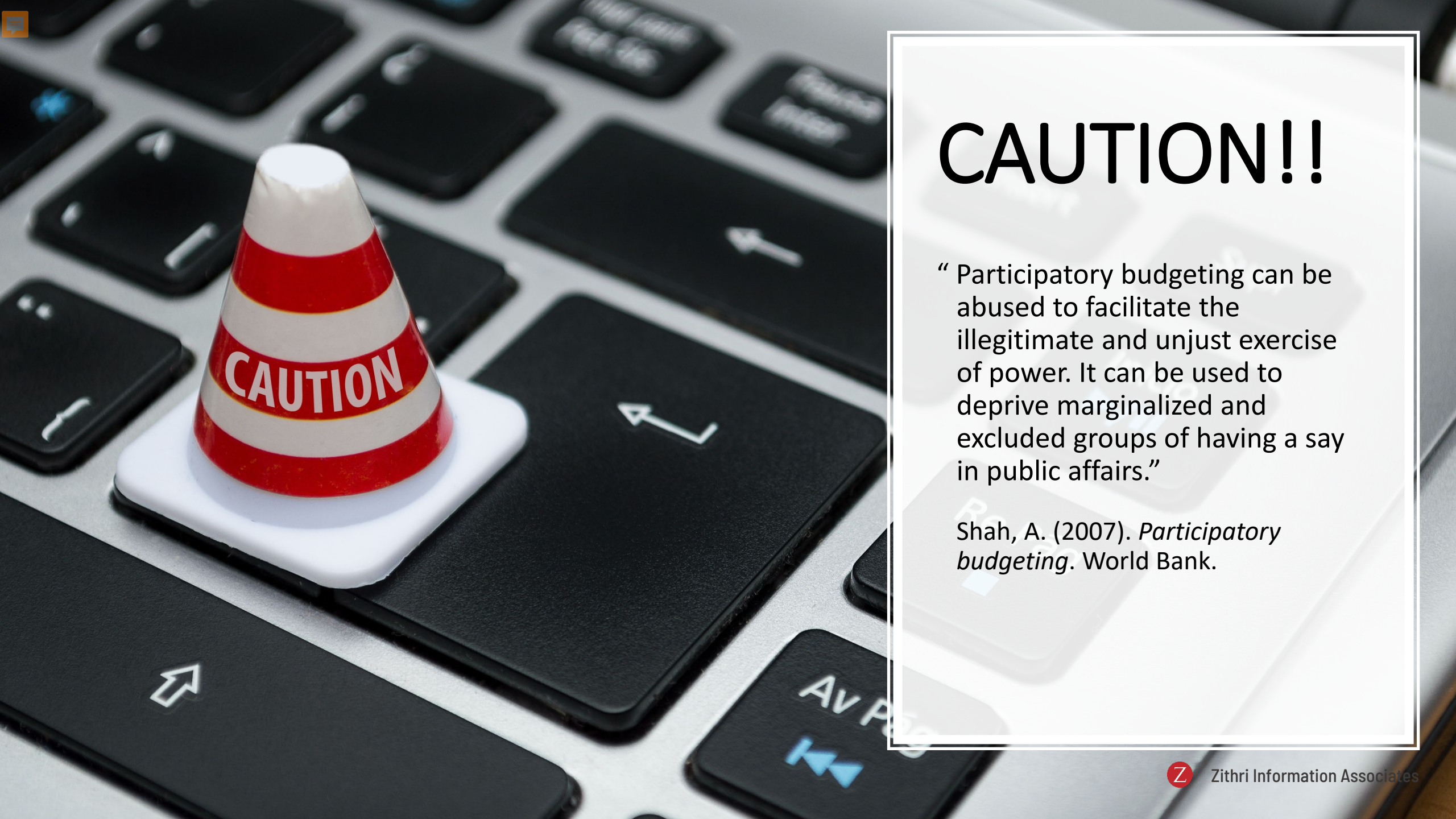
## Fund winning projects

The government implements the winning projects, such as laptops in schools, Wi-Fi in public parks, or traffic safety improvements. The government and residents track and monitor implementation.

## Vote

Residents vote to divide the available budget between the proposals. It's a direct, democratic voice in their community's future.





# CAUTION!!

“ Participatory budgeting can be abused to facilitate the illegitimate and unjust exercise of power. It can be used to deprive marginalized and excluded groups of having a say in public affairs.”

Shah, A. (2007). *Participatory budgeting*. World Bank.



# OUR APPROACH

- Design Research Methods Sprint (4-weeks)
- GOALS: Glean community ideas and representations toward iterative design of participatory methodology
- Board Selected Three Focus Areas
  - Restorative Justice
  - Ethnic, Black, and American Indian Studies
  - Dual Language
- Four meetings with focus groups w/ current state vs. future state analysis
- Elicited community representations on focus areas and the overall Participatory Budgeting Process





# KEY FINDINGS

## PB Process

- **INFORMATION ASYMMETRY:** Community needs PD & access to district information such that they can act as informed participants
- **STUDENT VOICE:** Multiple layers of student engagement

## Restorative Justice

- **ADULT ACCOUNTABILITY:** A restorative process that allows teachers to be brought into circle and happens at building leadership level
- **CLARITY:** Definitions, staffing, roles, and resources.

## Ethnic , Black, and American Indian Studies

- **EMOTIONAL LABOR SUPPORT:** This work is not simply curricular
- **COMPENSATE COMMUNITY:** Community are best source of direction and should be compensated
- **CLARITY:** Definitions, staffing, roles, and resources.

## Dual Language

- **BUDGET:** Increase funding so there is a clear allocation to help schools with high ELL populations
- **STAFFING:** Allocate budget for proper recruitment and retention of DL staff. Impacts to continuity of learning in building from high turnover.

# DISCUSSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

1

Form and fund year-long community PB steering group to develop strategy and implement for next budget cycle.

2

Bridge gaps across SPS participatory efforts (e.g., task forces, community advisories) by developing coherent **participatory framework and rubric**. Identify targets for participatory decision-making and resources.

3

Close feedback loop to PB participants in terms of budget decisions.





# Thank you!