

Breakthrough ACTION Liberia



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Introduction

Breakthrough ACTION Liberia is the United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) flagship integrated social and behavior change (SBC) project led by Johns Hopkins Center for Communication Programs (CCP). The project aims to: (1) improve the effectiveness of SBC, (2) implement high-quality SBC activities that will result in improved demand and use of health services for malaria; maternal, neonatal, and child health (MNCH); nutrition; family planning/reproductive health (FP/RH); adolescent health (AH); and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH); and (3) support informed communities engaging in behaviors to prevent zoonotic and non-zoonotic infections in line with the Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA), across 12 counties (Montserrado, Grand Cape Mount, Bomi, Grand Bassa, Margibi, Bong, Lofa, Nimba, Grand Gedeh, River Gee, Maryland, Grand Kru Counties) in Liberia.

Support at the National Level - National Malaria Social Behavior Change Strategy (2021-2025)

Breakthrough ACTION Liberia in collaboration with the National Malaria Control Program and other partners supported the Government of Liberia, with funding from PMI, to develop the next generation National Malaria SBC Strategy 2021-2025. The strategy aligns with the new National Malaria Control Strategic Plan of 2021-2025 and focuses on malaria in pregnancy, case management, and integrated vector management.



National Malaria SBC Strategy writing retreat in Margibi

Providing SBC Technical Support for LLIN Distribution Campaign

In support of the long-lasting insecticidal net (LLIN) distribution across Liberia, Breakthrough ACTION Liberia collaborated with the National Malaria Control Program (NMCP) and the National Health Promotio Unit (NHPU) to ensure key messages about the LLINs were disseminated at the household level. The team worked with the county health teams from all 15 counties to plan and facilitate district stakeholder advocacy meetings, radio talk shows, town hall meetings, household engagements, and media engagements with a focus on the correct and consistent use of the new LLNs.



Grand Cape Mount County Health Team (CHT) LLIN Campaign launch.

Providing SBC Technical Support Towards Improving the Quality of Malaria Care

To address service provider behaviors to improve the quality of malaria case management, Breakthrough ACTION Liberia interviewed 46 service providers (28 females and 18 males) on malaria SBC and identified eight priority



Speaking with CHAs about Malaria care seeking in Nimba County.

behaviors as barriers that contributed to the presumptive treatment of malaria cases. The barriers include: lack of provider access to the NMCP malaria guidelines and protocols; treatment for malaria based only on signs and symptoms; inconsistent caregiver demand for treatment due to alternate beliefs about the causes of malaria; caregiver reliance on traditional healers; poor behavior on behalf of providers; stockouts of rapid diagnostics testing materials and microscopic reagents to conduct test; service providers requesting fees from clients for registration and treatment.

Improving Provider Behavior Related to MNCH

Breakthrough ACTION Liberia conducted a two-day virtual training focused on interventions targeting the attitudes and behavior of service providers. The training covered the basics of rapid user testing, built providers capacity to conduct user testing, and familiarized themselves with the proposed solutions in preparation for pretesting the adapted Respectful Maternal Care (RMC) solutions (pain management toolkit, feedback box, provider-client promise reflection workshop) from Zambia. Nine participants from the Ministry of Health (MOH) and Fixed Amount Reimbursement Agreement (FARA) attended the training. Following the training, the project collaborated with MOH, Family Health Program (FHP), Strategic Technical Assistance for Health (STAIP), and FARA and adopted a set of solutions from Zambia that were piloted at the CB Dunbar hospital, the Zeansue and Fenutoli health facilities in Jorqelleh and Suakoko Districts. Lessons learned from the pilot will be used to inform policy direction and scale up the solutions for other counties.



RMC pilot activity in Bong County.

Improving Demand for Facility Deliveries

Breakthrough ACTION Liberia, in collaboration with the Grand Cape Mount CHT, conducted facility based delivery (FBD) assessment at three health facilities (Dambala Health Center, Than Clinic, Kinjor Clinic) and with randomly selected community members in Grand Cape Mount County to understand the behavioral barriers that pregnant women in Liberia face when delivering at the facility.

household water behaviors and sources among households without basic water services in Montserrado county. These studies will inform implementation strategies for future USAID-funded water and sanitation programs in Liberia.



WASH survey team members in Lofa County.

Increasing Knowledge and Promoting Positive Nutrition Behaviors in the Intended Audience

The project disseminated findings of the nutrition desk review highlighting the insignificant reduction in stunting and exclusive breastfeeding between 2013 and 2019, across six Breakthrough ACTION Liberia counties (Grand Cape Mount, Bong Lofa, Nimba, Grand Gedeh, and River Gee Counties) with local authorities, community health workers, and CHT representatives. They solicited recommendations to inform future nutrition programming.

GHSA Strengthening coordination mechanisms within the One Health multi-sectoral Risk Communication and Community Engagement Technical Working Group (RCCETWG)

Breakthrough ACTION Liberia supports the Government of Liberia's multi-sectoral One Health RCCE TWG to strengthen the coordination mechanism. In collaboration with the MOH and the One Health Platform, the Project conducted an assessment which led to identifying existing radio content and print materials on rabies and Lassa fever.

Developing One Health RCCE communication materia

The project also conducted a five-day co-creation workshop in collaboration with the NHPU and developed 13 materials and messages across the priority zoonotic diseases (PZD), bovine tuberculosis (TB), Lassa fever and rabies.



GHSA material development workshop in Grand Bassa County.

The new messages and materials for the three priority zoonotic diseases developed included two print materials for rabies, three print materials for Lassa fever, and one print material on bovine tuberculosis (TB). In addition, two audio messages were developed for this disease area.

WASH

Focusing on rural sanitation and peri-urban water behaviors among households, Breakthrough ACTION Liberia conducted a WASH study in Nimba and Lofa Counties within communities supported by the USAID-funded Partnership for Advancement of Community Service. In addition, the project conducted a peri-urban water study to explore



Participants using one health approach to design GHSA SBC materials in Grand Bassa County.

Strengthening Community Structures to Advocate for Better Health Policies and Funding

Advocacy is an essential strategy influencing and facilitating change in social norms and practices; as such, the Breakthrough ACTION Liberia Project has introduced the Advocacy Core Group (ACG) concept to lead community advocacy for improved health outcomes at the community, district, and county levels. The project conducted a five-day training of the trainer (TOT) workshop on SMART advocacy with the MOH National, County Health Promotion Focal Persons, One Health platform stakeholders, across the project 12 counties. The training strengthened participants' capacities on designing, planning, and facilitating advocacy training for ACGs at the county level and mobilizing and strengthening engagement with stakeholders across key government ministries and agencies with health-related mandates.



SMART Advocacy Training of Trainers - Grand Bassa County.

Applying the SBC Flow Chart to Reimagining a Sustainable Community Health

To strengthen and increase the capacity of community systems to collectively lead SBC interventions for improved health outcomes, Breakthrough ACTION Liberia collaborated with Bong and Bomi CHTs to pilot an integrated approach for quality SBC community-level interventions. The pilot aimed to revitalize existing community health structures which led to the development of community driven intervention thereby increasing the use and demand of health services for improved health outcomes in the project thematic areas in Bong and Bomi counties.



SBC Flow Chart engagement activity in Bong County.

Refresh Healthy Life Umbrella Campaign

Breakthrough ACTION Liberia commenced to broadcast existing sponsored radio messages, using a phased campaign approach under the national Healthy Life umbrella media campaign. The broadcast of the messages started in Monrovia on four selected radio stations and gradually scaled up to nine community-based radio stations in Bong, Nimba, and Lofa. To date, about 20 messages have been broadcast on 30 community-based stations within the 12 counties and five Monrovia national partner radio outlets. Two messages to support the early initiation and exclusive breastfeeding interventions kicked off the campaign. In addition, messages focusing on malaria, MNCH; RH/FP; RH, WASH, and prevention of zoonotic and non-zoonotic infections, such as Lassa fever, rabies, and bovine TB, were introduced.

Support at the County Level

Family Planning, Reproductive Health, and Adolescent Health

To increase the uptake of modern contraceptive use, Breakthrough ACTION Liberia worked with the Family Health Program through eight CHTs (Grand Cape Mount, Bong, Lofa, Nimba, Grand Gedeh, Grand Kru, River Gee, and Maryland), with support from the local leadership, to establish 80 adolescent health clubs in 55 communities in two districts of each of the project counties and provided education about the reproductive health issues and social issues affecting their lives. Additionally, the project printed 4000 posters.

and 2000 brochures focused on preventing teenage pregnancy and access to family planning commodities, which were disseminated to complement awareness messages to increase knowledge on family planning services.



Family planning awareness in Lofa County.

Disseminating One Health RCCE Communication Materials

The project worked with MOH to increase knowledge on preventing and controlling PZDs and printed 8,250 materials on Lassa fever, rabies, and bovine TB. In addition, the Project collaborated with the One Health stakeholders and CHTs across the project's 12 counties. Print materials were disseminated and awareness events were conducted at marketplaces, school buildings, town halls, mosques, churches, health facilities, and butcher houses.



Awareness on the prevention and control of bovine TB in Grand Kru County.

Strengthening Community Structures to Advocate for Better Health Policies and Funding

In order to foster community advocacy for improved health outcomes at the community, district, and county levels, Breakthrough ACTION Liberia collaborated with 11 CHTs in 11 of the project counties, and set up groups comprising religious leaders, traditional leaders, and representatives from youth groups, marketing associations, transport unions, and the media in two districts of each of the 11 counties. The ACGs were trained on the SMART advocacy approach on how to effectively engage relevant stakeholders to increase demand, access, and use of health services to improve health outcomes. The ACGs have identified 109 advocacy issues around MNCH, GHSA, WASH, malaria and nutrition and have resolved 21 advocacy issues.



Bong County ACG SMART advocacy training.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning



Participants in a practice session learning to use ODK for routine monitoring.

Leveraging on the existing county data structure to collect Breakthrough ACTION Liberia Quarterly data on its interventions, Breakthrough ACTION Liberia trained on the use of the Open Data Kit (ODK) tool to monitor data electronically

and to collect SBC performance indicators. Attendees included the following representatives: County M&E officer, Data Manager, Health Promotion Focal Persons, Community Health Focal Persons, Community Health Services Supervisors, and District Data Office.



ODK training with Grand Cape Mount CHT.