

2026 QUARTER-1 **NEWSLETTER**

VOLUME # 004

Advancing Women's Rights,
Accountability, Youth, and Climate
Justice

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Building Stronger Youth Network



TOGETHER WITH COMMUNITIES AND PARTNERS,
ACTIONAID LIBERIA IS ADVANCING A FUTURE WHERE
WOMEN AND GIRLS ARE EMPOWERED TO SHAPE THEIR OWN
LIVES AND SOCIETIES.



ActionAid Liberia and partner launch 1st Traditional Art School in Gbarpolu County

As part of initiative aimed at Promoting positive traditional practices, ActionAid Liberia and DOMAFEIGN in February launched the first Traditional Arts School in Gbarma District, Gbarpolu County. The initiative provides women and girls with alternative cultural education while equipping beneficiaries with practical vocational and income-generating skills to support their economic empowerment and livelihoods, offering a sustainable alternative to Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) practices.

The establishment of the Art School at its 1st phase is training 40 women and girls with various economic skills such as country cloths waving, tailoring, and are also taught strong moral values that advance stronger communities and advance all for better coexistence and upholding community & society norms.

Also, as a sign of community acceptance and their support to the transition process, to a newer sustainable way of life, Parker Town local authority has donated 25 acres of land for cotton cultivation for the waving of Liberian country cloths. During the launch, ActionAid Liberia, DOMAFEIGN and the local leaders broke ground for the cotton farm.

Today, as a result of the halting of FGM and the art school establishment

- 5,000+ women and girls no longer stand the risks of going through FGM
- 200 + additional women and girls to acquire skills country cloths waving, tailoring, and other economic livelihood skills



[Watch the full Video](#)

One of the most powerful aspects of this transformation is the role played by former practitioners themselves.

Jartu B. Johnson, once a practitioner, now leads community mobilization efforts encouraging women and girls to join the Art School instead of traditional bush school. Speaking at the launching program, Johnson in a very firm tone called for county-level support to the Art school. She acknowledged the role of ActionAid in empowering the women of Gbarpolu.

“I am not begging you, I am demanding your to advocate for this center to get support so we can train the girls and girls and women of Gbarma since we have laid down arms (abandoned FGM Practices.” Jartu told Senator Botoe Kanneh and Gbarpolu County district 3 representative Hon. Mustapha Wority.



STRENGTHENING WOMEN'S ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE

Through the Just and Equal Communities (JEC) Project, ActionAid Liberia continues to strengthen women's financial resilience through community-based savings and livelihood initiatives across five counties: Montserrado, Bong, Gbarpolu, Margibi, and Grand Gedeh.

The stories captured in this documentary reflect the resilience of these women and their new journeys. They show how the women are in turn, organizing and empowering others within their communities through Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA).

As a result, many are now earning thousands of Liberian dollars for themselves and gaining economic stability. This includes women who have transitioned away from the practice of FGM, survivors, and those from underprivileged backgrounds.

This documentary presents a short, but powerful story of change, highlighting the journeys of women and girls under the JEC Project, as they collectively look forward to seeing their government outlaw FGM.



Follow this link to watch the full Documentary:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sshpj9wyJss>

“ Since this JEC project came to my community, and when the president said we should leave all those harmful traditional practices (FGM), and I left it, my life is no longer like before. “Now, my life change because I can get my own money, and my children are in school. I am not even thinking about it (FGM) now. Massa Swaray, a former FGM Practitioner in Kpo River, Kamara Town.”



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- 670 Women have gained sustainable income
- \$13 Million Liberian Dollars generated in cash from the VSLA in just 1 year
- In addition, 450 former FGM practitioners and survivors are transitioning into alternative livelihoods, strengthening both economic security and social transformation.



EMPOWERING GIRLS TO LEAD AND DRIVE CHANGE, 220 ADOLESCENT TRAINED

ActionAid Liberia, in partnership with LIWEN, NATPAH, DOMAFEIGN, and WOCDAL, in February conducted a refresher training on Girls' Rights, Life Skills, and Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE).

The training benefited 220 adolescent girls and young women from Montserrado, Bong, Gbarpolu, Margibi, and Grand Gedeh counties.

The training brought together girls from Montserrado, Bong, Gbarpolu, Margibi and Grand Gedeh to strengthen their knowledge, leadership, and confidence to stand up for their Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) and advocate for safer, more just communities.

Across many communities, girls and young women continue to face barriers that threaten their health, safety, and full participation in society. The refresher training equipped participants with Comprehensive knowledge on their rights including bodily autonomy, protection from violence, and access to SRHR information and services.

This initiative contributes to strengthening grassroots leadership and civic participation among young women.

Key Achievements

- 220 adolescents gained skills in leadership, Comprehensive Sexuality Education (and advocacy to lead community advocacy
- They are now awareness of the SRHR issues across their communities and are now engaging their local authorities
- Participants are now educating other girls and women across communities
- Beneficiaries are now leading advocacy for reproductive health services, maternal waiting homes, and safe spaces for GBV survivors.



Other critical life skills passed on to the young women included decision-making, and negotiation skills, and educating them about bodily autonomy; where girls clearly understood the importance of their bodies, and how they can make informed choices, and challenge harmful norms in their communities.

At the end of the training participants returned to their communities becoming the voice of other youth who feel less empowered to do so. **Read More....**

<https://liberia.actionaid.org/stories/2026/220-adolescent-girls-trained-srhr-0>



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2026 CELEBRATION

ActionAid Liberia played a key role in Liberia's national celebration of International Women's Day, mobilizing women and girls across program counties to continue sustaining advocacy for gender equality and justice. The IWD celebration strengthened collaboration between government institutions, civil society organizations, and grassroots movements working to advance women's rights.



- AAL mobilized participated in the national IWD celebration. 138 women and young women were mobilized to the join the outdoor and in-door activities. At the County level, AAL and partners hosted events in observant of the IWD and sharpened rural residents' understanding about the rights of women and of women.
- Decentralizing the IWD celebration, AAL expanded awareness under the Liberia's Women Empowerment Project to Grand Gedeh in Gbao-Jarwodee where 52 participants learned about the critical role of communities in preventing violence and protecting women.



Citizens & Women's Movement call for stronger Protection system for GBV Survivors

As part of this year's IWD celebration ActionAid Liberia participated in a mass action hosted by National Campaigners' calling for access to justice for GBV survivors.

More than a thousand rights campaigners, women, He4She, young feminists, and advocates gathered on the ground of the Liberia National Headquarters, in Monrovia to petition the Government calling for an end to GBV and a holistic GBV services to address the growing wave of violence against women.



"No amount of hit is a small hit, leave to live." Markonee Knightley, AAL Women's Rights Manager educated women about the early warning signs of GBV during a National anti-GBV Solidarity Campaign



"Empowering women to claim their rights first begins with education." Markonee told Liberians at the campaign.

Advocates also presented a petition to the Police Inspector General, outlining key demands for strengthened services and improved support systems for victims and survivors as well as strengthening One-Stop-Centers across Liberia.

READ MORE..

<https://liberia.actionaid.org/news/2026/decentralizing-iwd-actionaid-liberia-uniting-rural-and-urban-women-advance-rights-and>



Speaking in solidarity for survivors and victims of gender-based violence (GBV), AAL's Women's Rights Manager, Markonee Knightley, along with other advocates, engaged the public in awareness sessions about the danger, and prevent of physical, emotional and economic abuse, but also highlighting early warning signs for early protection.

Women and girls were educated about practical strategies to protect themselves against violence whether by external individual or from a spouse or abusive relationships that may result to harm and insecurity of the their well-being.



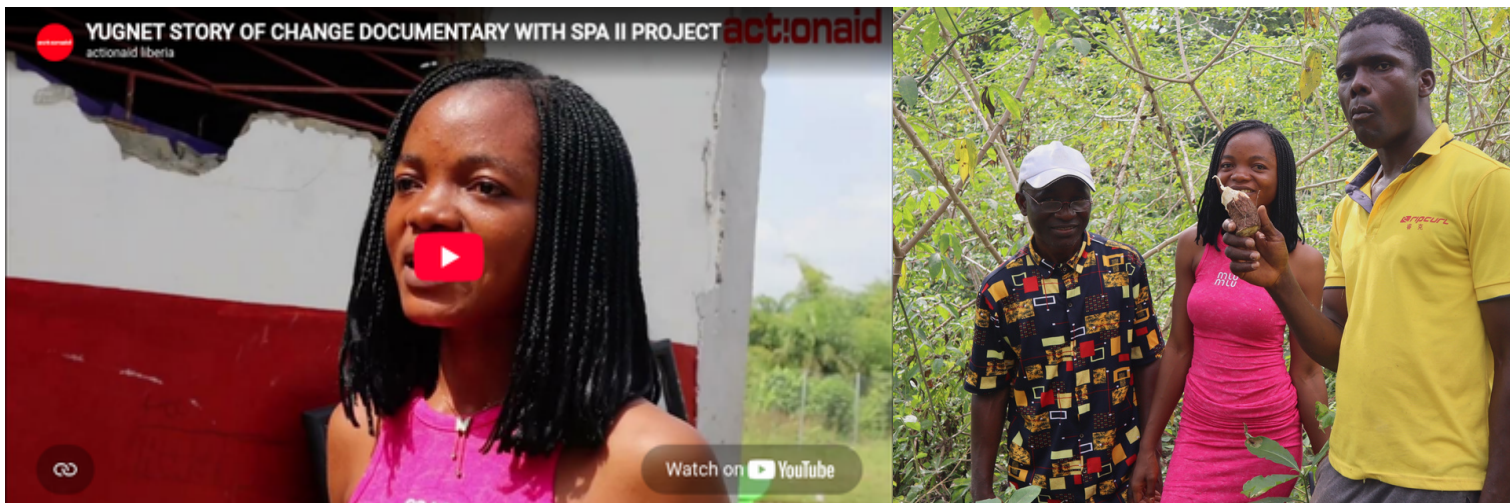
From Waste to Change: How Youth in Gbarpolu Are Rewriting Their Environmental Story

A youth-driven environmental initiative has made visible impact in communities across Gbarpolu, as members of the Youth Go Green Network (YUGNET)-Liberia credit the Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA-II) Project, reshaping attitudes and practices around climate change and environmental protection.

According to YUGNET Gbarpolu chapter coordinator, Henry David, awareness about climate change was virtually nonexistent in their community prior to the project's introduction. Today, that reality has shifted significantly.

Through targeted training sessions, approximately 30 young people, participants and have become educators and advocates, spreading knowledge about the dangers of deforestation, improper waste disposal, and harmful environmental practices such as open burning.

"We didn't understand how our daily actions affected the environment, now we are teaching others and taking action to protect our community." Henry David, YUGNET Gbarpolu coordinator testified saying. [Watch YUGNET change Story.](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qsYzTGD9tz4) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qsYzTGD9tz4>



Major Achievements of YUGNET-Gbarpolu under the SPA-II Project

- Five school campuses have been transformed into clean and organized environments
 - Waste management systems have been introduced
 - YUGNET's School gardens initiative is supporting student nutrition and food security
 - A one-acre cassava farm sustains youth environmental initiatives
 - Today, 30 trained youth leaders are promoting climate awareness across Gbarpolu. [READ More:](#)
- 
- Some YUGNET members now maintain backyard gardens, reducing spending on vegetables.

Looking Forward: with the availability farming tools, they say they can cultivate more crops and become much more self-sustainable.

Peer Education Training-Strengthening Youth Network



During this year's World Day of Social Justice, ActionAid Liberia reaffirms commitment to building a fair and inclusive Liberia for all.

Through the Just and Equal Communities (JEC) Project, we are strengthening the capacity of Community-Based Organizations, youth-led movements, and local partners to speak out boldly for rights, equity, and justice.

The peer mentoring training brought together 50 rights holders in rural Montserrado and Grand Gedeh, for a transformative training focused on amplifying community voices and challenging the inequalities that continue to hold people back. When communities are empowered, justice becomes possible.

AAL recognize our partners : LIWEN, NATPAH, and SIDA through the Embassy of Sweden in Monrovia for their contributions to advancing women and youth movements who are standing up for the rights of others.





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