

The Global State of Ultra-Poverty 2017

A global analysis of the greatest opportunities to end ultra-poverty by 2030.



RESULTS
the power to end poverty



November 2017

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We would also like to express our thanks to the Oxford Policy and Human Development Initiative for their work in developing the Multidimensional Poverty Index and sharing their data with us.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Executive Summary

We Must Prioritize Ending Ultra-Poverty NOW

There Is No Time to Spare

In 2015, 193 countries, together with the World Bank and the United Nations (UN), jointly declared an intention to achieve one of the most ambitious goals in human history: “By 2030, nobody will live in extreme poverty, anywhere in the world.”¹ Audacious as this goal may seem, it is imperative that we achieve it for our collective well-being and continued global progress. As Nelson Mandela observed, “Overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity. It is an act of justice. It is the protection of a fundamental human right; the right to dignity and a decent life. While poverty persists, there is no true freedom.”²

We view this report as a clarion call that we are in grave danger of missing the 2030 goal unless the global community acts immediately and urgently to prioritize reaching the nearly 400 million people living in the most severe forms of extreme poverty on the planet— what is termed ultra-poverty. Much of the global progress that has been made towards ending extreme poverty in the last few decades has come from lifting those closest to the poverty line (set by the World Bank at US\$1.90), primarily in India and China. The ultra-poor, in contrast, are those farthest from that line.

These are the individuals and families living on the margins of society, so isolated and excluded that they are left out of government assistance programs and market-based mechanisms like microfinance or micro-loans. Most of their time and energy are expended toward sourcing food, and they can find only sporadic labor and unreliable shelter. Most often these households are headed by a woman, trapped in a poverty cycle without the assets or social networks that can improve their lives.

The ultra-poor make up over half of the estimated 797 million people living in extreme poverty. Unless they move to the head of the line in our global poverty eradication efforts – rather than continuing to remain consigned to the back because they are the hardest to reach – we will most certainly fail to end poverty everywhere, in all of its forms. This is our great global challenge, and also our greatest global opportunity over the next 13 years. Ending ultra-poverty is entirely achievable. We have identified, as outlined in this report, where ultra-poverty is concentrated; 80 percent are living in only 14 countries. We also know what works to sustainably lift these households out of the worst forms of poverty. What is required



This is our great global challenge, and also our greatest global opportunity over the next 13 years.

Photo Above:
©UPLIFT: BRAC program

now is a shared, multi-sector commitment to immediately direct the resources and enact the policies required to do so.

In this inaugural Global State of Ultra-Poverty, we have undertaken the first-ever analysis exclusively devoted to ultra-poverty to: (1) concretely define the deprivations that constitute ultra-poverty; (2) identify where

ultra-poverty is concentrated; (3) identify those countries with the best and worst prospects for ending ultra-poverty; and (4) recommend the most promising multi-sector actions that will be required to end it.

Because poverty of this type has many dimensions, we borrow from the methodology that the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Institute utilize for their Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) to locate ultra-poverty.³ We define this level of poverty as a deprivation level of 60 percent or more as defined for MPI purposes. Those living in these conditions make up roughly half of the 767 million people that the World Bank calculates live on less than US\$1.90 per day.



Photo Left:
©UPLIFT: Trickle Up program

Reasons for Hope

While helping to prepare 394 million people for an escape out of ultra-poverty may seem like an overwhelming task, we have two reasons to be optimistic that we can be successful. **First**, we have proven approaches for working with people in ultra-poverty.

The Graduation approach,

pioneered by BRAC, has proven its ability to reach those living in ultra-poverty with a holistic approach and successfully empower them to make their way out of ultra-poverty, with resilience, over a sustained period. By combining careful targeting, living stipends, access to healthcare, nutrition, training, livelihood development, asset transfers, and regular mentoring, BRAC has now graduated over 1.7 million people through this two-year long program, with over 90 percent able to maintain and expand their livelihoods years after leaving the program. Tests in other countries have demonstrated its effectiveness across a wide range of geographies and cultures. The graduation approach shows us that a segment of the ultra-poor population, those that have the physical and mental capacity to work, can begin to manage their own livelihoods in a fairly short period of time when they receive the right types of support.

Government cash transfers,

with or without conditions, have shown their ability to staunch the intergenerational transfer of poverty. Providing regular income in small amounts to families in poverty

during the leanest times of the year enables them to keep their children in school, improve their diets, and maintain their health. Mexico and Brazil have seen large declines in rates of poverty and inequality after two decades of operating cash transfer programs.⁵ Where cash transfers have not proven as effective is in helping those in the severest forms of poverty because they often need more than money. Cash transfers limit the severity of their poverty, but there is no evidence to show that they help them move out.

Embedding graduation-type approaches in social protection:

Governments have undertaken 20 projects utilizing the Graduation approach, combining the asset transfers, training, and mentoring within their existing social protection programs that provide living stipends, public works, health care and education. The Graduation approach provides a proven strategy for movement away from poverty. Cash transfer programs provide enormous resources to fund Graduation and have already established a means to reach large numbers of people.⁶

Figure 1: Country Prospects for Eliminating Ultra-Poverty

	Social Assistance	Annual Growth	Govern- ance	Safety and Security	Social Capital	Intensity of Poverty	Gender Disparity	Climate Risk	Financial Resilience	Synthetic Index Expert Weights
Somalia	0.0	x	x	x	x	52.5	36.3	x	x	x
South Sudan	4.1	0.0	x	x	x	64.5	x	64.0	11.8	28.6
Chad	0.3	58.9	24.0	54.0	43.0	46.3	39.9	25.4	14.9	34.1
Niger	2.9	71.2	42.0	63.0	46.0	38.0	41.3	54.4	3.2	39.6
Burkina Faso	1.4	55.7	41.0	68.0	48.0	31.0	63.1	59.6	10.3	40.7
Guinea	0.0	61.4	34.0	59.0	45.0	36.4	51.2	96.2	5.7	41.3
Nigeria	3.8	49.7	36.0	39.0	51.0	43.2	42.6	64.3	51.6	41.4
Pakistan	23.6	45.6	41.0	42.0	42.0	43.8	55.5	42.9	42.1	41.7
Ethiopia	16.1	69.6	38.0	56.0	44.0	47.6	54.3	59.0	9.7	43.2
Congo (DRC)	11.9	72.2	27.0	33.0	43.0	66.7	60.1	81.3	1.6	43.4
Bangladesh	24.2	53.8	38.0	65.0	44.0	61.9	45.6	37.1	26.1	44.2
Tanzania	19.7	55.7	46.0	60.0	50.0	69.0	63.6	61.2	19.7	49.2
Uganda	75.1	36.4	38.0	54.0	53.0	67.6	66.2	42.0	11.8	50.2
India	25.9	61.7	54.0	52.0	48.0	58.0	69.3	41.5	52.6	51.3

Second, 80 percent of people in ultra-pov-
erty live in just 14 high-burden countries.
Hence, targeted intervention and resource
allocation directed towards those areas
confronting the highest burden can yield
extremely high impact.

Our analysis also looks at the prospects each
country faces in eliminating ultra-poverty,
creating an index of indices that looks at fac-
tors like existing social protection programs,
economic growth, intensity of poverty, the
treatment of women, and climate risk.

The Need for Immediate Action

Unfortunately, official development assis-
tance (ODA) does not flow to those countries
with the greatest burden of ultra-poverty. In
fact, these 14 countries with 80 percent of
the burden receive only 20 percent of ODA.
If the global community does not start pri-
oritizing ultra-poverty now, and concentrate
its efforts in the countries with the highest
burden, we put our ability to end extreme
poverty at grave risk.

In our Call to Action we recommend steps
that governments of high burden countries,
donor countries, global agencies like the
World Bank and the United Nations, as well
as private citizens and civil society can take
to bring about the end of extreme poverty.
Our recommendations all center around
three fundamental concepts:

1. Make the elimination of ultra-poverty
a global priority in order to meet the goal
of ending extreme poverty by 2030, with
regular monitoring of progress and interim
country targets by 2020.
2. Initiate or expand programs that have
the proven ability to reach those living in
ultra-poverty and provide pathways out of
poverty.
- 3 Prioritize funding for interventions in
those places with the highest burden of
ultra-poverty.

Figure 1
The red, yellow and blue
bands respectively show
failed states, countries
with below-average pros-
pects, and countries with
above-average prospects.

Our Shared Moral Imperative

Bill and Melinda Gates, in their preface to Goalkeepers: The
Stories Behind the Data, review the graphs that show prog-
ress, as well as projections against the Sustainable Devel-
opment Goals. They conclude by saying: “The decisions we
collectively make in the next couple of years are going to
have a big impact on the shape these curves take. Of course,
it’s not really about the shape of the curves. It’s about what
the curves signify: whether or not millions or even billions
of people will conquer disease, lift themselves out of extreme
poverty, and reach their full potential.”



Photo Above:
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The Case

Ending Poverty

“End poverty in all its forms everywhere,” states the first of the United Nation’s (UN’s) Sustainable Development Goals, approved by 193 countries in 2016.⁸ The World Bank has also joined in supporting this objective and gave it a deadline, announcing its goal to end extreme poverty by 2030. The Bank calculates that the world contains 767 million people living below US\$1.90 today, or about 10 percent of people worldwide.⁹

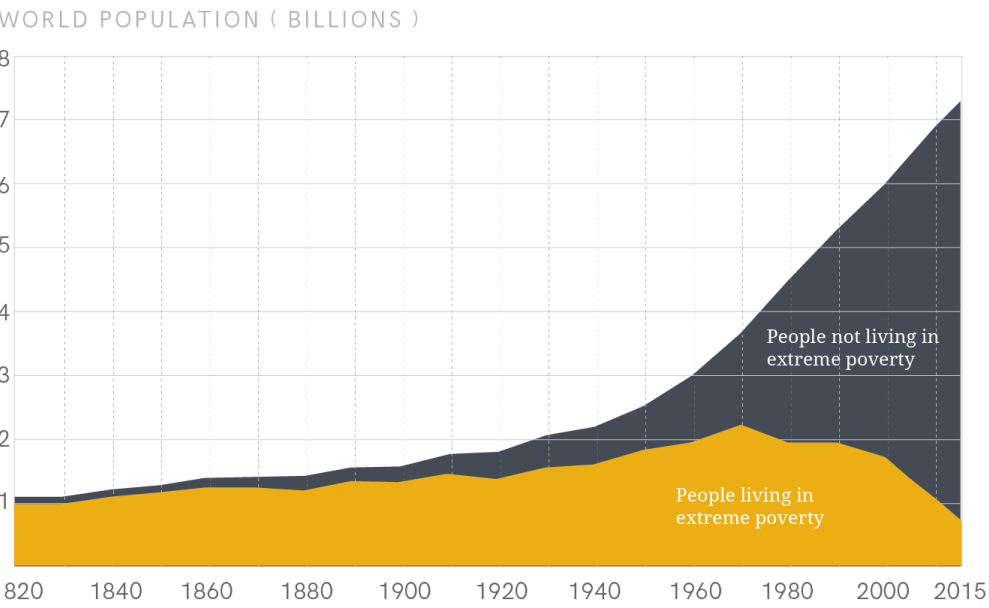
Looking at the decline in poverty over the last 40 years, one might be tempted to assume that we are on track to achieve this goal. Figure 1 shows levels of extreme poverty in the world since 1820, when more than half the population of the globe lived in poverty.¹⁰ If the trend lines are to be

believed, we only need to continue the rate of progress that has been made since 1970 to reach the 2030 target.

However, as our analysis and data reveal, this is an unwarranted and dangerous assumption; we see a distinct and essential demographic group – comprising over half of those living in extreme poverty or 394 million people – has been left out of the progress seen to date. These are the households that continue to live in the most dire and persistent forms of poverty on the planet, or what we term ultra-poverty. If we do not begin to address their needs now, the rate of poverty reduction will begin to level off, (see Figure 2).

Figure 1:
The Decline of Extreme Poverty

The number of people living in extreme poverty or as the World Bank defines it, surviving on the equivalent of \$1.90 per day or less



What’s the Difference Between Extreme Poverty and Ultra-poverty?

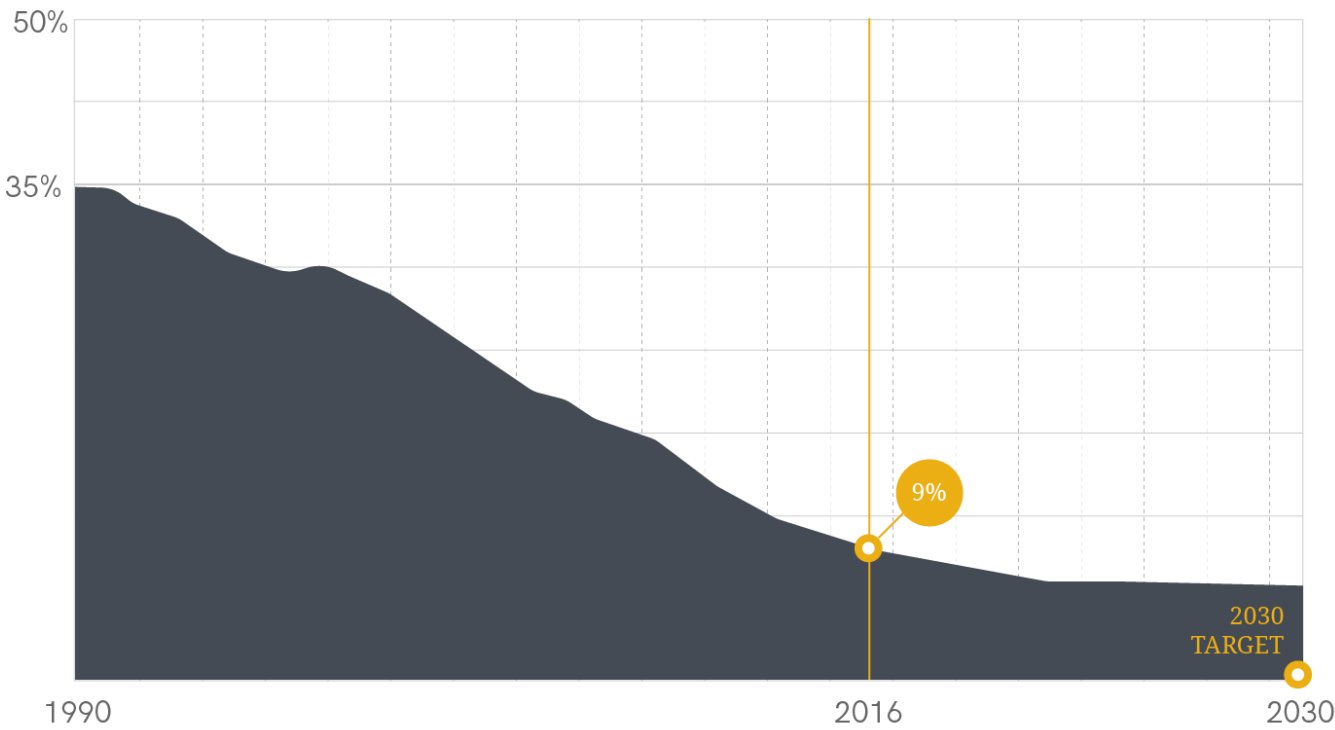
The World Bank uses a monetary measure to define extreme poverty, setting it as those who consume less than the equivalent of US\$1.90 per day, based on a formula for purchasing power parity across nations. We use the Multidimensional Poverty Index methodology (MPI) developed by the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) because it measures poverty across the many areas that affect those living in ultra-poverty. These areas include years of schooling, child school attendance, child mortality, nutrition, electricity, improved sanitation, improved drinking water, flooring, cooking fuel, and assets ownership. A

deprivation cutoff is set for each of these indicators and weights are assigned to each. A household deprived in all 10 indicators would receive a score of 100 percent. The Index considers a household “poor” if they have a deprivation score of 33 percent or higher. (See <http://www.ophi.org.uk/multidimensional-poverty-index/> for an explanation of the MPI methodology, and our Methodological Notes for more details on its adaptation to define and measure ultra-poverty.) We define ultra-poverty as having an MPI score of 60 percent or higher.

Figure 2:
Global Poverty Rate

The proportion of the population below the international extreme poverty line (US \$1.90/day)

Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, *Goalkeepers: The Stories Behind the Data*
Accessed at: <http://www.globalgoals.org/goalkeepers/datareport/>



The poorest people have seen their income grow less quickly than others

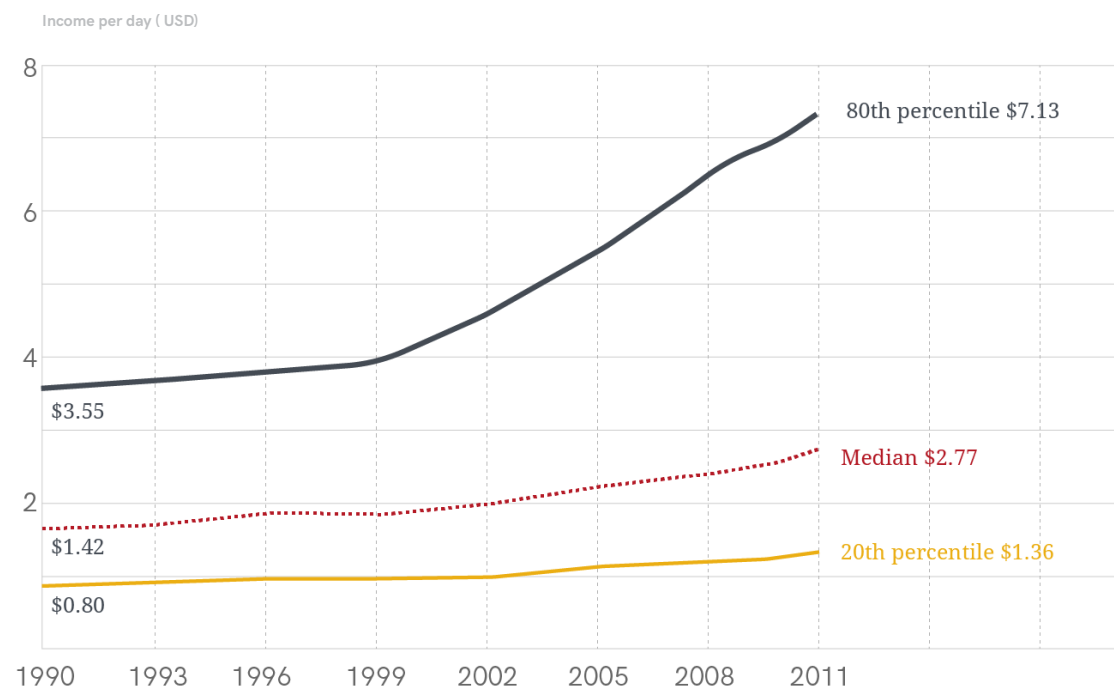


Figure 3 :

This figure shows how the estimated daily income of a person living in the 20th, Median and 80th percentile changed

As *The Economist* observed: “The share of people living in absolute poverty will almost certainly not decline as quickly in the future...Even as the global proportion of poor people continues to drift slowly downwards, large pockets of poverty will persist, and some of them are likely to swell. The war on want is about to settle into a period of grinding battles in the trenches.”¹¹

The reason for the increase in difficulty as we move forward? Most of the reduction in poverty over the last 40 years has occurred in two countries – China and India – and most of those who have moved above the poverty line started out fairly close to it. Going forward, the majority of people living in extreme poverty will come from parts of Africa, and many of the people living in poverty in these countries confront the more severe forms of deprivation that constitute ultra-poverty. From a macro perspective, given growing income inequality, the incomes of those at the lowest levels of the scale grow less quickly than those higher up

(as Figure 3 shows), meaning that – without concentrated intervention – the path out of these severe forms of poverty is likely to be longer and slower.

In this inaugural “State of Ultra-Poverty”, we have undertaken the first analysis exclusively devoted to ultra-poverty in order to: (1) concretely define the deprivations that constitute ultra-poverty; (2) identify where ultra-poverty is concentrated; (3) identify those countries with the best and worst prospects for ending ultra-poverty; and (4) identify the most promising multi-sector actions that will be required to end it. However, this is not intended to be a static recitation of data and analysis. Rather, it is our intent that this note can be an active document to be used to galvanize stakeholders and move them to action. The stakes are high; unless the global community acts with urgency to prioritize ultra-poverty within its broader development movement, it will jeopardize the 2030 goal of ending poverty.

For the first time in human history, we stand within sights of ending the worst forms of suffering on the planet. That we must do so is therefore not just a matter of collective economic and social progress, **it is our shared moral imperative.**

To do this, we will need to:

1. Greatly increase the scale of existing approaches that have been proven to sustainably move households out of ultra-poverty
2. Innovate around data and analytics, technology platforms, and financial models that can reduce costs and accelerate impact
3. Mobilize across sectors and institutions to tackle this challenge.

Finally, we also must emphasize the good news. Ending ultra-poverty by 2030 is an achievable goal. As our analysis reveals, 80 percent of those in ultra-poverty live in just 14 countries. Hence, targeted intervention and resource allocation directed towards those geographies confronting the highest burden can yield extremely high impact.

What do we mean by Ultra-poverty?

As we have noted, eradicating poverty will require that we prioritize assisting those living in the deepest forms of deprivation on the planet. The individuals living in these households (the majority headed by women) face a wide array of unique challenges and burdens even within their extremely poor communities. They live on the margins, confronting isolation that prevents them from benefiting from government-led social protection programs or market-led initiatives, like microfinance. Many of those living in ultra-poverty are invisible, even to their closest neighbors. Their lives are undocumented. They lack birth certificates and don't appear on government lists. Their neighbors ignore them, and they themselves withdraw from the communities surrounding them due to shame, fatigue, and fear of rejection. Here is how Sir Fazle Abed, founder and chairman of BRAC, describes what it means to live in ultra-poverty:

Ultra-poverty looks like a woman-led household, with children. The woman does not have many skills, so she would get domestic work or very low paying agricultural work. She doesn't get paid properly. She probably gets food in exchange for her work. She shares her food with her children, so she's half-fed and her children are half-fed. She's in a trap and doesn't know what to do. She can never build up a surplus of resources and she will not be able to send her children to school. At age seven or eight her children get sent to other homes to become domestic workers, and she will find a way to survive. So that is what the life of a woman trapped in ultra-poverty looks like.¹²



Photo Top:
©Uplift, Fonkoze program
Photo Below:
©Uplift, BRAC program

As will be detailed in the next section, we have identified a way to measure the combined intensity of the deprivations experienced by people in ultra-poverty – thanks to a methodology developed by the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Institute – as well as a quantitative definition that allows us to derive the number of people living in ultra-poverty across the world.

At the same time, ultra-poverty takes varying forms in individual countries, and in different locations within a country. For Golenoor, a woman living in Polashbari, Bangladesh, ultra-poverty meant working, when she could, in other people's homes, earning lunch and 50 US cents, saving lunch

until the end of the day so she could take it home to feed her children. Not enough food to meet minimal nutritional requirements, but enough to get them to the next day. And it meant watching her children develop in the same cycle she had experienced, with limited nutrition, compromised health, and no formal education.

Violence pushed Tomasa Tapia Garcia, from Guerrero, Mexico and her family into ultra-poverty. Members of a drug cartel killed her father when Tomasa was three. Tomasa's mother had to make money to feed her children, but also needed to stay home to care for Tomasa and her older brother and sister. At the age of five, Tomasa became a worker in the family business, stuffing straw into the dolls made by her mom.

Illness killed both of Claude Minani's parents, leaving him an orphan at the age of eight in a village outside Huye, Rwanda. He survived on the street and then with people who would let him sleep on their floor. In exchange for the sleeping space, Claude did household chores. When he was done he would rush off to the base of the hill coming into town, where he would help people with heavy loads push their bicycles up the hill in exchange for a few coins.

Unlocking agency for those living in Ultra-poverty

The multiple challenges faced by people like Golenoor, Tomasa, and Claude require holistic approaches that support them in confronting these interrelated obstacles. Over the past few decades, governments and development agencies have invented and tested several different approaches that work with people living in extreme poverty. However, few of these approaches have been proven to truly reach those in ultra-poverty and help them move sustainably to improved lives. What follows is a snapshot of several approaches that either have been tested or are being tested against these measures.

Graduation approach:

Almost 20 years ago, BRAC in Bangladesh began noticing that their programs in education, health, and microfinance consistently left out a group of people living in greater poverty than those who participated in their programs. By analyzing the challenges faced by these people – those in ultra-poverty – BRAC developed a holistic approach that combined careful targeting, living stipends, access to healthcare, nutrition, training, livelihood development, asset transfers and regular mentoring. BRAC has now graduated over 1.7 million people through this two-year program, with over 90 percent able to maintain and expand their livelihoods years after leaving the program.¹³ The approach has been tested and evaluated in 10 pilot programs in eight other countries and

has proven its effectiveness in randomized controlled trials. This approach has now been applied and adapted in 58 projects in 37 countries.¹⁴ It is one of the very few evidence-based programs that have been proven to reach those living in ultra-poverty and successfully empower them to make their way out of ultra-poverty maintaining resilience over a sustained period. The graduation approach shows us that a segment of those in ultra-poverty - people that have the physical and mental capacity to work – can begin to manage their own livelihoods in a fairly short period when they receive the right types of support

Government cash transfers:

Two decades ago, Mexico started to provide conditional cash transfers to mothers living below the poverty line as long as they sent their children to school and maintained regular health checkups. The program (originally called Progres, then Oportunidades, and now Prospera) reaches 6.5 million families.¹⁵ Brazil soon followed with its Bolsa Familia program, which has grown to cover 13.5 million families.¹⁶ Cash transfer programs, both with and without conditions, have become widely emulated, adopted by 52 countries and reaching over a billion people today.¹⁷

GiveDirectly provides a private, philanthropic approach to cash transfers and advocates for universal basic income schemes. It raises money in the US and delivers cash transfers, either in large lump sums or in monthly payments, to recipients living in extreme poverty they have selected in Uganda and

Kenya. GiveDirectly works closely with researchers to evaluate the impact of these transfers. These randomized controlled trials have shown that the transfers result in large increases in household monthly consumption (from US\$157 to US\$193) and large increases in the psychological well-being of the recipients. Monthly transfers proved more likely to improve food security, while large lump sum transfers led to larger investments in assets.¹⁸

While cash transfer programs have the potential to deliver a range of benefits and have an impressive evidence base establishing their effectiveness measured across multiple dimensions of poverty, they have not yet shown that they are effective in reaching those living in ultra-poverty or sustainably helping them emerge from ultra-poverty. More research needs to be conducted into the specific impact of such cash transfer schemes on people living in the worst forms of poverty.

Photo Right:
©Uplift, Fundacion
Capital Program



Embedding graduation-type approaches in social protection:

Governments have initiated 20 of the 58 iterations of the graduation approach, combining the asset transfers, training and mentoring within their existing social protection programs that provide living stipends, public works, health care, and education.¹⁹ The Ethiopian government provides asset transfers and mentoring to the poorest 30 percent of the households participating in its Productive Safety Nets Program, a government initiative involving over 10 million people in public works that build ecological resiliency.²⁰ The Government of Rwanda has developed a minimum package for participants in its Vision 2020 program that includes health insurance, public works, asset transfers, and mentoring.²¹ Many of the governments applying this combined approach have

also adopted some of the careful targeting practices used in the graduation approach, ensuring that these social protection programs reach those in ultra-poverty.²²

The Government of Malawi also provides an example of how to develop poverty elimination plans that differentiate between levels of poverty. Figure 4 shows how the government differentiates between those in ultra-poverty who are and who are not able to work, and those living in more moderate poverty (using their own definition for each level of poverty). For each category, the government defines their social protection needs and develops programs to meet those needs. For those in ultra-poverty who can work, the government provides short-term employment in public works programs, school feeding for children, cash stipends for food and assets, and adult literacy training.

Figure 4
Malawi Social Protection Strategy

		Categories and their social protection needs	Potential social protection programs/ interventions
Malawi Poverty Line 50.7%			
26.2%	Moderately Poor	+ Employment + Skills building + Capital + Productive Assets + Productive form asset / Capital erosion	Protection and promotion + Inputs subsidy + Public works programs + Insurance programs + Village savings loans + Micro-credit / Micro-finance + School feeding
Ultra-Poor 24.5%			
15.5%	Ultra Poor with Labor Capacity	+ Survival +Productive assets + Employment	Promotion + Public works programs + School Feeding + Cash and food for assets combined with skills building and cash for consumption / adult literacy training
10%	Ultra Poor & Incapacitated	+ Survival + Investment in human capital	Provision + Social cash transfers + School Feeding programs

Photo Left
©Uplift, Trickle Up Program



Sustaining movement out of poverty:

As the example from Malawi shows, planning for movement out of ultra-poverty also requires planning for how those leaving poverty can maintain and build on their progress. The Chronic Poverty Action Network (CPAN) Poverty Report 2014-2015 calculates that between 15 percent and 60 percent of those who escape poverty fall back into poverty at some point in the future. Preventing this regression will require that people graduating out of ultra-poverty move into a growing set of opportunities. Households in rural areas earning their income from livestock and agriculture will need markets for their products. Businesses can support their livelihoods by earmarking a portion of their supply chain for small providers and sub-contractors. Households in urban areas, and the educated children of rural parents who migrate to the cities, will need to be able to secure jobs with living wages.

Families escaping poverty also need tools to consolidate their gains, strengthen their savings, and expand their enterprises in light of market opportunities; ensuring their access to credit, savings, and insurance increases their options and helps prevent large losses.

Many governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) employ savings groups to provide financial services in rural areas that do not have banking infrastructure.

Sustaining movement out of poverty will also require a national commitment to monitoring and evaluation that helps countries locate households that have been left out, those that fall back, and those that face additional challenges. Initiatives to digitize information regarding families being reached by anti-poverty programs and provide real-time performance data must be developed, encouraged and expanded, so that governments and development assistance providers can be held accountable, learn from each other, and adjust their programs to meet changing needs.

The World Bank has announced the creation of the Platform for Economic Inclusion as a unit to support countries to develop and expand initiatives to address ultra-poverty. This platform offers an excellent opportunity to promote this transparency in all countries, and to exchange lessons learned from both successes and failures.

Protagonists of their own stories

We know that with the right support and resources moving from ultra-poverty to self-reliance is achievable. **Golenoor**, **Tomasa** and **Claude** are proof of that. Participating in graduation programs gave them the opportunity to forge new paths and livelihoods for themselves and their families.



Golenoor

Golenoor participated in BRAC's first graduation cohort 15 years ago. She now serves tea and cake to visitors who come to her home. She has been able to give an education to her three children, helping them move into their own careers. She proudly shows the bookshelf in her home that holds the workbooks of her granddaughter in grade school and the college texts of her nephew, both of whom live with her.



Pictured right:
©BRAC, Golenoor at her home

Pictured above:
©BRAC, Golenoor and her granddaughter



Tomasa

Tomasa participates in Mexico's Prospera program as part of a pilot effort that incorporates the graduation approach. She receives business training from a mentor using a tablet to provide the lessons. She has developed a business buying dishes in the city and selling them in villages outside. She wants to use her income to keep her children in school and get a bathroom in her house.

Claude

Claude participated in a Concern Worldwide program that incorporates the graduation approach. He now owns his own motorcycle and uses it to transport people and their loads around town. He got married last year, and brought his wife into the brick home that he paid to build out of the money he earned from his various business ventures.



Pictured above:
©Concern Worldwide, Claude on his motorcycle

Pictured right:
©Concern Worldwide, Claude's wife at their home

Pictured bottom left:
©Prospera, Tomasa at her home

Pictured bottom center:
©Prospera, Tomasa and her granddaughter

The Data:

Where - and How Big – is the Challenge?

We estimate that 394 million people live in ultra-poverty today. This represents a little more than half of the 767 million living in extreme poverty, according to the World Bank’s most recent estimate.

Population living in Ultra-poverty

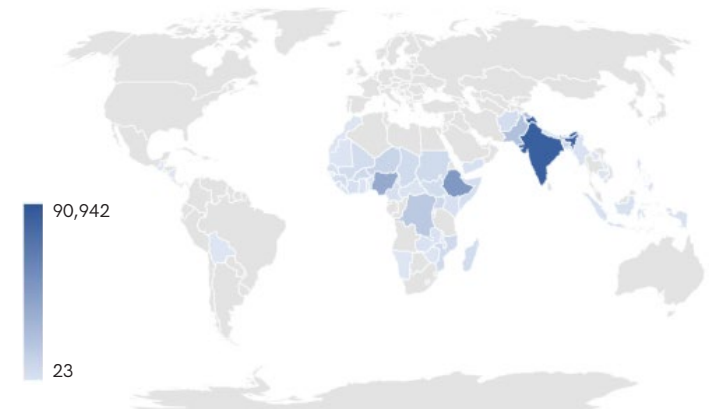


Figure 5
Population Living in
Ultra-Poverty in (000s)

Country	Total Population ('000)	Population in Ultra-Poverty ('000)
India	1,295,292	90,942
Ethiopia	96,959	53,347
Nigeria	177,476	41,582
Pakistan	185,044	26,158
Congo, Democratic Republic of the	74,877	20,241
Bangladesh	159,078	13,786
Niger	19,114	12,115
Uganda	37,783	8,982
Burkina Faso	17,589	8,569
Tanzania, United Republic of	51,823	8,506

Table 1:
*Countries with the
Highest Population in
Ultra-Poverty*

Proportion of population living in Ultra-poverty

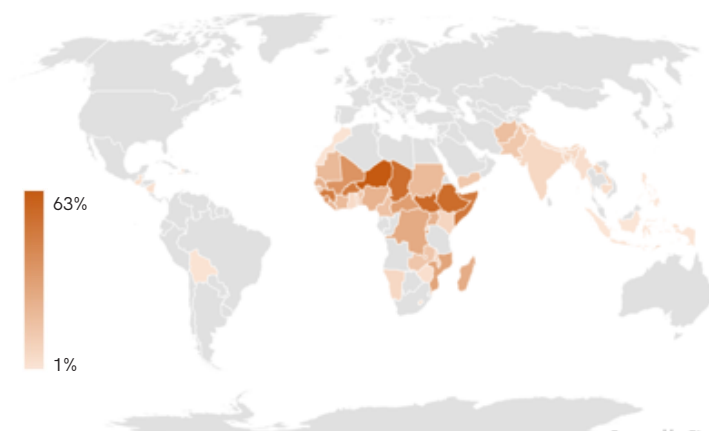


Figure 6
Proportion of Population
Living in Ultra-Poverty

Country	Total Population ('000)	Population in Ultra-Poverty ('000)	Population in Ultra-Poverty (%)
Niger	19,114	12,115	63.4
South Sudan	11,911	6,727	56.5
Ethiopia	96,959	53,347	55.0
Chad	13,587	7,337	54.0
Somalia	10,518	5,207	49.5
Burkina Faso	17,589	8,569	48.7
Guinea	12,276	5,070	41.3

Table 2:
*Countries with the
Highest Proportion of
People in Ultra-Poverty*

Tables 1 and 2 show the countries with the highest incidence and highest proportions of ultra-poverty and Figures 5 and 6 depict the incidence and proportion of ultra-poverty in all 56 countries that have more than 1% of their population living in ultra-poverty.

The two lists have three countries from South Asia and the remainder come from across Africa. Three countries appear on both lists: **Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, and Niger.**

Table 3: a breakdown of the regions of the world and their levels of ultra-poverty

Table 4 shows 14 countries with high burdens of ultra-poverty, measured either by total population (8 million and above) or proportion of the population (49 percent and greater). These 14 countries together account for almost 80 percent of the people in the world living in ultra-poverty.

Table 3

Ultra-Poverty by Region

	Number of Countries with Ultra-Poverty*	Population living in ultra-poverty (in millions)	Share of the world’s ultra-poor (%)
Americas	4	10.0	2.5
Asia	12	148.5	37.7
Africa	40	235.4	59.8

**Includes all countries for which there is data and where the population in ultra-poverty represents at least 1 percent of the total population.*

Table 4

High Burden Countries

	Total Population (000s)	Ultra-Poor Population (000s)	% of Population	% of World's Ultra-Poor
India	1,295,292	90,942	7%	23.0%
Ethiopia	96,959	53,347	55%	13.5%
Nigeria	177,476	41,582	23%	10.5%
Pakistan	185,044	26,158	14%	6.6%
Congo (DRC)	74,877	20,241	27%	5.1%
Bangladesh	159,078	13,786	9%	3.5%
Niger	19,114	12,115	63%	3.1%
Uganda	37,783	8,982	24%	2.3%
Burkina Faso	17,589	8,569	49%	2.2%
Tanzania	51,823	8,506	16%	2.2%
Chad	13,587	7,337	54%	1.9%
South Sudan	11,911	6,727	56%	1.7%
Guinea	12,276	5,980	49%	1.5%
Somalia	10,518	5,207	50%	1.3%
Total of 14 High Burden Countries		309,479		78.4%
Total in Ultra-Poverty Worldwide		394,811		

High Burden Countries

Addressing the needs in these 14 countries will require urgent attention to meet the 2030 goal of ending poverty.



Funding the Elimination of Ultra-Poverty

The governments of these high-burden countries will need to be the leaders charting the course for the elimination of ultra-poverty. They must set the direction and prioritize the struggle against ultra-poverty in their political agenda and their human resource and budget allocations. Unfortunately, as shown in Table 5, most of these countries have very little revenue of their own to fund this work. Most of the governments of the 14 high-burden countries earn less than half of the average earnings for all countries with ultra-poverty.

These countries will need to be able increase their tax base to tackle the challenge of ultra-poverty, and indeed Table 5 shows that all but two of the high-burden countries

are collecting a smaller share of their gross domestic product (GDP) than other countries facing ultra-poverty. But there is a limit to what can be done in countries with a low GDP. Some of these countries will need to be able to increase their revenue by capturing more in taxes from multinational companies that extract resources and assemble products within their borders. In most cases, however, this will still be far from enough; they will need external financing for a time. Disappointingly, official development assistance (ODA) does not flow in relationship to the size of the need, as evidenced by Table 6.

By signing on to the Sustainable Development Goals, donor countries agreed to align their aid policies with the fight against ex-

	Revenue as % of GDP	Revenue per Capita (US\$)
India	12.6	781.20
Bangladesh	10.9	399.60
Pakistan	14.3	700.70
Tanzania	12.7	405.00
Nigeria	5.0	320.00
Uganda	11.5	243.60
Congo DRC	17.7	141.60
Guinea	22.3	289.90
Burkina Faso	17.4	316.80
Somalia	NA	NA
Chad	17.8	498.40
Ethiopia	10.9	185.30
South Sudan	NA	NA
Niger	23.0	253.00
Average for all 55 countries with Ultra-Poverty prevalence >1%	19.2	776.00

Table 5
Government revenue for 14 high burden countries

Source: **<http://wdi.worldbank.org/table/4.1> supplemented by <http://www.imf.org/en/Publications/FM/Issues/2017/04/06/fiscal-monitor-april-2017>

treme poverty. The reality is quite different: the 14 countries with over 78 percent of the ultra-poverty population received less than one-fifth of the world’s ODA. The rest of the world, home to only 22 percent of the world’s ultra-poverty households, receives 80 percent of the donor community’s assistance. This must change, drastically.

Bilateral donors and international financial institutions must reorient their poverty-fighting support. At the same time, high-burden countries must make the elimination of ultra-poverty a priority in their cooperation dialogue with donors.

Financial support is not the only kind of possible assistance. A lot of the outreach to households in ultra-poverty requires know-how and experience that is available in the form of technical assistance. The World Bank supports social protection and graduation programs in countries where there is ultra-poverty and is therefore an invaluable repository of knowledge. Similarly, the International Labor Organization, as an agency committed to the universality of social protection, has extensive knowledge regarding the ways to extend safety nets to those who need it most.

	ODA Received - 2015 (\$ Million)	ODA Received as % of Global ODA in 2015	% of World Ultra-Poverty
India	5,911	3.1	23.1
Bangladesh	4,861	2.5	3.5
Pakistan	4,070	2.1	6.6
Tanzania	3,280	1.7	2.2
Nigeria	3,234	1.7	10.6
Uganda	2,545	1.3	2.3
Congo DRC	2,815	1.5	5.1
Guinea	726	0.4	1.3
Burkina Faso	1,242	0.6	2.2
Somalia	911	0.5	1.3
Chad	696	0.4	1.9
Ethiopia	4,925	2.6	13.5
South Sudan	1,637	0.9	1.7
Niger	1,203	0.6	3.1
TOTAL	38,056	19.9	78.3
REST OF THE DEVELOPING WORLD	153,398	80.10%	21.6

Table 6
Ultra-Poverty and Donor Priorities

Source: OECD Creditor Reporting System, accessed July 19, 2017

By signing on to the Sustainable Development Goals, donor countries agreed to align their aid policies with the fight against extreme poverty.



Photo Above
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Measuring the Difficulty of Ending Ultra-poverty

We began looking at the challenges that these countries face in helping people move and stay out of poverty and developed a synthetic index (a combination of indices) to estimate the level of difficulty facing each country in eliminating ultra-poverty.

For each of these questions, we identified the most appropriate index from existing data or indices already in the public domain that could measure the extent to which an individual country's fight against ultra-poverty was hindered or facilitated. We gave each indicator a weighting after consulting with stakeholders familiar with ultra-poverty programming, and the aggregation of all indicators gave us a synthetic index on the prospects for that country eliminating ultra-poverty. To learn more about how we selected the indices and weighted them, see Appendix 1. Figure 7 depicts the scores for all 53 countries with more than 1% of their population living in ultra-poverty.

To assess the prospects of ending ultra-poverty, we considered the following questions:

- Are the very poor already reached by safety nets?
- Is the country generally making progress on social indicators of development?
- Is the country plagued by poor governance?
- To what extent are the security of the country and the personal safety of the population at risk?
- Do many of the people living in ultra-poverty also suffer from other forms of social and economic exclusion?
- Is the ultra-poverty so deep that, even with some improvement, many of those living in ultra-poverty would remain in ultra-poverty?
- Has the country been addressing the particular issues faced by women living in ultra-poverty?
- Does climate change jeopardize any future gains?
- Is the country generally financially resilient?

Figure 7
Country Prospects for Eliminating Ultra-Poverty

The results for the 14 countries of interest are contained in Table 7, while the full table appears in Appendix 2.

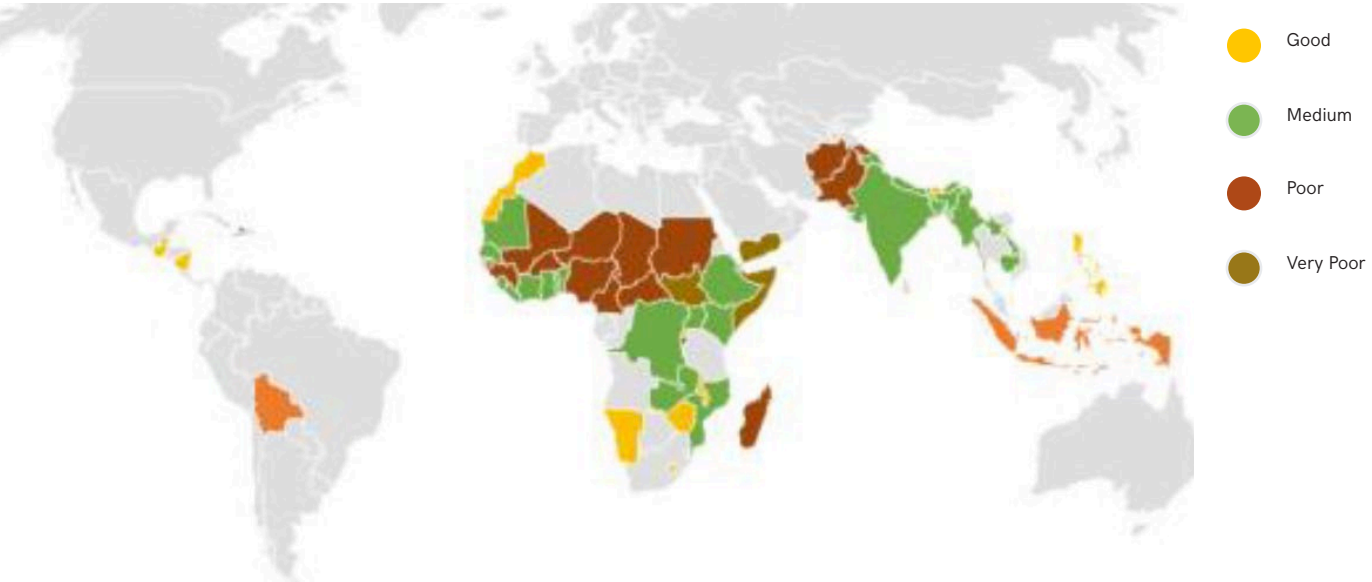


Table 7

Country prospects for ending ultra poverty

	Social Assistance	Annual Growth	Governance	Safety and Security	Social Capital	Intensity of Poverty	Gender Disparity	Climate Risk	Financial Resilience	Synthetic Index Expert Weights
Somalia	0.0	x	x	x	x	52.5	36.3	x	x	x
South Sudan	4.1	0.0	x	x	x	64.5	x	64.0	11.8	28.6
Chad	0.3	58.9	24.0	54.0	43.0	46.3	39.9	25.4	14.9	34.1
Niger	2.9	71.2	42.0	63.0	46.0	38.0	41.3	54.4	3.2	39.6
Burkina Faso	1.4	55.7	41.0	68.0	48.0	31.0	63.1	59.6	10.3	40.7
Guinea	0.0	61.4	34.0	59.0	45.0	36.4	51.2	96.2	5.7	41.3
Nigeria	3.8	49.7	36.0	39.0	51.0	43.2	42.6	64.3	51.6	41.4
Pakistan	23.6	45.6	41.0	42.0	42.0	43.8	55.5	42.9	42.1	41.7
Ethiopia	16.1	69.6	38.0	56.0	44.0	47.6	54.3	59.0	9.7	43.2
Congo (DRC)	11.9	72.2	27.0	33.0	43.0	66.7	60.1	81.3	1.6	43.4
Bangladesh	24.2	53.8	38.0	65.0	44.0	61.9	45.6	37.1	26.1	44.2
Tanzania	19.7	55.7	46.0	60.0	50.0	69.0	63.6	61.2	19.7	49.2
Uganda	75.1	36.4	38.0	54.0	53.0	67.6	66.2	42.0	11.8	50.2
India	25.9	61.7	54.0	52.0	48.0	58.0	69.3	41.5	52.6	51.3

The synthetic index shows that the 14 countries face varying levels of challenges in eliminating ultra-poverty within their borders. The high burden countries divide into three groups:

Failed states

South Sudan and Somalia lack the basic levels of authority, safety, and infrastructure necessary to address the high proportion of ultra-poverty in their countries.

Below average prospects

A group of nine countries face below-average prospects for addressing ultra-poverty. Three of these (Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Ethiopia) have begun investing significantly in social protection and have been making marked progress in addressing ultra-poverty. Five of the countries (DRC, Niger, Guinea, Burkina Faso, and Chad) face a vicious circle

where ultra-poverty depresses GDP per capita, which limits government revenues and makes it difficult for the government to provide extensive social protection programs. These countries will need substantial additional outside assistance. One country (Nigeria) has significant resources but has not developed a large-scale program to address ultra-poverty.

Above-average prospects

India, Uganda, and Tanzania have developed favorable conditions for eliminating ultra-poverty. India has shown progress in reducing ultra-poverty in recent years and the government continues to prioritize this sector in its policies. Uganda and Tanzania, both countries with fewer resources than India, show how government leadership in addressing poverty can attract outside assistance that enables them to develop national scale programs.



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The Call to Action

The 2030 goal of ending extreme poverty requires us now to begin to support 394 million people worldwide in an escape from ultra-poverty. To do this, we must:

1. Make the elimination of ultra-poverty a global priority, with regular monitoring of progress. Establish global priority and country targets by 2020 to meet the goal of ending extreme poverty by 2030.
2. Initiate or expand programs that reach those living in ultra-poverty and provide pathways out of poverty.
3. Prioritize funding for those locations with the highest burden of ultra-poverty.

To that end, we have the following recommendations for organizations and entities involved in this global challenge



In Countries with a High Burden of Ultra-poverty:

We urge governments to:

- Identify those that live in ultra-poverty and those vulnerable to slipping into ultra-poverty.
- Develop new (or amend existing) national-level plans that specifically address the needs of these people. Provide short- and medium-term benchmarks with a regular reporting schedule.
- Design social assistance, livelihood, and other programs to more comprehensively and specifically address the needs of persons living in ultra-poverty by including components such as asset transfers, training and mentoring, savings services, health care, education, and insurance.
- Propose requests to the World Bank and other donors to secure support and technical assistance for implementing comprehensive programs that specifically address reducing ultra-poverty.
- Systematize processes for learning from other countries that have developed national programs for supporting households in moving out of ultra-poverty.

We urge legislators to:

- Prioritize eliminating ultra-poverty through public commitments, policy and legislation, and budget allocations for initiatives with a demonstrated impact on reducing ultra-poverty.
- Hold government officials and agencies accountable for targets and standards in outreach to those living in ultra-poverty and regularly evaluate their performance.

We urge businesses to:

- Set goals for working with their governments to support training and jobs for those living in ultra-poverty.
- Make special efforts to integrate producers living in ultra-poverty into their supply chains.
- Pay living wages to their employees according to International Labour Organization (ILO) principles and demand that their sub-contractors do the same.

We urge citizens and civil society organizations to:

- Learn about the challenges of ultra-poverty and support global and national efforts to eradicate it.
- Demand that their government's decision makers endorse the elimination of ultra-poverty as a national priority before 2020 in order to reach this goal by 2030.
- Urge their governments to acquire the technical assistance and mobilize the necessary human and financial resources required to deliver on national-level programs specifically designed to address the constraints facing those living in ultra-poverty.
- Hold policy makers responsible for meeting targets and standards in outreach to those living in ultra-poverty and for implementing ministries or agencies to accurately and regularly evaluate program performance.

Among Donor Countries:

We urge legislators to:

- Prioritize, in international cooperation policies, the elimination of ultra-poverty through public commitments, policy and legislation, and budget allocations for initiatives with a demonstrated impact on reducing ultra-poverty
- Hold accountable the relevant national ministry or agency for international cooperation to meeting targets and standards for programs designed to reach and support persons living in ultra-poverty.

We urge bilateral development agencies of donor countries:

- Declare that the fight against ultra-poverty is achievable and must be a policy and programming priority.
- Provide funding to dramatically scale up existing comprehensive programs that specifically aim to reach the ultra-poor.
- Provide development assistance for the design and implementation of national-level programs that address the constraints faced by those living in ultra-poverty, and reallocate their resources toward countries facing a high burden of ultra-poverty.
- Require that their programs include a system for identifying households living in poverty that differentiates between levels

We urge citizens and civil society organizations to:

- Learn about the challenges of ultra-poverty and support global efforts to eradicate it.
- Demand that an increasing portion of their country’s international development or cooperation budget be dedicated to programs with a proven impact in reducing ultra-poverty
- Hold policy makers responsible for setting international assistance spending targets for ultra-poverty programs, including a reallocation of funding toward countries facing a high burden of ultra-poverty, and for meeting those targets.

We urge businesses to:

- Learn about the challenges of ultra-poverty and support global efforts to eradicate it.
- Demand that an increasing portion of their country’s international development or cooperation budget be dedicated to programs with a proven impact in reducing ultra-poverty
- Hold policy makers responsible for setting international assistance spending targets for ultra-poverty programs, including a reallocation of funding toward countries facing a high burden of ultra-poverty, and for meeting those targets.

Among Global Agencies and Actors:

We urge the World Bank to:

- Acknowledge, in policy and strategy statements and public materials, the imperative of eliminating ultra-poverty as a critical part of the process of ending extreme poverty by 2030.
- Cultivate broad understanding of ultra-poverty and the effective means for addressing it among Regional vice-presidents and other senior Bank leadership, as well as in its policy dialogue with IDA-eligible countries and the broader development community.
- Insist that IDA include elimination of ultra-poverty as one of its result indicators.

- Specifically address ultra-poverty within country strategies and Project Approval Documents, and proactively encourage countries to seek World Bank financing for the expansion of comprehensive social protection, livelihood development, or other similar programs to reach persons in the deepest poverty.
- Provide support for technical assistance to IDA-eligible countries that wish to design and implement new, or scale up existing, comprehensive ultra-poverty interventions at the local or national level.
- Support the growth of the newly-formed Platform for Economic Inclusion (PEI) as a learning hub and community of practice for country partners of the Bank, enabling access to peer learning, technical knowledge, latest evaluations and findings, and innovations in program design and delivery that target households in ultra-poverty.
- Support the development and funding of the multi-donor trust fund established within the PEI to focus on supporting and tracking the expansion of graduation-style social protection programs that specifically reach those living in ultra-poverty.
- In cooperation with the ILO, energize the newly formed Global Partnership for Universal Social Protection to put particular emphasis on the coverage of persons living in ultra-poverty by eliciting bold national commitments, monitoring improvements in coverage and highlighting national success stories.



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International Program

Among Global Agencies and Actors:

Among the United Nations (UN) organs and agencies, we urge:

- The Secretariat to explicitly highlight the need to address the challenges of ultra-poverty immediately, including in its Sustainable Development Goals Report.
- The UN Development Program to prioritize the special challenges of ultra-poverty in its programming, in its dialogue with implementing countries, and in its Human Development Report.
- The 2019 UN High-Level Political Forum on the Sustainable Development Goals to, within its planned focus on inclusiveness and the fight against inequalities, hold a special session on the elimination of ultra-poverty and invite high-burden countries to submit voluntary national reviews to report on this issue.
- The ILO, in its commitment to the universality of social protection floors, and as co-leader with the World Bank of the Social Protection Interagency Cooperation Board, to:
 - Advocate and provide technical support for the design and implementation of comprehensive social protection and livelihood programs that specifically address the conditions of ultra-poverty.
 - Encourage inclusive national social dialogue on prioritizing the extension and effective usage of social protection to persons living in ultra-poverty.

- Energize the newly formed Global Partnership for Universal Social Protection to put particular emphasis on addressing ultra-poverty by eliciting bold national commitments, monitoring improvements in coverage, and highlighting national success stories.
- The UN to fund additional research clarifying what works and why.

We urge the Asian Development Bank and the Africa Development Bank to:

- Publicly declare the elimination of ultra-poverty to be one of their top priorities.
- Increase the proportion of lending for social protection, livelihood development, and health programs.
- Give urgency to lending for programming that is specifically designed to address the constraints facing those living in ultra-poverty.



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Photo Left
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Fonkoze program

In all countries:

We urge philanthropists to provide funding for:

- Pilot initiatives that specifically target those living in ultra-poverty in the 14 high-burden countries identified in this report.
- Digitization of monitoring and evaluation systems that improve program performance and allow the monitoring of who is coming into these programs and whether they have left ultra-poverty when they exit the programs.
- Holding grantees accountable for reaching those living in ultra-poverty and succeeding in helping them make their way out of ultra-poverty.

We urge investors to:

- Provide investment capital for the implementation of impact bonds to accelerate the scaling of ultra-poverty programming with special prioritization on the 14 high-burden countries identified in this report.
- Invest in the digitization of monitoring and evaluation systems that improve program performance and allow implementing organizations to be held accountable in real time for results



We urge non-governmental organizations that are implementing poverty fighting programs to:

- Urgently and immediately focus on those living in ultra-poverty and those vulnerable to slipping into ultra-poverty.
- Use selection processes that transparently and effectively identify those living in ultra-poverty.
- Hold themselves accountable for reaching people living in ultra-poverty and succeeding in helping them make their way out of ultra-poverty.
- Share their successes and challenges and support efforts by other NGOs and regional and national governments to replicate lessons learned.
- Participate in the World Bank's PEI and encourage stakeholder accountability for targeting households living in, and monitoring progress they make in exiting ultra-poverty.



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The Global State of Ultra-Poverty 2017



Uplift is an initiative to champion the ultra-poor within the global movement to end poverty in all its forms. Ultra-poor families are the poorest of the extreme poor. It's been proven that they have great potential to rise out of their circumstances and build strong, thriving families.

We are a collaborative of donors, implementers, scientists, activists, technologists, and committed people who believe that it's time for this type of poverty to be over. Forever. Uplift advocates and fundraises for the organizations that have made a direct and clear commitment to work with the ultra-poor. Join this movement at joinuplift.org.

RESULTS
the power to end poverty

RESULTS is a movement of passionate, committed everyday people. Together they use their voices to influence political decisions that will bring an end to poverty. Volunteers receive training, support, and inspiration to become skilled advocates. In time, volunteers learn to effectively advise policy makers, guiding them towards decisions that improve access to education, health, and economic opportunity. With every hour of their time, volunteers multiply their impact through the enormous power of advocacy — whether it's helping change policy to support millions of families putting food on the table or helping raise billions of dollars for the world's most vulnerable children. Backed by the in-depth research and legislative expertise of staff, RESULTS advocates realize the incredible power they possess to use their voices to change the world.