

# Ultra-Poor Graduation in Kenya

## PROFIT Financial Graduation Program

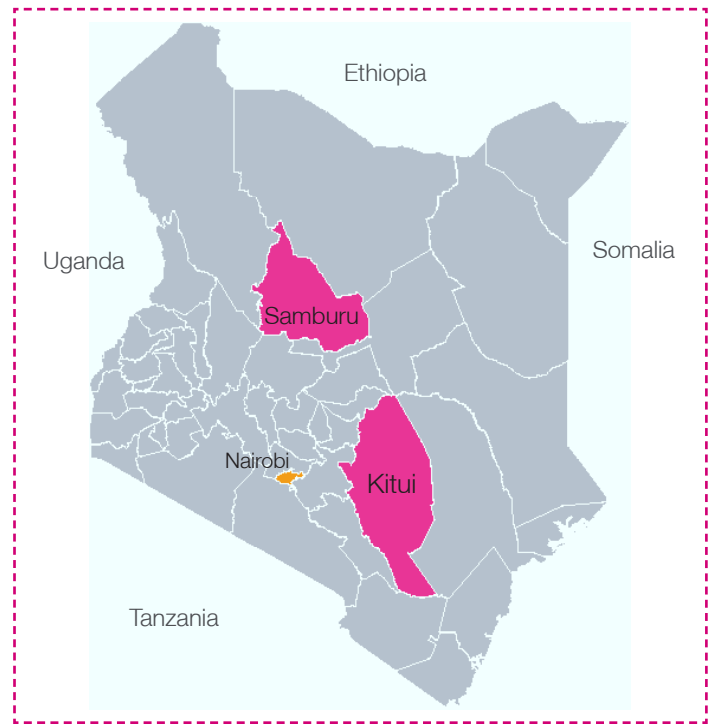
In October 2016, the Government of the Republic of Kenya (GoK) with funding from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) launched two Graduation pilots in rural Kenya to enable ultra-poor women and youth to build resilience and sustainable livelihoods. The pilots were part of the Programme for Rural Outreach of Financial Innovations and Technologies (PROFIT), an initiative that promoted economic development among the poor in the arid and semi-arid lands (ASALs) of Kenya. With technical assistance from BRAC UPGI, The BOMA Project and CARE International Kenya implemented the Graduation pilots in Samburu and Kitui counties. The pilots targeted 2,600 vulnerable women and youth with the aim to strengthen household resilience through greater food security, resistance to income erosion related to climate change, ability to manage health shocks, and improve access to financial services.

### Participant Progress (Aug 2017 - March 2019)

**Income:** The asset transfer combined with technical training and regular mentorship resulted in a significant increase in the value of businesses across both locations. This enabled participants to cover their expenses related to consumption, education, and ownership of assets. The value of transferred assets increased by 61 percent in Samburu and by 75 percent in Kitui.

**Savings:** At baseline, only 30 percent of respondents in Samburu and 17 percent in Kitui had savings. By the end of the program all program participants had savings, with an average increase of \$151 USD accumulated per participant. Although savings group formed as part of the pilot were the most common platform to save, participants also accessed a variety of other mechanisms such as ROSCA, M-pesa, banks, and microfinance institutions.

**Health & Hygiene:** After the completion of the program, all participants were enrolled in the National Hospital Insurance Fund (NHIF). The life skills training by mentors was instrumental in raising awareness on social and health issues including maternal and child



health, family planning, sanitation, HIV/AIDS, and others.

**Empowerment:** There was a significant increase in women’s empowerment measured by household decision-making, leadership in the community, and local committee membership. Women are now able to participate in domains which they had no prior access to such as hiring labor and livestock and business management. In addition, women reported greater

PROFIT Financial Graduation Program	
Pilot Duration	2016-2019
Pilot Location	Kitui & Samburu counties in the ASAL regions
Target Population	2,600 vulnerable women & youth
Funding Partner	IFAD Government of Kenya
Implementing Organization	CARE International Kenya The BOMA Project
Technical Advisor	BRAC
Evaluation Partner	Expanding Opportunities

respect from their spouses and improved decision-making within the home as a result of their contribution to family income.

## Lessons Learned

Below are some lessons drawn from the PROFIT pilots that provide valuable insights into effective implementation of the Graduation approach and can inform national social protection programs.



- Gender sensitization training with male family members is critical in increasing agency of female participants.
- Reinforcement of staff training is essential for high-quality implementation since mentors are expected to develop in-depth knowledge of a wide range of topics.
- Regular monitoring and the ability to capture timely data is important in ensuring a rapid response to challenges in implementation.
- Establish linkages to mainstream services and institutions throughout the implementation to ensure that participants have support post-Graduation.
- Through targeting and building linkages, the Graduation approach provides an opportunity to connect ultra-poor populations, who often lack national identity cards and proper documentation, with mainstream services.
- Community sensitization is important to secure buy-in and ensure sustainability of program outcomes.
- Cash transfers can be less difficult than in-kind transfers that are subject to procurement delays, but they require more monitoring.

COMPONENT	GRADUATION INTERVENTION
Targeting	Participatory Rural Appraisal
Consumption	\$15 USD per month for 6 months
Asset Transfer	Conditional Cash transfer or asset package valued at \$350 USD
Mentorship & Life Skills Training	Regular home visits by mentors who discuss social and health issues including maternal and child health, WASH, HIV/AIDS, gender empowerment, etc.
Savings Support	\$4-5 USD/month through savings groups
Health Support	Subsidized enrollment in the National Hospital Insurance Fund
Social Integration	Linkages to government services

BRAC's Ultra-Poor Graduation Initiative provides technical assistance, advisory services and strategic recommendations to the Government of Kenya, IFAD, BOMA, and CARE International to support the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the Graduation pilots. BRAC has expertise in advising Graduation programs in diverse contexts and direct implementation of the approach in Uganda, South Sudan, Liberia, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan, and Pakistan