

Ending extreme poverty by scaling Graduation through governments

More than 100m households trapped in extreme poverty

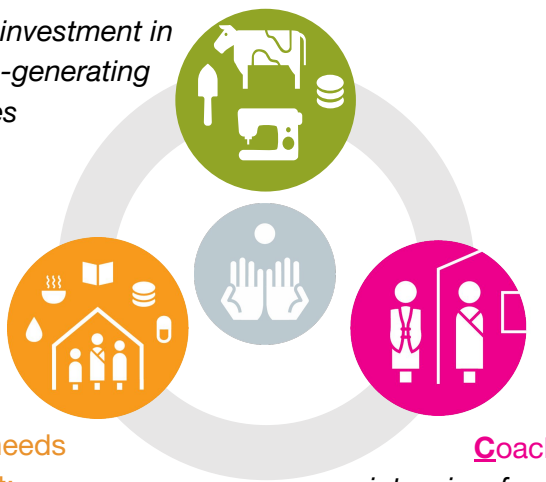
Nearly 1 in 10 people live in extreme poverty. They face multiple, reinforcing barriers that keep them and their households in a poverty trap. Economic growth alone hasn't proven sufficient to create economic opportunity to overcome these traps. Traditional long-standing social assistance and other programmes 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 with more than 170 programs collectively reaching over 6.7 million households (as of 2025). More than 100 studies from 40+ countries, have proven the Graduation can achieve immediate and long-term outcomes that are transformational for participants.

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 programmes have seen returns of over four times the initial investment. By addressing root causes, the impacts are more durable.

Governments are scaling worldwide

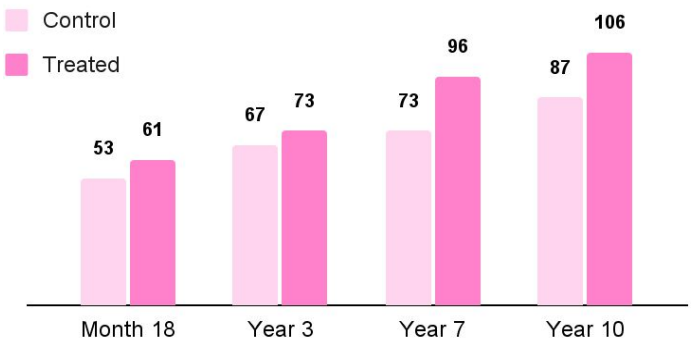
The wealth of evidence on the long-term impacts of Graduation has influenced widespread adoption including among governments in Latin America, Africa, and Asia. BRAC is working with governments in Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, the Philippines, Rwanda, and South Africa on integrating the Graduation Essentials, into existing systems at scale to achieve greater, more lasting impact. As of June 2026, more than 80,000 households were enrolled in BRAC-supported, government-led Graduation programmes.

We've found that every $1 BRAC spends on scale-up efforts through governments improves the returns on nearly $50 of government spending.

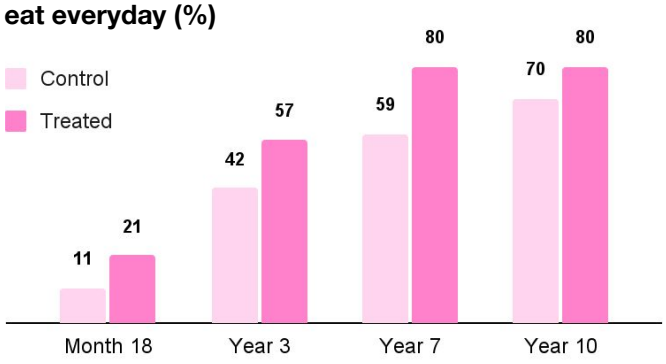
To reach the hundreds of millions of people still living in extreme poverty, we must urgently work together to scale what we know works through existing systems, enabling sustainability and for millions more people to escape the poverty trap.

Ten-year impacts of Graduation in West Bengal

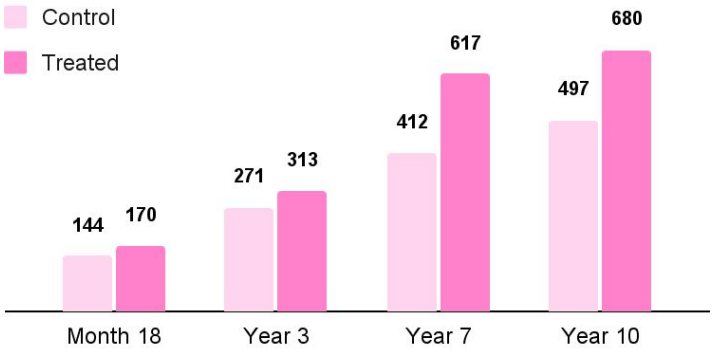
Per-capita consumption (2018 USD PPP)



Every household member gets enough to eat everyday (%)



Income (2018 USP PPP)

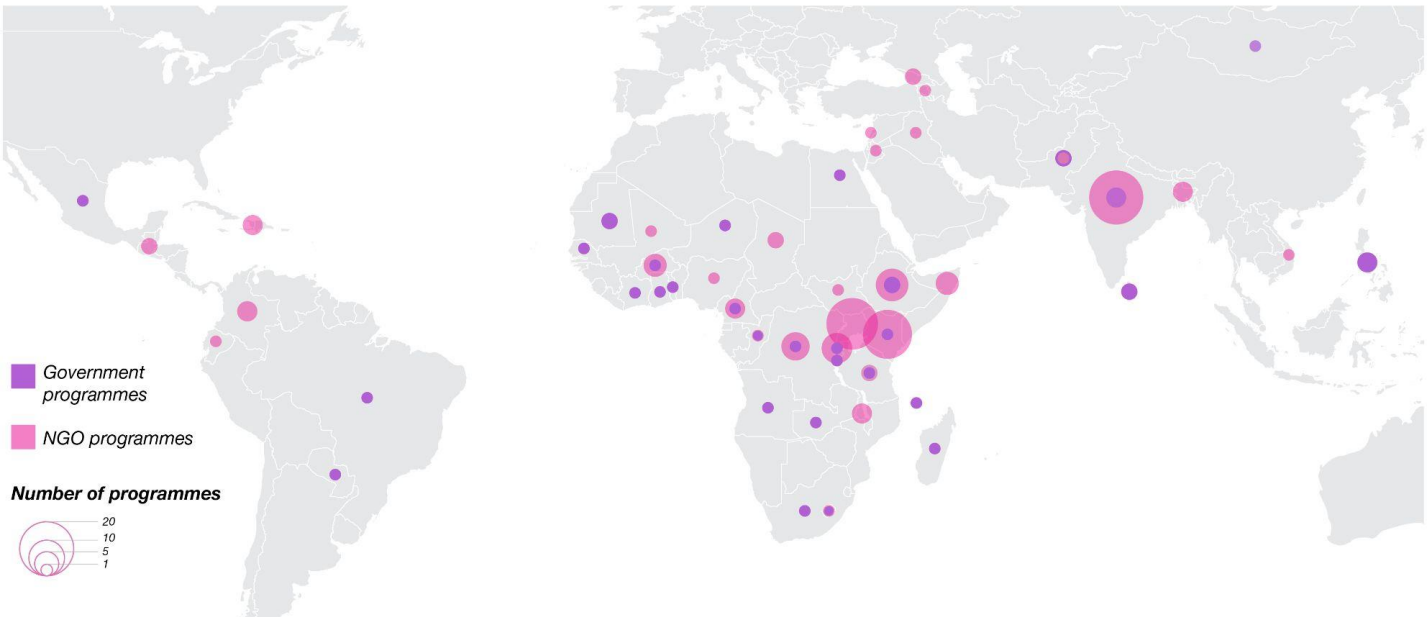


Targeting the ultra-poor to improve livelihood

To see the long-term evidence see:
J-PAL Evidence Review 2025



There are 170+ programmes in nearly 50 countries



Government leadership in scaling grows

India's Ministry of Rural Development is implementing an inclusive livelihood programme within the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihood Mission (DAY-NRLM) known as Samaveshi Aajeevika Yojana. BRAC is supporting this new livelihood component through partnership with six of the twelve state-level Rural Livelihood Missions involved: Bihar, Karnataka, Telangana, Chhattisgarh, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, with plans to expand further. As of June 2026, **more than 65,000 households** were enrolled in the six BRAC-supported states of the national inclusive livelihood programme.

