Breaking the Cycle of Poverty

Can we eradicate ultra-poverty for the next generation?

An end in sight for ultra-poverty

BRAC can provide the technical assistance and resources—from programme design and tools to on-site training—for this programme to move into new regions and communities. BRAC is poised to leverage its experience by working with first-in-class partners on a strategy for measurable and transformational social change in some of the poorest regions of the world. Together we can empower millions of families as they rise up!

NEXT STEPS: SCALING UP THE PROGRAMME

The model has been scaled up in Bangladesh and replicated internationally with measurable and well-documented results. Pilot programmes have successfully adopted BRAC’s methodology with the support of technical assistance provided by BRAC in collaboration with the Consultative Group to Assist the Poor (CGAP) and the Ford Foundation. In Bangladesh alone, BRAC has reached over 1.4 million households, including households that received soft loans in addition to stipends and assets. Pilot programmes have been implemented in eight countries across the world.

More than 95% of participants in Bangladesh achieve and sustain the criteria for graduation, with 92% crossing an ultra-poverty threshold of 50 cents per day and maintaining their improved conditions over the next four years. Internationally, reports show that in 18 to 36 months, 75% to 96% of participants meet the country-specific graduation criteria.

Simultaneously increasing the physical & social capital of the ultra-poor

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Join us in the campaign to end ultra-poverty
Poverty rates across the globe are falling. In almost every region of the world, the poorest of the poor are working to change their futures for the better. Eradicating global poverty in our lifetime has never been a more achievable goal. The World Bank marks 2030 as the target year to end extreme poverty, defined as living on less than the equivalent of $1.25 a day.

BRAC offers support to those living in ultra-poverty, a term for the lower half of the 1.2 billion people in the world who subsist on less than $1.25 a day.

BRAC has pioneered a graduation programme to lift people out of the harshest conditions of ultra-poverty. The programme has been implemented and adapted with great success across countries and regions. Scaled up further and replicated internationally, it should be part of a global strategy to eradicate extreme poverty.

Founded in Bangladesh in 1972, BRAC is considered “by most measures the largest, fastest-growing non-governmental organization in the world—and one of the most businesslike” (The Economist, 2010). It was ranked #1 out of the Top 100 NGOs in 2013 (The Global Journal) and ranked as the #1 International Microfinance Non-Profit by Philanthropedia, a division of Guidestar.

BRAC has been at the forefront of poverty alleviation in Bangladesh and ten other countries. The organization is known for creating opportunities for the poor—from microfinance, education and healthcare to community empowerment and legal rights.

WHAT IS GRADUATION?
Graduation occurs when households achieve economic and social advancement measured by several criteria over the course of 24 months. Criteria vary given the social and geographic context of the programme. Graduation criteria can include:

- No self-reported food deficit in the last year
- Multiple sources of income
- Use of a sanitary latrine and clean drinking water
- Homes with solid roofs made of corrugated iron or other materials (not thatched)
- Households own livestock/poultry
- Households have kitchen gardens
- Cash savings
- No childhood marriage in the family
- School-aged children are going to school
- Eligible couples adopt family planning

WHO ARE THE ULTRA-POOR?
Ultra-poor families eat below 80% of their energy requirements, despite spending 80% or more of their income on food.

A disproportionate number of women live in ultra-poverty. BRAC’s graduation programme is designed to target these unique conditions of families living on 70 cents or less a day.

These families are often without access to land, health services, and other basic needs. Even after working for days on end, women cannot feed their children or bring them medicine when they are sick. They lack community acceptance and self-confidence, and have difficulty envisioning a better future.

WHY BRAC?
Founded in Bangladesh in 1972, BRAC is considered “by most measures the largest, fastest-growing non-governmental organization in the world—and one of the most businesslike” (The Economist, 2010). It was ranked #1 out of the Top 100 NGOs in 2013 (The Global Journal) and ranked as the #1 International Microfinance Non-Profit by Philanthropedia, a division of Guidestar.

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TARGETING We use spatial poverty maps and community wealth rankings to identify the households in the greatest need of skills and services.

ASSET TRANSFER We ensure one-time grants of productive assets, such as livestock or goods for small trade, to help jump-start livelihoods.

WEEKLY STIPENDS Participants receive cash stipends along with guidance tailored to local knowledge and skills.

SAVINGS Participants are encouraged to save. They maintain a formal savings account with programme staff support.

TRAINING As families learn to earn and save, they receive hands-on training and weekly visits from staff to help grow their skills.

HEALTH CARE We encourage informed health care choices by teaching the importance of preventive health, including family planning and preventable illness.

SOCIAL INTEGRATION Throughout the program, families gain confidence and acceptance within their community.