

Media : TODAY Online

Date : 13-17 June 2011

URL : <http://www1.todayonline.com/shopbycolours/people3.htm>

Title : People : Trina Liang – Lin, President of UN Women Singapore

Trina Liang-Lin

President of UN Women Singapore

By SeahNida

Trina Liang-Lin has much to be proud of. At 40 years old, she has held director and executive-director positions in a number of global investment banks, and more recently as the managing director of Templebridge Investments.

While it is easy to get caught up in the race to stay at the top of the corporate ladder, she has the other feather in her cap – as president of UN Women Singapore – to thank for keeping her grounded.

Referring to her work at UN Women Singapore and the need to give back, Trina said: “These ground me and remind me there is more to life than just money and career climbing.”

As president of the non-profit organisation, Trina leads a team to support programmes that provide women and girls with access to education, healthcare, economic independence and a life free of violence and abuse.

Every year, Trina returns every year to her alma mater St Josephs’ Convent and Victoria Junior College to speak to students. She added: “Every year, I also take part in at least one mission trip on my own or with UN Women to see and understand the work that is being done around the region to help less fortunate women and girls.”

“Whatever I do, I try to do it to the best of my abilities. This can be as small as making time to be a mentor to a girl seeking career direction or a corporate finance deal involving hundreds of millions of dollars.” UN Women Singapore’s latest initiative, in collaboration with MasterCard, is Project Inspire. People aged 18 to 35 are invited to submit ideas to support the empowerment of women in disadvantaged communities. Participants have five minutes to pitch through video or a two-page written submission. The winner will get a US\$25,000 (\$30,850) grant to make it a reality.

Trina said: “When it comes to empowering women, I am most passionate about livelihood projects in the Asian region.” According to her, such programmes are crucial because they teach women a specific skillset such as how to make a product, coupled with basic language, maths and marketing skills.

Trina herself had to work hard to be the successful woman she is today. Hailing from a middle class Hougang family, she had a challenging start in life when she lost her mother at a relatively young age. She gradually worked her way up, obtaining a Master in Finance and Accounting from the London School of Economics and trailblazing her way as a top investment banker.

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As a woman working in a predominately male environment, she is aware of the difficulties and discrimination other women may face at work. She summed up her own experience, saying, “Investment banking is probably the last truly male professional bastion apart from sushi chefs! It helps in investment banking to think like a man and sometimes act like one – in other words, action and reaction!”

Submissions to Project Inspire close on 30 June 2011. Visit www.5minutestochangetheworld.org for more details.