

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Women's Foundation Launches #MyRealCareerLine Campaign in Hong Kong
Making a Stand Against Sexism and Inequality in the Workplace

Latest survey shows 62% of women feel discriminated against at work based on their looks.

Hong Kong, March 8, 2017 - To mark International Women's Day, The Women's Foundation (TWF) and J. Walter Thompson (JWT) today launched a campaign to tackle sexism and inequality in the workplace.

#MyRealCareerLine celebrates the talent, capabilities and other drivers behind a woman's 'real career line' while challenging the use of the term for career line in Cantonese, 事業線, to refer interchangeably to a woman's cleavage. The phrase 事業線 is just one form of casual sexism found in everyday language and print and online media that legitimises the objectification of women and in the process, diminishes a woman's professional achievements by making it all about her appearance.

A TWF-commissioned Edelman Intelligence/You Gov online survey of over 1,000 local male and female citizens from last week found that

- 62% of women felt discriminated against based on their looks. Meanwhile, one in four men aged 31-40 believed a woman's success is related to her physical appearance and one in five men aged 22-30 believe women use their sex appeal to their advantage.
- 40% of respondents believed women are routinely the subject of inappropriate comments on their body parts within the office and 18% of people had heard the phrase 事業線 used in a professional conversation.
- 42% of women said they found the term 事業線 offensive but underscoring the issue the campaign is spotlighting, one in five men under 30 thought the term was positive.

Female icons from media, entertainment, business and sports are supporting the #MyRealCareerLine campaign by sharing the story behind their 'real career line' in a short film directed for TWF and JWT by celebrated TVC director, writer and blogger Bud Ming. They include Olympic swimmer Stephanie Au, Freshfields Partner and China Chairman Teresa Ko, model Janet Ma, World Snooker Champion On-yee Ng, Founder of JupYeah Ren Wan, YouTuber and singer Hana Tam, entrepreneur Kayla Wong, science student Daisy Ngai and illustrator Stella So. After sharing their stories, the film shows the women ripping up a poster of a stylised cleavage underscoring their support for the campaign.

Other ambassadors for the campaign include Former Chief Secretary Anson Chan, Chairman of the Commission of Youth Ming-Wai Lau, SCMP CEO Gary Liu, Barclays Chief Executive for Hong Kong Anthony Davies and leading gender academic experts Professor Susanne Choi of the Chinese University of Hong Kong and Professor Annie Chan of Lingnan University.



To raise awareness, The Women's Foundation created a 3-day fictitious pop-up Career Line clinic to launch the campaign. The accompanying website and Facebook page for the Career Line clinic generated a wave of angry emojis and negative comments.

TWF and JWT also developed an online tool which individuals can use to combine their own photo with a superimposed image of a ripped stylised cleavage in the style of the campaign film. Supporters can then post their photos on social media and invite friends to do the same. See: www.realcareerline.hk

According to Su-Mei Thompson, CEO of The Women's Foundation, "The #MyRealCareerLine campaign is about rejecting the popular use of the term "career line" to refer to a woman's cleavage and inviting people and organisations to make a stand against casual sexism, objectification and inequality. In addition, we hope that women who see the campaign will take pride in and celebrate whatever it is that makes them exceptional, knowing that their true value and worth is based on far more than just their appearance. In terms of a call to action, we hope employers will play their part by working harder to ensure they are using objective criteria when assessing female candidates for job openings or promotions. And the media also has an important role to play in representing women in a more authentic, three-dimensional and aspirational light."

Professor Susanne Choi added, "Although many people might dismiss terms like 事業線 as harmless and just a joke, according to studies, far-reaching gender discrimination emanates from this kind of everyday casual sexism. It is therefore crucial to realise the importance of calling out micro-inequities and changing even the smallest things, especially when we consider the ramifications of gender discrimination like the fact that the income disparity between men and women in Hong Kong today is bigger than five years ago."

According to Professor Alfred Chan, Chairperson of the Equal Opportunities Commission said, "The EOC applauds The Women's Foundation for launching this important campaign to counter gender stereotyping and objectification of women, which can have a real impact on gender roles and inequality. We know from our surveys that sexual harassment remains prevalent in the workplace, especially in the service sector, with almost one fifth of the service industry employees in the 2014 survey saying that they had been sexually harassed at work within the last 12 months. Even worse, 90% said there were no instructions from their employers on how to handle these kinds of incidents, and fewer than 40% of victims reported the incident to their employers. To combat sexual harassment, the EOC is committed to working with different organisations and parties, including TWF, on creating a safe and harassment-free environment for everyone. Through concerted efforts, we aim to foster respect for everyone, irrespective of gender, and ensure a level-playing field for men and women."

Campaign Supporters

The campaign has been endorsed and supported by a significant number of organisations. This includes PR partner Edelman Public Relations Worldwide (HK), research partner Edelman Intelligence, strategic partner Facebook and media partners: LinkedIn, Google, she.com, Tatler, Marie Claire and RTHK.



About The Women's Foundation

The Women's Foundation is a Hong Kong registered not-for-profit organisation dedicated to improving the lives of women and girls in Hong Kong. TWF is focused on challenging gender stereotypes, increasing the number of women in policy and decision-making roles, and empowering women in poverty through ground-breaking research, innovative and impactful community programmes, and education and advocacy. For more information on The Women's Foundation, please visit <http://www.twfhk.org>.

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