

# Role of Citizens in Health Workers Staffing and Systems Strengthening



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## Introduction

The ENSURE (Enhancing Nutrition Surveillance and Resilience) project was implemented for 3 years in Turkana County in Kenya. Turkana County is an arid and semi-arid area, with persistently high levels of child malnutrition and limited access to quality nutrition services.

The aim of the project was to build resilience of the health systems and increase access to treatment for severely malnourished children.

## The Citizens Voice and Action Approach

World Vision's Citizen Voice and Action (CVA) approach for social accountability was used to equip the community to advocate with decision makers for increased resources and infrastructure to deliver quality nutrition services.

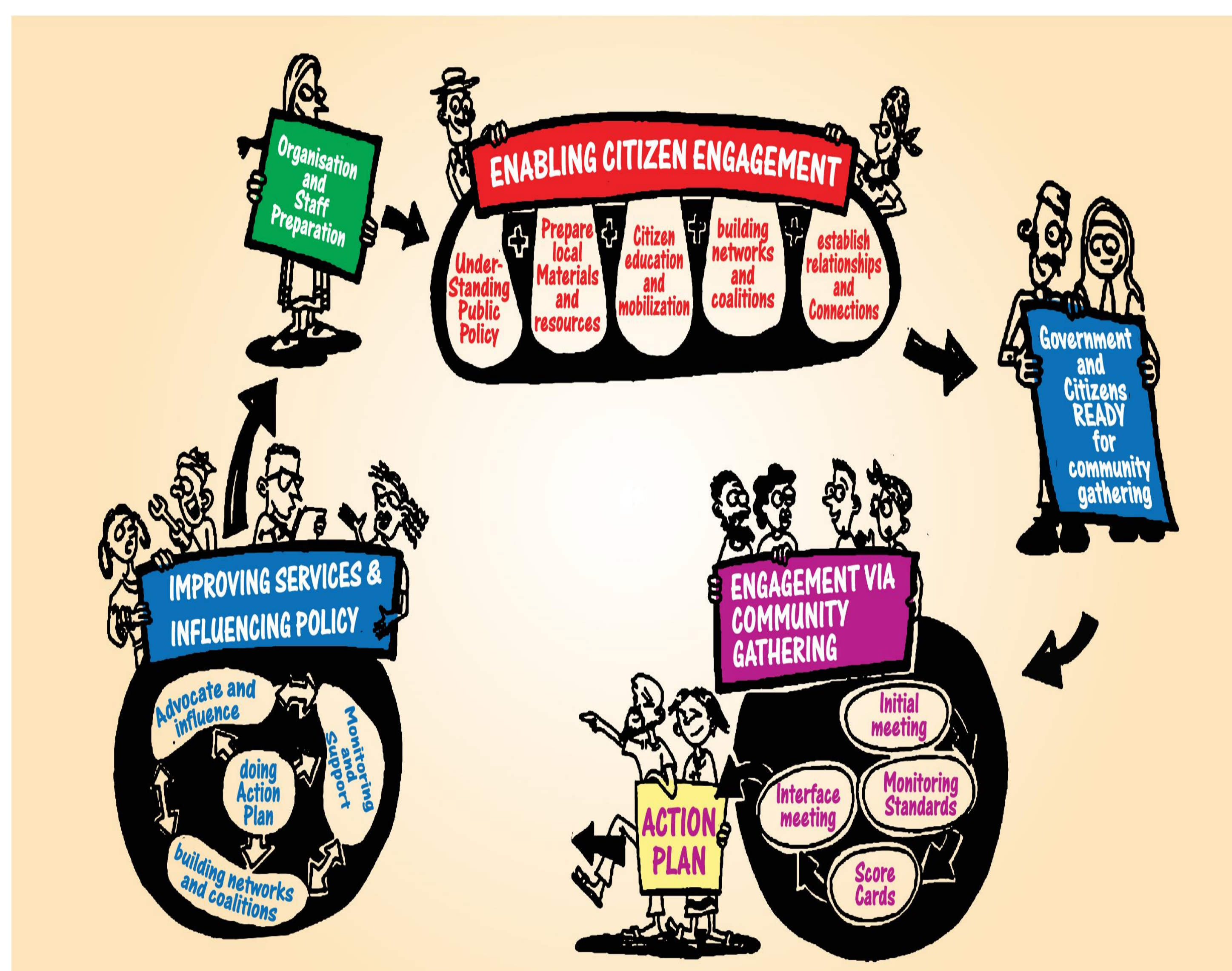


Figure 1 – World Vision's CVA Approach

CVA approach works by:

- Mobilising communities to **learn about basic rights** and how these rights are expressed under local law.
- Communities use a **set of tools** to collaboratively with government and service providers compare reality against government's own commitments.
- Communities work with other strategic stakeholders to **influence decision-makers** to improve services, using a simple set of advocacy tools.

## Main activities carried out during CVA implementation

- Project staff training as trainers of trainers and cascaded trainings.
- CVA groups formed and trained on the approach, tools and relevant government standards; the constitution of Kenya, Health Sector Strategic and Development plans, Norms and Standards for Health Service Delivery and National Patients' Rights Charter.
- Conducted **social audits on health worker staffing**
- **Lobbied for deployment of health workers** in 5 health facilities.
- Budget analysis and lobbying for increased budget allocation for community health strategy.
- Community dialogue and action days to discuss action plans and follow up.

Health Facility	Staffing standard	Staff available	Staffing gaps
Lowdar county hospital	112	82	30
Lokwii health centre	24	1	23
Lopur dispensary	4	1	3
Katilu health centre	24	8	16
Namukuse dispensary	4	0	4
Total	168	92	76
% staffing	100%	55%	45%

Table 1: Turkana County Health Facilities Staffing Analysis

**Post CVA implementation study:** Document review, 9 key informant interviews and 3 Focus group discussions

## Discussion

Following three years of CVA introduction in the county, there were observable changes in accountability practice and culture.

- Communities increased knowledge on health rights, norms and standards.
- CVA groups were empowered with tools to engage in community dialogues with county health managers and political leaders.
- CVA offered a systematic approach for meaningful participation of communities in health governance, participation in public planning and budget processes.



Figure 2 : Turkana Women at a community gathering

## Summary of Results

CVA was an enabling factor for several changes working alongside complementary efforts by the County government and other partners.

- Awareness raised on health and nutrition rights for communities.
- Citizen participation and voice towards health worker staffing- CVA accelerated influence for the recruitment of health workers in the five health facilities. Between 2013 and 2015 the county posted **98 staff** to the **five (5) health facilities** above.
- Construction of new health facilities reduced reduce distance to access services.
- Changes in service delivery practices and behaviour; reduced absenteeism by health workers and reduced waiting time at health facilities.

## Conclusion

Learning from this project, we suggest the following as success factors for involvement of citizens in health systems strengthening;

- Investing time and effort to get community and service provider buy-in and ownership of the approach.
- Use of existing approved government policies and service charters as the basis for training and social audits.
- Putting in place a plan for ongoing capacity building, mentorship and governance support.
- Linking citizen groups to policy implementation and budget decision makers. Target political leaders in addition to health managers.

## Further information & full report visit

<https://www.wvi.org/health/publication/citizens-voice-and-influence-nutrition-service-delivery-turkana-kenya> or contact Rose Ndulu Ndolo, Senior Nutrition Programme Adviser, World Vision UK [rose.ndolo@worldvision.org.uk](mailto:rose.ndolo@worldvision.org.uk)

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