

# TARGETING

## Experiences from Graduation Projects in Displaced Contexts



On May 2-4, 2023, Trickle Up convened partners implementing the Graduation Approach and the Graduation community of practice to share experiences working in displaced contexts in Uganda and Kenya. During the event, representatives from three Graduation projects discussed successes, challenges, and key learning related to implementing Graduation programming. The three projects are the Graduating to Resilience Activity, implemented by AVSI Foundation Uganda in consortium with Trickle Up and American Institutes for Research (AIR); Building Self Reliance and Resilience in the West Nile, implemented by Danish Refugee Council (DRC) Uganda, Trickle Up, and CEFORD; and the Kakuma Graduation Project, implemented by Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) Kenya with technical assistance from Trickle Up.

# Role of Targeting in Graduation

Graduation programs deliver a holistic and multidimensional package of support that is designed to address the specific needs of people living in extreme poverty who face diverse barriers to building sustainable livelihoods. Given the intensity of the commitment expected from Graduation participants, a key element for these types of programs is that they include an in-depth targeting process to identify participants with the greatest need for the full package of support and have the capacity to engage in livelihood activities. Robust targeting processes in the Graduation Approach are critical to ensure programming reaches the poorest households, guarantee transparency in participant selection, and select participants who are committed to participation throughout the duration of the program. The Trickle Up learning event provided a forum for project teams to share experiences and best practices from designing and implementing targeting processes in displaced contexts.

A key step in the targeting process is to develop contextualized inclusion and exclusion criteria. Inclusion criteria are the qualities or characteristics of participants or households that are good indicators of suitability for the Graduation Approach. Typically, these are locally defined poverty indicators that are indicative of households living in extreme poverty. Examples include a high dependency ratio, a female-headed household, low educational resources, low and intermittent income, and low food security, depending on the context.



Exclusion criteria are qualities and characteristics used to reject certain households from the Graduation Approach as they may have relatively more stability and wealth, or are unable to participate in livelihood projects. For example, Graduation Approach programs may not be suitable for households where members are already engaged in formal employment, are recent arrivals in the community, or are addressing more pressing challenges, such as illnesses, that prevent them from engaging in livelihood projects. Selection criteria are the criteria used to make the final determination of which households will participate in the program.

# Key Learning from Project Experience

## **1. Inclusion and exclusion criteria must be informed by the local displacement contexts and adapted for host and refugee communities.**

While all Graduation projects aim to reach people with the greatest need for support to build sustainable livelihoods, they each used different inclusion or exclusion criteria informed by the unique poverty characteristics of the operational context to target and select potential participants. The partner project teams developed these criteria by conducting detailed assessments in displacement contexts to identify specific socioeconomic indicators of extreme poverty. Several projects also required consideration of the linguistic capacity of participants to match them with coaches who speak the same language. Project teams adapted unique inclusion criteria based on the different contexts in host and refugee communities, recognizing the conditions of poverty in these settings can often vary. For example, the NRC project team found that many of the poorest households in host communities resorted to selling productive assets to cope with drought. As such, the project specifically targeted those households in the host community; however, they did not include this among the inclusion criteria for the refugee community.

Project teams also noted that in displaced contexts, exclusion criteria must include consideration of the migration status of potential participants, as people who are not likely to remain in the project area would not be able to participate throughout the full project life cycle. Moreover, participants who do not have a legal right to engage in business in their home country cannot engage in income generating activities. Additionally, exclusion criteria should include a strong understanding of humanitarian assistance provided in the local context that may make a household appear wealthier. For instance, humanitarian assistance may include roofing materials, making a household appear wealthier than their reality.

## **2. Implementing participatory targeting methods ensure that criteria are informed by the local poverty context, ensure transparency among community members, and gain buy-in.**

All three project teams shared experiences of using participatory, community-based approaches to define local poverty characteristics and identify households living in poverty. In displaced contexts, participatory targeting methods are especially important since official databases are often incomplete. Community-driven processes provide an opportunity for community members to share their perspective on what defines poverty in the local context and gather more accurate, up-to-date information about households in the community.

All three projects used a participatory poverty wealth ranking (PWR) exercise in which community leaders and community members collaboratively identify the different characteristics of different wealth levels among households. In the Graduating to Resilience activity, the team was able to learn from several pilots to refine their process. They conducted a social mapping exercise at the outset, visiting each house rather than relying on maps drawn by community members. During this process, they used a customized “scorecard” to reflect local definitions of poverty, therefore enabling the identification greater portion of households (HHs) in the community, even those not included on village lists. Community leaders and representatives then used these HH lists, compiled after the social mapping exercise, to conduct a “bucketing” exercise – placing each HH into one of four categories (as defined by the community): rich, moderate, poor, or extremely poor.

These processes are time intensive, but they are useful for project teams to build trust with the community, generate consensus, and build community buy-in across the community. These processes also ensure that the community has a shared perspective of extreme poverty that is incorporated into the project’s selection criteria.

### **3. Verification processes help to confirm that selected households meet the eligibility criteria and provide an additional layer of transparency in the targeting and selection process.**

All three project teams used participatory targeting methods with steps to verify the eligibility of selected households. The Graduating to Resilience team conducted household visits and surveyed households using the Poverty Probability Index (PPI), which scored each household according to certain poverty characteristics. The project team then used the results of each household’s PPI score to verify the results from the participatory PWR process. The DRC project team also surveyed households using a poverty scorecard and then consulted with community leadership to confirm the list of selected participants. The NRC project team conducted household verification visits to ensure that selected households meet the designated eligibility criteria. These verification steps are important to ensure that information obtained during earlier stages of targeting is accurate and selected participants. The verification process also



provides an opportunity for project teams to engage directly with project households and assess their motivation and commitment to participate fully in the project.

#### **4. Project teams must consider the likelihood of participant attrition when designing targeting processes.**

The targeting process is so important in Graduation projects because it ensures that project teams select participants who will commit the time required, have the capacity to actively participate, and will remain active throughout the duration of the project. The DRC team found that it was especially important to conduct due diligence on participant behavior and motivation during the targeting process to select participants with a commitment to actively participate in all project activities and build sustainable livelihoods. Even when this due diligence is conducted, some participants will inevitably drop out due to changing life circumstances, such as opportunities to migrate. Teams account for this risk by over-targeting by up to 20% to ensure projects reach their target numbers at the end of the project.

## Looking Forward

The multi-step targeting processes shared by the three project teams are time and resource-intensive, requiring significant staff time to facilitate targeting and conduct individual household visits to finalize household selection for the project. However, a thorough targeting process ensures that the final household selection is appropriate for the different components of the Graduation Approach and that selected households are committed to participating in the project. When appropriate, leveraging second or third-party data, such as UNHCR rosters, can potentially reduce the staff time required to conduct targeting. While resource-intensive, targeting is a necessary component of effective Graduation Approach projects. It ensures project teams fully understand the local poverty context in both refugee and host communities and select participants who meet the local definition of extreme poverty. Additionally, the time and resources required to conduct effective targeting processes ensure that projects target households with the most need for the holistic support provided by the Graduation Approach. Targeting is crucial to confirm eligible households are not missed in the process, to gain community input and buy-in, and to reduce attrition during the project.

While Graduation programs are specifically designed to respond to the needs of households living in extreme poverty, the approach can also be adapted to meet the needs of specific target populations such as youth and people with disabilities or specific initiatives such as improving climate resilience or reducing early marriage rates. As project teams continue to adapt the Graduation model to serve different populations, targeting methods must also be adapted to select participants with the targeted characteristics.

# Trickle Up Technical Support

Trickle Up has experience supporting implementing partners to design and undertake targeting processes that are informed by context-dependent poverty characteristics. Trickle Up supports partners through the process of defining inclusion and exclusion criteria, building capacity in participatory targeting methodologies, and assisting in the development, implementation, and analysis of poverty assessments and other household-level verification tools.



All photos in this report courtesy of DRC Uganda.

To learn more about Trickle Up's work and the Refugee Affairs team, please email Shoshana Hecker, Senior Director of Refugee Affairs, at [shecker@trickleup.org](mailto:shecker@trickleup.org).

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