

14 NOV, 2022

Give women platforms to lead and achieve economic success

The Malaysian Reserve, Malaysia



At Mranti Park, researchers, creators and innovators are brought together to nurture ideas into industry-changing products and services

Give women platforms to lead and achieve economic success

Dzuleira believes that it is time for the world to acknowledge the benefits of having women as leaders and commit to placing even more women in positions of power

by S BIRRUNTHA

OF LATE, women are increasingly taking up leadership roles, a trend which is hoped to continue as time goes on.

We no longer live in the world our mothers and grandmothers lived in, where career choices and leadership roles were very limited.

Leading by example, Malaysian Research Accelerator for Technology and Innovation (Mranti) group CEO Dzuleira Abu Bakar believes that it is time for the world to acknowledge the benefits of having women as leaders and commit to placing even more women in positions of power.

The Malaysian-born professional with a Master's Degree in Management & Finance from Universiti Malaya (UM) and Bachelor's Degree in Law from Universiti Teknologi Mara (UTM) stressed that companies and organisations need to build an inclusive culture.

"Women often are conscious and doubt themselves when offered leadership roles.

"It is imperative for organisations to stimulate confidence in their staff and empower them with knowledge and skills to take on such roles to break the glass ceilings.

"Give women platforms to be in power and achieve economic success," she told *The Malaysian Reserve* in an interview.

Dzuleira, who was the former CEO of the Malaysian Global Innovation & Creativity Centre (MaGIC) was appointed by the Science, Technology and Innovation Ministry (Mosti) in April 2021 to spearhead MaGIC's merger with Technology Park Malaysia (TPM).

Over the years, she held several top positions as the CEO of Cradle Seed Ventures (CSV) and

VP of Investments at Malaysia Venture Capital Management Bhd (Mavcap), as well as stints at Khasanah Nasional Bhd and Astro-nautic Technology Sdn Bhd.

Having more than 15 years of experience across various industries with positions in the private sector, government-linked investment companies (GLICs) and government-linked companies (GLCs), Dzuleira has specific depth in technology sectors in verticals such as consumer and enterprise solutions.

Speaking about her bigger mandate to accelerate commercialisation of technology and innovation at Mranti, Dzuleira said her move to TPM is part of Mosti's larger efforts to restructure and consolidate its agencies to ensure that they are well positioned to execute the National Science, Technology and Innovation Policy (DSTIN) and Malaysian Science Technology Innovation and Economic Development Framework (MySTIE 10-10).

She noted that this initiative is aimed at equipping Malaysia to be

better positioned to tackle issues such as low commercialisation rate, low gross domestic expenditures on research and development (GERD), low research and development (R&D) spent by the private sector and overlapping of roles between government agencies.

"Mranti's mission is to accelerate the creation, development and commercialisation of technology and innovation — by building a pipeline that encompasses the entire value chain, from start-ups in incubation to high growth technology companies; this will allow Malaysia to strengthen and unlock value in the technology and innovation ecosystem.

"I am excited to build on this momentum to help the country in achieving the MySTIE 10-10 launched in December last year, with technology commercialisation being one of the 10 STIE leap programmes designed to propel R&D conversion, creating spin-offs, targeted capacity building, technology development and ecosystem support," she said.

are women entrepreneurs, founders and co-founders; 44,649 women went through MaGIC's initiatives and programmes in five years; 457 start-ups have either employed women or are led by women (that is an estimated 25% of our total start-ups that MaGIC has helped grow); some start-ups co-founded by women include Sometime, Dropee.com, bloomThis, RecomN, TresGo and PichaLat.

"At TPM — now Mranti; we have equally nurtured a growing number of female-led start-ups such as BoomGrow, Data 8, Rich Trees Consultancy, ITM Hengtech, Artea, Three Little Ahmads, EZplast Solution, Medieva, Gula Cakery, Optimist Technology, Zelikha Holdings, Read Genius, Dunita International, infinitech Solution, Pelangi Network and Cordoba Leadership Centre," she said.

Challenges and Barriers to Female Leadership

According to Dzuleira, the tech industry is still a male-dominated world.

She cited a survey by TrustRadius, where women are outnumbered three to one in tech; around one in four leadership roles at large tech companies are held by women; women in tech earn 94.6 cents for every dollar earned by a man with the same role or experience; and women tend to work in lower-level, lower-paid positions and progress in their careers less quickly than men.

In the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) space, women gain only one job while men gain five, while the Unesco's Science Report 2021 indicates that women account for 33% of the world's researchers and only 22 women have been awarded a Nobel prize in a scientific discipline to date.

"The need for more women in STI goes beyond issues of fairness and ethics. The United Nations (UN) acknowledges that equal access to and participation in STI for women is imperative for the achievement of development goals.

"Attracting and supporting more women benefit everyone by increasing the potential to develop inclusive, innovative solutions for the complex problems the world is facing and driving scientific discovery," she said.

Dzuleira also shared that one of the factors that may contribute to the low female participation in STEM/STI includes early years gender parity, where psychologists have identified

"I am a strong advocate of technology and innovation, and being in the position I am in today makes it more possible for me to drive my belief forward."

— Dzuleira Abu Bakar



Source: Mranti

14 NOV, 2022

Give women platforms to lead and achieve economic success

The Malaysian Reserve, Malaysia



several factors which might set girls back when it comes to STEM subjects and unfortunately, most of them are born out of a culture that promotes male abilities and downplays those of females' when it comes to mathematics and science.

She added that other factors were misconceptions of roles in the industry, lack of encouragement, media stereotypes and lack of visible and accessible female role models in industry.

"Fortunately, today, we can observe how society is progressing to assist women grow in numerous sectors, but there is still a lot more effort needed to increase the number of female involvements especially in technology and innovation," she said.

Companies Benefit More by Having Women on Top
Dzuleira opined that it is important to bring women into the equation as they can bring unique perspectives to research and scientific conversation, enhancing creativity and providing new contexts to understand societal aspects of the research.

She said putting it simply, gender diversity leads to better and inclusive innovations.

She also highlighted that the probability of bringing interesting ideas to impact becomes drastically increased and by empowering more women with the knowledge, skills and tools to make advancements in innovation, we are increasing our potential to stimulate economic growth, create jobs and provide overall societal benefits.

Dzuleira stressed that boosting gender diversity in technology industries provides clear value, citing Boston Consulting Group's research which found that companies with more women in their workforces and leadership teams show better performance, and a more thriving technology sector that can aid the expansion of national economies.

"The research has shown that gender diversity can make companies more innovative and agile and improve their financial performance," she said.

Aside from the direct financial

Graduates Labour Force Participation Rate (GLFPR)		
Year	Graduates Labour Force Participation Rate (GLFPR) (%)	
Male	2021	87.3
	2020	88.5
Female	2021	83.0
	2020	82.0

Source: Graduate Statistics 2021, Department of Statistics Malaysia, DOSM

Industry	Share of leadership roles (%)	
	Female	Male
Non-governmental and membership organisation	47	53
Education	46	54
Personal services and wellbeing	45	55
Healthcare and care services	42	58
Government and public sector	40	60
Media communications	37	63
Manufacturing of consumer goods	34	56
Professional services	32	58
Leisure & travel	32	58
Retail and wholesale of consumer goods	32	58
Financial services	30	70
Entertainment	29	71
Real estate	29	71
Technology	24	76
Agriculture	23	77
Supply chain and transportation	21	79
Energy	20	80
Manufacturing	19	81
Infrastructure	16	84

Leadership roles included in the sample are Director, VP, CXO, Partner. The sample includes data from 152 countries. Source: Global Gender Gap Report 2022



STEM educators at a train-the-trainer workshop at Mranti. Dzuleira believes that STI is what Malaysia needs to deliver impact and uplift its citizens

benefit, Dzuleira said diversity is also increasingly crucial for organisations' culture and ability to attract better talent.

She also pointed out that in addition, it has been found to improve companies' customer service and brand perception in the market.

Balancing Work and Family Roles

Dzuleira described achieving work-life integration as a long and often a difficult process.

"I have learned through time and experience that it is very important to provide yourself with the opportunity to be successful and content in both," she noted.

Nevertheless, she said women can balance work and family responsibilities by building strong communication with family.

As a busy individual, Dzuleira balances work and family roles by having a flexible routine around her schedule, as well as by prioritising health and taking a break.

However, she had to accept the fact that imbalance is sometimes unavoidable.

Advice to Next Generation of Female Leaders

According to Dzuleira, it is important to remove gender inequality by removing biases with training and interventions by Human Resource and the leaders, to achieve a positive work environment.

"How often were you asked about marriage, marital status, family planning during job interviews? Most often these questions were thrown to women more than men. Let's drop this practice. Let us create an enabling environment via education and practices for women to prosper through continuous training and education," she said.

Dzuleira added that organisations must expand work-life policies, as inflexible work arrangements disproportionately impact women, with the most common example of childcare.

She noted that the tech industry is becoming more comfortable with non-traditional work arrangements that can provide a relatively easy way to help attract and increase the number of women.

"We have seen many successes around us that women can have multiple roles and yet be successful in their career."

"My role in Mranti requires me, among others, to develop strategic objectives and set clear directions including devising plans and policies.

"While we have yet to achieve the ideal male-to-female employee ratio, we are almost hitting the target and are indeed conscious of hiring talents based on merit.

"My priority is to drive the passion of my talents, creating an equitable, productive working culture and setting a clear set of values that will produce consistent, high-level performance across the whole organisation.

"As Marie Curie once said, 'The way of progress is neither swift nor easy'. But I firmly believe that we are stepping in the right direction," she said.

Tips to Become a Successful Leader

Dzuleira emphasised that it is very important for women to grow and develop their experience and professional skills to become a good and successful leader.

"If you are out of work, look at online courses and research how you might build up your professional skills and experience," she added.

Dzuleira also noted that women should demonstrate their initiatives and commitment to online learning, as this can be very attractive to future employers.

"Do not be afraid to try networking, through sites like LinkedIn. Connect with people who work in a role that you aspire to, get advice and expand.

"Step up and take action to demonstrate accountability, with



BoomGrow is one of the many female-led start-ups which has been nurtured by Mranti

the added bonus of building new skills and be sure to keep yourself relevant in the process," she said.

What's Next for Mranti?

Looking ahead, Mranti recently launched the Mranti Master Plan as an important bridge for transition and a successful model for domestic and foreign cooperation.

Dzuleira said this is an opportunity to accelerate commercialisation of innovation on the back of "impact technologies" in key industry sectors, in a sustainable way.

She also noted that currently, the Mranti Park is being developed in three phases, on three development precincts, namely Learning & Creative Media Precinct; Innovation Gateway Precinct; and Living Lab Precinct.

"The park will essentially be developed according to three principles — of innovation, sustainability and progressive culture.

"At Mranti Park, researchers, creators and innovators are brought together to nurture ideas into industry-changing products and services. It will be the centre of activity for collaboration, serving as a springboard for new ideas and creative solutions that can be accelerated

for commercialisation.

"My vision for the park is that this will be the place where we fast-track innovation to impact," she said.

Apart from that, Dzuleira said Mranti will also prioritise IR4.0 technologies involving block-chain, robotics, sensor technology, advanced materials and drones, among others.

Mranti has lined up new programmes such as Supercharger to seed, sustain and scale impact-driven innovations in a structured and systematic manner — linking both domestic and international markets for entrepreneurs, start-ups and the innovation ecosystem which will be rolled out in regional centres nationwide.

Mranti has also recently been appointed as the coordinating agency and secretariat of Malaysia Drone Tech Action Plan 2022-2030 (MDTAP30).

"Altogether, I believe these will place Malaysia and our people on the right trajectory to becoming a high-tech producer nation.

"In essence, this is what Mranti is about — bringing 'Ideas to Impact'. Our goal is to create impact — so these can be recognised, appreciated and celebrated the world over," Dzuleira said.



14 NOV, 2022

Give women platforms to lead and achieve economic success

The Malaysian Reserve, Malaysia



KEMENTERIAN TERAGA, SAINS, TEKNOLOGI,
ALAM SEKITAR DAN PERUBAHAN IKLIM

Page 3 of 3

SUMMARIES

Source: mrantipark.tiara.my At Mranti Park, researchers, creators and innovators are brought together to nurture ideas into industry-changing products and services

Dzuleira believes that it is time for the world to acknowledge the benefits of having women as leaders and commit to placing even more women in positions of power

OF LATE, women are increasingly taking up leadership roles, a trend which is hoped to continue as time goes on.