

Malaysia overtakes Hong Kong with more women in management, says HR firm
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More women are holding management positions in Malaysia this year, with the country overtaking Hong Kong and Singapore for the first time, recruitment firm Hays said, ahead of International Women's Day this Sunday.

The 2015 Hays Asia Salary Guide revealed that 34% of management positions in Malaysia are held by women, up 5% from last year and higher than the Asian average of 29%.

Malaysia ranks second to China (36%), which remains the region's diversity leader, and is followed by Hong Kong (31%, down from 33% last year), and Singapore (27%, unchanged year-on-year), while Japan only had 19% of its management positions filled by women, Hays said in a press release today.

"Malaysia has taken a big step forward when it comes to gender diversity in the workplace," the firm said in the press release.

Christine Wright, the managing director of Hays in Asia, said more workplaces needed to embrace flexible working practices, highlight female role models, change organisational policy in support of gender diversity, and give better board backing for diversity issues.

"Interestingly, the dialogue about how to achieve gender diversity in the upper echelons of management has turned away from quotas, with most people now saying that implementing quotas would not make real change happen.

"Instead, cultural change and practical measures are the agreed solution over formal quotas," said Wright in the press release.

She said one of the best practical measures was to put performance-related promotion policies in place, as it would ensure people were promoted based on their performance alone, encouraged meritocracy, and removed unconscious bias from the decision making process.

"If those in charge can't make it happen, it might take the leadership of the next generation to action real change and close the gap between the number of male and female leaders," said Wright.

"We will continue to monitor this trend in future years and see how quickly organisations develop (or fail to develop) female talent at the management level."

The guide also revealed Malaysia had seen "impressive salary increases", compared to the more moderate pay rise in Hong Kong and Singapore.

A total of 48% of employers in Malaysia increased salaries by 3% to 6% compared to the last review, 31% increased it by 6% to 10%. and 9% of employers raised it by more than 10%, the guide revealed.

Hays said 2,361 organisations representing 4,017,026 employees took part in its survey. – March 2, 2015

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