

Intervention Delivered at UNGA ECOSOC and HLPF Review, 15 February 2024

Esteemed delegates, distinguished participants,

My name is Heidi McAnnally-Linz, and it is a privilege to represent BRAC International today.

As the largest Global South-led NGO, BRAC has been at the frontlines of poverty alleviation for decades. We have partnered with over 100 million participants in proven programs across 17 countries.

We are all here today given the urgency that not a single SDG is on track globally, and not a single country is making progress across all the SDGs.

This is a direct result of a siloed approach to poverty reduction which fails to account for the interlinked social, economic and environmental vulnerabilities and deprivations faced by communities living in extreme poverty.

As we look forward to the HLPF, the Summit of the Future, and the post-2030 agenda, I urge us to leave these silos to prioritize scaling proven innovations that address these linkages.

Those who are furthest behind do not face just one single barrier. Women living in extreme poverty are also most impacted by extreme climate events, health crises, or displacement.

Humans simply do not experience their lives neatly divided into sectors or single SDGs.

So we cannot expect single solutions to move the needle.

But there is hope. As I shared in the ECOSOC partnership forum, we have proof that extreme poverty is not insurmountable. There are interventions with decades of evidence behind them that work precisely because of the multidimensional approach.

What has become known as the Graduation approach, which was originally designed by BRAC but is now leveraged by dozens of entities in 100+ programs around the world, is one such intervention. It combines three things: 1) a large productive asset, 2) basic needs support while the asset becomes productive, and 3) coaching that builds agency, know-how, and hope.

Dozens of randomized evaluations, led by academics including Nobel-prize winners, show that the Graduation approach addresses multiple drivers of exclusion and deprivation - what economists call the poverty trap - to achieve transformative impact for those furthest behind.

This evidence also demonstrates that the approach contributes to SDG 1 on no poverty, SDG 2 on zero hunger, SDG 3 on good health and well-being, SDG 5 on gender equality, SDG 8 on decent work and economic growth, SDG 10 on reduced inequalities and SDG 13 on climate action.

This all suggests that scaling such approaches can accelerate progress on multiple SDGs simultaneously, putting generations of people on a pathway out of poverty.

We are making some progress already. Dozens of governments, development partners, and CSOs are adapting the approach across dozens of contexts and for different impact groups, including women, youth, refugees and IDPs, climate-vulnerable communities, and people with disabilities.

For example, the Government's graduation program in Bihar, India is enabling more than 185,000 households - nearly 1 million people - to leave a life of poverty behind. This proves it can be done, but the global community must do more.

The HLPF and the Summit of the Future should encourage us all to think beyond silos and single-outcome interventions, pushing us to scale integrated solutions that match the integrated nature of the SDGs.

I hope this is one of many opportunities for us to explore a new path forward - a path that leverages and scales today's proven multidimensional innovations for a better tomorrow.

Thank you.