

HOW UNION COLLABORATION HELPED SIA SAVE JOBS & STRENGTHEN RECOVERY

A Singapore Labour Journal Article Feature



How Union Collaboration Helped SIA Save Jobs & Strengthen Recovery: A Singapore Labour Journal Article Feature

NTUC proudly launched the third volume of the Singapore Labour Journal in September 2024, themed "*Challenge as Opportunity*". This edition embodies the Labour Movement's commitment to embracing change, fostering innovation, and demonstrating resilience in the face of uncertainty and adversity.

One standout feature from this edition is the Singapore Airlines (SIA) Group's journey during the Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) crisis—a **powerful case study on how tripartite collaboration transformed a workforce crisis into a model of resilience and adaptability**.

In the face of economic disruption, organisations must rethink their workforce strategies to ensure resilience. The SIA Group's journey is a prime example of how tripartite collaboration can turn challenges into opportunities, aligning with the Labour Movement's ongoing efforts to foster innovation and adaptability. By surfacing this case study, we aim **to share a blueprint for building resilience amidst technological disruption or industry transitions**.

SMART Strategy Model: Supporting Workers Through Crisis

During the COVID-19 pandemic, global border closures and travel restrictions put staff at risk of losing their jobs. SIA engaged its unions (**AESU, SIASU, SEEU, ALPA-S, STSU**), and **NTUC** to safeguard livelihoods, health, and well-being through NTUC's **SMART Strategy model**.

NTUC's SMART Strategy Model



Job Support



Job Matching



Job Advocacy



Job Re-creation
and Training

Job Support

The first prong of the model aims **to empower organisations to maintain operations and retain workers**, even during challenging economic conditions, through a variety of internal and external job support measures.

Government Wage Support & Absentee Payroll

SIA Group leveraged government support schemes, e.g. **Job Support Scheme (JSS)** and **Absentee Payroll (AP)** to alleviate operational expenses.*

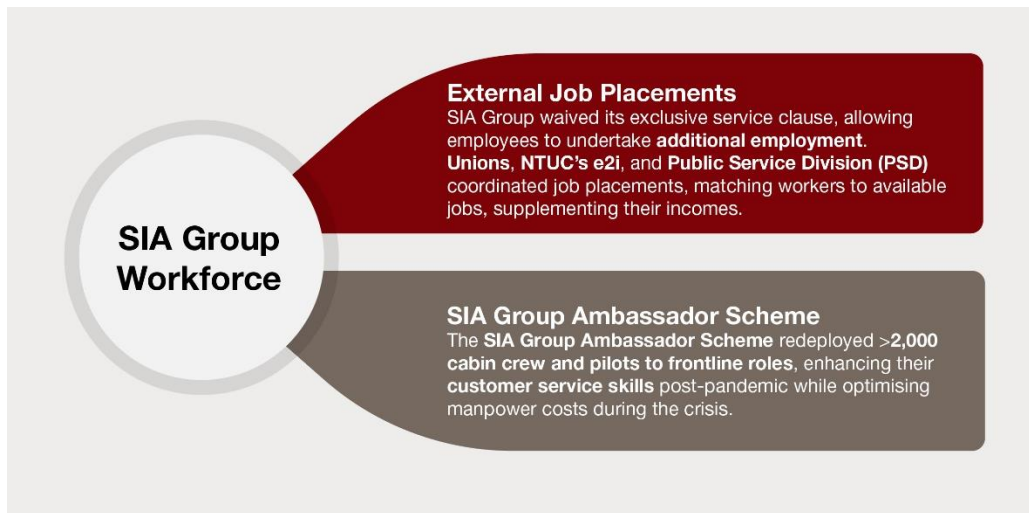
SIA Group Workforce Measures

In collaboration with unions, SIA Group implemented **pay cuts, voluntary no-pay leave, and early retirement schemes** to reduce retrenchments.

** JSS provided wage subsidies to employers, helping them retain local employees (Singapore Citizens and PRs) during economic uncertainty. AP helps companies offset manpower cost incurred when sending employees for training.*

Job Matching

The second prong of the model aims **to provide job matching, providing workers with employment opportunities**.



Job Advocacy

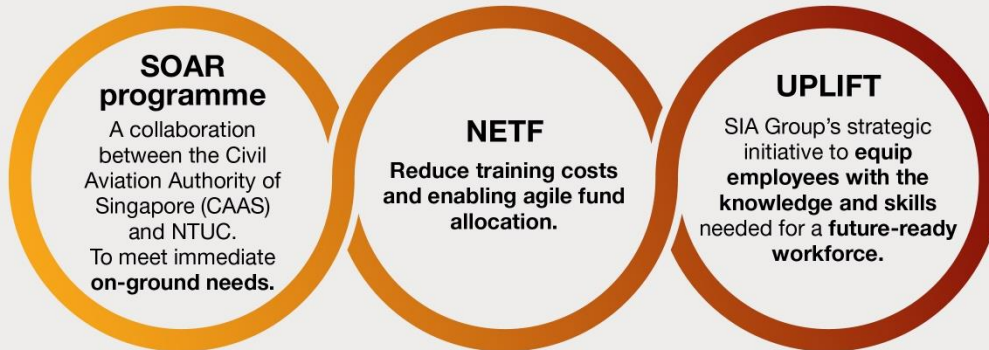
The third prong of the model advocates on behalf of workers, **calling for changes that enhance workplace progressiveness and their working environment.**



Job Re-creation and Training

The last prong of the model focuses on **upgrading workers' skills through training and upskilling**, helping them overcome challenges and prepare for the future.

NTUC oversaw the **Singapore OneAviation Reskilling (SOAR) programme**, co-funded through **NTUC-Education and Training Fund (NETF)** to support **SIA Group's upskilling plan (UPLIFT)**. **>28,000 courses** were completed, averaging **13.6 training days per worker**.

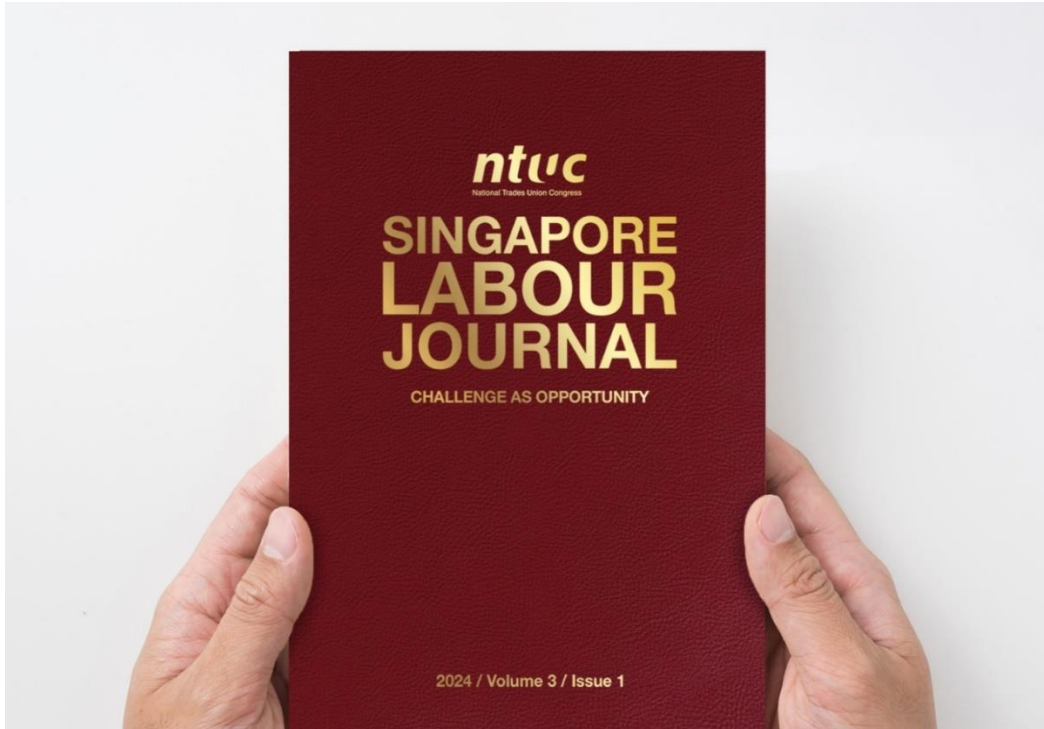


A Model for Crisis Resilience

While every effort was made to preserve jobs, some retrenchments became unavoidable. However, **SIA Group adhered to NTUC's Fair Retrenchment Framework, ensuring affected workers received a dignified exit, compensation aligned with established guidelines, and career transition support.** The SIA Group maintained an open stance towards rehiring these individuals when the demand for air travel recovered.

The SIA Group's experience highlights the power of tripartite collaboration in safeguarding jobs, supporting workers, and enhancing organisational agility during economic uncertainty.

Click [here](#) to read the full article.



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NTUC Strategy planned an **interactive dialogue and networking session** to bring together **Government Representatives and LAB members**, designed to deepen engagement and foster knowledge-sharing on key labour and workforce issues. This initiative aligns with LAB’s commitment to fostering meaningful collaboration among labour researchers, policymakers, and industry leaders to enhance research impact and policy discourse.

The dialogue will provide LAB members with an opportunity to gain **first-hand insights into key developments** and exchange perspectives on emerging workforce trends. The discussions and **learnings** from this engagement will further contribute to LAB’s ongoing efforts to shape strategies that support workers and strengthen Singapore’s labour landscape.

More details will be shared in due course—stay tuned for updates.

Find out more information about the LAB [here!](#)

Watch our introductory [video](#) to learn more!

Thank you for reading this issue of the ***Singapore Labour Research Digest!*** Through this space, we aim to initiate discussions, promote debate, and advance our understanding of labour issues. Feel free to also forward this newsletter to colleagues who may find the resource relevant to their work.

Have feedback you would like to share or are interested in a research collaboration? Get in touch with us at strategy@ntuc.org.sg.

Stay tuned for our next newsletter!

Presented by the NTUC Strategy

Find out more about the team behind the research [here!](#)

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