

Self Help Africa

Mandate: To support the livelihoods of Africa's small holder farmers.

Key Graduation Lessons Learned:

1. It is key to provide realistic budgets for productive assets so that it makes business sense for beneficiary otherwise the enterprises fail from the beginning.
2. Assess beneficiaries existing strengths before deciding on the kind of productive support. Avoid one-size fits all approach, even though placing a cap on options.
3. In rural context, cash transfer should cover at least one farming season to avoid beneficiaries liquidating their productive assets to take care of household need.
4. Partnership with local government is key to the success of the intervention

Scale: Global, over 200 staff globally and 34 staff in Kenya; 24 Million Euros per year globally and 2 Million Euros per year for the Kenya Programme. Based in Kenya, Uganda, Zambia, Malawi, Ethiopia, Burkina Faso and supporting projects in Togo, Ghana, Benin, Rwanda and Tanzania

Headquarters: In Kenya we are based in Nairobi, at Bank of Africa Building Off Waiyaki Way on Karuna Close and internationally, our Headquarters is in Dublin Ireland

Initiation: Since 2005 but officially registered in 2008 by the NGO Board.

Graduation work: We are implementing a graduation model in refugee settlements in North Western (Solwezi) and Western (Kaoma) Zambia. The model is supporting 300 refugees into self-reliant livelihoods. The model comprises trainings/coaching (enterprise and agriculture), provision of cash based interventions (up to 9 months per household) provision of investment assets/capital supported by a cadre of caseworkers/mentors.

Future plans: Our strategic direction is to scale up and engage with more households. One of the issues coming out of current graduation activities is that the amount given as productive assets is inadequate and may not enable beneficiaries to build up profitable enterprises. Even then the impact and the rate of change in terms of livelihoods improvement is much better than that experienced under ordinary livelihood programming. It is likely that our livelihood improvement programming may include provision of productive assets and mentorship, side by side.

Where, as an organisation, would you like to be in 5 or 10 years?

In the next 5 to 10 years we would like be engaged in large graduation projects targeting larger numbers for scale. We would also like to conduct research and

studies on the degree of self-reliance achieved - how those who graduate go on to sustain their livelihoods and the success factors of the graduation approach. We would also like to implement the approach with ordinary citizens, including under a variety of geographical, cultural contexts.

We are not implementing any graduation project in Kenya

We have not conducted any research yet, but the current graduation intervention is a pilot. However, the graduation approach is a more costly livelihood improvement and self-reliant intervention but so far evidence from our assessments shows that communities move out of extreme poverty at a much quicker rate. One area of interest would be to study the criteria and make-up of people/households that are more likely to leverage support under a graduation model. Experience from our current graduation intervention is that there are differences in terms of graduation within the same cohort. Some cohort members have transformed their lives in a fairly short time while others continue to struggle. Another area of possible research would be the role of mentorship (a vital component under graduation) in the graduation approach. What type of experience should a mentor have and levels of interaction. Comparative studies of the approach in different settings would be enrich our understanding of what makes for a successful graduation model.

A Graduation approach requires a sequenced and intensive package of support the extreme poor/vulnerable. Regular cash transfers, productive assets, access to finance and saving facilities; and coaching. The productive assets must be adequate if they are to raise the target people to a new level of livelihoods otherwise they are simply consumed and not invested. The timing of when cash transfers are made is very important and frequency and predictability is also key especially for protecting the productive assets. Important to recognise that rural and urban areas will present different challenges even within the graduation approach.

As this is a pilot, a lot of learning will be used to influence policy engagement especially at national level. The graduation approach has potential to improve livelihoods for the very poor even outside the refugee context we currently work in.

Other activities include market linkages and market oriented production for targets involved in agriculture. Village banking, use of radio and radio listening circles as a behaviour change tool.

Currently targeting 300 HH for graduation to self-reliance. We plan to scale-up within the refugee settlements and host communities. We have learnt that for the model to take root, significant social behaviour change must take place within the target people/households. This is change from receiving handouts and living of cash transfers to being self-reliant and working for themselves. In future our methodology will commence with behaviour change messaging using radio, drama, IEC and other printed visual aids.