

GRADUATION OVERVIEW

What is Graduation?

BRAC's Ultra-Poor Graduation approach is a multifaceted set of interventions designed to address the complex nature of extreme poverty. Through the provision of livelihood assets, cash transfers, and continued mentoring and training, the Graduation approach addresses participants' multidimensional needs within the local context and enables them to develop sustainable livelihoods that set them on a path of upward economic mobility. They also become better integrated into society, develop social connections, improve their self-esteem, and establish active roles in their communities.

The four pillars of Graduation

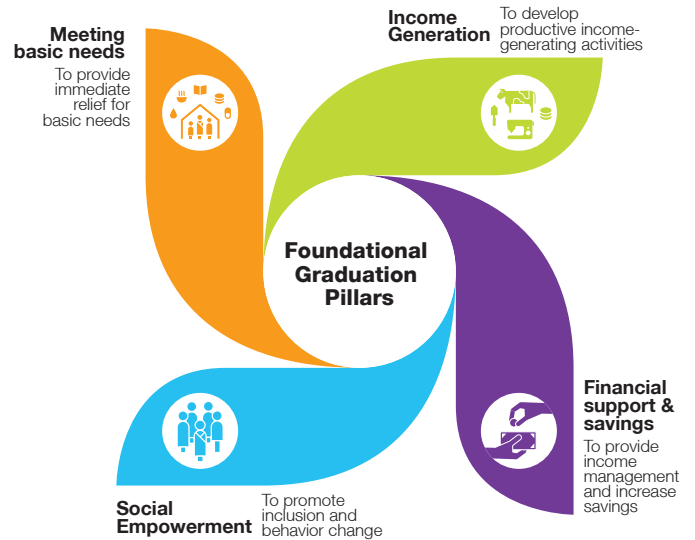
While adapted to meet local challenges and opportunities, there are four key elements that are fundamental to implementing Graduation successfully. Based on a multi-country study, we found that these elements are essential to helping people create a pathway out of extreme poverty across regardless of geographic and community context. No matter how we adapt our approach, we try to ensure these are incorporated into the program design.

Meeting basic needs: Provide participating households fundamental necessities like a cash transfer or food supplies, access to health services, water sanitation, information on better hygiene and access to high quality education for children.

Income generation: Help participants kickstart an income-generating enterprise or job through 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.

Financial 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: Help participants increase their confidence and integrate into their communities through 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 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 extreme poverty. We are working to scale globally and reach millions more living in extreme poverty. But we cannot do it alone. This is beyond the means and capacity of a single organization—no matter how ambitious or innovative. 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.

