

FOLLOW THE LEADER

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WHAT defines a true leader? This answer usually changes depending on the person. Some say that true leaders inspire, some say that leadership is influence, and others say that leaders should be humble.

In short, there are many things that define a great leader, and although there are a few important qualities to have, there is no specific mould to fill.

They come in many shapes and sizes with different strong points – some are especially inspiring, some are especially influential, and some are especially humble. As it has been said many times before, everyone is unique.

In this article, I'm going to focus on personalities in Malaysia who lead through influence and by their own example.

Here are a few of them.

DATUK DR KIM TAN

Tan is the founder chairman of SpringHill Management Ltd (UK), as well as an adviser to many government agencies in Asia on biotechnology.

Apart from that, Tan is also a trustee of Transformational Business Network, a network which includes entrepreneurs, business and financial professionals, technical specialists and social investors who aim to transform their communities through sustainable business solutions to poverty.

They use their skills and resources to support projects and SMEs (small and medium enterprises) that create jobs and empower the poor.

Tan also supported the Kuzuko Game Reserve, a conservation and social transformation project in an area of high unemployment in South Africa.

Having co-authored the book, *Fighting Poverty Through Enterprise: The Case for Social Venture Capital*, Tan believes that economies are transformed through enterprises to not only better the communities of the lesser privileged, but to also give them a sense of dignity and independence.



If you haven't spotted it yet, the common theme that can be found among the above corporate leaders is the spirit of giving.

Taking a lesson from them, we, as Malaysians, can give back to our communities and society as well. Or in the case of the Kassim couple and Tan, take it one step further and go beyond our own shores.

We don't have to be billionaires to do this; this spirit of giving can be cultivated by merely being a kind citizen, loving our neighbours, or even participating in volunteer work.



CORPORATE LEADERS



ANANDA KRISHNAN

A Harvard Business School graduate, Ananda Krishnan (also known as AK) has a real gift for business. He initially started his ventures in MAI Holdings, and then went on to set up his own company, Exoil Trading.

He is currently the CEO and chairman of Usaha Tegas Group Holdings and TAK Corporate Holdings, and has business interests in various areas, some of them being Maxis and Astro.

Although he is more than a little shy to the public eye, this second richest person in South-East Asia is also known to be a great philanthropist, and has contributed much to education in Malaysia.

Apart from the many lessons we can learn from him, Krishnan's lifestyle teaches us an important value: always give back to your society.

MOHD KASSIM SULONG AND MILIEE KASSIM

With Mohd Kassim as the co-founder of Deloitte KassimChan, an accounting firm, and Miliee Kassim as the director of Harta Setia, these corporate leaders are your local exemplary power couple.

The couple started the Kassim Chin Humanity Foundation together, which was set up with the objective of providing facilities to the poor and needy, regardless of their nationality, race, sex, age, or religion.

One of their current biggest projects in their foundation is their Asia International Vocational Centre.

Set up for underprivileged



children, they provide these facilities to children in poor Asian countries to help them develop skills that will be useful for them in their future careers, and also further enabling these children to build up their communities in the future.

DATUK RUBY KHONG

An inspiring woman, Khong manages to juggle being the director of an international petroleum company, an active philanthropist, as well as a mother of three children.

Currently the president of Kechara Soup Kitchen Community, Khong heads a community action group that distributes food, basic medical aid, and counseling to the homeless and urban poor of Malaysia.

Apart from that, she has also been invited to give speeches on social work and humanity, and has spoken as a panelist at the Philanthropy in Asia Summit in 2012.

As a loving mother, Khong is an example of one of the most commonly said phrases, "charity starts from home" – which means that someone who displays a charitable attitude at home will display the same outside of it.

This kindness is evident in her three children who have joined her in community work after their graduation, with two of them eventually joining her full-time, proving that Khong is a true leader by example.