

# The Graduation Approach in Egypt

## Bab Amal Graduation Program

In July 2018, BRAC’s Ultra-Poor Graduation Initiative (UPGI) launched its engagement with the Sawiris Foundation for Social Development (SFSD), Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL), Egyptian Human Development Association (EHDA), and Giving Without Limits Association (GWLA) to achieve their objective of reducing extreme poverty in Upper Egypt. This coalition hopes to demonstrate the impact of Graduation and inform the national poverty reduction strategy. The pilot is targeting approximately 2,400 rural, extreme poor households in the Assiut and Sohag governorates of Upper Egypt.

## Program Design

Like all Graduation programs that BRAC partners to implement and support, the design of Bab Amal adapts to meet the challenges of its participants. In the regions of Assiut and Sohag, this means focusing on the household level, where the main barriers to success include a lack of food, nutritional security, skills and livelihood options; poor health-seeking behavior, hygiene and sanitation practices; limited access to government support and financial services; low literacy levels and female participation in the workforce; and a lack of self-esteem and vision for the future. Each Graduation intervention plays a complementary role that enables households to achieve sustainable solutions to the challenges that they face.



©Sawiris Foundation 2018

**Context**

Recent estimates show that 28% of the population in Egypt lives below the national poverty line (World Bank). The targeted areas of Assiut and Sohag are the two poorest governorates in the country: Assiut has approximately 4.3 million inhabitants, with 66% living in poverty, while Sohag has approximately 4.6 million inhabitants, 65% of whom are poor (UNFPA, UNRCO and Basera). Livelihoods in the governorates are largely agricultural and include the cultivation of cotton, wheat, maize, and sugarcane. Handicrafts, textiles, and construction are common livelihoods as well. The extreme poor in Egypt face significant challenges due to rising food prices, currency devaluation, and a lack of sustainable employment opportunities.

## Key Interventions

**Social Protection:** These interventions correspond with the barriers to food security, nutrition, health, water and sanitation, and child school enrollment. Participants who are not enrolled in the *Takaful and Karama (T&K)* cash transfer program will receive a consumption stipend; in addition, all participants will receive life skills training on nutritional diversity, health and WASH practices and child education/labor, linkages to local health services and schools, and access to a health fund.



©Sawiris Foundation 2018

**Livelihoods Promotion:** The provision of sustainable livelihoods that promote income generation and improve economic welfare of vulnerable households is at the core of the Graduation approach. A one-time asset transfer aims to provide greater livelihood options in the areas of livestock-rearing, poultry farming, sewing, clothing sales, and petty trade. Technical and business skills trainings accompany the transfer to generate the necessary knowledge to manage the livelihood and build long-term gains.

**Financial Inclusion:** Interventions seek to create saving mechanisms, increase financial literacy and build borrowing capacity among all households. This is done through the creation of bi-weekly savings groups that include the distribution of micro-loans, as well as financial training.

**Social Empowerment:** Interventions include life skills training, household coaching, and the creation of Village Solidarity Committees (VSCs). VSCs promote social inclusion and messaging on topics such as gender equality. Bi-weekly household visits by a dedicated mentor allow for closer monitoring of livelihoods, one on one coaching, and personal engagement.

### Monitoring

A robust monitoring framework will track progress towards desired outcomes and ensure that the program is able to identify and adapt to contextual changes and operational challenges in a timely manner. In the Bab Amal program, monitoring will occur at the household and program levels.

### Graduation Pathways

To ensure that households are able to maintain their progress after the Bab Amal program ends, they must

COMPONENT	GRADUATION INTERVENTION
Targeting	Community targeting followed by verification survey based on the national poverty scorecard
Consumption	400 EGP per month for 6 months (applies to those not enrolled in the T&K cash transfer)
Asset Transfer	One-time asset transfer
Coaching & Life Skills Training	Regular home and group visits by mentors who discuss social and health issues including maternal and child health, WASH, gender empowerment, etc.
Savings Support	Savings groups
Health Support	Linkages to local health services & a health fund
Social Integration	Linkages to government services & Village Solidarity Committees

have access to safety nets and community support when faced with economic or health shocks. Linkages to government services will be a priority throughout the implementation cycle. In addition, the program will aim to formalize savings groups to ensure that households have greater access to formal financial services.

BRAC's Ultra-Poor Graduation Initiative provides technical assistance, advisory services and strategic recommendations to governments, NGOs, and multilateral institutions implementing the Graduation approach. The Initiative is currently providing technical assistance to governments in Kenya, Philippines, Rwanda, and others. BRAC has expertise in direct implementation of the Graduation approach in Bangladesh, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Uganda, South Sudan, and Liberia.



©Sawiris Foundation 2018