



About Trickle Up

Since its founding in 1979, Trickle Up has been dedicated to the economic empowerment of the poorest and most vulnerable. Over the past ten years Trickle Up has been a pioneer in the development and global adoption of the Graduation Approach, a holistic approach to economic development that has been proven to improve household income, savings, food security, and access to health and social services. Trickle Up has program offices in West Africa, Eastern India, and Central America and works throughout Africa and the Americas. Through partnerships and technical assistance engagements with governments and others, Trickle Up is dramatically scaling its impact and continues to innovate by adapting the Graduation Approach to specific populations, vulnerabilities and contexts. In 2017, Trickle Up and its partners will serve more than 40,000 participants.

“Everyone, no matter how poor, dreams of a better life, and will fight for it if given the opportunity.”

Mildred Robbins Leet
Founder, Trickle Up

Our Work in Burkina Faso

In Burkina Faso, Trickle Up’s program focuses exclusively on rural women living in extreme poverty. Due to significant barriers to financial inclusion and economic empowerment, women tend to be disproportionately represented in this segment of the population. Some of these barriers include lack of access to land, low literacy rates, domestic responsibilities including care for children, and lack of capital to invest in livelihood activities. Reliance on subsistence farming makes rural populations vulnerable, particularly in the Sahel region where chronic environmental shocks propagate food insecurity and poverty. Consequently, families exist in an intergenerational cycle of poverty. With a 34% rate of chronic malnutrition and a 10% rate of acute malnutrition in children, Burkina Faso is classified as a country with a serious nutrition emergency.

Trickle Up's Graduation Approach

Trickle Up's core competencies are rooted in the Graduation Approach – a rigorously tested approach to economic inclusion that has been adapted and evaluated across the globe. Graduation projects assist households to sustainably move out of extreme poverty through time-bound interventions. Trickle Up's programs focus primarily on women, but also on people with disabilities and refugees. Program components work together to increase the economic and social empowerment of participants:

Training increases self-esteem and awareness of rights. Skill-building improves basic financial literacy, livelihood planning, and understanding of savings, credit, and interest rates. Savings groups provide access to savings and loans, create social capital, and connect families to government and private sector institutions and services. Regular household coaching reinforces training and provides technical assistance to households as they implement new livelihood activities.

Market analysis Months 0-3

Regular coaching Months 4-24



Participant selection

Triangulation, obtain community buy-in, utilization of participatory poverty assessment tools

Savings group formation

Participants organized into VSL Savings groups of 20-25 to build financial discipline, social inclusion.

Skills training

Technical training on how to conduct market assessment, basic accounting and livelihood planning.

Asset transfer for livelihoods

Individual grants of 50,000 CFA are disbursed to each participant having completed various trainings. Grant is used to fund livelihood plans.

Continuous learning, growth, empowerment

Ongoing coaching complements classroom training and continues to build social support system

Our Impact in Burkina Faso

Through its local partners, Trickle Up works mainly in the Nord region (Yatenga, Zondoma, Passore), but previously also implemented programs in the Center-West (Boulkiemde) and the Boucle du Mouhoun (Kossi). These provinces are characterized by repeated poor harvests due to the arid climate of the Sahel, which over the past decade has led to serious nutritional consequences for young children. Since 2007, Trickle Up has implemented the Graduation Approach with approximately 5,450 households, effectively impacting over 27,000 beneficiaries to date.

Results show that the Trickle Up program has contributed to:

- Increasing households' income and daily spending on foods other than grains **3x**.
- Increasing participation in savings to **99%**, up from only 34% at baseline
- Supporting the creation of livelihoods with **65%** of participants in Burkina Faso reporting having two or more businesses
- Increasing the **resilience** of participant households to environmental shocks and market trends

Innovation and Scale

Understanding that women tend to invest their income towards basic necessities for their families, particularly their children, Trickle Up decided in 2014 to participate in the design and implementation of a three-arm randomized controlled trial (RCT) to test the child-level effects of Graduation alone and in combination with a child protection sensitization program that addresses cultural norms and information deficits regarding children. This evaluation is testing whether economic empowerment alone is sufficient to keep these families together, protect children from various risks, and increase their well-being, or if child-protection-themed sensitizations are crucial to deepening the effect. Preliminary results show that women's economic empowerment contributes significantly to reducing poverty-related stress levels within the household, which in turn mitigates stress-related violence against children.

Over the next few years, Trickle Up intends to dramatically scale its impact and reach hundreds of thousands of extremely poor households globally through existing and new national government partnerships. Currently in Burkina Faso, Trickle Up is designing a large scale evaluation in collaboration with a World Bank funded government cash transfer project to test cost-effective delivery mechanisms of Graduation to 10,000 cash transfer recipient households. Results from this evaluation could potentially inform future designs of cash transfer programs in West Africa and further the mission of integrating the Graduation Approach into government social protection programs.