

The Open Government partnership reaches out to people in some eastern provinces to seek their views on governance



Sayed Ikram Afzali, Executive Director of Integrity watch Afghanistan addressing the participants

In collaboration with the Training Human Rights Association for Afghan Women and the Open Government Partnership Secretariat, Integrity Watch Afghanistan facilitated a consultative workshop in eastern provinces to hear about governance issues faced by the people there. Government officials, civil society and members of the community participated in the event. The views expressed by the people will be collated and included in the National Action Plan II of the Open Government Partnership.

Speaking at the workshop, Shah Mahmoud Miakhel Governor of Nangarhar emphasized that open governance principles need to be imbedded in government departments and said: “people play a crucial role in holding government officials to account by playing their part in participating and

monitoring government affairs”. The top public official in the province pointed out to the participants that the government in Nangarhar have now made it easier for the people to access information. He also confirmed that they are holding open hearing sessions to listen and address various problems faced by the people.



Shah Mahmoud Miakhel, Governor of Nangarhar

Sayed Ikram Afzali, Executive Director of Integrity Watch, highlighted the role of people in fostering an environment of open government and emphasized that active engagement by the people in their government encourages and improves accountability. Encouraging people to partake in the local government, Mr. Afzali urged the participants to list some of the important issues faced by them which could be resolved by the government in the coming two years.

Referring to the first National Action Plan, Roshan Sirran, Director of the Training Human Rights Association for Afghan Women, pointed out that NAP-I had been able to address some important issues for Afghan women. As far as the second National Action Plan was concerned, Ms. Sirran expressed her satisfaction with women participants of the workshop considering the role & importance of women in achieving open government.

Participants broke into working groups to further discuss some important issues which they believed should be included in the National Action Plan-II. Some of these important issues included the improvement of healthcare services, increasing access to quality education and achieving reforms in policing.



The Open Government Partnership (OGP) is a global initiative which was established in 2012 where government and civil society co-create commitments to open up governments and make them more transparent & accountable. Afghanistan joined the initiative in 2016 and subsequently developed its first National Action Plan (NAP) in 2017. Integrity Watch has been working with the Government of Afghanistan and other civil society actors to co-create the NAP II for 2020 to 2021.



---

Severe shortage of equipment hinders quality of education in Balkh schools



### *Safiullah Joya*

Muhammad Yousef Khairkhah High School is located in Nahri Shahi district of Balkh Province. It has close to 5000 students of whom 45% are girls where they attend classes in 3 shifts. The school is one of many which face a shortage of teachers as well as standard laboratory equipment for science classes and most important of all, the availability of textbooks.

Badal Shah Khan, the Director of the school acknowledges the issues faced at his school and confirmed that, while such facilities were provided by some organizations in the past but it has been a while since they have been available. The Director did commit to resolving the issues with the help of the students.

A survey by of schools in 10 provinces by Integrity Watch Afghanistan, finds out that there is in effect no budget for school maintenance and equipment which are needed for the school to operate. The findings confirm that even schools built with donor contributions lack basic education materials and equipment.

Volunteers facilitated by Integrity Watch monitor schools such as Khairkhah to help establish a culture of accountability and self-help. Currently there are 30 volunteers monitoring 30 schools in Balkh.

---

**Civil society advocates trained to use public procurement data**



*Wahidullah Azizi, Integrity Watch Afghanistan | [@WahidSays](#)*

In collaboration with the Open Contracting Partnership and the National Procurement Authority and Transparency Afghanistan, Integrity Watch Afghanistan conducted a two-day training for members of Provincial Integrity Networks, government employees and university students on procurement transparency, Open Contracting Data Standards and engagement of the public in government contracts. The trainings which were conducted in Nangarhar, Kabul, and Kapisa were attended by more than one hundred male and female participants.

Hashmat Safi a participant from Kapisa province emphasized the need to conduct many more such trainings as there was little knowledge among civil society about how procurement processes worked within the Afghan Government. He added: “If we get to know how the procurements process works, starting with the announcement of the bidding process, awarding the contract and overseeing its implementation and completion, we will be better equipped with the knowledge to oversee and monitor government procurement processes”.



“For years procurement has been closed off to the public,” said Wazhma Omarkhail another participant from Nangarhar, “Up to now only a few companies have been able to secure government contracts and this closed position compromises the quality of goods and services delivered to the citizens of the province”, she added. Citizens need to know that under current procurement law, people have the right to oversee contract implementation and also check the quality of goods & services within local councils.

Based on the measures detailed in the Open Contracting Data Standards (OCDS), publication of data by default in the procurement process is recommended. This in return will increase transparency and accountability of the public officials involved in procurement-related contracts.

Every year, the government of Afghanistan and governments around the world spend a major part of the national budget on procuring construction, goods and services aimed at benefiting the public. The main purpose behind the OCDS is to engage the public in procurement which in turn will increase transparency in how taxpayer’s money is spent.



Copyright © Integrity Watch Afghanistan, All rights reserved.  
info@iwaweb.org | www.iwaweb.org | +93 (0) 780 942 942

This email was sent to << Test Email Address >>  
[why did I get this?](#) [unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription preferences](#)  
Integrity Watch Afghanistan · Kabul, Afghanistan · Kabul 00000 · Afghanistan