

**A comment on Clive Doucet's case study,
The Participative Budget in Porto Alegre:
Insights from a Study Visit of a Canadian Councillor**

April 13, 2004:

I quite agree with the observations made in Councillor Doucet's note - to a point. He is quite right that the budget process often looks like an expenditure management exercise that is handled, for the most part, behind closed doors. But it is, and it has not always been that way in every Canadian municipality.

As a former municipal chief administrative officer, I took great pains - working in partnership with my councils - to develop effective public participation in a transparent exercise that focused on activity, programs and services. And when we had determined - collectively - what we all wanted, then the conclusion was inevitable: people had to pay for what they wanted. That is the way the exercise should work.

My views on these matters were published in a series of articles carried in Alberta's Municipal Councillor in 1980, Civic - Public Works in 1978, and Urban Focus at Queen's University in 1981.

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