



## Participatory Budgeting, Municipal Governance and Citizen Trust

*A Commentary on Maputo's Post-2000 Trajectory*

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### ABSTRACT

Participatory budgeting has been promoted globally as a mechanism to enhance local governance and rebuild citizen-state relations. Its implementation in African cities, however, presents distinct challenges and outcomes within varied political and institutional contexts. This commentary analyses the specific trajectory of participatory budgeting in Maputo, assessing its impact on municipal service delivery and the cultivation of citizen trust since its adoption. The analysis employs a critical policy review, synthesising existing case study evidence and municipal performance data to construct a longitudinal evaluation of the intervention's governance outcomes. While initially fostering engagement, the process has been undermined by municipal resource constraints and executive recentralisation. A key finding is that citizen trust correlates more strongly with tangible service improvements, such as a documented increase in paved road maintenance, than with the participatory forum itself. The Maputo experience demonstrates that without concomitant fiscal autonomy and a genuine devolution of decision-making authority, participatory budgeting risks becoming a procedural formality that fails to substantively improve trust or service delivery. Future reforms must prioritise aligning participatory mechanisms with municipal revenue-raising capacities and legally enshrining citizen oversight powers over budget execution. participatory governance, urban governance, local government, public trust, service delivery, Mozambique This commentary provides a novel synthesis of Maputo's post-implementation experience, arguing that institutional design and fiscal constraints, rather than citizen willingness, are the primary determinants of the mechanism's efficacy.

**Keywords:** *Participatory budgeting, Municipal governance, Citizen-state relations, Lusophone Africa, Service delivery*

### Article Highlights

- Participatory budgeting in Maputo has been undermined by

### Core Argument

Institutional design and fiscal constraints—not citizen

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| <p>municipal resource constraints and executive recentralisation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Trust is linked to service delivery, such as increased road maintenance, not just the existence of participatory forums.</li><li>• Without fiscal autonomy and devolved authority, the process risks becoming a procedural formality.</li><li>• Future reforms must align participation with revenue capacity and legally enshrine citizen oversight.</li></ul> | <p>willingness—are the primary determinants of participatory budgeting's efficacy in rebuilding trust.</p> <p><i>A longitudinal evaluation of governance outcomes in a major African capital.</i></p> |
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