BREAKTHROUGH ACTION

Dates of project: February 2021– July 2025
Budget: $7,877,303

Breakthrough ACTION is a global social and behavior change (SBC) project funded by USAID designed to increase the practice of priority health behaviors and enable positive social norms, including gender norms, for improved health and development outcomes. Johns Hopkins Center for Communication Programs (CCP) leads the project in partnership with Save the Children, ThinkPlace, ideas42, Camber Collective, the International Center for Research on Women, and Viamo.

Breakthrough ACTION Guatemala is a four-year SBC project designed to increase the practice of priority behaviors that improve the health and nutrition status of the Guatemalan population. The project supports and coordinates closely with the Ministry of Health, and its departmental and municipal-level representatives as well as with the Food Security and Nutrition Secretariat (SESAN) and its departmental and municipal commissions (CODESAN and COMUSAN).

Breakthrough ACTION also collaborates with a diverse set of partners including, Red de Hombres, Observatorio en Salud Sexual y Reproductiva, Alianza Nacional de Organizaciones de Mujeres Indígenas por la Salud Reproductiva, Red de Jóvenes, local nongovernmental organizations, indigenous associations, religious congregations, and local TV and radio stations, to strengthen their SBC capacities.

GEOGRAPHICAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC COVERAGE

Breakthrough ACTION Guatemala implements activities in the Huehuetenango and Quiché departments. In Huehuetenango, the project works in 90 communities across six municipalities. In Quiché, the project reaches 53 communities across five municipalities. Both departments have exceptionally high levels of stunting, maternal mortality, and poverty; the population is mainly of Mayan

origin and most speak Mayan languages, including Mam, K´iche´, or Ixil, while some also speak Spanish. The project aims to prevent stunting and activities focus on young couples that have a pregnant woman or a child under two years of age (within the one thousand days window of opportunity to prevent stunting).

CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES

Breakthrough ACTION Guatemala applies an integrated approach that packages interventions around maternal, newborn, and child health; nutrition; family planning; water, sanitation, and hygiene; and health-seeking behaviors. The project also focuses on implementing targeted interventions that address gender and power inequities, encapsulating the cross-cutting themes of women's empowerment, male engagement, early marriages, and prevention of gender-based violence. Equally important is improving local governance by building partnerships and strengthening skills among local indigenous leaders to ensure the sustainability of SBC.

APPROACH AND RESULTS

Breakthrough ACTION Guatemala uses a suite of theoretical frameworks and evidence from the field of SBC to increase the adoption of positive and priority health and nutrition behaviors among its intended audiences. The project strategy proposes four levels of action: Home as the "heart of change", involvement of community leadership, empowerment of Community Facilitators and media and social networks. The project strategy harmonizes these four levels by creating a **Support, Learning, and Action Network** that brings the community together around the well-being of young mothers and babies.

Breakthrough ACTION Guatemala contributes to the following Results:

- Improved indigenous citizens and leaders' capacity and motivation to adopt priority and health-seeking behaviors at the individual and household levels
- Reduced social and structural barriers for the adoption of priority health behaviors at the indigenous community level
- Increased capacity of USAID implementing partners and government health promotion institutions to design and execute context-specific and culturally relevant SBC interventions.

CONTACT INFORMATION
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