

Round Table Conference

The Way Forward for the Implementation of

Article 25 -A & SDG 4

Karachi, Sindh

8th November 2019

Objectives of the Round Table Discussion:

1. Undertake a rapid review of the laws in place for 25 A in Sindh, their notification, a stock-take on the rules of business which have been formally adopted by the government for the implementation of RTE/25 A and SDG 4.
2. Understand where the province of Sindh stands with regards to community engagement and teachers to deliver equity, inclusion and quality in education.
3. Overall, the round table session will serve as a platform to bring the influencers and decision makers on board for discussing and devising accelerated strategies more imaginatively by engaging government, parliamentarians, civil society, semi-autonomous bodies and law makers to address gaps in the implementation of RTE/25 A and SDG 4.

A Round Table Discussion was held at Pearl Continental Hotel in Karachi on the 8th of November 2019, for the purpose of **Accelerating Actions to Implement Sindh Right of Children to Free & Compulsory Education Act 2013**. There was an overwhelming consensus of over 50 parliamentarians, government

officials, teachers, academics, innovators and civil society at the round table to achieve the objective of the discussion. The action-packed round table was supported by the FOSI Pakistan and backed by article 25 A and the provincial act and rules. The focus of the meeting was on 'governance' and quality particularly highlighting Chapter V of the Sindh's RTE on SMCs and Teachers together with Chapter VII committed to establishing the Education Advisory Council and Secretariat to track implementation of RTE and SDG 4. The meeting set the context by sharing highlights of key indicators on education in Sindh, followed by specific reading of the Act/Rules 2016.

The participants pledged actions to accelerate the implementation of the Sindh Children Free & Compulsory Education Act 2013 and its Rules 2016. Over 20 pledges were made including the decision to write to our Leaders for Education in Sindh. Assistant Director (Primary Schools) Seema Zahid agreed to propagate widely the Sindh RTE Act & Rules. Whilst Dr. Ghazala Rafique from Agha Khan University pledged support for awareness about the articles on Early Childhood Education to parents and teachers. A headteacher from Sukkur vowed to open a second shift for the most vulnerable out of school children. The leader of the Opposition Syed Firdous Shamim Naqvi (PTI,) pledged to support the implementation of RTE through a bi-partisan approach to make a difference to the future of the children of Sindh and Pakistan, admitting that this sector has been given a stepchild treatment bordering on criminality by many key stakeholders, parliamentarians, government, teachers, even parents themselves. He vowed to support amendments to the act as well as mobilizing parliamentarians at the Assembly for an awareness session about the 30 articles of the Act and Rules respectively and their obligation to oversee its implementation. Mr. Farooq Sattar (MQM) agreed to meet the Chief Minister of Sindh regarding implementation of the Act and Rules for right to education in the province. Azcorp's representative Ms. Madiha Rehman pledged awareness through comics, and Adeel Durwesh of 'Parhao Sabaq' suggested an urgency of making education more relevant through enterprise skills for students.

Dr. Kaiser Bengali, economist and expert pleaded that education is highly fragmented as a sector and clearly remains off targets; it cannot be cohesively addressed until it is well coordinated and decentralized to local levels backed by resources and authority for action. He proceeded to give the example of Bangladesh where the Prime Minister set aside one day a week with her cabinet to make critical services for public a possibility; there are no similar trends in Pakistan. Whilst acknowledging the work of ITA, its ASER reports and leadership, he agreed to do everything possible including being a part of protests and hunger strikes for 25 A. Ms. Alia Shahid, Secretary Women Development Department in Sindh promised and pleaded for actions to accelerate quality education for girls, that is the most critical pillar for women's empowerment and gender-based budgeting which is the only tangible way forward to gender justice.









