

Strategic Vision

The need to combat extreme poverty and drive systems change has never been more urgent. We must act swiftly and design programs and policies that meet the increasing and evolving needs of people living in extreme poverty—programs and policies that are inclusive, comprehensive, and adaptive—building resilience and supporting sustainable economic recovery.

Scaling a Solution Proven to Break the Poverty Trap

BRAC's Ultra-Poor Graduation Initiative (UPGI) is committed to scaling BRAC's Ultra-Poor Graduation approach to help 21 million more people lift themselves from extreme poverty by 2026, with a particular focus in Asia and Africa.

Pioneered by BRAC in 2002, the Graduation approach is [proven to break the poverty trap](#) for the long-term. It is a scalable, time-bound, and sequenced set of interventions based on a deep understanding of the unique and ever-changing challenges faced by people living in extreme poverty. The program aims to adapt to local challenges and opportunities and 'graduate' people from extreme poverty into sustainable livelihoods and long-term resilience. The flagship program in Bangladesh has already graduated more than 2 million households over the past two decades. BRAC UPGI is building on the success of the [Ultra-Poor Graduation program in Bangladesh](#) through global advocacy and partnerships with governments and NGOs.

Driving Systems Change with Governments at the Helm

BRAC has directly implemented and provided technical assistance on Graduation in 13 additional countries. [Additionally, more than 100 partners in 50 countries have piloted or implemented Graduation and together graduated 3.1 million households.](#) BRAC UPGI is scaling Graduation through integration in existing government programs and policies related to poverty reduction, social protection, and economic inclusion, including cash transfers and inclusive livelihood programs. To ensure sustainable impact, BRAC UPGI is increasing our work with government actors and global policymakers to promote the scaling and adoption of the Graduation approach through comprehensive policy and systems change.

Influencing Global Policies and Programs: At a country-level, BRAC UPGI is working with governments and partners to reach 21 million more people through government-led Graduation programs and policies by 2026. BRAC works closely with policymakers to promote the scaling and adoption of the Graduation approach at a large scale by enhancing the design

THE GRADUATION APPROACH

BRAC's Graduation approach is designed to meet the complex needs of those living in extreme poverty. Focusing on assistance that includes health improvements, building financial skills, and vocational support, the Graduation approach implements a multifaceted set of interventions to support participants' transition to greater self-sufficiency, autonomy, and dignity.

Graduation uses asset transfers, coaching, and training to address the multidimensional needs of participants within their local context. These interventions enable participants to develop sustainable livelihoods, better integrate into their communities, develop social connections, improve self-esteem, and establish active roles within their communities.

[Learning from multi-country studies](#), we have established four core pillars of the approach, regardless of geographic and community context, that are fundamental to implementing Graduation successfully. These elements are essential to helping people lift themselves out of extreme poverty across contexts:

Meeting basic needs: People living in extreme poverty often lack basic necessities to survive. At BRAC, we first meet the basic needs of households participating in the program through services such as a cash transfer or food supplies, access to health services, water sanitation, information on better hygiene, and access to high-quality education for children.

and execution of programs targeting extreme poor populations, partnering and engaging with key stakeholders to sustain local support and investment in the nation's commitment to ending extreme poverty through the Graduation approach.

Driving Learning and Innovation: Embedded in BRAC's approach is an ethos of learning and critical self-evaluation. Beyond utilizing external researchers to conduct evaluations throughout program implementation, we are constantly generating evidence and learning on the most effective ways of adapting and scaling the Graduation approach. We continue this commitment by investing in a robust learning agenda alongside and in support of our efforts to scale. BRAC UPGI works with a vibrant community of actors dedicated to fighting extreme poverty through Graduation and similar approaches, including governments, research institutions, local civil society, and multilateral institutions. Together we work to build a global body of evidence on ending extreme poverty, adapt the Graduation approach for various poverty contexts, and scale effectively and efficiently through governments.

“ The level of effort, programming, resources, and tenacity required to eradicate extreme poverty vastly exceeds the capabilities of a single organization or the Audacious investment. To truly eliminate poverty in all its forms, BRAC urges governments, multilateral institutions, donors, NGOs, and policymakers to work together more effectively and commit significantly more resources.”

- Lindsay Coates, Managing Director | BRAC UPGI



Income generation: We help participants kick start an income-generating enterprise or job. Services might include training and asset transfers like livestock, equipment, or seed capital to start a small business, vocational education, and apprenticeships or resources to gain wage employment.

Finance support and savings: We support participants in directly accessing convenient formal or informal savings facilities and financial services so they can plan for the future, save, and borrow responsibly. This also includes basic numeracy education or financial literacy training.

Social empowerment: To address poverty of self-esteem, we help participants increase their confidence and integrate into their communities. Services might include regular mentorship and life skills training as well as connection to community associations to improve participants' well-being, enable self-sufficiency, and strengthen social and economic inclusion within the community.

Working together, these interdependent elements lead to significant, positive outcomes among households living in extreme poverty, including increased or improved assets, food security, savings, financial inclusion, health outcomes, social integration, and productive skills.

At BRAC we believe it is unjust that hundreds of millions of people around the world lack access to food, clean water, education, health care, and a steady income. We stand with those most affected by pervasive inequality and most at risk of being left behind as an act of justice—not of charity.

