



EMPOWERING WOMEN & CHILDREN

UN Women Singapore and MasterCard collaborate on a social media initiative where the winning idea wins a grant.

As the world commemorated 100 years of International Women's Day, the Singapore National Committee for UN Women (UN Women Singapore, previously called UNIFEM Singapore) and MasterCard joined hands on March 1, 2011, to launch "Project Inspire: 5 Minutes to Change the World". This year-long digital and social media-driven initiative aims to connect and inspire young people across the world to share their life-changing ideas and fulfil their visions of a better world for disadvantaged women and children.



At the press conference announcing Project Inspire. Top, from left, Trina Liang-Lin, UN Women Singapore, and Georgette Tan, MasterCard.



Project Inspire is a platform for 18- to 35-year-olds with a five-minute video or two-page written pitch to articulate their idea to the world and win a US\$25,000 grant that they can use to implement their idea. The winning idea should set out to empower disadvantaged women or children in Asia-Pacific, Middle East and Africa through education, skills training, financial inclusion or social entrepreneurship. The idea can come from an individual or from a team made up of three persons.

Beyond the grant, there will be an additional special recognition to be given to the best financial literacy/livelihood proposal, which will be awarded a US\$10,000 start-up grant. People with a passion to make a difference are encouraged to submit their ideas at:

www.5minutestochangetheworld.org. Closing date for submission of entries is June 30, 2011.

A shortlist of 10 finalists will have to convince a global voting audience of the merits of their proposal, and present live in Singapore to an expert judging panel at the end of August 2011, when the winner will be announced. The finalists will also get the opportunity to attend a workshop on sustainable

social entrepreneurship and hone their presentation skills through a training session with professional consultants.

Project Inspire will rely on the power of the social media to connect people around the world to participate, as well as interact, share ideas and inspire change. This online community will stay connected with the winners as they go out into the field in the fourth

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MORE HARD FACTS ABOUT THE WOMEN IN THE WORLD FROM UN WOMEN SINGAPORE:

- 65 percent of the 780 million people who can't read are women.
- In times of crises, parents are more likely to take their daughters out of school and send them to work.
- Two-thirds of all children denied education are girls.
- Women are concentrated in insecure jobs in the informal sector with low income and few rights.
- Women produce 50 percent of the food in the world.
- Female wages are an important income source for families depending on remittances for daily supplies.
- In the developing world, women constitute around 60 to 80 percent of the export manufacturing workforce.
- 80 percent of women workers are considered to be in vulnerable employment.

quarter of 2011 to implement their vision. Through first-hand views on planning, preparation and implementation of creative, effective and focused programs based on limited resources, others can gain insight and inspiration to take action to change the world for underprivileged communities in their own way.

Project Inspire is jointly organized by UN Women Singapore and MasterCard, and supported by INSEAD, Bain & Co and Channel NewsAsia. The initiative supports the heightened need to devote resources to the empowerment of women. Despite great strides in their socio-economic standing over the past 100 years, statistics show that women account for 70 percent of the world's poor. They work two-thirds of the world's working hours but earn only 10 percent of the income and own one percent of the world's property. Giving

these disadvantaged women more opportunities to stand on their own feet has enormous socio-economic ramifications, as empowering women fuels economies, spurring productivity and growth.

A growing body of research demonstrates that there is no tool for development more effective than the empowerment of women. The "Global Gender Gap Report 2009" issued by the World Economic Forum found no country where men and women were equal, but noted that where the gender disparity gap was narrower, countries were more economically competitive and prosperous. Said UN Women Singapore, the report noted that "the combined impact of these gaps entails colossal losses to the global society and economy, and concluded that significant economic recovery and growth will not occur without the engagement, empowerment and contribution of

women and girls."

Trina Liang-Lin, president, UN Women Singapore: "The United Nations Millennium Development Goal 3 (MDG3): The empowering of women and girls is recognized to bring about potential multiplier effects for the achievement of the other MDGs such as MDG1: To eradicate extreme poverty and hunger and MDG4: To reduce infant mortality amongst others."

Added Georgette Tan, vice-president, Communications, Asia/Pacific, Middle East & Africa, MasterCard Worldwide: "At MasterCard, we recognize that empowering a woman to realize her potential is key not only for her personal development, but to the development of her family, her community and the nation. We are proud to work with UN Women Singapore on "Project Inspire: 5 Minutes to Change the World" to mark our 25th anniversary in the region, as it truly embodies the focus and aims of our ongoing community outreach efforts. We believe that by tapping the energy and passion of today's young people, we can create meaningful, sustainable impact and inspire others to do the same."

This is not the first time that MasterCard and UN Women Singapore have collaborated together. Other past initiatives include the "Buy to Save Sale" that raises funds to support initiatives reaching out to women affected by violence and the UN Women Singapore "Say No to the Oppression of Women" (SNOW) gala event. 