

Through its Key Initiatives, UNHCR's Division of Programme Support and Management (DPSM) shares regular updates on interesting projects that produce key tools, practical guidance and new approaches aimed at moving UNHCR operations forward.



Myanmar / Women from different ethnic groups get sewing training funded by UNHCR in Maungdaw, northern Rakhine State. The programme is intended to create inter-ethnic harmony and promote livelihood opportunities for its participants. / UNHCR / Kyaw Soe Lynn / September 2010



Tanzania / Ramadhani Abdalah, a Tanzanian Zgwa farmer hired by a Zgwa Somali Bantu refugee to help with farming an acre of land. The two communities' common historical linkage has enabled an easy integration into the host community. / UNHCR / B. Bannon / November 2008

Since 2006, the approach has been pilot-tested in ten sites in eight countries worldwide by organisations supported by the World Bank's Consultative Group to Assist the Poor (CGAP) and the Ford Foundation. As a result of these pilots, between 75 and 98 percent of the participants met graduation criteria after 18 to 36 months.

UNHCR believes the CGAP-Ford Foundation's Graduation Approach holds promise for the poorest refugees, thus enabling them to become self-reliant and lead active and productive lives while weaving strong social, economic and cultural ties within their host communities.

By partnering with the NGO Trickle Up and the BRAC University, which supported the design and implementation of all ten CGAP-Ford Foundation pilots, UNHCR will implement the Graduation Approach in collaboration with local partner organisations. The initial multi-year graduation pilot began in June 2013 in Cairo, Egypt and was followed by a second pilot in Costa Rica in November 2013. These initiatives test the viability of the Graduation Approach when applied to refugee populations in both urban and camp settings as well as in protracted and crisis situations.

The Graduation Approach

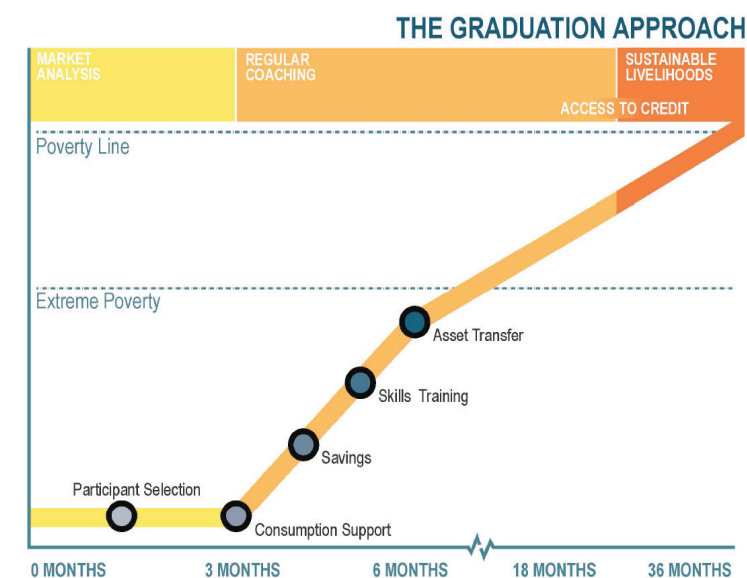
REACHING FAMILIES LIVING IN EXTREME POVERTY

The Livelihoods Unit in DPSM's Operational Solutions and Transitions Section (OSTS) has launched a new initiative based upon the Graduation Approach to building food security and sustainable livelihoods. The Graduation Approach is anchored in UNHCR Global Strategy for Livelihoods 2014-2018, which aims to bring innovative, market-based methods for building refugee self-reliance to UNHCR operations.

The Graduation Approach was first developed by BRAC in Bangladesh, one of the world's largest non-governmental development organizations, to help address the needs of those who were too poor for microfinance services. UNHCR is now working with BRAC and other development partners to implement the approach for the first time in urban settings and among refugee populations.

GRADUATION APPROACH COMPONENTS

- Identify the most vulnerable households within a community;
- Provide a regular and time-bound cash transfer to enable them to meet basic needs;
- Help families plan their livelihoods and transfer their productive assets;
- Develop their ability to save money as a tool to build resilience;
- Enhance their technical and entrepreneurial skills through livelihood training;
- Ensure the close mentorship of participants throughout the process in a way that develops their self-confidence.



The Graduation Approach / Consultative Group to Assist the Poor

TARGETING OBJECTIVES

The Graduation Approach targets families living in extreme poverty, families which live on less than \$1.25 a day. They are often marginalized within their communities, lacking access to services and programmes that could help them.

Targeting for UNHCR projects is context-specific and draw on the socio-economic criteria established for existing cash-based interventions and other assistance programmes.



Iran / UNHCR gave Afghan refugee Ali a molding machine last year, helping the seventy-five-year old continue to earn a living despite his ailing hands and heart condition. He works from home making prayer stones out of clay, supporting his wife, daughter, and sick son from his business. UNHCR hopes to expand its livelihood programmes in Iran to help more refugees earn a living. / UNHCR / A. Rummery / May 2010

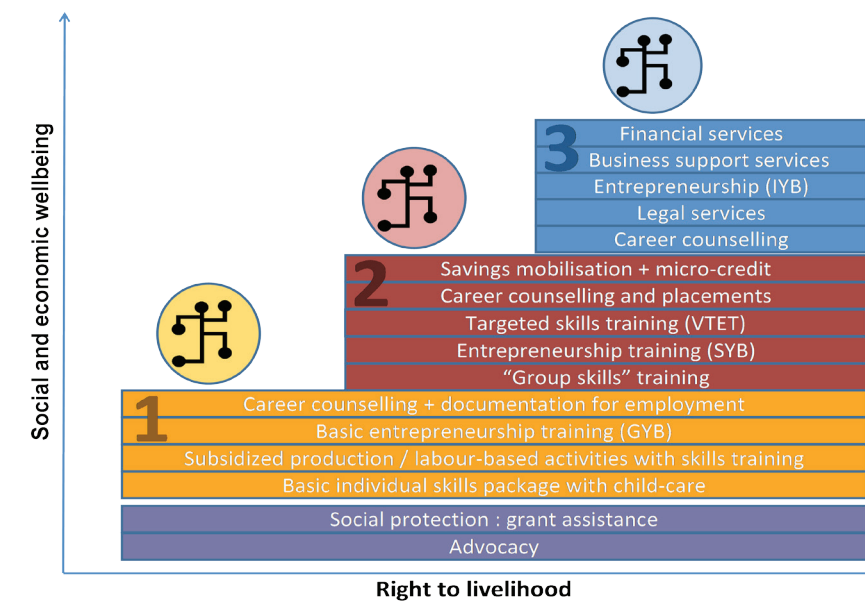
SEQUENCED INTERVENTIONS OVER 24 MONTHS:

- Targeting** to ensure the poorest households are selected
- Consumption support** for food before their businesses earns income
- Savings** to build assets and instill financial discipline
- Skills training** to learn how to care for assets and run a business.
- Asset transfer** of an in-kind good (such as livestock) to help jump-start a sustainable economic activity

GRADUATION CRITERIA

Graduation criteria, or benchmarks of success, will be determined for each UNHCR project according to the populations' vulnerabilities at the start of the project and the local context. Although graduation criteria will be determined on a pilot-by-pilot basis, graduation measures for past pilots not involving refugees have included:

- Eating at least two cooked meals per day all year round
- No starvation due to unavailability of food
- Productive assets valued at a certain threshold
- At least two sources of income
- The maintenance of a minimum savings balance
- At least one loan repaid within a savings-and-credit group



WHAT COMES NEXT?

Building on the results of the two pilots, DPSM will:

- Develop a strategy for implementing the Graduation Approach in UNHCR operations based on lessons learned from BRAC and CGAP-Ford Foundation pilots.
- Assess monitoring data and analyse results to establish good practices for the graduation of refugees.
- Develop tools and guidelines for UNHCR's own Graduation Approach.

MORE INFORMATION

For more information, please contact the Livelihoods Unit within the Operational Solutions and Transition Section (OSTS) of DPSM: livelihoods@unhcr.org

Updates from the field

THE GRADUATION APPROACH IN EGYPT

Egypt is among the countries with the largest number of urban refugees in the world. As of mid-2013, it is home to 183,398 registered refugees. Cairo offers an interesting opportunity to test the Graduation Approach in an urban setting and with two different populations requiring UNHCR responses: an African refugee population in protracted displacement and a Syrian refugee population in an emergency situation. Five hundred participants were originally chosen for the pilot study, from among those already receiving direct cash assistance, giving priority to survivors of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), youth, and women to the greatest extent possible. More recently, 1,000 Syrian refugees will be included in the pilot. Along with receiving cash assistance to cover daily life needs, participants will be given fixed amount food vouchers monthly (EGP 300) as well as training and coaching that will enable them to choose one of two pathways to help them move off of cash assistance: self-employment or wage employment. All programme participants will continue to receive UNHCR protection.