

New platform for women to network with senior peers

It will help young women realise leadership potential, develop a heart for service

BY SUE-ANN CHIA
SENIOR POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

YOUNG women looking to network with their more seasoned counterparts in the business and political arenas now have a new platform from which they can do so.

Called the Young Women's Leadership Connection (YWLC), it was officially launched last night by Mrs Lim Hwee Hua, Minister in the Prime Minister's Office and Second Minister for Finance and Transport.

The YWLC also aims to groom female leaders, get them engaged in community work and provide more opportunities for them to interact with their peers.

It was an idea first mooted in 2008 by Mrs Lim and the financial firm UBS Singapore.

"As women go through the different stages in life, their personal and career

goals change," Mrs Lim said at the launch last night.

"By creating a network of young ladies at a similar stage in life, these ladies can leverage on each other's experience and tap on each other for advice."

The YWLC began to roll out programmes in July 2008 and provide opportunities for mentorship, enrichment, networking and community engagement, especially for young women who were undergraduates or those who had just started work.

The goal has been to enable young women to realise their leadership potential as well as to develop a heart for service to the community.

Most of the young women are in their 20s and were selected from the three local universities here.

At the event last night, attended by 30 members and guests, the YWLC, led by its pioneer executive committee, was officially constituted under the People's Association (PA) network of community organisations.

A key feature of the YWLC is its mentorship programme, which started in March last year with 17 successful female leaders serving as mentors.

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The Young Women's Leadership Connection was officially launched by Mrs Lim Hwee Hua last night. The idea was first mooted in 2008 by Mrs Lim and the financial firm UBS Singapore. The YWLC aims to groom female leaders and get them engaged in community work. ST PHOTO: DESMOND LIM

They include Mrs Lim, Senior Minister of State for National Development Grace Fu, MPs such as Ms Penny Low and Ms Lee Bee Wah, and corporate chiefs like UBS Wealth Management Singapore chief executive officer Christine Ong and Great Eastern chairman Fang Ai Lien.

Ms Teo Lay-Sie, chief operating officer of UBS Singapore and Asia Emerging, said UBS joined the project as it is a firm

believer in mentoring young women as part of talent management.

"More and more women are represented in the boardroom... so we want to help these young ladies prepare because we've been there, done that," Ms Teo told The Straits Times.

Other core programmes by the YWLC include seminars for leadership development, community programmes such as

helping out at grassroots organisations, and networking events for women.

Ms Michelle Tan, chairman of YWLC, described its members as "uncut diamonds" who are resilient and full of potential.

The YWLC wants to expand, with plans to recruit 50 to 100 young women this year.

sueann@sph.com.sg