

Citizen Voice and Action within the Development Programme Approach

▶ What is the Development Programme Approach?

The Development Programme Approach is World Vision’s way of doing long-term, local programming that contributes to the sustained well-being of children. The Approach equips World Vision staff to work in a participatory, empowering way with local stakeholders and communities to improve the well-being of children. Working effectively with partners and supporting local advocacy are at the heart of the Approach and help to strengthen the sustainability of child well-being outcomes. (Further information and resources are available in the *Guidance for Development Programmes* toolkit: www.wvdevelopment.org.)

▶ What is Citizen Voice and Action?

Citizen Voice and Action (CVA) is a local advocacy approach that helps communities engage directly with government service providers to improve the quality of the services they provide at the community level, like health or education. CVA equips communities with simple tools so they can engage in non-confrontational dialogue with their government and agree on ways of improving services. (For further information, see the [CVA Field Guide](#) and the [CVA Project Model](#) that includes the more comprehensive *CVA Guidance Notes*).

CVA is most effective when it is an integral part of the shared projects that address the community’s child well-being priorities.

▶ How does CVA fit into the Development Programme Approach?

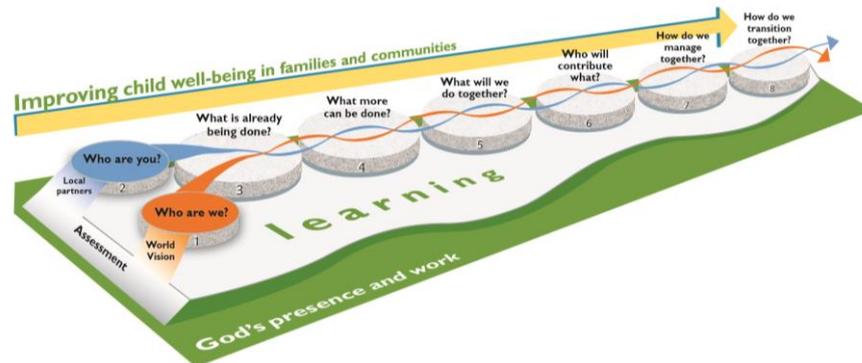
Local advocacy is a central part of development work, and CVA is a proven, effective local advocacy approach. World Vision programme staff can use the CVA tools with communities and partners throughout the Critical Path. CVA is divided into three phases:



- ‘Enabling Citizen Engagement’ is the awareness and education phase that fits into Steps 2-6 of the Critical Path.
- ‘Engagement via the Community Gathering’ is the heart of the CVA process and fits into Step 5 to 7 of the Critical Path, after the community members have identified their vision and priorities for child well-being. During this phase, citizens monitor the performance of an individual school, clinic or other government facility. They meet with the local government to plan actions that will improve performance.
- ‘Improving Services and Influencing Policy’ fits into Step 7 of the Critical Path, and includes all the work communities and government departments do to fulfil the action plan they have created during the previous phase.

▶ CVA in the Critical Path

CVA is most effective when it is an integral part of the shared projects that address the community's child well-being priorities. To achieve this, the community and partners need to have a good understanding of how government policies and services impact different aspects of child well-being. This understanding is built throughout the Critical Path, as described below.



▶ Step 2: Who are you?

One key aim of Step 2 is for staff to develop a good understanding of how the government is contributing to child well-being. CVA activities can be a part of Step 2 in three ways:

- The programme team, together with key community and partner representatives can engage with local and national government departments to find out about the laws, policies, plans and budgets that relate to child well-being. The tool [Understanding Government Structures](#) can be used for this.
- The programme team can work with the local government to summarise the laws and policies into a form that can be shared with and easily understood by the wider community.
- The programme team actively build relationships with government stakeholders, and share World Vision's strategic approaches.

These activities are included in the 'Enabling Citizen Engagement' phase of CVA. See Section 4 of the [CVA Guidance Notes](#) for tools and more information.

▶ Step 3: What is already being done?

During Step 3, the Starter Group deepens its understanding of child well-being and vulnerability. It will be important to consider how government policies and services (or their absence) affect vulnerability. The summaries developed in Step 2 can be used to increase the awareness of the Starter Group.

As the Starter Group members plan their community engagement process, they can use the summaries prepared in Step 2 to stimulate dialogue around child well-being, and to raise the communities understanding of the role of the government.

▶ Step 4: What more can be done?

As the Starter Group considers what more could be done to improve child well-being, the group may need to refer back to the laws and policies they studied in Step 2.

At the end of Step 4, the community members identify their vision and priorities for child well-being. Groups and organisations will then commit to working together to plan and implement shared projects to address their priorities. When the priorities are related to areas of

government service provision, then CVA can be used throughout the planning and implementation in Steps 5, 6 and 7 of the Critical Path.

▶ **Steps 5 and 6: What will we do together?**

CVA can be used in Step 5 when the shared project is related to areas of government service provision, for example health or education. CVA tools such as the *Monitoring Standards* and the *Community Scorecard* (see the annexes of the [CVA Field Guide](#)) can be used as part of the detailed root-cause analysis for the shared project. This may show if the quality of government services is part of the root cause.

CVA activities can then be included as part of the shared project plan, and partners will commit to carry out the activities. CVA is already integrated into a number of key World Vision approved project models and therefore may be part of the National Office Technical Approaches.

▶ **Step 7: How do we manage together?**

CVA activities are implemented as an integral part of the shared projects when the projects relate to areas of government service provision. The CVA tools *Monitoring Standards* and the *Community Scorecard* can be used by the working groups to collect simple information on the quality of government services. This will then lead to action planning with service providers to improve those services. The action plan is a simple chart that shows what action will be taken, who is accountable, what resources will be contributed and who will monitor the action to ensure it is undertaken. The execution of this action plan constitutes the third phase of CVA, called 'Improving Services and Influencing Policy' (see Section 6 of the [CVA Guidance Notes](#)).

The same tools can be used as part of the monitoring system for the shared project, and can be used to track the actions taken and the changes in quality of services provided. This can be included as part of the regular community review and planning meetings.

▶ **Step 8: How do we transition together?**

A key purpose of CVA is to encourage on-going government accountability for service provision. Communities are empowered to engage directly with the government so that they depend less on organisations, like World Vision and other partners, to intervene on their behalf, which helps the community sustain child well-being gains after these organisations exit.