

Strategic Vision

The need to combat extreme poverty and reach those furthest behind is more urgent than ever. We must partner with governments to design and deliver evidence-based approaches at scale that respond to the multidimensional constraints people in extreme poverty face and enable them to break the poverty trap long term. Doing so will enable us to reach millions more and regain lost progress toward Sustainable Development Goal 1 - eliminate all forms of poverty - as well as uphold our commitment to Leave No One Behind.

Empowering Millions More to Break the Poverty Trap

BRAC's Ultra-Poor Graduation Initiative (UPGI) is partnering with governments to scale the Graduation approach and empower 4.6 million more households to lift themselves from extreme poverty by 2026. We are focused on countries in Africa and Asia where we can have maximum impact – countries with a high concentration of people living in extreme poverty and the political will to strengthen existing efforts to combat the issue.

BRAC's founder, Sir Fazle Hasan Abed, liked to say that “small is beautiful, but scale is necessary.” We see this as our twin challenge – to scale at a size that is meaningful on a global level while delivering long-term impact. In other words, to scale beautifully.

Scaling Graduation Through Governments

Governments are best positioned to make long-term gains on extreme poverty reduction. They have the mandate, the infrastructure, and the established systems to transform the lives of their most vulnerable people, as well as the ability to coordinate investments to tackle extreme poverty across ministries, stakeholders, policies, and programs.

Past government efforts have led to significant global reductions in poverty, but to address the multidimensional nature of extreme poverty and break the poverty trap, governments are investing in multifaceted interventions like Graduation, and integrating them into social protection and economic inclusion programs.

We estimate that more than 15 governments have developed Graduation approaches across Latin America, Africa, and Asia. Several are leading the way in bringing multifaceted approaches like Graduation to scale, reaching hundreds of thousands of households in the deepest forms of poverty and putting them on a pathway toward sustainable growth. We are looking to support and strengthen these efforts, leveraging decades of experience.

EXPANDING GRADUATION'S REACH

Pioneered by BRAC in 2002, the Graduation approach is proven to break the poverty trap for people in extreme poverty long term. It is a multifaceted, sequenced set of interventions adapted to address the unique circumstances of extreme poverty within the local context and delivered over a 2-3 year period.

BRAC UPGI, a flagship program at BRAC International, was established in 2016 to support further expansion of the Graduation approach through programming and policies, and by partnering with governments and other implementing partners to achieve the long-term benefits demonstrated by Graduation and enable millions more to lift themselves from extreme poverty.

To date, BRAC International has supported the expansion of Graduation through direct implementation, technical assistance, and advisory services in 16 additional countries, including Afghanistan, Egypt, Guinea, India, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Pakistan, Philippines, Rwanda, South Africa, South Sudan, Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia. We have worked with government partners in India, Kenya, Lesotho, the Philippines, Pakistan, Rwanda, Tunisia, South Africa, Zambia, among others, adapting the approach in each country to fit the local context and integrate into existing programming, which helps drive down overall costs and achieve more long-lasting impact.

“Scaling beautifully requires the collaboration of our partners and allies to eradicate extreme poverty – and it requires investment and persistence over many months and years to bring about meaningful change. We are well aware of the challenges scaling Graduation will pose, but we are also sure that the status quo will not be enough to eradicate poverty.” - Greg Chen | UPGI Managing Director

Increased Country Engagement

BRAC UPGI is working with governments and partners in countries across Africa and Asia to deliver Graduation programs at scale - 100,000 cohorts or more - by enhancing the design, implementation and learning of transformative programs that reach those furthest behind and meet their unique, multidimensional needs. To effectively support this work and pursue strategic opportunities for expansion, BRAC UPGI is establishing a local presence in select geographies and partnering and engaging with key stakeholders to sustain demand for and investment in the commitment to ending extreme poverty through the Graduation approach.

Influence the Global Dialogue

BRAC UPGI engages multilaterals and other influential actors like academia and the media, to ensure global policies and programs are supportive and reinforcing and to communicate progress and learning. UPGI utilizes global policy agendas to center Graduation as a proven policy tool to help governments and multilaterals achieve their priorities and commitments to reaching and meeting the long-term needs of those furthest behind. We promote existing government-led efforts to expand Graduation as concrete examples for governments and multilaterals to look to, and enable South-South knowledge sharing in global spaces.

Drive 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 contribute to a global body of evidence on ending extreme poverty, adapting the Graduation approach for various poverty contexts, and scaling effectively and efficiently through governments. We facilitate South-South knowledge sharing, making evidence, lessons learned, and recommendations on the design, implementation, and evaluation of Graduation more accessible to partner governments and other implementing partners.

“We have the resources, the evidence and the know-how to end extreme poverty for good – what we need to do is stop tinkering around the edges, and invest in scaling evidence-based approaches to deliver on the promise we made at the start of the SDGs. The question is will we act with the urgency it warrants?” - Shameran Abed | BRAC International Executive Director

