

Youth Graduation in Uganda

From 2016-2019, BRAC Uganda partnered with the Cartier and Medicor Foundations to implement a Graduation pilot in the central districts of Luwero and Masindi to improve the livelihoods and welfare of poor and vulnerable households. The pilot targeted 1,650 youth between the ages of 18 - 35 years who were at the margins of poverty.

Context

Although Uganda has seen rapid economic development in the past decade, rural areas like Luwero remain difficult settings for youth and the extreme poor. In Luwero district, 78% of the population is under 30, and over 70% of the youth population is unemployed. The Ultra-Poor Graduation Program was launched by BRAC given the size and untapped potential of this youth population that remains disadvantaged in Uganda.

The Graduation Approach in Uganda

BRAC's Graduation approach is a comprehensive, time-bound, integrated and sequenced set of interventions that enable extreme poor households to achieve socioeconomic resilience, in order to progress along a pathway out of extreme poverty. BRAC Graduation programs have at their foundation four core pillars: social protection, livelihoods promotion, financial inclusion, and



Youth Graduation Pilot in Uganda	
Pilot Duration	2016-2019
Pilot Location	Central Uganda: Luwero and Masindi districts
Target Population	1,650 households
Funding Partners	Cartier Foundation
	Medicor Foundation
Target Youth	18-35 years old
Evaluation Partner	BRAC's Independent Evaluation and Research Cell

social empowerment. Working together, these interdependent interventions have led to strong outcomes at the household level.

The Graduation program in Uganda targeted disadvantaged youth who had no productive assets, owned less than 1 acre of land, and were mainly dependent on irregular earnings, through a community based participatory rural appraisal (PRA) process.



The program provided youth participants a support package consisting of the following interventions:

- Livelihoods support including a selection of two assets from a menu of options determined by a market assessment
- Training on selected livelihoods, basic business, financial, and life skills
- Consumption support to smooth over immediate needs
- Hands-on coaching through bi-monthly home visits
- Savings, financial access, and health services
- Social integration through the creation of local village committees

Preliminary Learnings

- Life skills training and social and health messaging should be tailored separately to male and female Ugandan youth, with a focus on mental health, substance abuse, sexual assault and consent for male youth, sexual and reproductive health, sanitation and hygiene for female youth, and access to justice including awareness of legal rights for both groups.
- Market assessments and household livelihood selection must consider male youth preferences, which include livelihoods that are not home-based and can generate faster returns.
- Ensuring that local community leaders can exert influence on youth participants, especially male youth, to take ownership and responsibility of their assets is key.
- Livelihood options should include skills-based vocational trainings on activities such as electrical work, mobile repair, motorcycle repair, and a greater focus on other small trades.
- Harnessing the power of technology to reinforce life skills messaging, such as through text messages could be particularly effective with youth populations.

Impact

A quasi-experimental study was conducted for 1,216 program participants whose outcomes were compared to those of eligible youth from the same geographical regions who were not enrolled in the project. Results from the study will be available by November, 2019.

