



Institute of  
Social and Policy Sciences



## **Background Note**

### **Policy Dialogue**

on

**Procurement and Purchases by Parent Teacher Councils:**

**Enhancing Transparency and Accountability at School Level**

**Abbottabad**

**September 4, 2014**

## **Background Note**

### **1. Introduction:**

Procurement of school supplies, construction work, purchase of textbooks and services is an extremely important function for seamless working of any education system. Construction of new schools, classrooms and missing facilities is probably the biggest development expenditure in the education sector at provincial level every year.

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, school construction budget was approximately Rs.5.14 billion in the FY 2013-14 – which is 63.5% of the total development budget of the Elementary and Secondary School Education Department. Responsibility for this work lies with Civil Works Department, which procures private contractors for construction. Whereas the free textbooks in the province are funded from development expenditure and cost about Rs.1,500 million. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa each Parent Teacher Council (PTC) receives an annual grant based on a criteria taking into account number of classrooms and enrolment. PTCs can spend this grant to purchase learning materials, furniture, and minor repairs and maintenance works.

Media reports and selective evidence indicate that inefficiencies and lack of transparency are commonplace in the procurement of text books, school construction and purchases of PTCs, resulting in negative impacts on service delivery. In absence of strong accountability institutions within the government, procurement ends up in wastage and inefficiencies as a result of hidden interests and cartels of providers. Moreover, value for money is compromised due to corruption, patronage, and lack of competition. As a result, money that reaches the service delivery point (i.e. school) is less than intended, and fewer children benefit from school supplies, buildings, textbooks and services.

In this context, Institute of Social and Policy Sciences (I-SAPS), in collaboration with Ilm Ideas, is conducting a Policy Dialogue on “Procurements and Purchases by Parent Teacher Councils: Enhancing Transparency and Accountability at School Level”. The dialogue is aimed to discuss the role of PTCs in procurement procedures and to share experiences, best practices and recommendations for improving transparency and accountability in PTC procurements.

### **2. Aim and Objectives**

The broad aim of this dialogue is to facilitate an informed debate on procurements of school supplies and constructions by PTCs in order to ensure effective utilization of available resources in a transparent manner. Specific objectives of policy dialogue are to:

- Facilitate an interface between the government officials, public representatives and civil society for improving the effectiveness and transparency in PTC fund utilization for schools improvement;
- Discuss concept of horizontal accountability at school level and debate role of the stakeholders for improving transparency and accountability in parent teacher council procurements; and

- Share viable options and best practices for enhancing transparency and accountability in the PTC purchases.

### **3. Topics to be covered by Speakers**

The speakers and discussants at the policy dialogue will include experts in the areas of education, procurements and community participation in school development. The topics to be covered in the policy dialogue include;

- Improving Horizontal Accountability at Service Delivery Level: Capability, Accountability and Responsiveness of PTCs.
- Procurement and Purchases by PTCs: Challenges at Policy, Procedure and Practice Levels.

### **4. Participants**

The participants of policy dialogue will comprise the key stakeholder's including public representatives, district government officials, representatives of the district education department, members of PTCs, office bearers of district bar association, civil society organizations, and representatives of electronic and print media.

### **5. Follow-up**

I-SAPS has initiated a series of policy dialogues on education procurements at provincial and district levels with a view to creating and sustaining a vibrant interface between civil society, public representatives and government officials for improving transparency and accountability in the system. In addition to more issue-based dialogues, I-SAPS will provide department-specific recommendations and facilitate the departments and PTCs for improving procurements in education sector.