

# Train and support influential volunteers to advocate to their local leaders for the causes they identify as the most important.

## HIGHLIGHTS

### Volunteer-run Health Advocacy Committees (HACs) advocated for:

- Construction of 195 local latrines to protect water quality from feces
- Construction of 30 new hand pumps and repair of 82 hand pumps to provide safe drinking water
- Construction of 15 landfills
- Adoption of several community laws to improve sanitation and reduce home delivery to encourage delivery at a health facility

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In River Gee, HAC members successfully advocated local leaders to repair and fence a hand pump

## Strengthening Advocacy Capacity to Create an Enabling Environment for Uptake of High Impact Behaviors in Liberia

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1. Breakthrough ACTION. Johns Hopkins Center for Communication Programs. Baltimore, MD, USA.
2. Breakthrough ACTION Liberia. Monrovia, Liberia.

### INTRODUCTION

- The USAID-funded Breakthrough ACTION is empowering traditional, religious, and other influential leaders at county and district levels in Liberia to advocate for health related issues affecting their communities.
- Adapting the SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, timebound) Advocacy approach designed by the Advance Family Planning project, Breakthrough ACTION formally established, trained and provided technical support to HACs.

### METHODS

- HACs are made up of 28-35 influential volunteers who advocate for health topics identified in their communities. They develop advocacy plans, identify advocacy issues, and effectively advocate for better funding and policies in their communities.
- Through 2022, Breakthrough ACTION has established 46 Health Advocacy committees and trained 711 HAC members in Liberia (229 F; 482 M) in 12 counties.

### RESULTS

- This approach empowers people from communities to identify the most relevant health issues for their communities instead of having them dictated by others.
- It aims to be more sustainable than donor-dictated activities, as local volunteer advocates can continue to improve their community without relying on donor dollars.
- Community members have successfully advocated with their leaders to build latrines, fix water pumps, repair and maintain an ambulance, construct a landfill, renovate a clinic that was destroyed by a storm, rehabilitated road, constructed maternal waiting homes and reduce delivery fees at a health facility to make it more accessible.

### DISCUSSION

- Issues addressed by HACs are ones that are unlikely to be identified at a national or a global level, but they are deemed the most pressing by the community.
- At the request of the Liberian government for sustainability, HACs are now operated by the government. It will be important to observe if this limits their independence.



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