

GRADUATION OVERVIEW

What is Graduation?

Focusing on assistance that includes improving health, teaching financial skills, and providing vocational support, BRAC invented the Graduation approach in 2002 to address hopelessness and help the world's poorest escape extreme poverty. BRAC's Graduation model offers a transition to greater self-sufficiency, autonomy and dignity.

The four pillars of Graduation

While adapted to meet local challenges and opportunities, all BRAC Graduation programs globally have at their foundation the following core pillars:

Meeting basic needs: Provides preventive, protective, and promotive mechanisms to support basic income security such as consumption support, crisis relief, and access to health, and education.

Income generation: An asset transfer, cash transfer, or loan, with which to procure a market-viable asset along with technical skills training to manage the asset or access employment opportunities.

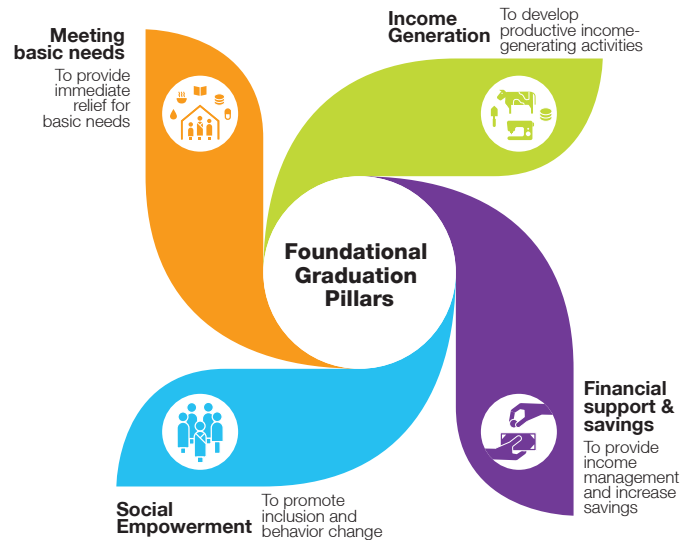
Financial support and savings: Direct access to convenient, formal or informal financial services, accompanied with financial literacy training.

Social empowerment: Regular check-ins and life-skills support that build confidence and resilience, and promote social inclusion and positive behavioral change relevant to self-sustainability, security, and well-being.

Working together, these interdependent interventions lead to strong outcomes at the household level including increased or improved assets, food security, savings, financial inclusion, health outcomes, social integration, and productive skills.

Impact and Evidence

The Graduation approach was pioneered by BRAC's Ultra-Poor Graduation (UPG) programme (formally known as the Targeting the Ultra-Poor (TUP) program) in Bangladesh, which began in 2002. Today, our approach, carried forward by BRAC's Ultra-Poor



Graduation Initiative (UPGI), has graduated more than 2 million households out of extreme poverty, with more than 95 percent of participants continuing to improve financially five years after the program ends.

The Graduation approach has gained worldwide recognition for its holistic treatment of poverty and has been replicated and adapted by stakeholders across the globe. The approach has been rigorously tested and researched by third-party validators, including the London School of Economics, Innovations for Poverty Action and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and it has been proven effective across contexts and in the long term. There are now 114 Graduation programs in 45 countries implemented by NGOs, governments and multilateral institutions.



Impacts on Graduation households typically include: increased assets (38-70%); increased incomes (30-40%); diversified sources of income; increased consumption (5-10%); savings (150%+); increased food security; increased access to healthcare and good hygiene practices; and increases in a range of social indicators, including school attendance for children, attendance of social events and confidence. Additionally, “graduated” households will be embedded in government social safety net systems, linked to public services such as schools and hospitals, and economically active within their markets.

Adaptation

The design of complementary interventions for Graduation should include the following key steps outlined below:

1. **Analysis of the specific needs and barriers** that participants (according to poverty level, gender etc.) face in each context, and the opportunities to create synergies towards productive inclusion.
2. **Consistent targeting** between the interventions informed by the core Graduation pillars so that the poorest and other vulnerable groups are not excluded.
3. **In-depth market analysis and market linkages** to identify suitable livelihood options for participants and provide direct access to producers.
4. **Determining the capacity of front-line staff to deliver intensive mentorship and support to participants.** This deepens program impacts by improving participant’s psychosocial resilience and confidence to continue on an upward trajectory.
5. **Embedding Graduation programs within a comprehensive national policy framework and other systems-based approaches** that aim for pro-poor growth.

BRAC’s international Graduation programs

BRAC is implementing Graduation programs worldwide as part of its broader goal to end poverty. The approach can significantly contribute to the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goal 1: end poverty in all its forms. BRAC’s Ultra-Poor Graduation Initiative provides technical assistance, advisory services and advocacy on the Graduation Approach to governments, NGOs, and multilateral institutions on how to implement quality Graduation programs worldwide. The Initiative supports implementers to reach the poorest and most marginalized communities across the globe.

