



# Empowering femininity

➤ Chloe Lim aims to realign beauty with compassion, intelligence as Malaysia's new Miss Universe

BY JOHN TAN

**B**EAUTY, compassion and intelligence are among the values many aspire for. Society at large has placed great worth on their existence, emphasising their importance in our daily lives. But these values are often said not to co-exist, especially among women.

Chloe Lim Sue Lyn, however, argues otherwise. The 27-year-old lass, who was recently crowned Miss Universe Malaysia, is a strong believer that women can possess these attributes fully. As part of her advocacy as this year's queen, Lim is walking the talk.

"What attracted me this year was the theme. It was redefining your journey and I resonated with that. I was passionate about having a platform to stand for something more.

"What I wanted with Miss Universe was to stand at this intersection that a woman can be beautiful, intelligent and compassionate. This inspired me to take a brave step for myself and try something different," the Kuala Lumpur native told *theSun* at Holiday Inn Bangsar.

## Strong exposure to charity, education

Lim's background in academia is evidence of this. Before receiving her crown, she occupied herself with the pursuit of academic excellence. The management consultant holds not one, but three international degrees.

She has a degree in accounting and finance, law and international management. Lim pursued her tertiary studies across the globe, from the UK and New York to Portugal and Estonia, gaining a global education experience.

Lim's makeup is done by Azmier Hisyamuqris.



"I always had a sense of adventure and curiosity. Whether it was reading books, watching films or travelling, I always wanted to see the world. I wanted to immerse myself globally and learn about different cultures. So, I was excited to go abroad and broaden my horizons.

"That is what I did and am grateful for the experiences I had. I am grateful that my family believed in opening one's mind globally."

While it was personally fulfilling, the experience gave Lim a firsthand perspective to global inequalities too. Having seen the effects of inequity among underprivileged communities, she developed a calling for community work.

She has taught orphans in Vietnam and helped build a social shelter for vulnerable girls in Portugal. Locally, she has dedicated herself to offering free English lessons to the children at the local orphanage Lighthouse, closing the educational gap among children.



Lim's outfit is from local stylist Evita Mairesse.

"I am also partnering with my old high school to bring the children to career fairs, show them what avenues and opportunities are out there."

## Adjustments required

That said, it has not entirely been a smooth transition for the philomath. Though Lim is experienced in academics, charity and corporate affairs, she had never competed in beauty pageants before. This year's



Lim wearing the crown by A Vintage Collezione.  
— ALL PICS BY ADIB RAWI YAHYA/THE SUN

Miss Universe was her first time participating.

"It was a learning curve. My day-to-day used to be Excel and PowerPoint. But now, my technical skills are having the best makeup, hair, catwalk, social media and content creation. These skills were something I had to learn and ramp up into."

Fortunately, she had her fellow contestant and roommate Priyanka Sockanathan to count on. The duo leaned on one another throughout the competition. Lim, however, had to shoulder through a bigger obstacle on her own.

Upon the announcement of her win, she was met with an intense backlash online. Considering the call for inclusivity this year, many pageant veterans competed alongside Lim – with their presence came an established following and support.

Lim's victory, therefore, came as a surprise as some found her to be too rookie. Additionally, they found her physical attributes to not fit their idea of a beauty queen.

"Being picked apart online by people who might not even know you does hurt. But I choose to respond to it with grace, kindness and compassion. So, I do not react or respond to any of those comments.

"But I do know why I am here and my commitments, which are to give my best to represent Malaysia on the world stage, give back to communities around me and make

the impact that I set out to do as Miss Universe Malaysia."

## Hard at work

For the past few weeks, Lim has been living up to her word, prepping hard to represent Malaysia at the world stage in Thailand on Nov 21.

"We definitely understand the competition is quite close. So, I am grateful for all the support from the Miss Universe Malaysia Organisation. We have been making sure we craft the right image that represents Malaysia well."

When asked if she feels pressured by former queen Sandra's achievement last year, Lim simply expressed her wish to outdo herself.

"I respect Sandra and her grit, determination and ability to perform. I am not Sandra and I would not be a 2.0, but I will be me. Just showing up as my best and knowing I left my best on stage, that is what motivates me."

As for her plans after the competition, Lim still aims to champion causes close to her heart while taking on new opportunities.

"I would like to speak at conferences that make an impact in Malaysia. I would love to do more of that and continue with my advocacy work. With Lighthouse, working with the children and trying to close the opportunity gap in Malaysia.

"It is truly a life of service. It is truly about what and how much you can give back. That is what I am excited to continue doing," she concluded.



Lim's hair is styled by Frank Ong and Adrian Tan.