

Notes to ‘Graduation: Results and Lessons’ Presentation

Slide 1 – Graduation: Results and Lessons

CLP2 developed a set of graduation criteria. To graduate a household had to meet any six out of ten criteria within three months of CLP support ending. This allowed the Programme to assess whether the household was likely to be on the right trajectory out of extreme poverty. Just because a household had graduated however, did not mean it had exited extreme poverty based on income. DFID has contracted Oxford Policy Management (OPM) to conduct an Impact Assessment of CLP2. OPM will be assessing the number of households the Programme managed to lift out of extreme poverty.

This presentation explains why CLP2 developed graduation criteria; what the process entailed; some headline graduation results; and some of the key lessons.

Slide 2 – CLP’s Graduation Criteria

In March 2011, the first annual review team recommended CLP develop a set of graduation criteria. The process took time. The final set of criteria and thresholds were agreed in March 2014 and are shown in the table below.

The criteria relate to 1) what CLP aims to achieve 2) char vulnerabilities, and 3) what the Programme delivered. If a household has graduated then it is said to be on the right trajectory out of extreme poverty.

A household had to meet any six (or more) of the criteria within 3 months of the 18-month period of support ending.

Criteria domain	Criteria and thresholds
Income/ expenditure/ consumption	1. Household has had more than one source of income during the last 30 days
	2. Household eats three meals a day AND consumes five or more food groups in the past week
Nutrition	3. Household has access to improved water
	4. Household has access to a sanitary latrine with an unbroken water seal
	5. Presence of ash/ soap near to water point or latrine
Asset base	6. Productive assets worth more than Tk 30,000
Status of females	7. Participant is able to influence household decisions regarding sale/ purchase of large investments e.g. cattle
Vulnerability	8. Homestead is above known flood level
	9. Household has cash savings of more than Tk 3,000

Criteria domain	Criteria and thresholds
Access to services	10. Household has membership of social group

Slide 3 – Graduation Criteria: Why?

As explained in the “Overview of CLP2’s M&E System” presentation there was a relatively heavy emphasis on monitoring nutrition and livelihoods indicators at the start of CLP2. The key livelihoods indicators included income, expenditure, cash savings and assets.

Income and expenditure are undoubtedly important and were key outcome-level indicators in the CLP1 and CLP2 logframes. They do however provide a relatively narrow definition of what it means to be extreme-poor on the chars.

Households on the chars are very reliant on wage labour which is prone to fluctuations in supply and demand. A household’s income can be severely compromised if the adult male labourer falls sick and/ or the availability of local employment dries up as it often does during the lean season between October and December each year.

The slide tries to illustrate two scenarios. One, in which the household is highly vulnerable to external shocks: they are not on a raised plinth, they have poor water & sanitation and limited assets and cash. They could however be above the extreme poverty line. Conversely a household could well be below the extreme poverty line if work is not locally available and/ or the adult male labourer has been sick. The household is however relatively less vulnerable.

Partly in response, the first annual review of CLP2 in March 2011 recommended CLP develop ‘a comprehensive and holistic set of graduation criteria that includes assessing changes in economic, human and social capital ...that... would provide a more robust indication of *sustainable* graduation.’¹

Slide 4 – Developing CLP’s Criteria (Timeline)

The purpose of this slide is to demonstrate the time it took to finalise an agreed set of graduation criteria and thresholds.

CLP2 began in April 2010. The recommendation to develop graduation criteria came a year later in March 2011. It wasn’t until March 2014 that the graduation criteria and thresholds were finally agreed. The first report documenting graduation rates was not published until November 2014.

Part of the problem was that three annual review teams (March 2012, March 2013, and March 2014) were all tasked with reviewing CLP’s graduation criteria. Each team had a different perspective on what the criteria should be.

¹Premchander et al; March 2011, CLP; Annual Review 2011

Slide 5 –Version 1

Following the first annual review in March 2011, CLP began to consider developing graduation criteria. There were internal debates, discussions with other Programmes and online research.

By September 2011, CLP had developed an approach (Version 1) to assessing graduation. This comprised a two-step process. Firstly the household must NOT meet the selection criteria to be deemed out of extreme poverty. Secondly, the household had to be resistant to chargs shocks/ vulnerabilities and therefore had to meet 50 out of a possible 80 points on the so-called poverty scorecard (see slide). This was to be assessed 12 months after the end of CLP support. The indicators included in the scorecard, along with their weightings, were drawn from the CLP logframe.

[You can read more about Version 1 here.](#)

Slide 6 –Annual Reviews Impact Approach

Three annual review teams reviewed CLP's approach to graduation. Differing views by each teams had the effect of slowing down agreement on what the final set should look like:

- **March 2011:** CLP's first annual review. The team recommended CLP develop a set of graduation criteria.
- **March 2012:** CLP presented the two-step process (Version1, see slide 5). The team did not agree with the two-step process or the weightings and recommended CLP drop the first step, keep most of the indicators in the second step and add a couple more (to bring the number of indicators to ten). They also recommended equal weightings for all indicators. These indicators (more or less) are the ones that CLP used as the final set in March 2014.
- **March 2013:** This annual review team recommended replacing the graduation criteria with women's body mass index, assets and food consumption score. These were the important indicators for them. CLP and the donors disagreed.
- **March 2014:** During this annual review the debates continued. For example there were discussions about whether or not to combine the assets and cash criteria. There were also discussions about whether a latrine with broken water seal could still be classed as sanitary.

CLP's graduation criteria were finally agreed after the March 2014 annual review. The criteria were however not far off the criteria agreed following the 2012 annual review.

Slide 7 - % of households graduating, by cohort

CLP2 provided 78,026 core participant households with the integrated package of support. These households were supported in annual groups, or cohorts. There were a total of six cohorts (from 2.1 to 2.6).

This slide shows CLP's official graduation rates, by cohort. As a reminder, a household was said to have graduated if it met any six of CLP2's ten graduation criteria within three months of support ending.

The key points to note from the graph:

- The weighted average graduation rate for Cohorts 2.1-2.6 was 89.7%, just above the target of 85%.
- Because the criteria were not agreed until March 2014, there are methodological issues with the graduation rate for Cohort 2.1 in particular and to some extent Cohort 2.2. When Cohorts 2.1 and 2.2 came to an end the M&E system had not fully taken into account the graduation criteria. To some extent we had to use proxy indicators to assess graduation rates for Cohorts 2.1 and 2.2. The graduation rates for these cohorts are likely to underestimate actual rates.

Slide 8 – % of households meeting criteria (2.1-2.6)

The purpose of this slide is to illustrate which of the ten graduation criteria are being met and which are not being met by relatively high proportions of households.

The graph shows the graduation criteria being met by the vast majority of CPHHs:

- Household eats three meals a day AND consumes five or more food groups in the past week
- Household has membership of social group
- Presence of ash/ soap near to water point or latrine

These results are impressive when considering the starting point, or baseline status of CPHHs. For example, at baseline, only 37% of Cohort 2.6 households ate three meals a day AND consumed five or more food groups in the previous week. Only 15% had ash/ soap near to their water point or latrine.

Graduation criteria being met by relatively fewer households include:

- Household has cash savings of more than Tk 3,000
- Household has access to improved water
- Productive assets worth more than Tk 30,000

The cash savings value of Tk 3,000 was chosen because experience indicated it was enough to cushion the household should they need to relocate, e.g. due to erosion, which is a very common threat on the chars. At the time of preparing the graduation criteria this threshold of Tk 3,000 was above the value of the relocation grant offered by CLP (then Tk 2,000). In selecting the threshold of Tk 3,000 it was felt that the household would not only need cash savings to relocate but also to meet essential needs during the relocation period e.g. food.

On reflection, it is possible that this threshold is over-ambitious. Households might not actually wish to hold cash savings of this amount, rather choosing to invest the cash in productive assets.

Whilst just over 80% are not achieving this cash savings criteria at the end of the 18 month cycle, the average value of cash savings held by Cohort 2.1 to 2.6 households was Tk 2,557 at the 18 month mark: fairly close to the Tk 3,000 threshold. It's also important to note that CPHHs are starting from a very low cash savings base. For example the mean value of cash savings held by Cohort 2.6 at baseline was just Tk49.

In terms of the access to improved water criteria, it should also be pointed out that at the start of CLP2 not all core participant households were targeted to receive an improved water supply. This policy changed in 2013. CLP's Infrastructure Unit initiated a 're-sweep' meaning households that had left the CLP would be re-visited and provided with access to water. Whilst early cohorts benefitted from the re-sweep policy the official graduation rates have not been modified.

As for the asset value criteria (productive assets of Tk 30,000+), whilst 40% are not achieving this criteria at the end of the 18 month cycle, the average value of productive assets held by cohort 2.1 to 2.6 households was Tk40,815 at the 18 month mark i.e. on average almost Tk11,000 above the threshold. Some successful households are therefore clearly pushing up the mean values for productive assets.

Furthermore, data collected during the October 2015 annual survey shows that CPHHs on average continue to significantly accumulate their productive assets beyond the 18 month cycle. For example the mean value of productive assets held by Cohort 2.1 households was Tk41,408, which, at the time of the survey, was 46 months after the end of support. This suggests the threshold of Tk 30,000+ for productive assets at the 18-month mark is possibly on the high side; it takes longer for households to reach this threshold than the time period CLP set for its graduation assessment.

Furthermore, when selected for the CLP, CPHHs are extremely poor and are starting from a very low productive asset base. For example the mean value of productive assets held by cohort 2.6 at baseline was just Tk 1,687.

Slide 9 – % of households graduating, by cohort, years after CLP support ends

This slide attempts to show the sustainability of graduation. The graph shows graduation rates at baseline, at the end of 18 months i.e. end of support, and then in October 2015 for Cohorts 2.1 to 2.5. Cohort 2.6 is not shown because support to that cohort did not end until February 2016.

Key points to note from the graph:

- As one might expect, for all cohorts at baseline, almost no households graduate (meet 6 or more criteria)
- The graduation rates at the end of support (18 months) are the same as those shown in Slide 7
- Graduation rates for each cohort are also shown in October 2015.
- The graph shows that graduation rates are sustainable, at least between the end of support and October 2015.
- The following table shows the number of months that had elapsed between the end of CLP support and the October 2015 survey:

Cohort	Months
2.1	46
2.2	40
2.3	28
2.4	16
2.5	4
2.6	0 (CLP support ongoing at time of survey)

- For Cohorts 2.1 to 2.5 in October 2015, the weighted average rate of graduation was 90%. This is slightly higher than the weighted average rate of graduation at the end of 18 months support, which was 88%. The reason for this is likely to be due to methodological issues that were explained in slide 7.

Slide 10 – Pros and Cons

The Pros

- **Multi-dimensional view of poverty:** As we've demonstrated, CLP's graduation criteria cover ten different indicators which fall under six different dimensions of poverty from income/ expenditure/ consumption to women's empowerment and nutrition. This provides a greater understanding of extreme poverty on the chars and where households are failing and doing well.
- **Context specific:** a) CLP's graduation criteria reflect the chars vulnerabilities, what the programme tried to achieve as well as what the programme was responsible for delivering. The indicators that are relevant to CLP are going to be different to those selected by an urban poverty programme for example. b) Some of the indicators originated from discussions with the community. For example, the indicators related to consumption and women's empowerment. This makes them more defensible as a choice of indicator.

The Cons

- **People have different views/ Time consuming to achieve agreement:** CLP's experience has shown that defining graduation and then defining criteria and thresholds to define graduation is complex. We have seen (from the different annual review teams for example) that different people have different views. Whilst differing views can result in rich debate, it can also slow the process down.
- **Difficult to change:** CLP selected criteria and thresholds and then went ahead and applied them. After data had been collected and presented we realised that high

proportions of households were not meeting some criteria such as assets of Taka 30,000. The reasons for this can be explained and relate largely to the fact that households don't have sufficient time to accumulate assets by the 18 month point (which is when graduation data is collected.) Rather than change the indicator and threshold we chose to present the data and explain the findings. We felt that if we had changed the threshold we would have been seen to be changing the goalposts.

Slide 11 - Lessons

This slide provides an overview of the key lessons learnt in developing graduation criteria. These include:

- **Early consultation important:** Finalising the graduation criteria and methodology took far too long. Too many annual review teams reviewed the criteria, each coming up with a different idea. It would have been useful to get the key stakeholders (donors, CLP team, partners, community representation etc.) under the same roof, early on, to thrash out exactly what it was we meant by graduation and what the criteria should be, or at least what the process should be to develop the criteria.
- **CLP criteria good but by no means perfect (cash savings, assets):** We believe we have developed good criteria considering the programme's aims, deliverables and the chars context. However the thresholds are by no means perfect and could have been established based on a better understanding of the chars through greater consultation and research.
- **They were over-reviewed:** As mentioned above, three annual review teams reviewed the criteria and each team had a different opinion.
- **Community involvement:** Some of the criteria (women's empowerment and consumption) were developed in consultation with the community. Community involvement makes the indicators much more defensible.
- **Think through data collection, analysis and reporting framework early**
- **Criteria will be 'interrogated' – make sure process is defensible:** We have seen that people have very different ideas of what graduation means and how it should be measured. Having a strong logic as to why you chose certain indicators and thresholds above others is important.

Slide 12 –Thank you

More information is available on the [CLP website](#). Relevant reports include:

- [Graduation: Results for Cohorts 2.1 to 2.6](#)
- [Longitudinal analysis of key livelihood indicators](#)
- [CLP Graduation Rates. How sustainable are they?](#)
- [Asset Values: Why are some households doing better than others?](#)