



Community Empowerment Programme



The Community Empowerment Programme (CEP) is empowering vulnerable people, especially women and girls by increasing their human, social and political capital so that they are aware of and exercise their rights, claim their entitlements, resist exploitation and actively perform as community leaders. This is one of the core programmes of BRAC reaching more than one million rural women since its inception in 1998. The programme focuses to establish a community driven mechanism by institution building at grassroots, capacity development of women for their active participation in local power structure, mobilizing them to access safety net resources, addressing violence against women and children, and connecting service providing organizations for women's empowerment.



What we do

- Institution building of rural marginalized women (Polli Shomaj), create awareness about their rights and entitlements, build their leadership capacity to participate in local power structures and to negotiate with local government institutions for responsive and accountable service delivery.
- Building capacity of local government institutions for being more accountable, transparent, participatory and gender responsive.
- Ensure access to information and awareness raising on different socio-economic issues (i.e. child marriage, VAW, health awareness, WASH, disaster, unsafe migration, COVID19 response) through world's largest Popular Theater network and Community Radio.
- Addressing Violence against Women and Children (VAWC) through facilitating both prevention and protection measures. Facilitate violence incident reporting mechanism, support the survivors and provide psychosocial first aid where necessary.
- Build responsive communities and institutions to foster social cohesion towards a peaceful society as of SDG 16.

Empowering Women through Institution Building (Polli Shomaj)

Polli Shomaj is a grassroots women led institution, and works at the cornerstone of CEP. It serves as a forum through which the underserved people specially women in the communities can raise their voice, claim their rights and entitlements.

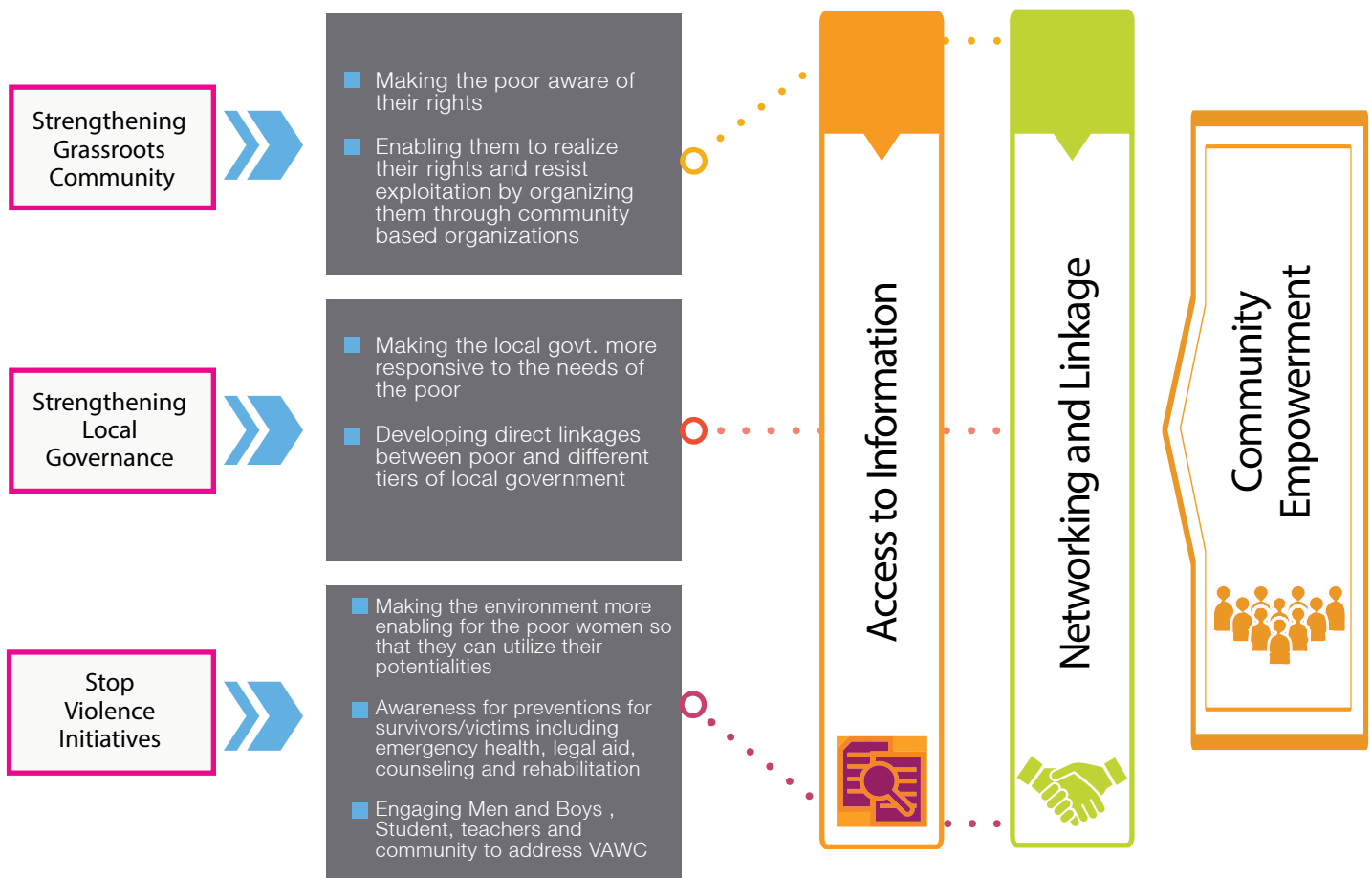


12,487
Polli Shomaj formed
in 53 districts

What It Does

- assist marginalized people to access government and non-governmental services and resources
- actively participate in rural power structures including at local government's development activities as well as social initiatives
- preventing conflict and violence, particularly violence against women and children in the community

Approach



Our strengths

- **Community-led mechanism:** Promoting meaningful community linkages with local institutions to enhance development initiatives. Self-motivated grassroots institution members (Polli Shomaj) addresses VAWC, child marriage and other social injustices, mobilise resources, play leadership role in the community etc.
- **Storytelling at scale:** Nurturing the tradition of storytelling to raise awareness, attracting millions to watch popular theatre shows and listen to community radio.
- **Violence against women and children database:** Collecting primary data of violence against women and children to support survivors and mobilise communities to prevent violence.
- **Peace and social cohesion:** Engaging community in a whole of a society approach to build social cohesion.

- **Psychological first aid:** CEP is engaged to promote mental health awareness in the community and provide necessary psychosocial support for the survivors. In this connection a groups of psychosocial support providers (Monobondhu) create who are capable of giving Psychological First Aid to violence survivors and their family members.
- **Community Radio:** The Community Radio (Radio Pollikoncho 99.2 fm) delivers a wider range of information towards empowerment of the rural communities for upholding the voice of the poor and marginalized. Right to information Act is being used to create communities greater access to information.

Major Programme Highlights since 2016

Women led community based institution building

- 12,350 Polli Shomaj and 663,810 members (women)
- Polli Shomaj have mobilized 74,25,443 local government services (i.e. VGD, VGF, Govt. allowances, IGA training)
- 246,981 Polli shomaj members have participated in local power structure (i.e. Union Parishad standing committee, school/mosque/bazar committee)
- 452,970 Social injustice (i.e. child marriage, dowry, hilla marriage, VAWC) have been prevented and addressed by PS groups

- 8,410 PS members have been recognized as Joyeeta by Government for their remarkable socio-economic contribution

- 12,350 Polli shomaj (ward level institution) consisting of 663,810 women members

Strengthening local governance

- 7,545 elected representatives have been trained
- 12,808 Animators have been trained
- 281,446 ward shova and 189 open budget session facilitated

Addressing violence against women

- 50,117 violence have been reported
- 103,196 survivors received services (i.e. medical, legal, psychosocial)
- 2,757 survivors have been rehabilitated

Promoting peaceful society

- 17,620 community people participated in community cohesion fair
- 3,989 youths engaged in cohesion building

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