

Tan See Leng sets up S\$1 million endowment under late father's name to support women in STEM

Tan also spoke at length about the government's efforts in supporting this endeavour.

Matthias Ang | April 07, 2022, 02:26 PM



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Manpower Minister Tan See Leng has established an endowment under the name of his late father, Tan Seow Chiap, to support women pursuing education and careers in the fields of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM).

The announcement was made by Tan on Apr. 7, at the first anniversary of the Promotion of Women in Engineering, Research and Science (POWERS) by Nanyang Technological University (NTU).

Tan said that the promotion of women in STEM is a cause that is "close to his heart."

The minister elaborated:

"In my personal capacity, I have had the privilege of knowing and working alongside with many talented and capable women in the field of medicine, pharmacy, clinical sciences, chemical engineering, science, amongst many other disciplines.

Growing up, I have had the privilege of being taught by many, many inspiring female teachers and as a medical student, I continue to be mentored and tutored by some of the finest minds who are accomplished women clinicians as well."

Tan also said that he "strongly believes" gender diversity in all sectors across the workforce is crucial to Singapore's economic progress and in making Singapore a fairer and more inclusive society.

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S'poreans must be empowered in pursuing their aspirations without being constrained by gender stereotypes

In referencing the White Paper on Singapore Women's Development, Tan said, "Singapore must be a society where all Singaporeans, from all walks of life, have full and equal opportunities to flourish."

All individuals, whether they are man or woman, should therefore be empowered in pursuing their aspirations without being constrained by gender stereotypes, biases or barriers, he added.

In reiterating his belief that women are "just as capable" of advancing in STEM fields, Tan highlighted that the proportion of women in such jobs had increased from 28.1 per cent in 2010 to 32.4 per cent in 2020.

"In our Smart Nation, STEM is where there will be continual abundance of opportunities and we have to put in every ounce of effort to support women to enter and maximise their potential in the STEM fields in Singapore," he said.

What are the government's efforts in this endeavour?

Here, Tan said that apart from initiatives such as NTU POWERS, other efforts include:

- The Infocomm Media Development Authority's (IMDA) drive of the SG Women in Tech movement with community and industry partners.
 - This involves the publication of an annual list of 100 women role models for their "outstanding" achievements and contributions to the Infocomm technology industry to inspire more to join the sector.
- The introduction of the SG Women in Tech Corporate Pledge to encourage companies in the sector to implement concrete measures to attract, retain and develop more women tech professionals.
 - This also includes the Girls in Tech movement which provides a platform for young female students to pursue their interest in tech, and eventually a tech career.
- The SG Cyber Women initiative, part of CSA's broader national initiative, SG Cyber Talent, which aims to encourage more women to explore the cybersecurity profession through talks and programmes.
 - In addition, students are also provided with opportunities to explore cybersecurity as a career through interactions with women professionals and experts that who share relevant technical and soft skills.

Tan also highlighted that the government will continue to protect women against gender-based discrimination, as well as promote flexible work arrangements and family-friendly workplaces so that women will not feel inhibited to enter or to progress in careers of their choices.

Why name the endowment after his father and not his mother?

Tan then highlighted that he had been asked by colleagues as to why he chose to have the endowment promote women in STEM, as well as name it after his father instead of his mother.

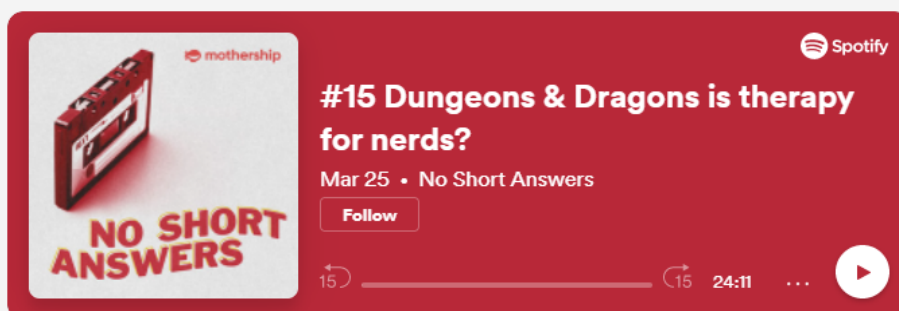
Tan gave the following reply:

"This is because gender equality is not a woman's issue. For Singapore to become a truly fair and inclusive society, we require a whole-of-society effort to shift mindsets on gender roles, challenge the biases, and break barriers that limit women's potential and contributions at work.

So the men here including myself, we are husbands...We are fathers, brothers, sons, colleagues, and friends to our women colleagues, our wives, our daughters, our mothers. We must do our part even more. We can start by believing in them and to show greater support for the women in our lives.

And we should always be there for them as they pursue their aspirations, for them to reach their own fulfillment, and to achieve their fullest potential, be it at work or at home."

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The image shows a Spotify podcast player interface. On the left is a red cassette tape with the text 'NO SHORT ANSWERS' in white and red. Above it is the 'mothership' logo. To the right of the cassette, the episode title '#15 Dungeons & Dragons is therapy for nerds?' is displayed in white on a red background. Below the title, it says 'Mar 25 • No Short Answers' and a 'Follow' button. At the bottom, there is a progress bar with a play button icon on the right and a '24:11' duration indicator.

Top collage photos via Tan See Leng Facebook

