

Ending extreme poverty by scaling Graduation through governments



More than 100m households trapped in extreme poverty

Nearly 1 in 10 people live in extreme poverty. They face multiple, reinforcing barriers that keep them and their households in a poverty trap. Economic growth alone hasn't proven sufficient to create economic opportunity to overcome these traps. Traditional long-standing social assistance and other programmes have not adequately addressed the root cause. There is a need for new tools to create opportunity for those furthest behind.

A simple proven approach...

The Graduation approach is a sequenced, two-year investment that simultaneously tackles multiple reinforcing constraints.

The approach has three essential components - or what are called the ABCs.

Asset:

a large investment in income-generating activities



Basic needs support:

to ensure families can make ends meet until new livelihood generates sufficient income

Coaching:

intensive, frequent coaching that unlocks agency, know-how, and hope

... that generates high returns across various contexts

Graduation has been adapted and implemented across a wide variety of contexts and countries, achieving broad and lasting impact. There are dozens of rigorous evaluations which document the effectiveness in a variety of environments.

Graduation is an investment with returns that grow over time. The longest running studies in Bangladesh and India show that significant reductions in poverty persist beyond seven and even ten years. Most programme gains exceed the investment cost after three years, and over longer time frames, some programs have seen returns of over four times the initial investment. By addressing root causes the impacts are more durable.

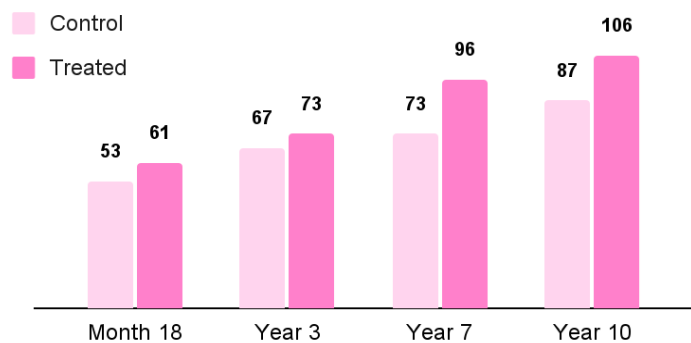
Now governments are scaling worldwide

The wealth of evidence on the long-term impacts of Graduation has influenced widespread adoption including among governments in Latin America, Africa, and Asia. BRAC is working with governments in Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, the Philippines, Rwanda, and South Africa on integrating the Graduation Essentials, or ABCs, into existing systems at scale to achieve greater, more lasting impact. Every \$1 BRAC spends on scale-up efforts through governments improves the returns on nearly \$50 of government spending.

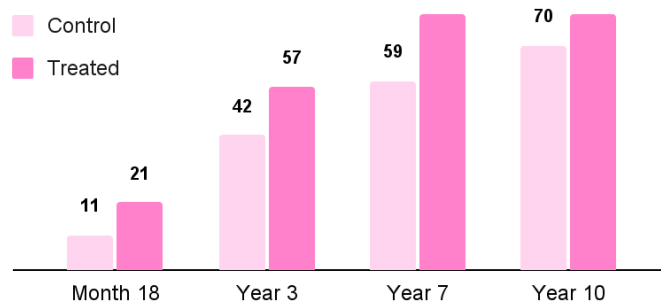
To reach the hundreds of millions of people still living in extreme poverty, we must urgently do more. We know what works. The resources are there. Now we need to build the political will and multisectoral support to scale it through existing systems, enabling millions more to escape the poverty trap.

Ten-Year Impacts of Graduation in West Bengal

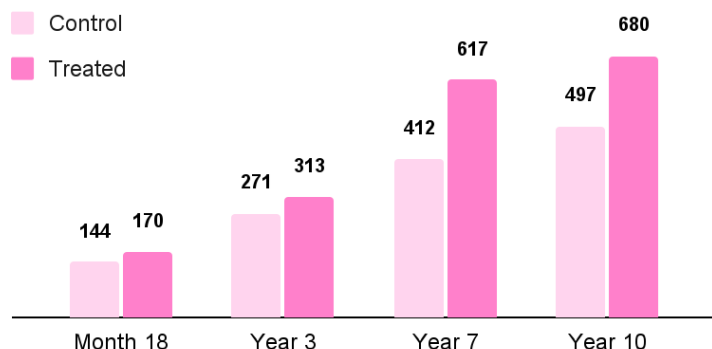
Per-capita Consumption (2018 USD PPP)



Every household member gets enough to eat everyday (%)



Income (2018 USP PPP)



Targeting the ultra-poor to improve livelihoods

To see the long-term evidence see:

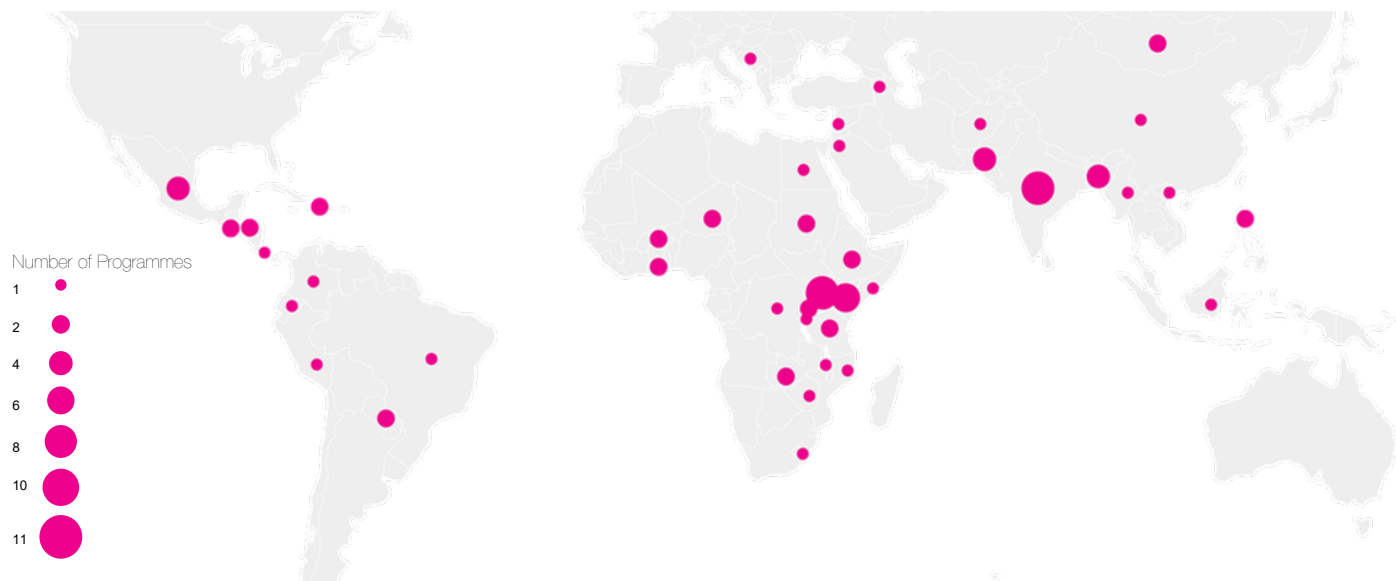
[J-PAL Evidence Review 2025](#)

Targeting the ultra-poor to improve livelihoods

Long-term impact 2021
A multifaceted livelihood program has reached and improved the standard of living for more than three million households across 15 countries following randomized evaluations by J-PAL affiliates.



There are 100+ Programmes in nearly 50 countries



Government leadership in scaling grows

The National Rural Livelihood Promotions Society, an autonomous body under India's Ministry of Rural Development is implementing an inclusive livelihoods programme within the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) known as Samaveshi Aajeevika Yojana. BRAC is supporting this new livelihood component through partnership with five state-level Rural Livelihoods Missions in Karnataka, Telangana, Chhattisgarh, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra. The pilot was launched in 2024 with a **goal to reach 74,000 households** by March 2026.

