

BRAC Ultra-Poor Graduation Initiative Welcomes Greg Chen as Its New Managing Director

NEW YORK, September 16, 2021 -- Greg Chen has been appointed the new Managing Director of [BRAC Ultra-Poor Graduation Initiative \(UPGI\)](#) with effect from 1 November 2021.

Chen brings with him a wealth of experience influencing policy change for financial inclusion in senior leadership roles in non-governmental and private sectors. He has a proven track record of effectively developing and executing strategies to engage countries, regions, and global bodies and building key partnerships with governments and regulators across Africa and Asia.

“I am confident Greg Chen is the right choice to steer BRAC Ultra-Poor Graduation Initiative forward, driving innovation, positive transformation and influencing systems change in poverty eradication, to meet the needs of people living in extreme poverty,” said Shameran Abed, Executive Director of BRAC International.

Chen has been a loyal champion and trusted advisor of BRAC. He has been a member of BI’s Board since 2019, and has provided insightful and strategic counsel during that time, supporting BRAC’s overall efforts to combat pervasive inequality worldwide. He has been instrumental in BRAC expanding the reach of the Graduation approach, which he will continue to do through government partnerships and influencing policy change as the Managing Director of BRAC UPGI.

“BRAC is an inspiration, and the Ultra-Poor Graduation Initiative is poised to scale globally,” said Greg Chen, new Managing Director at BRAC UPGI. “I could not be more excited to join the team.”

Prior to joining BRAC, Chen was the Policy Lead at [Consultative Group to Assist the Poor \(CGAP\)](#), focusing on hands-on advisory and implementation with microfinance institutions and engaging governments and regulators across Africa and Asia. CGAP is a global partnership of more than 30 leading development organizations that works to advance the lives of people in poverty through financial inclusion. It does this by generating and sharing knowledge to help build inclusive and responsible financial systems that move people out of poverty, protect their economic gains, and advance broader development goals. CGAP was instrumental in helping test and spread BRAC’s Graduation approach outside Bangladesh. He has also worked on rural livelihoods in remote northern Pakistan for the Aga Khan Rural Support Program, and provided advisory services to dozens of institutions on behalf of ShoreBank International, now Palladium Impact Capital.

Chen has more than 25 years of experience in financial inclusion and has lived in Bangladesh for more than a decade and in South Asia for more than two decades. He is a frequent speaker on microfinance and digital finance at American University, the Boulder Institute for Microfinance, BRAC University, Johns Hopkins, Tufts University, Yale University, and among others. He has a master’s degree in international development from Harvard’s Kennedy School and a bachelor’s degree from Wesleyan University.

Media Contact:

Courtney Calardo

Senior Manager of Communications

BRAC Ultra Poor Graduation Initiative

courtney.calardo@brac-upgi.org

<https://bracupgi.org>

####

About BRAC's Ultra Poor Graduation Initiative

BRAC Ultra-Poor Graduation Initiative (UPGI) is part of BRAC International and was founded in 2016 to support the expansion and implementation of BRAC's Graduation approach. BRAC UPGI has been providing advisory services and technical support to governments of varying capacities across Africa and Asia on integrating Graduation with existing social protection systems. In the past, BRAC UPGI has worked with government partners in the Philippines, Kenya, Rwanda, Lesotho, Guinea, Zambia, India, and Pakistan, among others, adapting the approach in each country to fit the local context and effectively integrate into existing programming. BRAC UPGI is scaling the Graduation approach through programming and policies, and partnering with national governments, peer organizations, civil society actors, and donors to achieve the long-term benefits demonstrated by Graduation and enable millions more people to lift themselves from extreme poverty.

About BRAC International

BRAC International is a leading nonprofit organization with a mission to empower people and communities in situations of poverty, illiteracy, disease, and social injustice. Our approach is grounded in the conviction that people living in vulnerable situations can be agents of change if they are empowered with the tools, skills, and hope they need to change their lives. We design proven, scalable solutions that equip people with the support and confidence they need to achieve their potential. BRAC's institutional expertise on successfully implemented programs is applied across 10 countries, touching the lives of over 130 million people, where our models are adapted according to the country's context.
