

Citizen Voice & Action (CVA)



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40,000
CVA participants
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“
119
community clinics
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40
Union WATSAN committees
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40
Union Agriculture Service Units
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NOBO JATRA NEW BEGINNING

USAID's Development Food Security Activity

INTRODUCTION

'Nobo Jatra-New Beginning' is a five year USAID Food for Peace Title II Development Food Security Activity project that seeks to improve gender equitable food security, nutrition and resilience in southwest Bangladesh. World Vision Bangladesh, together with the World Food Programme and Winrock International and 3 local partner NGOs, undertook the program in September 2015, integrating interventions in MCHN, WASH, agriculture and alternative livelihoods, DRR, good governance and social accountability and gender to achieve its objectives. Nobo Jatra is being jointly implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MoDMR) of the Government of Bangladesh in four upazilas under two districts – Dacope and Koyra upazilas in Khulna and Shyamnagar and Kaliganj upazilas in Satkhira – and it aims to reach 856,116 direct beneficiaries. Figure 1 below illustrates the project's goal and purposes.



NOBO JATRA'S GOAL AND PURPOSES



NOBO JATRA AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS)

Nobo Jatra aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and supports vulnerable communities in the disaster prone southwest coastal region of Bangladesh to effect enduring change by addressing the following SDGs:



Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere

Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower women and girls

Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Helping citizens engage with governments for improved accountability has become a significant interest of scholars and practitioners of international development over the past decade and is increasingly viewed as a critical part of addressing governance. In the 2016-2025 strategy, USAID's Office of Food for Peace has embraced social accountability as an "operational approach" for empowering vulnerable and disadvantaged populations. Under the new strategy, it is considered critical to "strengthening their ability to demand the opportunities that will allow them to improve their own food security, while facilitating greater transparency and responsiveness of the public and private institutions responsible for providing those opportunities".

CITIZEN VOICE AND ACTION (CVA)

World Vision's social accountability approach, Citizen Voice and Action, employs targeted civic education; participatory community services scorecards and social audits of services, where comparisons are made between government standards, such as health staff per head of population or extension workers per head of population, with the reality of service provision. It also supports community led advocacy to government to ensure government policy commitments and service technical standards are followed up by government agencies and key decision makers.

The approach is used in 630 programs in more than 1000 health clinics and schools, affecting hundreds of thousands of people in 48 countries. CVA's efficacy has been tested with a number of research partnerships including Oxford, Columbia, Georgetown and John Hopkins universities. It is a proven collective action and governance approach with community recipients found to be 16% more likely to take action in a randomized control trial. A 2017 study of CVA impact in health published by Columbia University found:

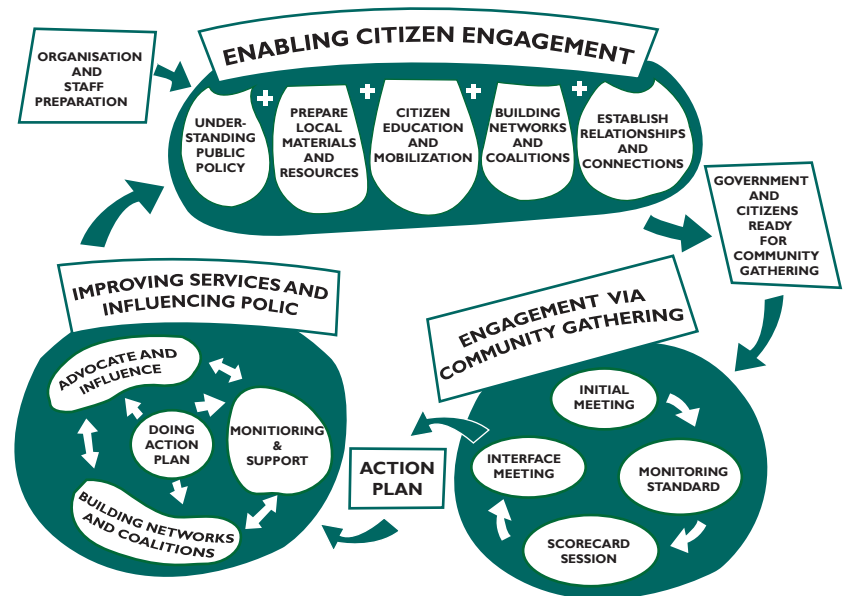
"CVA positively impacted the state, society, state-society relations and development coordination at the local level. Specifically, sustained improvements in some aspects of health system responsiveness, empowered citizens, the improved provision of public goods (health services) and increased consensus on development issues appeared to flow from CVA."



HOW DOES CVA WORK? OVERVIEW

CVA facilitates dialogue between communities and government for improved government performance on services.

Information and civic education is critical for citizens to be able to engage with their governments. CVA works by first informing citizens about their rights to access services and the quality standards government prescribes for those services. Then, community facilitators support their citizens to work collaboratively with government and service providers by jointly assessing the state of services against government's own commitments. Communities also have the opportunity to rate government performance against criteria that they themselves generate. Finally, communities work with other stakeholders to influence decision-makers to improve services, using a simple set of advocacy tools.



WHY CVA IS IMPORTANT TO NOBO JATRA

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes the need for good governance in developing economies and Goal 16 of the SDGs is dedicated to the 'promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, the provision of access to justice for all, and building effective, accountable institutions at all levels'. In Bangladesh, the emphasis on governance is articulated in the Constitution through the commitment of the state to protect the fundamental human rights of freedom, equality and justice, as well as political, economic and social rights for all citizens. To uphold this commitment an expansive administrative system is in place, a critical extension of which is local government. As the level of government most accessible to the people this is positioned as a platform for citizen engagement and designed to enhance transparency, accountability and participation in service delivery. In reality however, weak accountability, inefficient administration and pervasive corruption remain major challenges for the state and culminate in poor governance.

A primary focus of USAID's Development Food Security Activity projects includes efforts to address systemic issues in local governance and strengthen structures of administration and service provision. At Nobo Jatra this is delivered through an integrated and crosscutting range of interventions which build upon the success of World Vision International's CVA approach seeking to promote community level advocacy, increase awareness on rights and entitlements and enhance participation in public policy making. The process of CVA facilitates dialogue between citizens and local government officials allowing them to seek and receive quality public services, strengthen leadership capacity in local communities and create opportunities for long-term networking and collaboration.

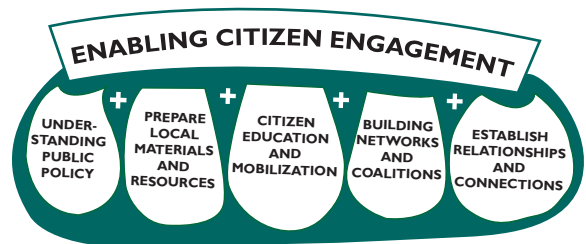


IMPLEMENTING CVA

Following several preparatory activities at the organizational level, CVA is implemented and rolled out in communities through three stages:

I. Enabling Citizen Engagement

Enabling citizen engagement provides the critical first phase as a foundation for CVA. The objective of this phase is to prepare the community to engage productively and positively with service providers and government by (i) understanding public policy, (ii) preparing local materials and resources, (iii) promoting citizen education and mobilization, (iv) building networks and coalitions and (v) establishing relationships and connections.



II. Engagement via Community Gathering

Community gatherings are at the heart of CVA. Community Gatherings refer to a series of meetings involving large and small focus groups. During this phase, communities collect information about the performance of services and make proposals for improvement. It is vital that those responsible for the services participate, especially the service providers themselves. Four types of sessions are held in this phase.



Initial meetings introduce citizens and government representatives to all the processes and expected outcomes of the Community Gathering as well as the CVA process. A social audit approach known as 'Monitoring standards' provide stakeholders, especially service providers and communities, with information on what the national government prescribes as standard inputs and quality for

their public services, as defined through government policy. During this session stakeholders or service providers compare these standard inputs with the actual services discussed during interface meetings.

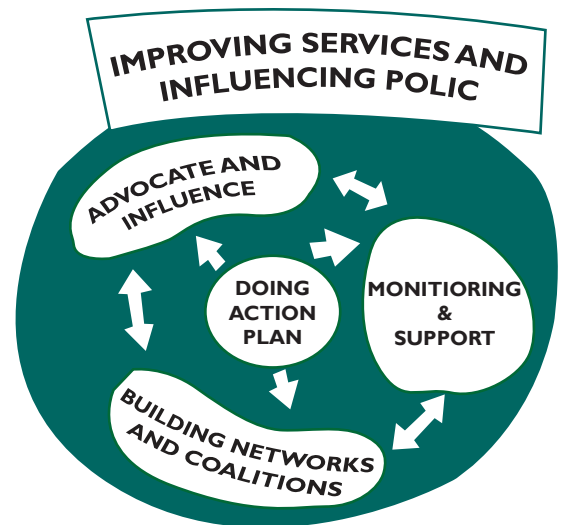
Score card sessions are designed for service users to assess the performance of service delivery and to provide proposals to improve the quality of service. Focus group discussions are the simplest way to do this. Service users can be categorized into focus groups based on gender or age, disability and by specific marginalized groups ie ethnicity or caste. Each group should include 8-12 people with similar characteristics and the score cards resulting from the focus group discussions should be shared during interface meetings.

Interface meetings are the final session of the community gatherings, bringing together participants from the monitoring standards and score cards sessions along with the government representatives, both administrative and political, to present the findings of the previous sessions and to develop an action plan to improve the delivery of public service.

III. Improving Services and Influencing Policy

This phase of CVA focuses on the implementation of the action plan that was developed during the interface meeting. The plan should result in both improved public services and increased influence on policy. Local communities, service providers and government representatives are responsible for the implementation the action plan.

The third phase of CVA describes what is involved in implementing the action plan which is based on (i) building networks and coalitions, (ii) advocacy and influencing and (iii) monitoring and support.



CONTEXTUALIZING CVA IN NOBO JATRA

Nobo Jatra implements CVA in three sectors through specific government service institutions. It seeks to improve the quality of service delivery in MCHN through Community Clinics, WASH through union WATSAN committees and agriculture and livelihoods through agriculture extension services. It contextualizes and facilitates CVA through the following activities:

- **CVA Group Formation**

Nobo Jatra aims to form CVA groups comprised of Village Development Committee members in each union, with each group consisting of nine members who will lead the CVA process in their union. Project staff facilitate the orientation and training of members with special emphasis on monitoring standards, scorecard sessions and interface meetings.

- **Citizen Education and Mobilization or Civic Education**

To support the wide dissemination of information including service standards, simple 1-2 page communication brochures in Bangla have been developed which highlight the key services or standards for Community Clinic, union Agriculture Service Units and union WATSAN Committees. These brochures are shared through all sectorial outreach activities by component leads and staff ensure the widest possible dissemination of information to maximize coverage.

- **Monitoring and support**

Nobo Jatra facilitates the implementation of the action plan and creates a platform for members to review achievements and include new action points based on community needs at 6 month intervals.

- **Advocacy and Influencing**

Improving services and influencing policy usually requires action by service providers and power holders, most often the government. Nobo Jatra supports community or VDC led advocacy activities at the union and sub-district levels. The necessary action points that are beyond the capacity of community members are shared with Union Parishads before their yearly planning and budgeting activities during the sharing of the Community Development Plan (CDP) by VDCs. Some of these action points are shared with upazila or district level representatives during coordination meetings. Additionally, Nobo Jatra leads national level or ministerial level advocacy events using evidence generated by CVA.

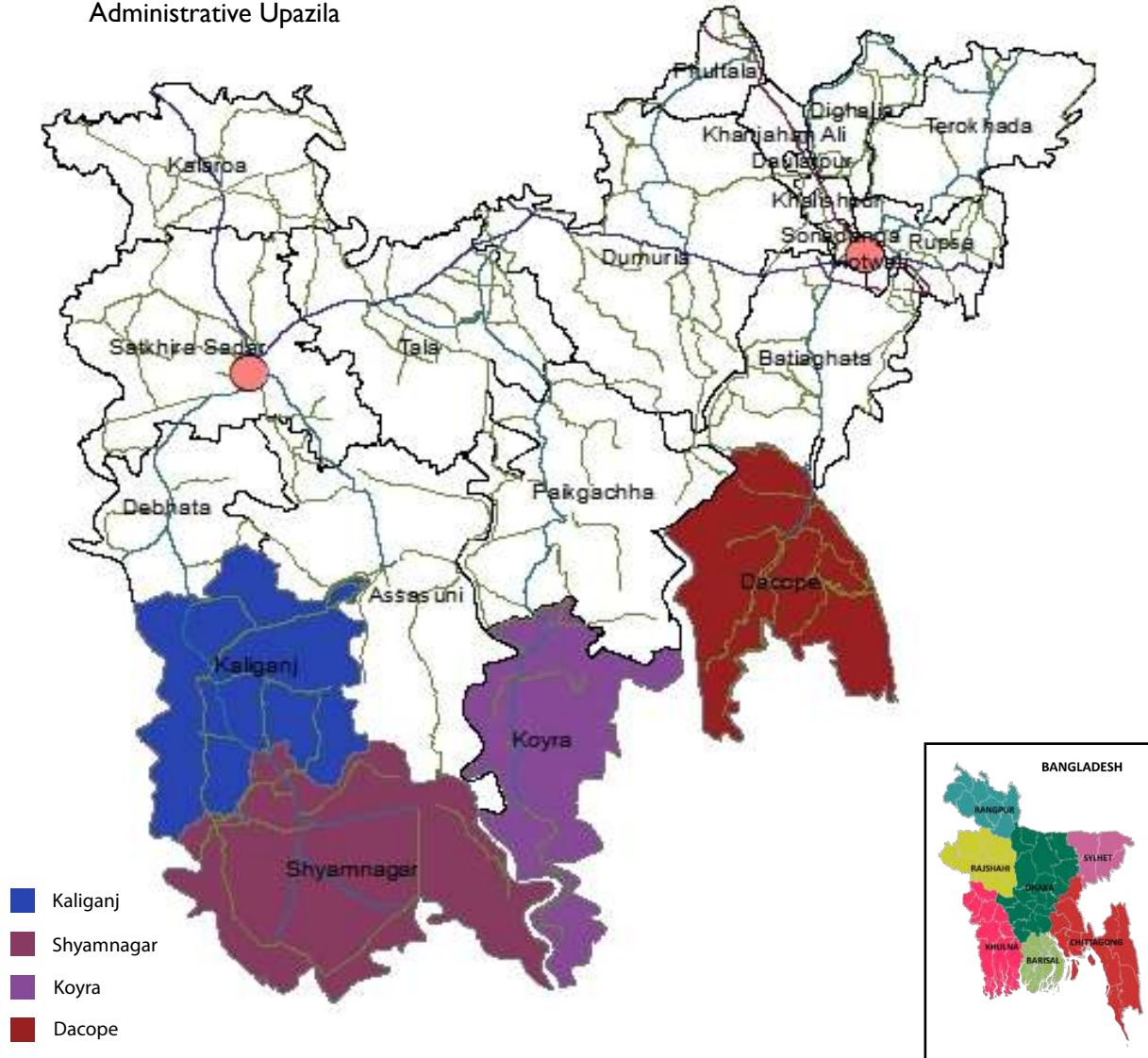
CVA OUTCOMES



NOBO JATRA'S WORKING AREA

Khulna & Shatkhira Districts

Administrative Upazila



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