

Agriculture and Livelihoods



Goal: To combat hunger and malnutrition and enable farmers and their families to establish secure, sustainable livelihoods.

8

Countries reached by agriculture programs

600 thousand

Smallholder farmers trained since 2012

79%

Farmers trained who are women and adolescent girls

Opportunity

Worldwide, up to a billion people struggle with extreme hunger, and, as the world's population continues to grow, there is increasing pressure on rural land and resources. As a result, the health and wellbeing of more than two billion people now depend on the success of smallholder farmers. Smallholders work on less than a hectare of land, yet produce 80 percent of the food consumed in the developing world. However, their lack of access to yield-boosting modern farm technologies and knowledge results in limited livelihood opportunities and constrains their ability to produce beyond subsistence.

Background

BRAC believes that no one should suffer from hunger or malnutrition. Food security is a complex and evolving challenge, and one that can only be addressed through multifaceted development initiatives that operate at scale.

To achieve transformative change in rural agriculture communities, a holistic approach to livelihoods improvement is necessary, focusing not just on economic change, but on health, resilience, and inclusiveness as well. Through its programs, BRAC strengthens pro-poor agricultural market systems, increases resilience to climate change, fortifies nutritional outcomes, and improves the livelihoods of rural women and youth. This approach elevates farmers and their families out of hunger and into secure, sustainable livelihoods built on local agriculture and livestock solutions.



A participant of a BRAC agriculture training tends to her farm in Tanzania. ©BRAC/Alison Wright



A lead farmer in Liberia feeds her chicken ©BRAC/Sarah Allen

Approach

To address these challenges, BRAC works in eight countries across Africa and Asia to strengthen pro-poor agricultural market systems, increase resilience to climate change, and improve nutritional outcomes, with a special focus on rural women and youth. In Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Liberia, Myanmar, Nepal, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda, BRAC empowers smallholder farmers by providing access to quality farm inputs and technical training from Community Agriculture Promoters and Community Livestock Providers.

In addition, BRAC facilitates the formation of producer cooperatives, and offers financial services in underserved, rural communities. It also conducts research to develop better varieties of inputs and practices for the agriculture sector, emphasizing technology and environmentally-sustainable practices.

At the market level, BRAC works to strengthen rural value chains by investing in local agribusinesses, developing the local supply of quality farming inputs, and helping to build more efficient market linkages between actors across the value chain. It creates systems to produce, distribute, and market quality agricultural inputs at fair prices. BRAC's social enterprises, including poultry hatcheries, seed farms, and feed mills, serve key roles as suppliers and buyers in rural markets.

Why BRAC?

With more than 45 years of experience working to alleviate poverty and build sustainable livelihoods, BRAC possesses a deep understanding of the challenges farmers face. This informs its focus on supporting people to grow their incomes, build their resilience, and improve their food security and nutritional outcomes.

BRAC's value chain approach sets it apart. Considering every step in the value chain, it fills market gaps to ensure sustainable and effective agricultural development. With an emphasis on research and innovation, BRAC has developed an extensive network of collaborative relationships with agricultural research groups and governments to develop enhanced crop varieties of greater quality, nutritional value, yield, and resistance that can thrive even in unfavorable environments.

In the next five years, BRAC intends to reach an additional 400,000 smallholder farmers — particularly rural women, youth and other marginalized groups. This will create a ripple effect for their families, benefiting an additional 2 million people. BRAC will also explore expansion opportunities to countries where its model is replicable and scalable.

“**We now have a historic opportunity to end extreme poverty and hunger in our lifetimes,”** says Sir Fazole Hasan Abed, BRAC Founder and Chairperson. **“The Sustainable Development Goals set a target of eradicating extreme poverty by 2030 and I believe it is within our power to do so.”**”