

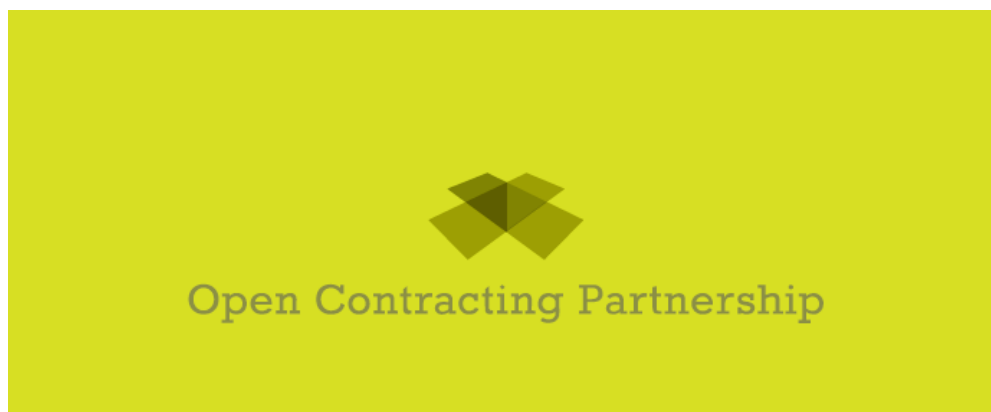
Open Contracting in the Classroom and Beyond

An Infosheet on Introducing Open Contracting in Classroom Teaching

I. What is the project all about?

Every year, governments around the world spend an estimated US \$9.5 trillion through contracts alone, and this is because contracts serve as the foundation of governance and public administration works. Government entities serve as the custodians of public funds, and as such have the duty to make the best use of available or potentially available resources.

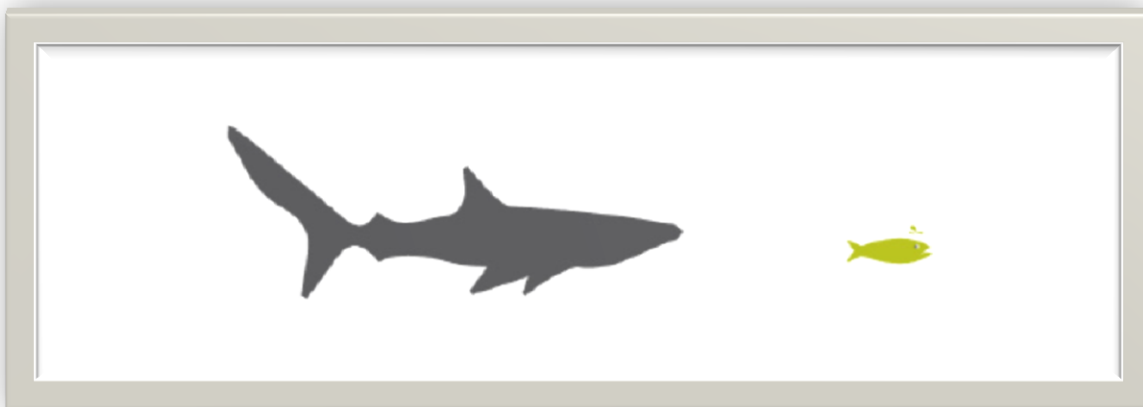
The Open Contracting advocacy aims to promote the efficient, effective and economic use of public funds through collaborative efforts of civic engagement.



II. What is Open Contracting?

Open Contracting (OC) refers to government disclosure and citizen participation in the public contracting process, from the inception stage and planning to the performance and delivery of contractual obligations. It involves constructive engagement between government and citizens in the entire decision-making and implementing process.

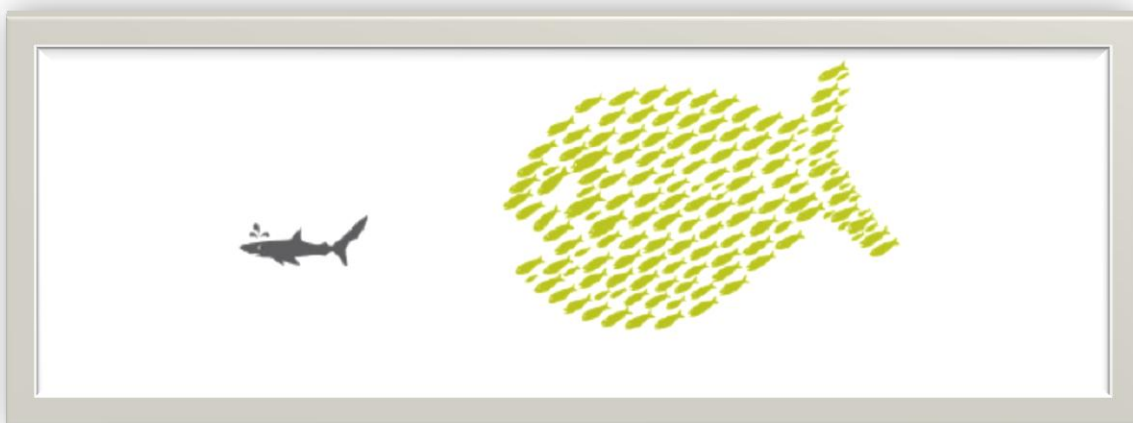
For a more comprehensive discussion on the matter, an open-source book called **Open Contracting: A Guide for Practitioners by Practitioners** was created through a five-day Book Sprint writeshop, with practitioners from all over the world working together to develop its content. Copies are available on request. To learn more about current OC initiatives around the world, visit the website at **pro-act.org**.



III. Why is Open Contracting important?

The role of contracts in governance is manifold. The delivery of goods and services depend highly on contractual obligations. Projects spearheaded by governments, international bodies and civil society organizations would not be operative without standards and parameters set by legally-binding agreements. Effective investments, revenue generation, resource management and budget planning all require lawful indentures.

Open Contracting allows citizens a look into the different government contracting processes, and thus equates to transparency and accountability of public offices. These in turn helps better facilities and infrastructures, more efficient delivery of goods and services, and the furtherance of the protection of the rights and welfare of the population.



IV. Who are behind the project?

The World Bank Institute (WBI) started the OC advocacy and provided seed money for the dissemination of its projects in different countries. The Ateneo School of Government (ASoG) serves as the conduit and coordinator of the grant for the Booksprinters to conduct the dissemination activity. ANSA-EAP is a partner for the OC dissemination project in the Philippines. It selected the classrooms as venues for disseminating OC advocacy.

V. What are the objectives of Open Contracting?

Open Contracting advocates for:

- Increased number of contracts that are publicly disclosed.
- Improved quality of publicly available information on contracting.
- Enhanced accessibility to contracting data.
- Increased and more strategic use of contracting data.
- Increased opportunities and mechanisms for participation throughout all phases of contracting.
- Increased number of citizens participating in contracting processes.
- More timely and effective follow-up actions based on citizen monitoring feedback.
- More and better equipped champions promoting open contracting.

VI. How will the project be implemented?

Selected teachers will be invited to a writeshop to develop lesson plans on OC, which will be integrated in their regular classes. At least two sessions will be devoted for the teaching of OC lesson plans, which will include practical lesson on engaging government through actual experience of accessing and reviewing contracts. The students will be asked to submit reports on their experience and the insights from teaching will be consolidated to study its effect and potential institutionalization.

VII. Why do we want Open Contracting to be taught in classrooms?

Open Contracting is a relatively new idea that needs to be taught, and classrooms provide a good setting for learning it. The classroom is an ideal jumping board for guiding students to apply lessons in public disclosure of contracts through actual experiences of engaging government agencies. Thus, teaching Open Contracting offers venues for students' civic engagement.

VIII. What is the role of teachers in the project?

Teachers, especially in the university setting, are a strong influence on the students' view of their environment. They shape their actions as future practitioners in their chosen field. In teaching OC, the teacher exposes the students to principles of transparent government contracting and guides them in exploring the application of their respective fields in this particular interest.

More than just encouraging their students to be responsible Filipinos, the teachers themselves shall be the model citizens that inspire the youth to actively take part in civic engagement for good governance.

IX. How can students contribute?

Students need not be practitioners in the field yet for them to be able to contribute to the Open Contracting. Specially-designed project and paper requirements, tailored for their different academic backgrounds, shall expose them to the realities of governance.

Through actual visits to government agencies and subsequent fieldwork, they in effect will become citizen monitors of public contracts that promote transparency and accountability in government offices. Furthermore, their fresh insights from firsthand experience in the sociopolitical and legal mechanisms of these contracts might prove useful in solving current problems faced by local communities.

X. In what fields do we test this initiative?

The participants in the pilot module development will consist of teachers coming from various fields: Public Administration, Social Sciences, Information Technology, Journalism and Management and Accounting. These fields were selected because they are closely-related to the theory and application of open contracting. In the future, more fields shall be added as the people become more involved in more varied contracts.