

“Graduation Model Event”
Brighton, UK, 25th October 2016
Overview of Discussions



#GraduationFromPoverty

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Front picture details: Beatrice Mukandagano a (widow) participant of the graduation programme in Kirundo province (Burundi) sitting with her 4 children beside her house in Bugabira commune. She managed to build herself a house and buy land to cultivate. She said that before Concern came to her community, she was so poor that she did not even have a place to sleep with her children. Photo by Irénée Nduwayezu, Concern Burundi, 2015.

Acknowledgements: This event was organised by Concern Worldwide and the Centre for Social Protection (CSP) at the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) at the University of Sussex. Our thanks go to Anne O’Mahony, Lucia Ennis, Chris Pain, Jenny Swatton, Rosaleen Martin and Alice Simington from Concern Worldwide Head Office, and to Odette Kampwira, Philippe Rougier and Russell Gates from the Concern Burundi and Rwanda offices; Stephen Devereux, Keetie Roelen, Rachel Sabates-Wheeler from IDS, researcher at Cambridge University, Ricardo Sabates, and to Rachel Slater of the Overseas Development Institute for delivering closing remarks. We also thank Irish Aid for their generous support of the programme.

If you have any questions or comments on this document, please email rosaleen.martin@concern.net or chris.pain@concern.net

Introduction

Concern Worldwide has been implementing graduation programmes in a number of countries since 2008 including Zambia, Haiti, Rwanda and Burundi. These programmes are intended to address extreme poverty at the household level in a sustainable manner. In an effort to find out whether these have worked, and whether certain elements are more important than others, Concern collaborated with the Centre for Social Protection (CSP) at the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) at the University of Sussex to carry out rigorous research in Rwanda and Burundi. The *Terintambwe: Taking a Step Forward* programme (in Burundi) and the *Unleashing the Capacity of the Extreme Poor* programme (in Rwanda) were implemented between 2012 and 2016 with funding and technical support from Irish Aid and the UK Department for International Development (DFID).

In the research in Burundi, a quasi-experimental randomised control design was utilised which included three rounds of quantitative household surveys (at baseline, midline and endline), administered to both an intervention and control (or comparison) group to allow for difference-in-difference analysis, as well as a substantial qualitative research component. Implemented in cohorts, the Rwanda programme has the advantage of a fourth round of data collected for the first cohort, allowing an assessment of the sustainability of the benefits a full two years after the programme ended.

The results from the research were launched at a half day event in Brighton on the 25th October 2016 attended by over thirty participants. Three presentations from Alice Simington, former Country Director for Concern in Rwanda and Burundi and Keetie Roelen and Stephen Devereux from the CSP focussed on the experiences in implementing the programme and some of the key results from the research in the two countries. The following presents a brief overview of research findings and a summary of the lively discussions these prompted during the event. Full research reports from Rwanda and Burundi are available on both the [Concern Worldwide](#) and [IDS](#) websites.

What are Concern's Graduation Programmes

The graduation approach provides an integrated and sequenced package of support (social assistance, livelihood development, access to finance services) to support a *pathway out of extreme poverty*. Concern's programmes consist of five core components including:

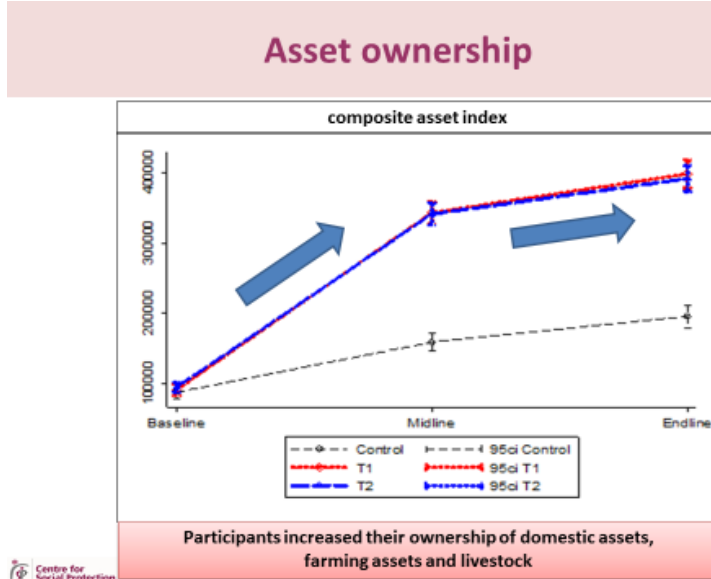
- A **comprehensive targeting** exercise that makes sure extreme poor households are identified as programme participants.
- The provision of **income support** (where feasible in the form of regular cash transfers) to help programme participants meet their basic needs as they are supported to develop/diversify their livelihood strategies.
- The provision of **skills training and regular coaching** which focuses on enhancing human capital and includes providing access to practical trainings related to income generation as well as routine coaching and monitoring visits.
- Facilitating access to **financial services** and promoting routine saving to help extremely poor people manage risk, build resilience to lifecycle shocks and stresses and reduce the likelihood of having to resort to negative coping strategies.
- The final element is a **capital/asset transfer** to help programme participants establish a new, or expand an existing, economic activity. Most commonly this is used for establishing/expanding a small business but it could feasibly be used to support access to formal employment.



Concern's interventions are tailored to specific contexts and have generally been implemented in a standalone capacity; they have not been designed in a manner that sees them integrated with government led social protection schemes up to now, though the new generation of interventions (from 2017) will address this.

What do the Results Show

The Burundi research found that households were able to increase their ownership of domestic and farming assets as well as the number of livestock they hold, between both baseline and midline and from midline to endline, though the pace at which these are accumulated slow down after participants stopped receiving the monthly income support. Other important findings were that participants were able to move away from ad-

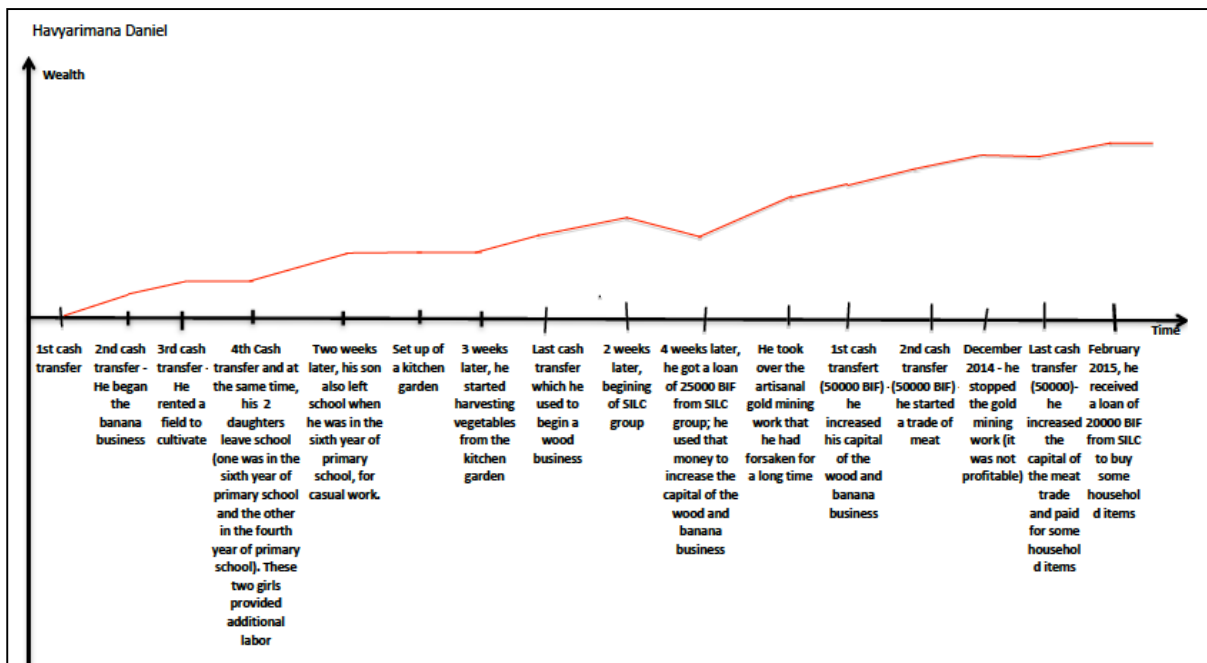


hoc daily labour as their primary occupation and were able to diversify livelihood activities to help manage risk. They were also able to save more frequently and in greater amounts.

Similarly, the research found positive effects with respect to some indicators of behaviour, such as hygiene practice, attributed to the community-wide training and home visits by case managers during qualitative discussions. The combination of increased assets, livelihood diversification and savings leads to **positive pathways**, which is also reflected and explained in the

qualitative research.

The qualitative research used key milestones as identified by the programme participants (a life history approach) to track progress from their perspective of wealth and well-being over the lifecycle of the project, so while the following figure seems to suggest a different trajectory, we need to be aware the time frames are different. While all respondents reported a **positive trajectory** from the start of the programme this approach allows us to identify a **see-saw trajectory pattern** which reflects the different shocks and stresses felt by participants throughout the life of the programme, rather than the three points in time the quantitative data gives us.



The reason for dips in trajectories do differ slightly between the beginning of the programme, where dips tended to be associated more with the destruction of shelter or family illness/death, and during the

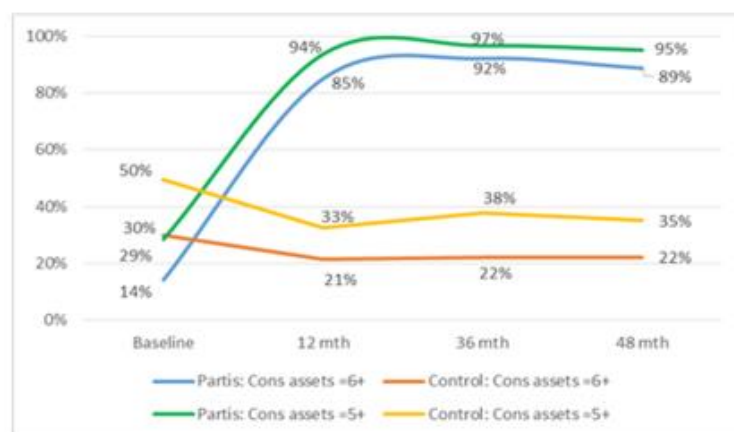
programme when dips tended to be associated more with livestock death or the collapse of tontines (informal savings groups). Peaks in trajectories however were often related to times when income was received (i.e. consumption/income support and asset/capital transfer) but also when participants were able to purchase assets (e.g. land for housing/cultivation, domestic or productive assets and health insurance).

The qualitative research also found that control group members also changed various aspects of their behaviour, for example, handwashing having either overheard community-level trainings or learning about such practices from other participants. While these spillovers were considered problematic from an evaluation perspective, they are indicative of the power of training and coaching services beyond those directly benefiting.

Similar results were seen in Rwanda in terms of performance against key indicators. However, in this context an additional round of data was available, for two years after the research was completed, which allows us to make some assumptions about the sustainability of benefits. The biggest material gains were achieved in the first year (reduced deprivation, increased assets, improved food security), mainly driven by the provision of regular and predictable income support. The non-material indicators (i.e. social relations, financial literacy, hygiene practices) also showed improvements, driven by other components such as mentoring, skills training and behaviour change messaging. This has left us with a typical trajectory over time with either sustained improvement – big rise, then “plateau” – or an “inverted U-curve” – big rise, followed by slight decline. That said, the endpoint is always higher than baseline, across all impact indicators. This means that benefits have been sustained after the programme support ends and that they are not just an “attention effect” resulting from the immediate transfer of cash or training.

The research has shown that the programme has had large and positive *material* impacts, strong positive *behavioural* impacts, and positive *social* impacts. While the research has not been able to ascertain whether less frequent visits from the case managers have an impact on the results (this was part of the research), it has revealed that the dedication and professionalism of staff contribute to success, reinforced that the synergies between components are key and that the achievement of sustained impacts requires sustained effort.

Graduation Trajectories (Consumption Asset Thresholds)



However, it has also highlighted some areas that require further attention in the design of Graduation programmes, for example: resentment amongst non-participants; potential for intra-household conflict around financial control; and how to support households who are progressing more slowly (known as “slow movers” - often households hampered by multiple exogenous shocks such as illness.)

Where Next

The largely positive results from the impact evaluations show that the programme works and is line with findings elsewhere¹. Rather than focus on this, discussions in Brighton centred on the importance (or

¹ In addition to the BRAC evidence from Bangladesh, similar evidence is presented in Abhijit Banerjee, Esther Duflo, Nathanael Goldberg, Dean Karlan, Robert Osei, William Parienté, Jeremy Shapiro, Bram Thuysbaert, Christopher Udry (2015) A multifaceted program causes lasting progress for the very poor: Evidence from six countries. Science Vol 348 Issue 6236 (available at <http://science.sciencemag.org/>)

relevance) of defining the thresholds, the importance (and cost) of coaching, over-burdening the approach with too many add-ons and how to deal with slow and non-movers. The following presents an overview of the discussions.



Workshop Coordinators:

Top Left to Right: Chris Pain, Lucia Ennis, Anne O'Mahony, Jenny Swatton, Ricardo Sabates, Odette Kweli

Bottom Left to Right: Rosaleen Martin, Rachel Sabates-Wheeler, Alice Simington, Keetie Roelen

Defining the Thresholds

There is a general consensus around the need to have clear thresholds above which we can say households have graduated, as well as being clear about what households are 'graduating into' (the enabling environment). Thresholds facilitate measurement and can illustrate progress, which in turn can be used for advocacy and bringing about policy change. While absolute lines can be drawn, based on key indicators in the Sustainable Development Goals, it may be more important to draw relative lines that incorporate the opinions of the programme participants, as well as trying to address issues related to the multidimensionality of the programme. However, in such a complex programme, how can we capture everything that is achieved in a small number of indicators? We need to accept some elements are too difficult to capture in a single threshold, such as the measurement of social capital, or the inclusion of self-confidence and self-esteem. However, these should not be discarded in favour of more easily measured indicators.

Overall, the general feeling was we may be paying too much attention to this and what might be more important is to understand a) if overall programme objectives are being met and b) the different trajectories of participants (fast/slow movers) and how to better tailor programmes to needs of different groups. One participant highlighted how they were "puzzled" about the discussion on '**what is graduation**' and that some of the discussion on definition is a distraction, similar to the lengthy debates on the difference between safety nets and social protection.

Coaching and Mentoring as the X-Factor

Coaching is often seen as the 'x-factor' in graduation programmes; the component that makes the difference between success or failure. In Burundi, the research was intended to also look at the role of coaching, to assess whether higher levels of support lead to greater outcomes. Even though research was not able to identify major differences between programme participants who received high or low treatment (three visits and one visit per month respectively) from their case manager², it is clear that coaching is an integral part of the Graduation approach. It is particularly important in terms of behaviour change and ensuring people utilise their assets in the most suitable way, with a general acceptance that the delivery of monetary assistance on its own, at least in the short-medium term, is not enough to help lift people out of extreme poverty.

Therefore, the question is not whether coaching/mentoring should be provided but how it should be provided and what messages case managers should be delivering. It is also generally agreed that there is a need to distinguish between training on the one hand and coaching or support services on the other. While technical trainings should be delivered by professionals, and there are certain messages that have to be delivered on a

² This is partially explained by the fact that one or three visits is not a large enough difference between the two treatment groups, while there was a great deal of spillover between the two groups in terms of the randomization at household, rather than community, level

one-to-one basis, there could be scope to reduce the burden on the case manager through greater utilisation of institutional structures (community channels/groups) as either the deliverers or recipients of the messages.

This raises two further issues. The first is related to behaviour change and the need to clearly identify which behaviour is to be changed before identifying the most effective channel for delivering the message. The second is the need to consider whether an approach which sets out to further utilise institutional structures is going to over-burden these existing systems and how this burden could be reduced, for instance through the better use of visual aids. This necessitates a greater understanding of what other messaging is being promoted in a given context and who is driving this, including government.

Graduation +++

There is a very real risk that Graduation Programmes will become over-burdened. In addition to trying to reduce the cost of programmes (driven in part by a focus on economy rather than effectiveness), more and more is being asked of them – as one participant described ‘it’s like adding more baubles to the Christmas tree’. Some examples of this include the community dialogue sessions; the formation of and participation in disaster risk reduction groups; the delivery of nutrition messaging and better access to health insurance. Although all of these have huge potential to address “extreme poverty” there is a need to clarify the objectives of a Graduation programme and be realistic about what it can achieve. Any single package needs to be kept clear and simple, sticking to the core elements of the programme; much of what can be done will depend on context and the messages to be delivered. It is important to start small and identify a niche, recognising that integrated programmes develop over time.



*Programme participants in Burundi receiving their mobile phones as part of the Graduation Programme.
Concern Worldwide*

The solution may well be to link participants to other programmes and existing structures, including interventions that focus on developing the capacities of the service delivering institutions in health, education or national registration (working on the supply as well as demand side), rather than over-burdening what is in essence a livelihoods programme. Looking to the future a better understanding of the different roles of government and NGOs may be necessary, with government focusing on cash transfers and NGOs doing the individual support and grassroots work.

Is Graduation Scalable or Replicable?

The general feeling is that Graduation programmes have the potential to be scalable, though all opportunities to reduce costs need to be taken³ whether this is in the form of less frequent one-to-one household visits from case managers and/or the better use of alternative means of message delivery. The word 'Graduation' has positive overtones for governments as it suggests a time bound package of support and subsequent exit from social welfare. This should be built on however; there is a need to seek opportunities to work with government social protection programmes and to advocate for the on-going support of extremely poor households who don't have labour capacity.



Graduation Programme Participants in Rwanda, Stanislas and Clementine, received training on caring for animals and selling produce. Concern Worldwide

There is a space for advocacy here – we know that 'Graduation' works, with the research from Rwanda and Burundi joining a greater body of evidence that shows how well these programmes work across a growing number of contexts. We need to push for more expenditure on this type of programme, including from Government's own resources, potentially in the form of a solidarity tax as has been implemented elsewhere. However, there were a number of worries expressed over whether a graduation programme is appropriate in less stable or fragile contexts, where markets opportunities may not exist, there has been little economic growth or the additional services to be linked to do not function.

Slow and Non-Movers

There is always the risk that households included on a graduation programme fail to progress, or slip back immediately after the cash transfers end. Earlier work in Haiti⁴ suggested that this can happen to anything up to 30% of programme participants. Though the figures from Rwanda and Burundi are not yet available, early indications suggest that a number of households fall into this category and are hidden by impressive mean values on a number of indicators. This will be looked in more detail in the coming months. This suggests that while there are lessons from the Graduation work to date for transformative and promotive social protection, it underlines the need for a quality, state run, protective and preventive social protection system⁵.

³ Due to the human resource requirements, graduation programmes are often considered to be expensive though this matter is still highly debated.

⁴ Pain, C., Vautravers, E. and Descieux, A. (2015) Sustaining Graduation: A Review of the CLM Programme in Haiti. IDS Bulletin 46(2): 74-82

⁵ For more on the distinction between these types of social protection, please see Stephen Devereux and Rachel Sabates-Wheeler (2004) Transformative social protection. IDS Working Paper 232 (available at <http://www.ids.ac.uk/publication/transformative-social-protection1>)

NGOs and Academic Researchers – Critical Friends

As this was also the culmination of a four year research partnership between Concern Worldwide and the IDS – CSP one of the four discussion groups at the workshop looked at the experiences of NGOs and academic researchers working closely together. There was a general feeling this has become much easier over the past 10 years as staff in NGOs increasingly understand what is involved in research, and academics see the need to have their work used for more than publications. This is just as well as both are being pushed to work more closely together by funding agencies. A number of general observations came from the group:

- ✚ Be clear on the research question (NGO responsibility), and from there the right methodology can be chosen (academic responsibility). While an RCT might be the most desirable approach for some academics (and has the greatest chance of being published) it is not always the most appropriate, with process evaluations answering more of the ‘how did this happen’ question, which may be more important for the NGO.
- ✚ If you do opt for an RCT make sure you do it right and ensure the sample is big enough, the control is not ‘contaminated’ by spillovers and the difference between the treatment and control is clear enough to show results.
- ✚ Be open to identifying the unintended impacts and looking into these as well as focussing solely on the narrow research question. The more answers we get, the more questions we seem to have.
- ✚ For an NGO, if you do research be open to being told that your intervention hasn’t worked in the way that you intended – the researchers have to be allowed their freedom to do their side of the work.
- ✚ Try to limit the amount of time the research takes from programme participants, and where appropriate control groups. In the research it is important to distinguish between what we need to know and what we would like to know. Wasting extremely poor people’s time is more unethical than having a control group.
- ✚ Both the NGO and the academic researchers need to be realistic in terms of what they can get from the relationship.

A number of external participants were impressed at how closely the two organisations had worked together and were in a position to openly discuss the results of the research, and be constructively critical in terms of the implementation of the programme.

The Way Ahead

The Graduation approach offers huge opportunities for Concern and other agencies working on “extreme poverty” and has been put forward as a means of helping to get to zero hunger faster in the [2016 Global Hunger Index](#). Notwithstanding, questions over the cost of the approach persist, even though it is not always clear what it is being compared to, and is something that needs to be looked into in more detail. A second key question concerns sustainability. While the work in Rwanda has shown the benefits are still clearly accruing to the household two years after the end of the programme, the same questions should be asked after five years (to assess the longer term sustainability) as well as paying greater attention to “intergenerational graduation” looking at the impact on children’s education and nutritional status. Other key questions to be examined include:

1. Why do some households fail to progress? This would necessitate follow-up with the groups or individuals that have seen a downturn after the programme finished and look at why this has happened.
2. What are the core attributes of a successful Case Manager? Are there differences between using volunteers and those who are paid?
3. To what extent does graduation lead to intra-household tensions? Ascertaining how much of the benefits actually go to the whole household, and look at the success of the programmes in the areas of gender and empowerment
4. Can Graduation work in a fragile or crisis context?

Annex 1: List of Participants

Name	Organisation
Anne O'Mahony	Director of International Programmes, Concern
Stephen Devereux	Institute of Development Studies (IDS)
Keetie Roelen	IDS
Rachel Sabates- Wheeler	IDS
Martin Greeley	IDS
Annalena Opper	IDS
Ricardo Sabates	University of Cambridge
Chris Pain	Concern Worldwide (Dublin)
Lucia Ennis	Concern Worldwide (Dublin)
Emily Bradley	Concern Worldwide (Dublin)
Laura Hastings	Concern Worldwide (Dublin)
Rosaleen Martin	Concern Worldwide (Dublin)
Alice Simington	Concern Worldwide (Dublin)
Anne-marie Coonan	Concern Worldwide (Dublin)
Rachel Slater	ODI
Martina Ulrichs	ODI
Rod Dubitsky	BRAC US
Miles Murray	Food Economy Group (FEG)
Philippa Tadele	ITAD
Alex Cornelius	ITAD
Larissa Pelham	Oxfam
Paul Jasper	OPML
Jenny Swatton	Concern Worldwide (UK)
Natalie Lartey	Concern Worldwide (UK)
Peter Reynolds	Concern Worldwide (UK)
Sarah Whiteley	Concern Worldwide (UK)
Julia Csastka	Concern Worldwide (UK)
Odette Kampwira	Concern Worldwide Rwanda
Philippe Rougier	Concern Worldwide Burundi
Russell Gates	Concern Worldwide Burundi
Melissa Acar	Concern Worldwide Haiti
Caoimhe de Barra	Concern Worldwide Malawi
Sam Fox	Concern Worldwide Malawi
Reka Sztopa	Concern Worldwide CAR

Apologies: CGAP, Save the Children, Mercy Corps, Irish Aid, DfID



TUESDAY 25TH OCTOBER 2016, 10AM – 2.30PM THE OLD SHIP HOTEL, BRIGHTON, UK

The Institute of Development Studies (IDS) together with Concern Worldwide have generated valuable evidence and learning on the question of sustainable graduation from extreme poverty. This workshop will include presentations of findings from the Rwanda and Burundi graduation programme research between 2012 and 2015.

The workshop will:

- ⇒ Contribute insights to improved design and implementation of graduation programmes based on learning;
- ⇒ Inform policy debates around assessing sustainable graduation/ social protection programmes; definition and conceptualisation of graduation;
- ⇒ Follow on from recent discussions on this topic and develop practical policy and research recommendations.

10-11AM: INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH FINDINGS

- Introduction
- Concern Graduation Experience: Alice Simington, former Country Director, Concern Rwanda
- Findings from the Rwanda Graduation Programme: IDS: Stephen Devereux
- Findings from the Burundi Graduation Programme: IDS: Keetie Roelen

11-12PM: ROUND TABLE DISCUSSIONS

Participants will spend approx. 15 minutes in each roundtable discussing key questions identified by the co-facilitators. Discussion will be captured on a flip chart for the next group to add their comments to.

The 4 groups will be as follows:

1. Defining and measuring graduation
2. Lessons from research
3. Money or message? The impact of coaching.
4. Sustainability/replication/scalability

12 - 1PM: PANEL DISCUSSION

Co-facilitators from the Round Tables will present back the findings as per the flipchart summaries to the plenary. The panel will give their feedback followed by a Q&A session.

1 - 1.30PM: WRAP UP & CONCLUDING REMARKS

Wrap up and outline of the way forward and discussion with focus on policy and research recommendations.

Annex 3: Round Table One-Pagers

IDS – CONCERN GRADUATION WORKSHOP

ROUND TABLE 1: DEFINING AND MEASURING GRADUATION

Graduation model programmes aim to ‘graduate’ participants out of the programme. But what does graduation mean? The concept is more complex than it might seem at first.

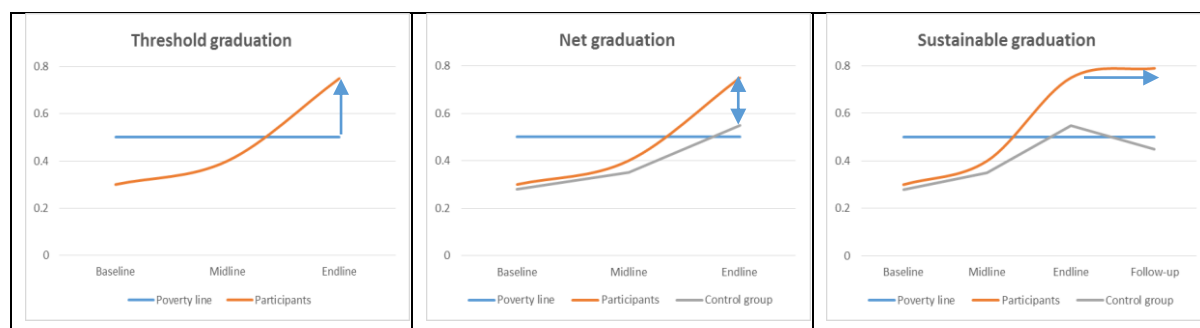
The simplest definition refers to **threshold graduation** out of poverty. Participants remain on the programme until they achieve a predefined level of income or assets. Alternatively, if participants exit the programme after a fixed period, the graduation success rate is measured as the percentage of participating households that have achieved the predefined threshold.

In the Rwanda evaluation, graduation was defined in terms of three indexes: for deprivation, productive assets and consumption assets. In Bangladesh, BRAC’s ‘Targeting the Ultra-Poor’ programme set the threshold for graduation out of ultra-poverty at US\$0.50 per person per day. The programme cycle runs for 24 months, after which an evaluation found that 92% of participants had achieved an income of US\$0.50.

Understanding how much graduation can be attributed to the programme itself requires comparing graduation rates of participants against those of similar non-participants – a ‘control group’ or ‘comparison group’ to calculate attributable graduation rates. For example, if 92% of BRAC participants graduate after 24 months, while 20% of control group households also reach this threshold, the **net graduation** rate is 72%.

Of course, participants who receive benefits from a programme automatically become better off, so a test for **sustainable graduation** is whether improvements recorded between baseline and endline are retained or continue to increase after the period of programme support ends.

Those who believe that social protection should always be available when needed argue for **developmental graduation**, meaning that participants graduate ‘into’ other social services, rather than ‘out of’ all forms of support.



QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Should graduation be measured against a predefined poverty line or asset threshold, or should progress be measured simply in terms of positive trajectories over time?
2. Does the concept of graduation contradict the principle that social protection should be available to everyone who needs it, whenever they need it?

IDS – CONCERN GRADUATION WORKSHOP

ROUND TABLE 2: MONEY OR MESSAGE?

There is a lot of debate about the extent to which coaching and support services are the ‘X-factor’ in graduation programmes. But what do we know about how much difference they make, on their own and in relation to other components of graduation programmes. And how can coaching and support services be meaningfully integrated in programmes?

In BRAC's 'Targeting the Ultra-Poor' programme in Bangladesh, individual coaching was identified as a key factor that gives participants the knowledge, skills and self-confidence to escape from extreme poverty – a cognitive and psychological resource alongside the material resource transfers. Women who graduated from Women for Women International programmes in the DRC and Rwanda also highlighted how social barriers often prevent women from moving out of poverty and considered training groups and support from facilitators to be crucial to their success. The recent Science article evaluating graduation programmes across the world discusses the potential importance of such services as well as highlighting the need for more research.

In the evaluation of Concern Worldwide's Graduation Programme in Burundi, we aimed *inter alia* to test the X-factor through an experimental design methodology. We find that coaching by dedicated case managers is important for achieving positive material and non-material change, not only for the individual but for wider communities – money is not enough. Qualitative findings highlight how programme participants valued and appreciated the coaching and support services, while spillover effects from treatment to control group households in the same communities indicate the pervasiveness of the messages and their impact beyond participating households.

"We will miss his pleasant visits but we have learned a lot from him and we will keep up the good work" [male participant, Cibitoke].

"Non-participants have imitated us in doing business because they wanted to be well off like us; some of them are SILC members and others have set up kitchen gardens" [female participant, Kirundo]

These evaluation findings allow for critical reflection about the need for and practicalities of more systematic and integrated approaches to social protection. They also urge wider debate about the extent to which coaching and support services can be integrated in graduation programmes, and how their sustainability can be achieved.

The case manager's advices were very useful to myself and my husband and I am afraid that if the visits stops we may go backward" [female participant, Kirundo].

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What is the appropriate balance between coaching and support services and other components in graduation programmes?
2. How can coaching and support services be meaningfully incorporated in graduation programmes to achieve lasting change?
3. How can coaching and support services be implemented in resource-constrained settings, including the use of community-based structures for providing such services?

IDS – CONCERN GRADUATION WORKSHOP

ROUND TABLE 3: SUSTAINABLE? REPLICABLE? SCALABLE?

Well-funded graduation model programmes delivered to small, geographically defined populations by a team of highly committed implementers, trainers and evaluators have a very good chance of lifting programme clients out of destitute and vulnerable situations over the course of the programme. Evidence from a range of graduation projects, including the Burundi and Rwanda projects, show this to be the case, including positive outcomes in terms of food security, asset accumulation and wellbeing. However, before replicating or increasing the coverage of such a project, any inquisitive development practitioner would, ideally, need to have answers to the following questions:

1. Replicability:
 - a. What are the costs of running such a project in terms of fixed and operating costs? How much staff capacity is needed to deliver, monitor and provide training within this project? Are the costs justifiable in relation to other interventions that would have achieved similar outcomes?
 - b. How easy will it be to replicate the project in a different location? Local costs and local social norms may mean that there are constraints to project replicability. For instance, if a cash transfer has relied on community involvement in targeting, is this replicable in an urban setting where community targeting might not be appropriate. The Ford/CGAP pilots suggest that their model can be successfully adapted to different countries across the world. Which elements of the Concern R and B projects are likely to be replicable and which parts will need to be adapted?

2. Sustainability:

- a. Are the positive project outcomes sustainable and if not, what does this imply for project design? It is no surprise that if a project client is given cash and assets over a prolonged period, when their income and assets and subsequently measured they will obviously be better off than before. Such an impact is directly attributable to the project intervention yet not an interesting indicator for measuring the sustainability of positive change. In both R&B, the biggest impacts were recorded during the first phase – cash transfers – after which some fall-back was reported on most material indicators. In terms of non-material indicators, some impacts were sustained while others declined, possibly due to lack of reinforcement post-intervention. It is critical to know under what conditions positive changes due to the intervention are able to be sustained over time.
- b. Is the project itself sustainable? Numerous timebound small scale cash transfer projects have been piloted and tested across the world, but only a few have found funding or political traction to continue for the long term. Questions need to be asked about the ambition and strategic vision of small-scale projects. How can successful projects encourage national political commitment so that positive learning and outcomes for few translates into positive outcomes for a much more significant number of the poor and vulnerable?
- c. How do we measure sustainability? Are we benchmarking ourselves too high? Are we being unrealistic in how we measure sustainability? At what level of success do we consider the project sustainable – with a view to other alternatives for those who cannot graduate based on their specific barriers to progress (ill health/mental issues/HH issues).

IDS – CONCERN GRADUATION WORKSHOP

ROUND TABLE 4: LESSONS FROM RESEARCH

Designing monitoring and evaluation systems that are coherent and serve the purposes of both project implementation and project outcomes requires careful planning. In fact, the Education Endowment Foundation stipulates amongst its guidelines for impact evaluation projects that the “evaluation team should be independent from the implementation team”. It is understandable that part of the importance for this independence has to do with the reliability and validity of the evaluation results. However, independence does not mean working separately. There is a huge overlap and interdependence between the needs of the evaluation and the requirements of the implementation that cannot be ignored. In this sense, both evaluation and implementation have to act separately but work collaboratively.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. With this in mind, we propose a discussion around some of these initial questions.
2. Why do we do research? Is there a distinction between those who want to ‘publish’ and ‘utilise’? What can we do to break this down?
3. What are the challenges of the collaboration between the evaluation team and the implementation team?
4. What are the challenges of application of evaluation methods to development programmes? In particular, what are the circumstances under which Randomised Control Trials could be implemented?
5. What is the role of monitoring for evaluation and what is the role of monitoring for programme implementation?
6. What are the differences between impact and process evaluation and how do these relate to programme implementation?
7. What were the lessons learned from the Graduation Project in Rwanda and Burundi as well as other development projects?

Annex 4: Links to Resources

<https://www.concern.net/insights>

<http://www.ids.ac.uk/project/burundi-graduation-programme-evaluation>

<http://www.ids.ac.uk/project/enhancing-the-productive-capacity-of-extremely-poor-people-in-rwanda-evaluation>