

School closure reversed: India

A. ENABLING CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

When the Rajasthan state government merged schools in Dakhiya, Rajasthan, due to lack of teachers, the community asked the local Citizen Voice and Action (CVA) team to take action. Local CVA committee members were well-aware of the provisions of the Indian laws on Right to Information and Right to Education and they knew what they could do about it. "After the primary school closed, four to five parents would come every day asking the CVA team for help to reopen the school," says CVA committee member Jagdish. Eight-year-old Seema says, "It would take a one hour walk to reach school. We had to wade through deep sewage during the rains. Stray dogs also followed us." Most other students dropped out of school due to the distance and lack of public transport.



Photo: Daniel Mung / World Vision

B. CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT IN ACTION



Photo: Daniel Mung / World Vision

1. The Citizen Voice and Action process required community members to work together to lobby the state government to open the school. After detailed consultation with the community, the CVA team met with the former principal, who felt the same way. "I was extremely sad when I heard they were closing down the primary school. Children already faced difficulty attending this nearby school. Going to the further one for classes was impossible," said Principal Sitaram.

2. Here are some of the people involved in the process: Seema (in the middle) and her classmates are in the front, and behind them from left to right is Jagdish, who is a CVA team member, Pokhar Lal, who is the vice-village chief, Veer Singh, who is the remedial school teacher, and Sitaram who is the principal of Dakhiya Primary School.



Photo: Daniel Mung / World Vision

3. Next, the CVA team wrote to the District Collector and the Member of Legislative Assembly to explain the need to reopen the school. All community members signed the letter. As a result, the education department investigated the situation and discovered that the distance between the community and the merged school was further than the legal requirement. "Dakhiya is one of the two schools we reopened due to the difficulty in access and distance," says Ajit Mehta, Member of Legislative Assembly.



C. IMPROVING STANDARDS AND INFLUENCING POLICY

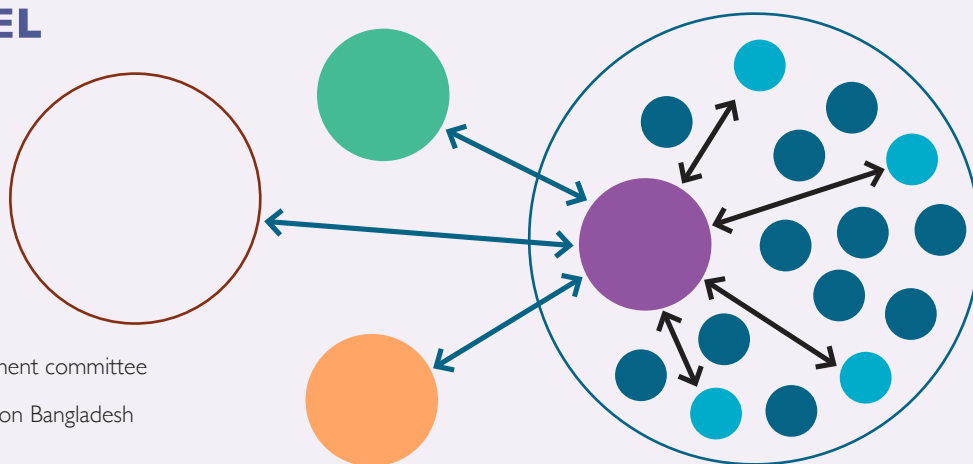


Thanks to the social action taken in her community, the school is reopened so that Seema (centre) and her classmates can continue learning at their local school. The community and CVA team continue to monitor the school. Every month, the School Management Committee meets with the parents to discuss the progress of the children in their learning.

ACTION MODEL

KEY

- CVA team
- parents
- community
- school principal and management committee
- development staff, World Vision Bangladesh
- Rajasthan state government



More about Citizen Voice and Action

CASE STUDY

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Citizen Voice and Action (CVA) was developed in Africa and has spread across the globe. World Vision trains communities to use CVA to find out how well they experience government services like schools, water supplies and health clinics. It helps community members (citizens) to communicate with government and service providers for improved services. CVA empowers citizens to tackle poverty, inequality and poor governance.

A. ENABLING CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

1. Identify a service which is not functioning as well as it should and identify the official standards for monitoring outcomes of the service, found in the service provider's official documentation.
2. Teach community members about the CVA process.
3. Connect with the service managers, inspire them about connecting with users, and ask them to commit to this process.



CVA materials are in the local language and illustrated with cartoons for younger participants and people who can't read.
Photo: Daniel Mung / World Vision

B. CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT IN ACTION

4. Arrange for users to visit the service with the managers to find out how the actual experience compares to the official monitoring standards.
5. Set up user groups for Score Card Workshops, and ask them to:
 - (i) Identify performance measures based upon their opinions of the ideal service;
 - (ii) Score the service according to these measures;
 - (iii) Analyse the scores and come up with an average score;
 - (iv) Propose solutions related to each performance measure.
6. Hold an Interface Meeting where users and service managers interface to discuss, review the proposals, and develop a shared action plan including SMART objectives (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound).

Access a step-by-step guide to the process here:
https://www.wvi.org/sites/default/files/CVA_Field_Guide_0.pdf

C. IMPROVING STANDARDS AND INFLUENCING POLICY

7. Carry out the agreed shared action plan to improve the service.
8. Support the implementation of the action plan and ensure there is ongoing monitoring.
9. Build networks and cooperate with others to connect with higher levels of management or government.
10. Advocate and influence at higher levels of management or government.



CVA meetings are held at places and times that are convenient for community members.
Photo: Daniel Mung / World Vision