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## **Graduation Programming**

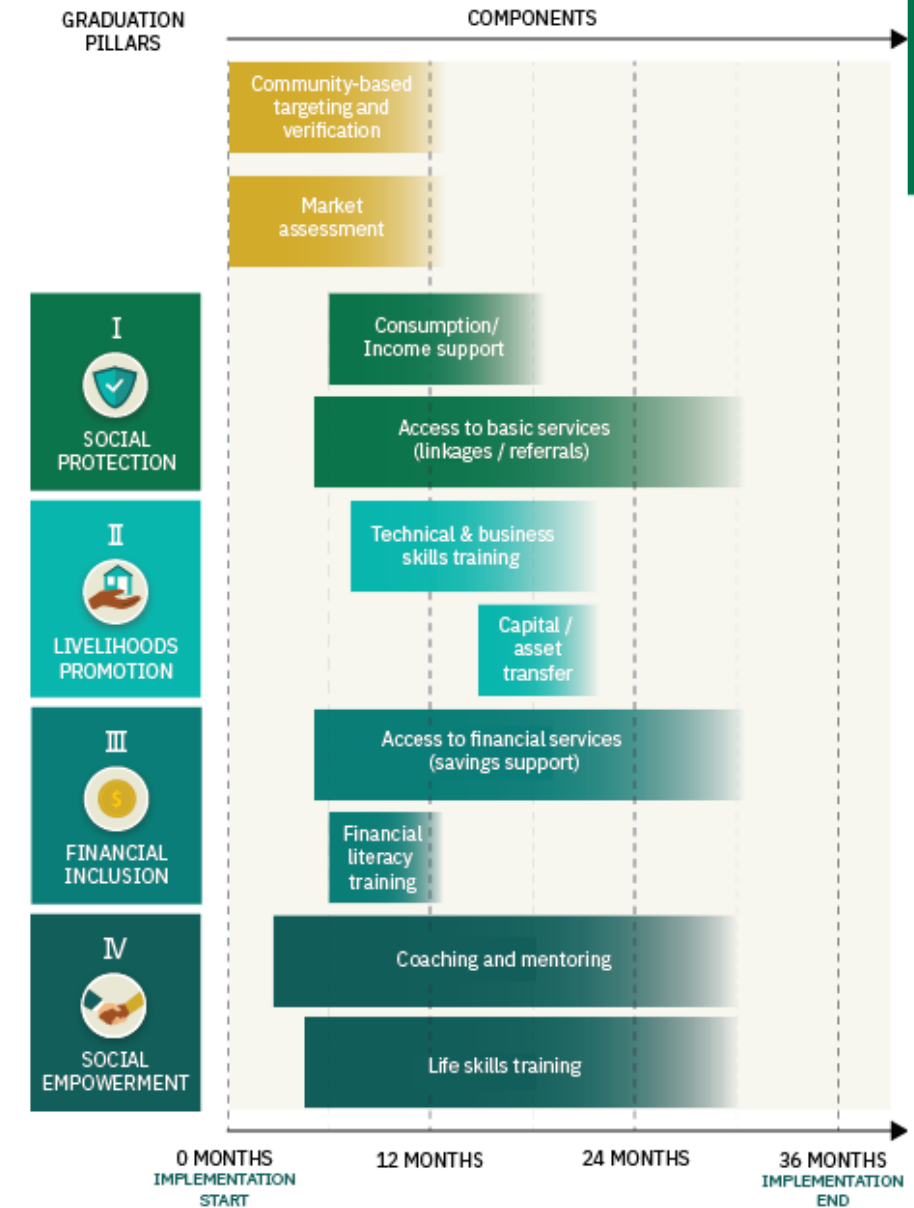
**Regional Economic Inclusion Working Group**

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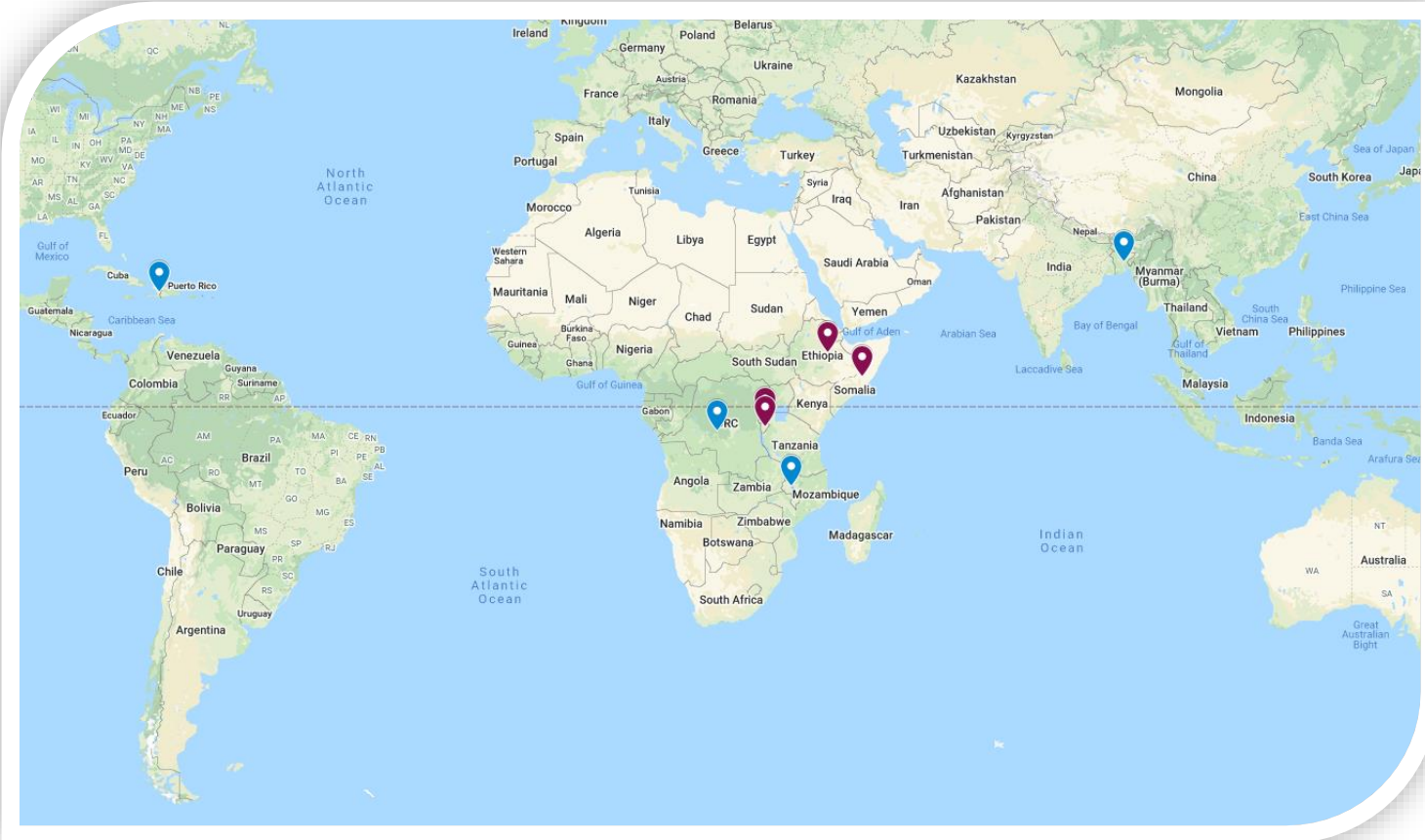
# Graduation Approach

- Pioneered by BRAC in Bangladesh as a way of exploring how social protection, livelihood promotion and access to finance could be sequenced to provide a pathway out of extreme poverty.
- Efforts by multiple actors to scale up and adapt the approach to different contexts/population groups.
- Economic Inclusion programmes (including Graduation Approach) currently serve 92 million people (directly or indirectly) in 75 countries (PEI 2021).
- Quickly becoming a key feature of national Social Protection systems globally.
- Comprehensive package of support provided to an individual/household.



\* sample schedule

# Concern's Graduation Portfolio (2007 to date)



- Haiti (2007-2009), CGAP – Ford Foundation pilots (with Fonkoze).
- Directly supported 110,971 people across 9 countries, indirectly far more.
- Region: **Rwanda, Burundi, Ethiopia, Somalia.**
- Strong Government partnerships (implementation; inform national policy and programming).
  - *How to integrate livelihood packages into existing social protection systems and build on top of existing social assistance programmes.*

# Rwanda and Burundi

**Dates:** 2012 – 2016 and 2017 – 2021

**Location:** Southern Province (Rwanda), Cibitoke, Kirundo and Bubanza (Burundi)

**Reach:** 11,774 HH

**Cost:** \$1023/HH (24 months) / \$1.40/HH/day

- **Randomised Control Trial** (2012-2016); research led by IDS. Examined sustainability of impacts over time (**Rwanda**) and the importance of the coaching component in achieving graduation outcomes (**Burundi**).
- Results showed **major improvements in multiple dimensions of poverty including** an ability to meet basic needs, the accumulation of assets and high income levels as well as more transformative improvements such as self-efficacy and improved health and nutrition. <https://www.concern.org.uk/research-and-reports/research-graduation-model>.
- **Rwanda:** 61% of participants met an asset-based graduation rate at 12 months compared to a baseline of 6%. Benefits sustained, one year after programme ended (48 months) 77% met asset-based graduation criteria, up from 3 years previously.
- **Burundi:** Positive impacts not achieved through a single component but through the combination of programme components working together.
- Further qualitative research has looked at graduation trajectories and the effect programmes have had on intra-household relationships. Despite benefits having been sustained, people follow different trajectories during and after programme support. Highlights need to look at enabling and constraining factors and what people are graduating (moving) into and onto (**enabling environment**).

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- Implemented in partnership with Government ministries – MINALOC (**Rwanda**) and Ministry of National Solidarity, Social Affairs, Human Rights and Gender (**Burundi**).
- Active member of the Social Protection Working Groups in both countries; co-chair of the Sector Working Group on Linkages to Livelihoods and Complementary Services for Graduation (**Rwanda**).
- Successful in influencing the design of policies and programmes.
- **Rwanda:** Graduation is a prominent part of the Vision 2020 Umurenge Programme (VUP) – National Social Protection Programme in Rwanda.
- **Burundi:** Consulted on the design of the new ‘Merankabandi’ World Bank funded Social Safety Net Programme.
  - Provided specific inputs on targeting and accountability.
  - Instrumental in increasing political acceptability for programmes that cash-based assistance and the use of electronic payment mechanisms.

# Ethiopia (REGRADE)

**Dates:** 2017 - 2021

**Location:** South Wollo Zone (Amhara Region) and Wolayita Zone (SNNP Region)

**Reach:** 5,634 HHs

**Cost:** UNK

- Linked to the temporary direct support provision of the national Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP)
  - *PSNP Temporary Direct Support clients are food insecure but have labour capacity. PSNP provides them with cash and/or food transfers in return for seasonal public employment activities. In addition to the safety net function, the PSNP also supports livelihood promotion through technical assistance, business planning and access to financial services.*
- Whilst safety net function covers the whole of Ethiopia, the coverage of the livelihood component is more limited.
- REGRADE supports the implementation of the livelihood component (builds on top of the safety net provision) in 20 Community Micro Watersheds found in 9 Woredas.
- There are similarities and differences in the design and implementation of the PSNP livelihood package and the REGRADE livelihood package.
- Worked closely with Zonal, Woreda and Kebele Food Security Task Force on implementation.
- Involved in the annual PSNP reverification process led to the development of new jointly agreed criteria (and thresholds) upon which households will be assessed as ready (or not) to exit/graduate the PSNP.

# Ethiopia

- New criteria multifaceted (includes income diversification, food security, nutrition, financial inclusion, housing conditions, health and education status).
- Additional investment of ETB 13,342/HH on top of the PSNP ETB 6,840 – 9,360 led to a graduation rate of 59% (Cohort 1) compared to a national rate of 3% in 2019.  
\*Pre-existing graduation criteria.
- Watershed Management Approach (targeting and temporary employment) also led to the restoration of over 1,770 hectares of unproductive land and reduced soil loss by 51%.
- Invited to share programme experience and learning to the federal PSNP-IV review team responsible for updating the PSNP guidelines.

	PSNP-IV	REGRADE
<b>Targeting</b>	REGRADE follows a similar targeting approach to the PSNP. Following geographical targeting, eligible households are identified through a community-based targeting exercise, undertaken jointly with the Kebele Food Security Task Force (KFSTF) and community leaders. Under Cohort 1 of REGRADE, participants had to be receiving PSNP safety net support in order to be eligible for the programme. This was changed in Cohort 2 to capture other extremely poor households not enrolled on the PSNP.	
<b>Consumption support</b>	Both programmes provide the same households with 12 months of support. The PSNP provides two rounds of 6 months between January and June and REGRADE provides two rounds of 6 months between July and December. They provide the same daily rate of ETB 39 (US \$1.86) per person and support is conditional on undertaking public employment. For REGRADE these are related to soil and water conservation within the community watershed (refer to article 6).	
<b>Technical and business skills training</b>	Training is provided on one of three livelihood pathways: livestock and crop production, off-farm and waged-employment. Curriculum covers entrepreneurship, business and marketing and is delivered by a mix of livelihood experts and Agricultural Extension Workers.	Technical and business skills training is provided on eight different occupations (e.g. modern livestock and crop production, masonry, barbary). Training is delivered directly by Concern staff in partnership with Zonal/Woreda government experts. Where skills do not exist in-house, services are sourced externally from other training providers.
<b>Coaching and mentoring</b>	Households are supported by the Government Agricultural Development Agents (DAs) through general extension services. Each DA supports around 250-300 households.	Households are supported by full-time locally-based Household Case Workers (HCW) employed directly by Concern. Each HCW supports around 50 households. Coaching is delivered through individual household visits (2 per month) and in groups of 10 (4 sessions per month) to nurture positive behaviour change.
<b>Facilitating access to financial services</b>	Households are linked to the government-supported Rural Saving and Credit Cooperatives (RUSACCOs) and Micro Finance Institutions.	Households are linked to government-supported Rural Saving and Credit Cooperatives (RuSACCOs). Where infrastructure is limited, participants are supported to establish Village Economic and Social Associations (VESA) to bridge the gaps <sup>2</sup> .
<b>Asset/capital transfer</b>	Households receive a transfer of approx. ETB 7,000 (US \$250) on a loan basis. Funds are delivered through microfinance institutions (MFIs) and must be repaid in full.	Households receive part-grant (70%) and part-loan (30%) <sup>3</sup> . Grants are made directly by Concern whilst loans are made through RUSACCOS and are repayable. The value of support varies by livelihood activity (up to a maximum of ETB 6,000 US \$222).
<b>Other key design features</b>		Activities are designed to address gender inequality, Gender Based Violence, Health and Nutrition and Risk Management.

# Somalia

**Dates:** 2020 - 2021

**Location:** Baidoa, South West State

**Reach:** 200 households

**Target population:** IDPs

**Cost:** USD \$1340/HH (22 months)

- Pilot programme targeting protracted displacement-affected households in Baidoa, South West State.
- Designed to test how activities under a cash-based humanitarian programme (under the Somali Cash Consortium) and durable solutions programme (Danwadaag) can be coordinated and sequenced to achieve longer-term sustainable impact and improve overall value for money.
- Participants of the Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (under Somali Cash Consortium) are linked with livelihood promotion activities under Danwadaag.
- Control group of 200 households who are only receiving the Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (SCC).
- Learning from the pilot will be used to influence future programming.



# Somalia (SAGAL)

**Dates:** 2020 - 2024

**Location:** Multiple, Somalia

**Reach:** 44,221 households/265,326 individuals

**Target population:** IDPs, returnees and hosts

- SAGAL (Social Transfers for vulnerable Somalia people), implemented by Somali Cash Consortium.
- Objective to support households to improve food and nutrition security and protect livelihoods. Support also provided to strengthen government system for delivery of social assistance.
- Contributes to SO3 of the EU Local Economic Development Programme.
  - *SO3: Social Safety Nets. Provide safety nets to vulnerable people to contribute to strengthening their recovery and resilience).*
- Potential to link *SO2: Economic growth. Revitalise and expand the local economy with a focus on livelihood enhancement, job creation and broad-based inclusive growth.* Possibilities being explored:
  - GIZ Technical and Vocational Education and Training Programme
  - FAO RAAISE Project (value chain development - fisheries, livestock and agriculture)
  - ILED Finance for Growth project (access to finance)

# Challenges/Lessons Learned

## ■ Objectives/Targeting

- Safety Net programmes and Livelihood programmes have different objectives and therefore targeting criteria.
- Safety Net programmes are often narrowly targeted with low coverage of the working age poor. Creates a challenge when trying to build livelihood packages on top of existing provision.
- Whilst there is huge potential to improve social and economic well-being by linking safety nets with complementary interventions designed to improve labour market engagement, there is a risk that we start to focus too much on programme exit and reducing social protection case loads. It is not about removing people from social protection altogether but facilitating access to more sustainable livelihoods.

## ■ Components

- Implementation challenges i.e. inadequate/delayed payments mean that transfers don't always stabilise income. Social protection needs to be regular, predictable and the value adequate to enable people to meet their basic needs and invest time in livelihood promotion activities.
- The valuable role of coaching (creating linkages, improving self-efficacy, mental health) as well as the role of community-based saving groups as a bridging structure to more formal financial inclusion.
- The cost of coaching is often seen as a constraint to large scale provision and replication therefore often squeezed. Risks programme efficacy.

# Challenges/Lessons Learned

## ■ Labour market

- There is often a strong emphasis on addressing supply side constraints to labour market engagement (lack of skills, capital) but less on demand side constraints (lack of labour demand) and narrow engagement with market actors (incl. private sector).
- Policies and programmes need to identify and address barriers to labour market engagement including structural barriers.
- The dominance of informal employment in many countries often means that any employment created does not conform to decent work standards which has implications for sustainability. Need to consider labour market conditions.

## ■ The enabling environment

- Participants follow different trajectories during and after programmes; we need to better understand enabling and constraining factors and what people are moving into/onto.
- The importance of coordination (vertically and horizontally) given the multi-sectoral nature of programmes and the need for institutional and legal structures and incentives to ensure effective coordination.

## Where next...

- Focus on adaptation to different contexts (e.g. urban and fragile and conflict affected).
- Focus on different target populations, i.e. refugees, IDPs (Lebanon, Turkey) and addressing challenges to doing so (legal frameworks, ID cards, right to work etc.)
  - *Member of the UNHCR Poverty Alleviation Coalition (coalition has ambitious goal of alleviating poverty of 500,000 households consisting of refugees and nationals in 35 countries within 5 years).*
- Focus on 'Green Graduation' and employment options that have a direct, positive impact on the environment (e.g. jobs that have a focus on reducing carbon emissions, restoring nature or making similar environmental improvement).
- Continue to work alongside Government partners on integrating graduation approaches within broader systems of Social Protection and influencing policy and programming based on evidence-based learning.
- Stronger focus on systems change for scale and sustainability, and on risk management.
- Continue to engage with regional and global networks (incl. Partnership for Economic Inclusion, UNHCR Poverty Alleviation Coalition) on what works, where

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EXTREME POVERTY  
WHATEVER  
IT TAKES**