

Ultra-Poor Graduation (UPG) Programme

Year of inception: 2002



BANGLADESH

The UPG program in Bangladesh, formerly known as Targeting the Ultra Poor (TUP) program, is a comprehensive, time-bound and sequenced set of interventions that aim to graduate people from ultra-poverty. It combines social protection, which provides vital consumption support and immediate relief for basic needs, with livelihood development and access to finance to help the ultra-poor move into sustainable livelihoods. BRAC, a Bangladesh based international NGO pioneered this approach. Currently, 99 programs in 43 countries are replicating the Ultra-Poor Graduation Approach.

Program objectives:

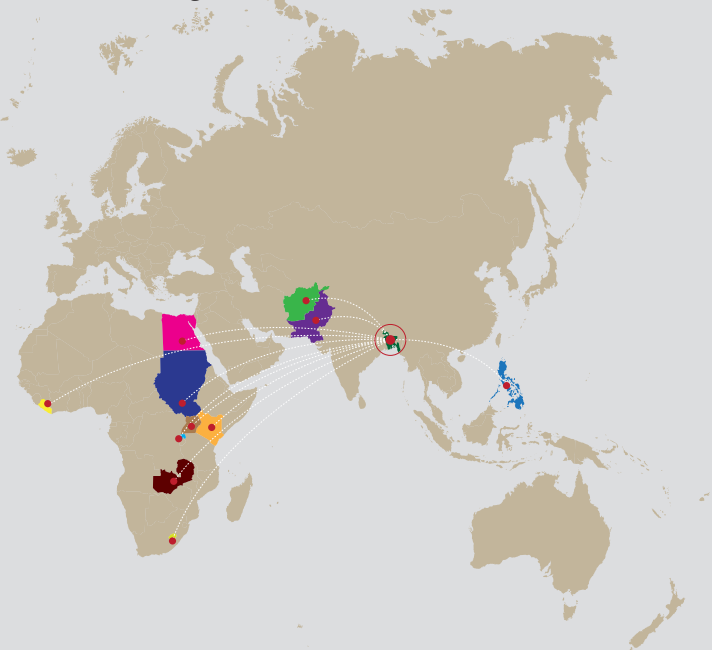
To enable ultra-poor households to achieve key milestones towards sustainable livelihoods and socioeconomic resilience, in order to progress along a pathway out of extreme poverty.

Coverage:

In Bangladesh, the UPG program has reached more than nine million people in two million households.

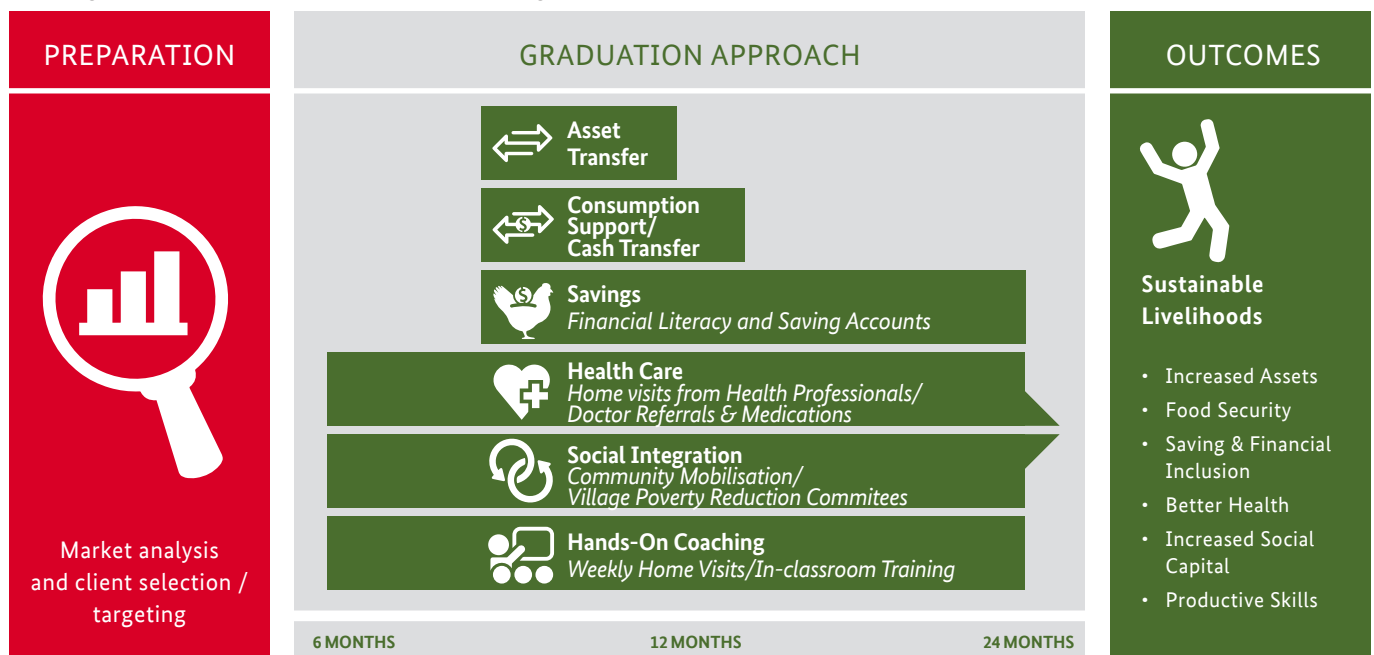
Building off the long-term success of the program in Bangladesh, BRAC has directly implemented and provided technical assistance on Graduation in 11 additional countries over the last 18 years.

BRAC's Graduation Programs & Pilots:



Program design and implementation features:

The program is implemented in a sequenced and integrated approach:



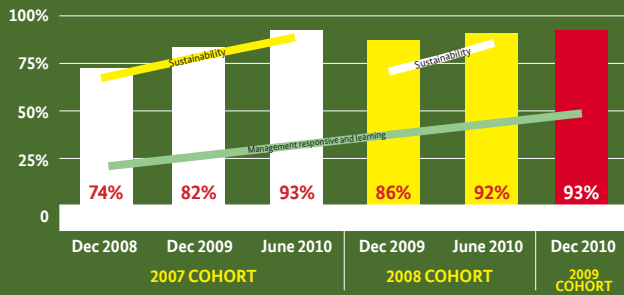
Success stories:



74%

of those who enrolled with the UPG program in 2007 graduated in the end of 24 months-cycle.

The rate of graduation continued to grow to **82%** in 2009 and **93%** in 2010. Similar trends could be observed for the 2009 cohort.



From 2002 to 2018, **1.8 million families** graduated through the UPG program



Annual income of beneficiaries increased by **37%**



Consumption increased by **10%**



Savings increased up to **9 times**



Access to land **doubled**



Hours of productive work increased by **361%**

A Cost-Benefit Analysis showed that each dollar spent on UPG program generates **5.7 dollars** of benefits.



Stories: <http://graduationstories.brac.net/#stories>

Key success factors and challenges:

The UPG approach builds on the following principles to ensure success of the program:



Comprehensiveness of the approach



Sequenced and integrated support



Community-based targeting



Adaptability to local context



Integrated skill development



Coaching and mentoring of beneficiaries



Strong market assessments



Intensive monitoring and rigorous impact evaluations



Providing ultra-poor households with a comprehensive package of large-scale assets, cash support, access to health care and regular training for two years is cost-intensive. Implementation and staff costs are considerably higher than those of traditional cash transfer programs.



Further readings:

- Official website of BRAC UPG approach: <http://www.brac.net/program/ultra-poor-graduation/>
- Banerjee, Abhijit et al. (2015). A Multifaceted Program Causes Lasting Progress for the Very Poor: Evidence from Six Countries. <http://www.econ.yale.edu/~cru2/pdf/Science-2015-TUP.pdf>
- BRAC (2020). Impact and Reach of BRAC's Graduation Approach. <http://bracultrapoorgraduation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Graduation-Impact-and-Reach-Factsheet.pdf>
- BRAC (2019). Overview. Ultra-Poor Graduation Programme, Bangladesh. <http://www.brac.net/program/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/UPG-Programme-Bangladesh-brief.pdf>
- BRAC (2017). Annual Report. <http://www.brac.net/sites/default/files/annual-report/2017/BRAC-AR-2017e.pdf>
- Dharmadasa, H., Hashemi, S. M., Samaranyake, S., & Whitehead, L. (2015). PROPEL Toolkit: An Implementation Guide to the Ultra-Poor Graduation Approach. <http://nowphilippines.com/cgap/secondedition/BRAC-PROPELToolkit.pdf>
- International Growth Centre (n.d.). Graduation: What's next for ultra-poor programmes? <https://www.theigc.org/blog/graduation-whats-next-for-programmes-targeting-the-ultra-poor/>
- BRAC Ultra-poor graduation: <http://bracultrapoorgraduation.org/>

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