



# PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Newry, Mourne Down County District



## WHAT IS PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING?

- Participatory budgeting (PB) is a way by which local people can decide how part of the public budget is allocated
- Empowers communities to have a direct say in how funds are used to address needs

## CAMPAIGNING TO INTRODUCE PB

- In 2014 the Northern Ireland Open Government Network (NIOGN) established, an alliance of individual citizens, activists and representatives of community/voluntary organisations
- NIOGN ran 'conversation cafes' where the topics around poverty and budgeting arose and P was discussed
- NIOGN groups around NI learned about how to set up PB

## COMMUNITIES LEADING CHANGE

- in 2018 NIOGN input a PB blueprint to Newry, Mourne Down council as proposal for community
- Participatory budgeting initiated by council through County Down Rural Community Network and the Confederation of Community Groups
- Communities Leading Change established as initiative to administrate the PB project
- PB was split into two categories:
  1. Rural Mournes
  2. Youth of the district

## THE PROCESS

- In recruiting there was increased advertisement for marginalised groups maximized citizen participation and inclusion
- In the Mournes group an event of 70 participants listened to nine voluntary groups pitching different proposals, and voted for 6 groups which won £500 of funding each
- Youth category – groups posted a YouTube video pitch for their project idea. Over 5000 participants voted for their favourite 3. Fifteen groups won £500 investment.
- An evaluation report contains reports of where money has been spent, how it has helped and recordings of 2 new PB projects to be est.