



MEDIA RELEASE

Breaking the Glass Ceiling

- PPIS' Inaugural Film Review cum Panel Discussion

"If I don't achieve justice for myself, I won't achieve justice for others." - Judge Kholoud Al-Faqih

Singapore, Sunday, 16 August 2020. Today, Guest-of-Honour, Ms Nadia Samdin, Member of Parliament of Ang Mo Kio GRC and 30 women leaders from various organisations came together to advocate for gender equality and the promotion of women's aspirations in a belated commemoration of International Women's Day (IWD).¹

The Singapore Muslim Women's Association (PPIS) hosted this IWD commemoration, which is also the organisation's inaugural film review cum panel discussion. Through a critical discourse on the film's pertinent themes, PPIS and fellow women leaders voiced their hope for a gender equal world by challenging prejudices, broadening perceptions and improving situations – all while celebrating the achievements of women.

Significantly, the [Global Gender Gap Report 2020](#) had placed Singapore as 54th among 153 countries. This meant that the country currently has the 54th narrowest gender gap in the world. While this was a steady rise from previous ranks, it also showed that it will take Singapore 163 years to close the gap at the current pace of change. Another report, the recent Gender Social Norm Index, also revealed that 9 in 10 people are prejudiced against women.

"The recent developments within the Malay-Muslim community in Singapore over the last five years, is suggesting a gradual openness to women in leadership. Although much progress has been made, I believe that more can still be done, such as addressing issues on caregiving responsibilities, retirement adequacy, gender pay gap, and many more.

This work will require support from all levels. Government policies, public education and awareness are important and this includes diversity programmes in testament of the tenacity and our conscious effort to find qualified persons to be part of conversations like this, panels, board and committees. We also have to ensure the cultural and mindset shift of the community, and that they are updated to today's context." GOH, Ms Nadia Samdin said in her speech.

PPIS also sees this as a call for immediate change, especially in the globalised world where future generations are increasingly progressive in their mindset and views of gender equality. Hence, in response, the organisation hopes to amplify its efforts as the voice of Muslim women by leading contemporary discussions to inspire change and drive collective action in Singapore. After all, women are stronger together.

Directed by Erika Cohn, the award-winning documentary, THE JUDGE, tells the journey of Judge Kholoud Al-Faqih; the first woman appointed to a Shari'a court in the Middle East. Through the screening, PPIS hopes to emulate Judge Kholoud's grit in being a change-maker within her community, commitment in creating allyship among women, and support for mutual advancements.

¹ PPIS' IWD celebration in March was postponed due to COVID-19's safe distance measures.



This is especially with the skewed perceptions of women in leadership in Singapore and across the world. Her act of breaking the glass ceilings of traditional, male-dominated Shari'a courts of the Middle East has already left an impact, when a second woman was elected shortly after. It was notable as the appointments took place only after some thousand years since the courts have been in existence.

The film also underscores the significance of a strong support ecosystem, meritocratic policies and a progressive societal mindset that views women empowerment positively. This will in turn translate to the provision of more opportunities for women to succeed in life. In Judge Kholoud's tireless fight for justice, she received strong support from the male figures within her family. This reiterates that the onus of gender equality lies on all shoulders - not just women.

"Just like how Judge Kholoud was the first female judge in the Middle East, PPIS - as the pioneering Muslim women's organisation in Singapore - hopes to represent the Muslim women's voice and advance their aspirations. Through our various programmes and services ranging from families to children, the organisation aims to support women in juggling the multiple roles they play in society and across the different phases of their lives," said Mdm Rahayu Mohamad, President of PPIS.

Taking centre stage during the panel discussion were esteemed women in their respective fields: Ms Malathi Das; Lawyer and Past President of the Singapore Council of Women Organisations (SCWO), Dr Suzaina Kadir; Vice Dean (Academic Affairs) at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore (NUS) and Ms Khadijah Madihi; Director - Strategic Partnerships & Development from the Reyna Movement.

As a lawyer herself, Ms Malathi Das said: "Witnessing another woman's rise to the peak of legal achievement as a judge is always a matter for great pride and joy. Given that the world's population is almost equal between men and women, why should not one of the main pillars of society be equally represented by women, who bring a different point of view and value to the judicial branch."

Guest-of-Honour:

Ms Nadia Samdin
Member of Parliament for Ang Mo Kio GRC

Event Details:

Date: Sunday, 16 August 2020

Time: 11am – 12.30pm

The event was held in English.

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About PPIS

Founded in 1952, PPIS (Persatuan Pemudi Islam Singapura or the Singapore Muslim Women's Association) is a non-profit organisation focused on services for women, family and children. Our focus is on working with women of all ages in carrying out their multiple roles in society. PPIS runs three core community services namely; Family Services, Student Care and Early Childhood Education (ECE).



With 16 centres islandwide, the services work together to provide quality and holistic support as well as developmental programmes for women and their families across the different phases of their lives.

PPIS is also part of the national SGTeguhBersatu taskforce led by Minister-in-charge of Muslim Affairs, Mr Masagos Zulkifli, to strengthen families through psycho-social resilience. In April 2020, the organisation, together with MUIS and Pergas, developed the psycho-social resilience framework of 3Cs - Coherence, Connection and Cohesion. This framework will be the guiding principles towards PPIS' efforts of building resilient and forward-looking families.

About PPIS Research and Engagement Department (R.E.D)

As a pioneering Muslim women's (MW) organisation, PPIS recognises the need to be a source of support to MW in an ever-changing social landscape. R.E.D aims to represent MW's voice and advance aspirations. The focus areas of the department are research and engagement. Our objective is to undertake research efforts on MW's matters. The research is to help PPIS understand MW better and provide evidential data to represent MW to other communities as well as offer recommendations on topics that affect MW.

R.E.D's goal is to engage different parties on emerging and challenging subjects confronting MW. Through evidence-informed education programmes and public awareness, we endeavour to develop the community's knowledge base. R.E.D aspires to involve PPIS members in building internal and external social capital through their wealth of experience, knowledge and skills.

For more information, please visit: <http://www.ppis.sg>