

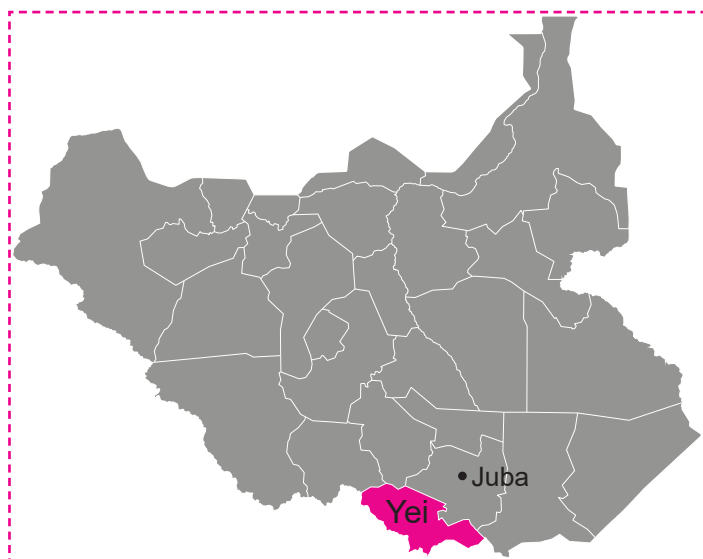
Graduation in Conflict Settings: South Sudan

Challenges due to conflict

In July 2011, South Sudan gained independence from Sudan after 25 years of brutal civil war, making it the most recent sovereign nation in the world. This stability unfortunately became short-lived when political conflict between the country's ruling party and rebels broke out in 2013. Five million people became in need of aid, 3 million were starving, and 25% of the population was displaced. Resources were also scarce during the conflict: public services came to a halt, food stores and markets were empty, and valuable assets such as livestock were stolen.

BRAC Graduation program in South Sudan

BRAC saw the South Sudan crisis as an opportunity to serve the ultra-poor in a conflict setting. By partnering with the Department for International Development (DFID), BRAC designed and implemented a Graduation pilot that aimed to bring 250 women in Yei County out of ultra poverty through an integrated and sequenced set of interventions including consumption stipends, asset transfers, increased access to financial services and skills training.



New Design Features

BRAC responded to participant needs in this fragile context by prioritizing resilience building activities like training, gender empowerment, food security, financial inclusion, and health. Some key design features include:

- Provision of fruit seeds to participants as a more sustainable alternative to food subsidies
- Training both women and men to view assets as 'family assets' by encouraging joint management and decision making
- Participants trained as community peer trainers and influencers

South Sudan Graduation Pilot Highlights	
Pilot Duration	2013-2015
Pilot Location	Yei County
Target Population	250 women (2,433 family members involved)
Funding Partner	Department for International Development (DFID)
Implementing Organization	BRAC South Sudan
Value	\$320,97; \$132 per participant

Responding to Conflict

In 2015, due to a resurgence of conflict, participants' purchasing power was eroded by increased inflation rates and 7% of assets were lost from violence-induced geographic displacement. The program's strong risk mitigation strategy enabled staff to anticipate and respond to such security challenges effectively, including:

- **Constant risk assessments** of assets and resources of participant households
- **Ongoing and robust** market analysis
- **Community contingency plans**
- **Asset diversification** to promote resilience
- **Conflict communication warning systems** and broader community networks
- Extension of **free medical advice** to non-participant households lacking access to health services
- Plantation of 1,337 community trees, resulting in shared benefits of increased nutritional in-take



Results

The Graduation pilot saw many successes, especially in increasing participants' knowledge, skills and confidence, promoting more productive and secure livelihoods, and leveraging local institutions to support the ultra poor. The table below highlights critical program outcomes.

Lessons Learned

BRAC learned a number of key lessons for future Graduation programs in conflict settings. These include:

- **Community involvement** is essential to secure participants' pathways out of poverty
- Front line staff must have a **deep understanding of household** needs in order to respond and innovate constantly to new and emerging risks
- **Access to health care** (specifically self-funded by the community using a revolving fund), enables participants to save their limited resources
- A **robust risk management strategy** is critical to respond to both direct and indirect conflict-related issues

Pilot Successes	
Knowledge, skills and confidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 100% trained in financial and life skills• 74% attained basic numeracy skills• 61% working as community peer trainers & influencers
Productive and secure livelihoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 97% increase in annual household consumption• 71% of women attained 2 or more income sources
Local institutions supporting the ultra-poor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 100% of committees meeting quarterly• 90% engaged in committee discussions