



Institute of
Social and Policy Sciences



Background Note

Capacity Building Workshop

on

Improving Transparency and Accountability in Procurements of Education Sector in Punjab

Gujrat

February 10, 2015

Background Note

1. Introduction:

Pakistan is currently facing an education emergency where millions of children are still out-of-school. About half of the out-of-school children in Pakistan are in Punjab alone¹. The learning outcomes of the children who are enrolled in the schools are poor and the quality of education imparted in the schools is also questionable. The provincial government is facing numerous challenges including effectiveness of the available education budget.

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 2013-14, the provincial government of Punjab allocated more than 50 percent of the education sector Annual Development Program (ADP) for school civil works². Development, printing and distribution of textbooks constitute another big procurement budget line as it costs over Rs. 3 billion annually. At school level, school councils (SCs) are involved in procurement of minor civil works and purchases of stationery and learning materials, etc. which involves annual grants worth over Rs. 1.5 billion.

While research reports³ and media stories⁴ often highlight issues of inefficiencies, vested interests and lack of transparency in public sector procurements, this aspect has received little attention in education debate in Pakistan.

With an aim to enhance transparency and promote horizontal accountability in education sector procurements, Institute of Social and Policy Sciences (I-SAPS), in collaboration with Ilm Ideas, is implementing 'Education Procurements In-Sight (EPIS)'. It is an initiative to bring issues in education sector procurements in the forefront of policy debate and strengthen institutional capacities within the concerned government departments to exercise their mandate of scrutiny more effectively.

2. Aim and Objectives

The broader aim of this capacity building workshop is to facilitate and provide technical assistance to the civil society for improved monitoring of public education sector procurements in order to ensure effective utilization of available resources in a transparent manner. Specific objectives of the workshop are to:

- Build the capacity of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) for improving transparency and accountability in education sector procurements;

¹ Alif Ailaan (2014), *25 Million Broken Promises: The Crisis of Pakistan's Out-of-School Children*, Islamabad.

² Annual Development Program (ADP) 2013-14, Government of Punjab

³ I-SAPS (2014), *Education Sector Procurements in Punjab: A Horizontal Accountability Perspective*, Islamabad.

⁴ <http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-5-295450-Call-for-fairness-in-education-sector-procurements;>
<http://e.jang.com.pk/01-21-2015/pindi/page4.asp>

- Providing an overview of the procurements rules and regulations existing in the province;
- Explaining the procurements process with simplicity;
- Highlight the importance of horizontal accountability and discuss the role of civil society in monitoring education sector procurements; and
- Discuss purchases made at school council level and identifying the challenges.

3. Sessions to be covered during the Workshop

The trainers for the capacity building workshop will include experts in the areas of education, procurements and community participation in school development. Sessions of the workshop will include:

- Procurements in Education Sector and Horizontal Accountability
- Procurement and Purchases at School Council Level

4. Participants

The participants of the capacity building workshop will comprise civil society organizations working in education sector.