Case Study Series 3:

Addressing Citizens' Concerns: Inspiration from Proactive Civil Servants

Case 8 - Bridging the Digital Divide: Empowering Remote Villagers Through Community Engagement

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The case studies for this series are collected from real-life cases of civil servants working in different South Asian countries. This collection initiative is an attempt to document different proactive approaches taken by civil servants and, in the process, encourage other civil servants to become more proactive in their own workplaces. If you know of other such instances of proactive acts, please email us (mashrur.sipg@gmail.com), and we will get back to you to collect more information.

Case 9-Bridging the Digital Divide: Empowering Remote Villagers Through Community Engagement

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The problem of digital barriers depriving poor villagers access to government services

In the digital era, access to online services is not just a convenience but a necessity. The Government of Bangladesh provides several services like Old Age Allowance and Maternity Allowance. However, the digital divide remains a pressing issue, particularly in remote areas. This case study highlights a successful initiative led by an Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO), Mr. X, to bridge this divide and ensure that villagers have access to essential digital services. A secluded village in Mymensingh faced a significant challenge regarding accessing the digital services. Despite having internet access, most inhabitants, equipped only with feature phones, were unable to utilize digital services. This lack of digital access prevented them from applying for critical government programs like the Old Age Allowance, depriving them of essential support.

Empowering through digital literacy and hands-on assistance for villagers

Understanding the gravity of the situation, Mr. X, the UNO, embarked on a mission to ensure that no villager was left behind in the digital age. He collaborated with

Problem

The residents of a remote village lacked access to digital services and could not access government services due to limited internet-enabled device availability.

Solution

The scout members were mobilized to visit homes, assisting villagers in accessing, registering, and applying for digital services using internet-enabled devices.

Outcome

This initiative enabled needy villagers to successfully apply for and receive vital government services and financial support.

and educational institutions with active scout programs to formulate a solution. The innovative approach involved mobilizing scout members to visit each household, identifying those eligible for government services, and assisting them in applying online using internet-enabled devices. The scouts and NGO workers played a crucial role in this initiative. They lent their smartphones to villagers, guiding them through the application process for various services. This hands-on assistance was vital, especially for older people and others lacking digital literacy, ensuring they could easily navigate the digital landscape.

Villagers who had previously been excluded from the digital realm could now access and benefit from government services. The program not only facilitated immediate access to necessary services and allowances but also empowered the villagers with a newly found connectivity to the digital world.

The initiative serves as a beacon for similar communities worldwide, showcasing how bridging the digital divide can significantly enhance the quality of life and give access to services for remote populations. By leveraging community resources and fostering digital literacy, this approach offers a sustainable model for enhancing digital access and ensuring no one is left behind in the digital age.

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