

NTUC SEs Gear Up To Be CBF And Bigger For Greater Social Impact



There are enterprises and there are enterprises. There are enterprises that exist purely for profit. Then there are enterprises that have the passion to Do Good but lack the resources to make a strong enough social impact to make a difference. The NTUC Social Enterprises, on the other hand, have both the passion and the resources to Do Good such that it maximises social impact to make a difference. A big difference showed in last year's global economic downturn.

Speaking at the NTUC Social Report Card Press Conference on 6 May 2010 at the NTUC Foodfare Foodcourt at Simei, NTUC Secretary-General Lim Swee Say, recounted: "Even in the downturn, we continued to maximise our social impact for the workers. We made sure that we remained competitive. Last year, many organisations had excess manpower and went on shorter work weeks and retrenchments. You will recall that the NTUC SEs went to NTUC's e2i (Employment and Employability Institute) to collectively express our commitment to not talk about retrenchments and shorter work weeks."

SG Lim added that the NTUC SEs even went to the extent to "mount a recruitment campaign", resulting in a combined NTUC SEs Job Fair on 11 May 2009 that offered more than 1,000 different jobs for Singaporeans.

To continue to Do Good to help working people of All Collars, Ages, and Nationalities live better lives, SG Lim stressed that it was vital to upkeep the virtuous cycle of Doing Good to Do Well to Do More Good. In other words, the 12 NTUC SEs will commit to increase their Do Good efforts by ensuring affordability, accessibility and quality of their products and services. This will enable them to attract more customers and Do Well and be competitive. By Doing Well, the NTUC SEs will then be able to Do More Good.

The NTUC SEs also collectively contributed a record sum of \$107 million to help workers and their families ride out the downturn. It is a 41 per cent increase in social contribution and is the biggest amount since the 1970s. This effort is remarkable considering the severity of the downturn and hits home that the NTUC SEs stay true to their social mission of Doing Good.

Out of the \$107 million, close to \$90 million went to help members and their families manage the cost of living and stretch the dollar. This included NTUC FairPrice's rebates to customers and 5 per cent discount on housebrand items, NTUC Income's discounts to Incomeshield policy holders, NTUC Club's discounts for visits to their theme parks and stays in their chalets, as well as discounts to targeted customer segments like the elderly. The remaining \$17 million was donated to charitable causes, including

the Labour Movement's U Care Fund 2009 (\$11 million) and external charities such as the Community Chest and Singapore Children's Society (\$6 million).

SG Lim pointed out that the real social impact was "many times the \$107 million". NTUC SEs with wider reach such as NTUC FairPrice and NTUC First Campus were able to help moderate price increases by their competitors. This explains why they will now focus on growing bigger so as to create a more substantial impact on more working families. For example, NTUC Fairprice will open two Finest stores in 2010 and NTUC First Campus will increase its number of childcare centres from the current 55 to 100 by 2011.

SG Lim briefly shared some plans for growing bigger: "We are going to identify new areas where we can create new social impact, given that Singaporeans are living longer, are better educated and have new aspirations. Another area that we are looking at is how we can align even better. Within the Labour Movement, the network of Social Enterprises, how can we leverage each other better so that our medium sized, smaller sized SEs can grow even faster."

NTUC SEs are also aiming to be Cheaper Better Faster. Cheaper examples include NTUC Foodfare's value meal which is 10 to 15 per cent cheaper for NTUC members, essential healthcare products which are 2 to 6 per cent lower than most competitors, Incomeshield plans which are 7 to 29 per cent cheaper than major competitors. Better and Faster highlights include NTUC Income's newly opened 24-hour contact centre, NTUC Learning Hub's establishing of a new Productivity and Innovation Institute, and NTUC Foodfare's setting up of a new state-of-the-art central kitchen.

Commenting on the CBF strategy, SG Lim assured Singapore enterprises that NTUC SEs are in no way "trying to 'bao ka liau', that is do everything and crowd out all our competitors".

He added: "Firstly, with 12 Social Enterprises, it is impossible to try to be everywhere for everyone and get involved in everything. Secondly, the strategy adopted by the NTUC Social Enterprises is to form strategic partnerships. It could also lead to the establishment of new Social Enterprises for some particular area of the business. In other words, we recognise that it is not possible for us to have all the expertise in every area. Yet at the same time, we recognise that if we do not broaden and widen our products and services, our social impact may be limited."



Thank You From The Bottom Of Our Hearts, Dr Goh Keng Swee

One of the founding fathers and architect of modern economic Singapore, former Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Dr Goh Keng Swee passed away peacefully at his home early on 14 May 2010. He was 91.

A statement from the Prime Minister's Office said that the body of the late Dr Goh will lie in state at the Parliament from 20 May to 22 May 2010. The public may pay their last respects during this period. A State Funeral will be held on 23 May 2010. As a mark of respect for Dr Goh, the State flag on all Government buildings will be flown at half-mast from 20 May to 23 May 2010.

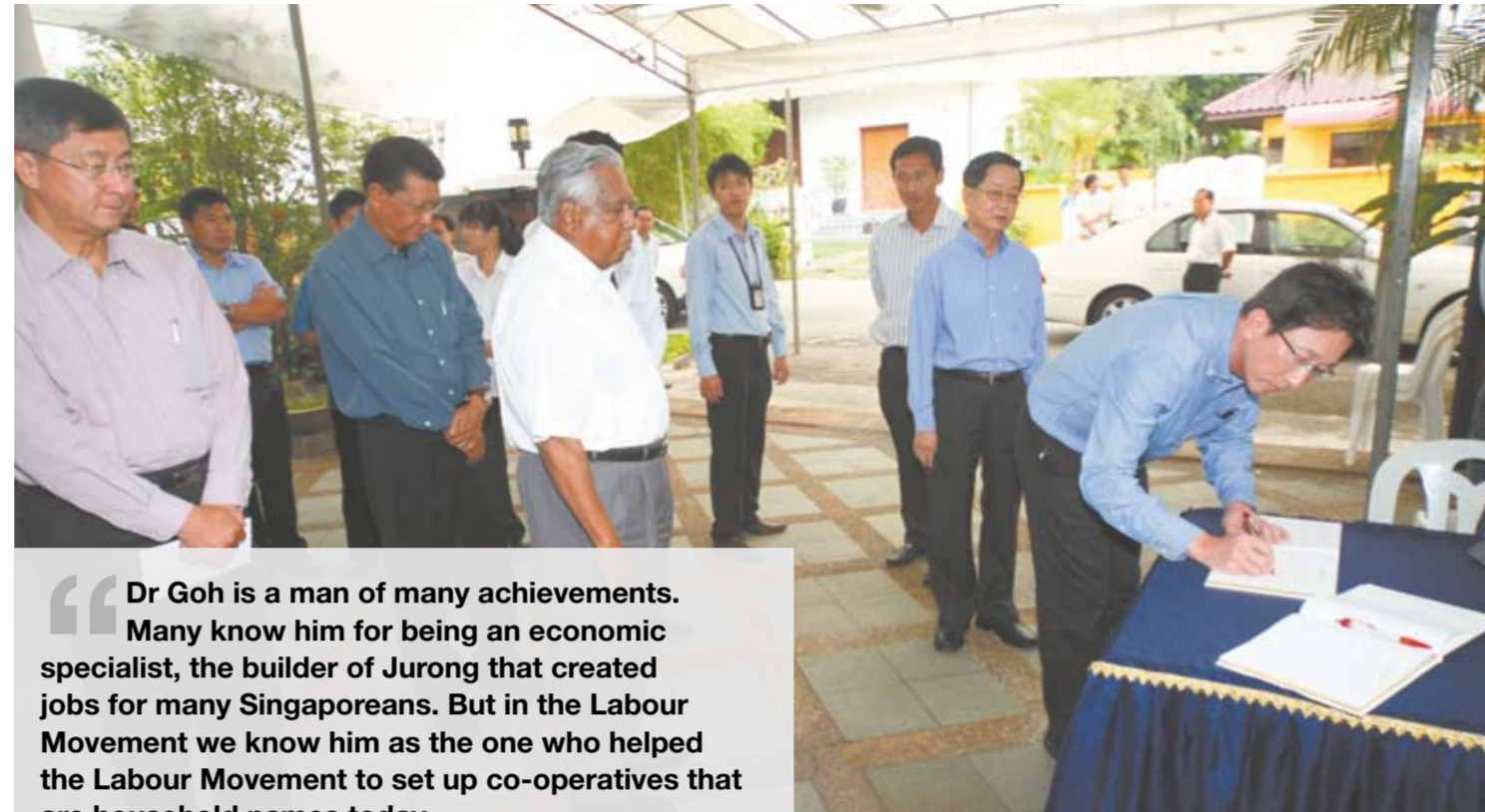
In his tribute to Dr Goh, President S R Nathan said: "He was the foremost among the architects of the transformation of Singapore. He was behind many of our achievements as a Nation - be it in our economic progress and transformation in education, in defence and security or the enhancement of Singapore so that its people can have a better life. Nothing was too small or insignificant to be worthy of his attention..."

"...He will be remembered by all who knew him, as a humble and simple man, who in his quiet way inspired one to achieve great things. He was indeed a gem of a man in all respects. I hope that future generations will think and ponder about his ideas, and appreciate what Dr Goh has contributed to Singapore's development and growth and what some have called the 'magic of our success'."

NTUC President John De Payva, NTUC Secretary-General Lim Swee Say and Minister in the Prime Minister's Office and NTUC Secretary-General from 1993-2006 Lim Boon Heng were early birds at Dr Goh's wake on 14 May 2010. They delivered a letter of condolence to Dr Goh's wife, Madam Phua Swee Liang.



(From right) NTUC Central Committee member Terry Lee, NTUC Secretary-General Lim Swee Say, NTUC President John De Payva and Minister in the PMO Lim Boon Heng consoling Mrs Goh after delivering NTUC's letter of condolence.



“Dr Goh is a man of many achievements. Many know him for being an economic specialist, the builder of Jurong that created jobs for many Singaporeans. But in the Labour Movement we know him as the one who helped the Labour Movement to set up co-operatives that are household names today.

“He gave very wise counsel about how they should be set up, how they should be run, and because we adhered to his advice, they are now Singapore success stories. So the credit must go to Dr Goh for what he did in the founding years of our co-operative movement.

“And I think that when I say that he is a hero, many Singaporeans would share with me this view and we all owe Dr Goh a debt of gratitude and certainly I am sure all Singaporeans share with me the desire to respect him and that we cannot miss the chance of at least sending him off.”

Lim Boon Heng, Minister in the Prime Minister's Office and NTUC Secretary-General from 1993-2006, at Dr Goh Keng Swee's wake on 14 May 2010

NTUC Secretary-General Lim Swee Say signing the condolence book at Dr Goh's wake. On his left is NTUC Central Committee member Terry Lee and NTUC Assistant Secretary-General Ong Ye Kung. President Nathan is in the middle with NTUC President John De Payva and Minister in the PMO Lim Boon Heng to his left.

Picture by Alvin Tan

“He has contributed immensely to Singapore in every area that you can think of. There is nothing that you can diminish in terms of his achievements. Even the smallest of things received his attention and he was always curious to know about things.

“If he was ignorant, he told you he did not know. He was a humble man to the core. He was very Calvinist in his spending and he was a teacher to many of us. There was no area in the public sector, even in society, that he had not touched. It is a great loss for us.”

President S R Nathan at Dr Goh Keng Swee's wake on 14 May 2010.



(From right) NTUC Deputy Secretary-General Halimah Yacob, NTUC Deputy Secretary-General Heng Chee How and NTUC Assistant Secretary-General Seng Han Thong paying respects to Dr Goh Keng Swee.

14 May 2010

Mdm Phua Swee Liang
48A Dunbar Walk
Singapore 459443

Dear *Mdm Phua,*

All of us at the National Trades Union Congress and our unions, associations and co-operatives are deeply saddened to hear of the demise of your husband, former Deputy Prime Minister Goh Keng Swee, and extend our deepest condolences to you and family.

Dr Goh Keng Swee is a national hero.

He played a pivotal role in the modernisation of Singapore's socio-economic structure. From the earliest days of his public life, he maintained close association with the trade unions and placed great emphasis on the vital role of the Labour Movement in Singapore. We are indeed indebted to him as he had helped to chart the union movement's future goals and directions at the 1969 Labour Movement Modernisation Seminar.

Dr Goh envisioned that the way for the Labour Movement to succeed was through the operation of successful co-operative businesses that not only served the needs of the Labour Movement but also the needs of ordinary working people not served by the private sector. He said then, "In my view, the potential for growth of the co-operative movement, if supported and sustained by organised labour, is excellent, provided the right strategy and the right methods are employed."

He was instrumental in laying down four key principles under which the Labour Movement could operate its co-operatives effectively. Firstly, the co-operatives must be fully competitive with private enterprises and not expect privileged treatment by the Government. Secondly, the Labour Movement should engage in co-operative enterprises in areas that it already has a natural built-in advantage so that the co-operatives could compete easily and successfully with private enterprises. Thirdly, the co-operatives must have the highest standards of integrity and this can be achieved through a one-central authority like NTUC, which would supervise the co-operative enterprises.

Fourthly, the co-operative must have effective management. Dr Goh was truly a beacon of meritocracy when he said, "The staff of the co-operative, be it the top executive or the general run of employees, should be recruited entirely on the basis of merit. The co-operative should not be made the dumping ground of loyal and aged union members who are tired of their present employment and believe that they deserve a more congenial occupation at better rates of pay. Nor should appointments and promotions to any position in the co-operatives be subject to political pressures or influence. Merit and performance must be the only criterion." He added that while the co-operative's professional staff would be "held responsible to a committee, Board of Directors or whatever the governing body be called, it should be given considerable scope for the exercise of initiative, judgement and enterprise. The committee or board should not interfere in the day-to-day management of the co-operative."

The success of the Labour Movement's co-operatives is due to close adherence to the wise counsel of Dr Goh.

He held on to the strong belief that the successful management of co-operative businesses would help to strengthen the position of the Labour Movement and advance the national interest. His careful guidance and contribution in helping the Labour Movement was evident in the outstanding achievements of the co-operative businesses, particularly those of the NTUC Income Insurance Co-operative Limited, in which he was the Chairman of its Board of Trustees from 1970 to 1979.

Dr Goh had also discharged many of his public office duties to promote the welfare and well-being of the ordinary working people of Singapore. In the 1960s, as Finance Minister, he was responsible for initiating Singapore's industrialisation plans and the establishment of the Economic Development Board, the Development Bank of Singapore and the Jurong Industrial Estate, the latter being transformed from a swampy wasteland, so as to attract foreign investments here and which consequently, created many thousands of jobs for Singaporeans.

Workers and unionists identified with Dr Goh as a man with an affable touch as well as a comrade who had fought to improve the lives of fellow workers and Singaporeans. He was both compassionate and concerned over the plight of low-income workers and the poor. His diligence, dedication and sincerity have touched and warmed the hearts of many Singaporeans and workers alike.

His demise is truly a loss to our workers, Singaporeans and Singapore. He will always be fondly remembered by all of us as an icon for the workers who had 40 years ago shown the Labour Movement the path to modernisation that has led us to where we are today.

Yours sincerely,

John De Payva
John De Payva
President

Lim Swee Say
Lim Swee Say
Secretary-General

Lim Boon Heng
Lim Boon Heng
Secretary-General
(1993-2006)

ntuc

National Trades Union Congress

The Labour Movement Mourns The Passing Of

Former Singapore Deputy Prime Minister
Father of Modern Industrialisation



DR GOH KENG SWEE

Departed on 14 May 2010

Age: 91

**“It is only the unenlightened and backward employers
who hope that their workers will never join the union.”**

– Dr Goh Keng Swee, in a speech to new unionists in 1968

**Dr Goh Keng Swee played a pivotal role in charting the direction of the Labour Movement
at the 1969 Modernisation Seminar which paved the way for the successful operation of
cooperatives to serve the needs of the workers and all Singaporeans.**

NTUC Central Committee NTUC Administration & Research Unit

NTUC-Affiliated Unions

Air Transport Executive Staff Union
Amalgamated Union of Public Daily Rated Workers
Amalgamated Union of Public Employees
Attractions, Resorts & Entertainment Union
Amalgamated Union of Statutory Board Employees
Building Construction and Timber Industries Employees' Union
Changi International Airport Services Employees' Union
Chemical Industries Employees' Union
DBS Staff Union
Education Services Union
ExxonMobil Singapore Employees' Union
Food, Drinks and Allied Workers' Union
Healthcare Services Employees' Union
Housing and Development Board Staff Union
Inland Revenue Authority of Singapore Staff Union
Keppel Employees' Union
Keppel FELS Employees' Union
Metal Industries Workers' Union
National Transport Workers' Union
NatSteel Employees' Union
Ngee Ann Polytechnic Academic Staff Union
Port Officers' Union
Public Utilities Board Employees' Union
Reuters Local Employees Union
Sembawang Shipyard Employees' Union
Shipbuilding and Marine Engineering Employees' Union
SIA Engineering Company Engineers and Executives Union
Singapore Airlines Staff Union
Singapore Airport Terminal Services Workers' Union
Singapore Bank Employees' Union

Singapore Bank Officers' Association
Singapore Chinese Teachers' Union
Singapore Government Shorthand Writers' Association
Singapore Industrial & Services Employees' Union
Singapore Insurance Employees' Union
Singapore Interpreters' and Translators' Union
Singapore Malay Teachers' Union
Singapore Manual & Mercantile Workers' Union
Singapore Maritime Officers' Union
Singapore National Union of Journalists
Singapore Organisation of Seamen
Singapore Port Workers Union
Singapore Press Holdings Employees' Union
Singapore Refining Company Employees' Union
Singapore Shell Employees' Union
Singapore Stevedores' Union
Singapore Tamil Teachers' Union
Singapore Teachers' Union
Singapore Technologies Electronics Employees' Union
Singapore Union of Broadcasting Employees
Singapore Urban Redevelopment Authority Workers' Union
SPRING Singapore Staff Union
Staff Union of NTUC-ARU
Times Publishing Group Employees' Union
Union of ITE Training Staff
Union of Power and Gas Employees
Union of Security Employees
Union of Telecoms Employees of Singapore
United Workers of Electronic and Electrical Industries
United Workers of Petroleum Industry

NTUC-Affiliated Associations

CityCab Operators' Association
Comfort Taxi Operators' Association
Premier Taxi Operators' Association
SmartCab Operators' Association
SMRT Taxi Operators' Association
TransCab Operators' Association

NTUC Cooperatives

NTUC Choice Homes Co-operative Limited
NTUC Club
NTUC Eldercare Co-operative Limited
NTUC Fairprice Co-operative Limited
NTUC First Campus Co-operative Limited
NTUC Foodfare Co-operative Limited
NTUC Healthcare Co-operative Limited
NTUC Income Insurance Co-operative Limited
NTUC LearningHub Private Limited
NTUC Link Private Limited
NTUC Media Co-operative Limited
NTUC Thrift & Loan Co-operative Limited

NTUC-Related Organisations

Consumers Association of Singapore
Employment and Employability Institute Pte Ltd
Ong Teng Cheong Labour Leadership Institute
Singapore Labour Foundation

Balancing Work And Family



By
Halimah Yacob

NTUC Deputy Secretary-General
Alignment Director (Women's
Development Secretariat)

A dialogue participant shared her challenge of working and taking care of her family. She starts work at 7am but gets up daily at 4am to cook for the family before leaving. This leaves her exhausted at the end of the day, and even during weekends she has other household chores. I wondered why her family was not helping to provide her relief. But I soon realised she was not alone in facing this dilemma.

At another dialogue session about getting more women back to work, one self help group shared that a homemaker they helped to place in a job wanted to decline it because her husband could only eat hot, home-cooked food. So, they suggested that she bought microwave oven so he could heat up the food she had cooked before going to work.

Many female executives I meet in the course of my work make it clear they don't want more than one or two children, and cost was not the only consideration. They simply find it difficult to cope. Despite all the progress we have made, women still remain the key caregivers in our society. Although traditional roles are changing, the pace is too slow.

Women are still stuck with the old chores their mothers did, but they have also assumed part of the role that their fathers were doing. This adds to the higher tension and stress women today face and certainly something has to give. In this case, those married and working are reluctant to have more children. So, families must do their part to help reduce the burden on working women.

We can also do a lot more to help our women. Firstly, women need more support to take care of their children. Our childcare centres are not growing fast enough, although the Ministry of Community Development Youth and Sports announced that 200 more child care centres will be built over the next few years. In the Scandinavian countries, which have both a high labour force participation rate and a high fertility rate, there are a much higher proportion of young children in child care centres. Despite the higher subsidy now, infant care, which can cost up to \$1200 per month, is still too expensive for most families here.

Secondly, we need more family friendly workplaces. Companies can do a lot more to support working mothers. Women want and, do need, greater flexibility at work as the normal structured hours of work and style of working, more suited for a male employee with a home maker wife, may not suit them. Beyond just providing flexible work options and relevant leave and other benefits, there must be a culture from the top that supports workers with families, and which permeates down to the supervisors, as often it is the latter that is the obstacle in implementation.

Thirdly, women themselves need to step back and reprioritise goals. There is no such thing as a superwoman. We have to put first things first, to quote Stephen Covey. We need to ask, for instance, whether it is really important to clean the windows every week, a small matter, but some women agonise over it.

At a recent seminar organised by the NTUC Women's Development Secretariat, a woman was so stressed up because she feared her daughter, in the second year of junior college, may not get into a local university. It is fair for us to be concerned over our children's education, but we also have to learn to manage our own expectations, as there are many other options we can help our children explore to achieve the same goal.

Shortcut To Better Service



Place: Singapore General Hospital, Specialist Outpatient Clinics

Bottleneck found: Patients had to wait long periods at every visit because they have to register once to see the doctor and a second time to pay their bills and fix the next appointment before collecting medicine at the pharmacy.

Bottleneck broken: The staff from the Specialist Outpatient Clinics came up with the Service Express idea in 2007 which did away with the need for a patient to wait around a second time to make payment and set the next appointment. The patient could simply go straight to the pharmacy to pick up his medicine after seeing the doctor. This also allowed Patient Services Staff to serve more patients per day.

How Service Express works: During registration, the patient fills up a form containing details such as their credit card or bank account number and contact details and simply drops it at the tray at the counter before going in to see the doctor. When the patient leaves after his appointment, the Patient Services Staff will process the form. Within the day, details of the patient's next appointment such as date and time are sent via Short Message Service to the patient's mobile phone. A final hard copy of the bill will be sent to the patient via regular mail. If the patient wishes to amend the appointment, he can log on to www.sgh.com.sg/Patient-Services/Specialist-Outpatient-Services/Pages/make-change-appointments.aspx or call to do so. A computerised SMS reminder will also be sent to the patient 7 days before his appointment.

“I believe that productivity is everyone's effort as it is for the improvement of the organisation and its staff. At the Healthcare Services Employees' Union, it is a mindset that is embedded in us because we are dealing with patients. We are continuously upgrading and developing; it is a part of our culture. We are happy about the process of developing good practices, improvement and productivity and we get good feedback from our patients about Service Express. This is in line with the call for productivity and it is an opportunity for the staff to participate and be involved.”

Mahmood Idrose, HSEU President

Have you broken any bottlenecks? Share it with us at liaumn@ntucmedia.org.sg

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Mother Tongues Unions Heartened



By
Marcus Lin

Have no fear, Mother Tongue devotees. The teaching of Mother Tongue Languages will not take a back seat in Singapore's education system. On the contrary, the advantages of bilingual education and its positive contributions towards Singapore's economic success and competitiveness will be further entrenched.

All doubts were erased and that assurance was given by Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and Education Minister Dr Ng Eng Hen at a press conference on the teaching of Mother Tongue Languages on 11 May 2010. The news was welcomed by the Singapore Chinese Teachers' Union, Singapore Malay Teachers' Union and Singapore Tamil Teachers' Union.

The press conference was called to clear the air on certain comments made by Dr Ng in April. He had stated that the Ministry of Education was looking at the teaching of Mother Tongues with its over-emphasis on examinations that "counts for so much in the Primary School Leaving Examination" and what could be done about it. Some public debate ensued.

Certain quarters took it to mean that the 25 per cent weighting given to Mother Tongues in the PSLE may be reduced. Currently, the 25 per cent weighting for Mother Tongues is on par with English, Mathematics and Science in the PSLE.

PM Lee outlined the key points: "The first point is Mother Tongue remains crucial. It is the foundation of our educational system, has been for many years and will continue to be, and we have no intentions of changing that.

"Secondly, we are not reducing the weight of Mother Tongue Languages at PSLE. I put that directly to address a lot of concerns that have arisen. That is not going to change but there are things we have to do to the examinations and to the teaching of Mother Tongue.

"We have to update the curriculum, we have to update the teaching, we have to update the examining of Mother Tongue Languages because our language environment in Singapore is changing and we have to adapt to that. We have to fit the diverse backgrounds and aptitudes of our students in schools. That means we have to customise our content and it means we need more resources for Mother Tongue and particularly, it will mean we need more Mother Tongue teachers."

He added: "I see a positive side in the public responses. There has been agitation and there has been fear and I think we need to calm this



Education Minister Dr Ng Eng Hen (in long sleeves) with SCTU members at the dialogue on 3 May 2010.

down. But there has also been strong support for the Mother Tongue Languages which in fact reflects the success of our bilingual policy.

"Had it not been for the bilingual policy producing a whole new generation of Singaporeans who are competent in and proud of their Mother Tongues, I do not think we would have had this reaction. And the Government shares the same goals as many of those who have spoken up - to maintain a strong emphasis on Mother Tongue Languages, to keep our bilingualism alive and ultimately to create the best environment to give our students and our children the best headstart in life."

Dr Ng said that he was misunderstood and that, on hindsight, "I should have chosen my words more carefully and apologise for creating that wrong impression."

He has appointed a Mother Tongue Languages Review Committee to set a road map for the next 10 to 15 years. "Two general directions are clear. First, we need more differentiated teaching - i.e. teaching different groups of students to the appropriate levels. Students who are weaker in MTL will benefit from this. Second, our system needs to be more proficiency based - i.e. geared to recognise and reward students when they attain specific proficiency levels."

Dr Ng added: "Motivating students solely through exams is not sustainable and discourages many students who actually have done quite well in their MTL. The Singapore Chinese Teachers Union agreed with me that exams should not be the main driving force. So did teachers from the Malay and Tamil language unions, when they met Senior Parliamentary Secretary (Education) Masagos Zulkifli Bin Masagos Mohamad and Senior Minister of State for Education S Iswaran."

"We are happy to note that the Prime Minister and Minister of Education reiterated the importance of Mother Tongue in Singapore's education system and for recognising the commendable efforts put in by Mother Tongue teachers all these years during the press conference. It is indeed a joy too, to hear that more resources will be devoted to the teaching and learning of Mother Tongue. PM emphasised the importance of teaching students according to their abilities, the continued sustainability of the bilingual competitive advantage for Singapore as well as the alignment of teaching and learning strategies of the Mother Tongues to current situations.

It is also an affirmation to know that MOE has taken note of the necessity to train and recruit Mother Tongue teachers. During the dialogue session with the Minister of Education on 3 May 2010, SCTU had raised these concerns. The news release from PM and MOE has been most reassuring. Looking forward, we will put up recommendations to the Ministry of Education on how the teaching and learning of the Chinese Language can be further enhanced. We will also further strengthen our collaboration with the Chinese community to explore ways in which we can help parents facilitate their children's learning of Mother Tongue at home."

Lim Chin Nam, SCTU President

"Singapore Tamil Teachers' Union is happy to note that the Prime Minister has reassured the public that MTL weightage will not be reduced at the PSLE. Six members of STTU's Executive Committee, led by Mr S Samikannu, President of STTU, had met Mr S Iswaran, Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Education, on Monday 10 May 2010, to express our opinion on this issue. We had a fruitful exchange of views at the session. STTU is glad to learn that MOE will be working out ways to enhance the teaching and assessment of MTL in our schools. "

S Nalluraj, STTU General Secretary

"On 7 May 2010, four exco members of the Singapore Malay Teachers Union had a dialogue session with Mr Masagos Zulkifli Bin Masagos Mohamad, Senior Parliamentary Secretary (Education). We discussed the issue of the weightage of MTL subjects in the PSLE as mentioned by Dr Ng Eng Hen. SMTU expressed its members' concerns on the implications should the reduction of the MTL weightage be carried out. We are very happy when the PM announced that the weightage of MTL subjects in the PSLE will remain the same. SMTU applaud the PM's assurance that the bilingual policy will continue. The SMTU will continue to support its members and Malay Language teachers to enhance their teaching craft and make the learning of Malay Language more meaningful for students."

Rohan Nizam Basheer, SMTU Deputy General Secretary

‘Lessons From My First May Day Rally’

President and Chief Executive Officer of CapitaLand Limited Liew Mun Leong sends out an e-mail every Sunday to his colleagues which are eventually compiled into a book. Sunday, 2 May 2010, was special as he related his impressions on the first May Day Rally that he attended the day before. Mr Liew has kindly agreed to share extracts of that e-mail with readers of NTUC This Week.

“I was invited by NTUC to attend this year’s May Day Rally but hesitated for some time to accept. I imagined it to be filled with boring slogans and chanting rally speeches clamouring for workers’ rights and welfare. Except for our branch union leaders who are our staff and a few NTUC union leaders, I didn’t expect to know anyone else there.

“As it turned out, it was an eye-opener for me and I enjoyed it enormously. It was a morning well invested as I learned so much from what happened there. At the morning May Day Rally, I witnessed what appeared to me to be an absolute happy harmony between the unions, the employers and the Government in Singapore (don’t think it was staged!).

“I was stunned watching the sharp contrast of CNA’s telecast of militant workers’ protests in Indonesia and KL in the evening. Again this morning, I sadly read in the Straits Times about the ‘May Day Mayhem’ reports on protests by thousands of dissenting workers in Jakarta, Tokyo, Hong Kong, Taiwan, KL, Kathmandu, Athens and Moscow. What could have gone so drastically wrong in these cities?

“I remember in the early 50s, as a young boy, when the bus workers in Hock Lee Bus Company went on strike. It spiraled into bloody riots which not only resulted in violence and took lives, it also crippled our public bus transport system and destabilised our overall city peace.

“Soon after Singapore gained independence in 1959, the NTUC was formed in 1961. Since then I can’t really recall if there has been any workers’ strike at all. Next year, NTUC will celebrate their 50th anniversary with all the pride of a very well organised Labour Movement which is the envy of many other labour movements.

“So what have we done right in Singapore so far? The formula is in what they call tripartism involving the workers, their employers and the Government. The three parties work hand in hand on all sensitive issues expeditiously to arrive at a balanced approach between worker welfarism, the employers’ economic sustainability and the overall political stability.

“Besides the NTUC leaders, the Prime

Minister, Senior Minister and almost the whole Cabinet were at the rally too, together with the President of the Singapore National Employers Federation and several of us from the business community. I watched the dynamics of the various groups and I certainly could detect the complete ease with which the various ‘factions’ were interacting with one another. There was absolutely no barrier between the union chiefs, the politicians and the employers - at least nothing I saw suggested any tension between them.

“Contrary to my original prejudice, the rally speeches turned out to be very informative and indeed inspiring. With simple power points and I suspected his intended slightly Singlish tone, Lim Swee Say the NTUC Secretary-General made an excellent dissertation of the world economy and the future

economic landscape ahead for Singapore. It was a very engaging lecture. The Prime Minister also made an inspiring speech first in Mandarin then in English.

“Secretary-General Lim told Manpower Minister Gan Kim Yong that 20 years ago he was running the National Computer Board promoting IT whilst I was then heading the Singapore Institute of Standards and Industrial Research helping local industries to upgrade their technology programmes.

“We had collaborated together when I was promoting computer integrated manufacturing CIM and he contributed all



Mr Liew Mun Leong (in blue) soaking up the May Day Rally atmosphere.

“The lesson for both of us is that the community in Singapore is small and we have to be flexible to adapt our skills to this ever-changing and demanding world. And we have to continue to learn just as I have learned so much unexpectedly in my first May Day Rally.”

the IT technology programmes for that initiative. He commented that he was proud of me having turned into a successful real estate business leader after more than two decades in the public service. I reminded him that he too has turned into a successful union leader and Minister also after two decades in the civil service. We both have changed skills and professions.

“The lesson for both of us is that the community in Singapore is small and we have to be flexible to adapt our skills to this ever-changing and demanding world. And we have to continue to learn just as I have learned so much unexpectedly in my first May Day Rally.

“Remember Tripartism and doing things Cheaper, Better and Faster! Time to start looking at how we at CapitaLand can do our business Cheaper, Better and Faster!”

24 Hour Security For You

By
Vanessa Teo

Already offering one of the most price competitive insurance policies in Singapore, NTUC Income Insurance Co-operative Limited is taking it a step higher to deliver Better and Faster service. This is delivered through its increased accessibility to its services and products.

Operating 24-hours, seven days a week, NTUC Income's contact centre is the only call centre that offers round-the-clock service. Callers will be greeted by a personable Customer Service Officer instead of relying on an Interactive Voice Response system. This serves as a unique proposition to all customers and gives Income a distinct advantage over its competitors.



NTUC Income Chief Executive Officer Tan Suee Chieh said this is one of NTUC Income's strategies to make NTUC Income more accessible to customers.

He shared: "Customers today want value and affordable products, but they also want it to be convenient and delivered with good customer service. With our 24-hour contact centre, customers can call and make enquiries or claims at any time, so it makes a big difference in terms of value and convenience."

Delivering Value For Money

“NTUC Income's purpose of existence is to offer value to a customer which is very different from a commercial business whose purpose of being is to maximise shareholders profit. But of course our products have to be sustainable. Thus, we have our very competitive Income Shield premium rates and competitive term insurance rate which are staple products for our customers. Our investment plan charges are the lowest, so we will continue to offer value to our customers.”

Tan Suee Chieh, NTUC Income Chief Executive Officer

Thus, through the value that we give to our customers, we actually create a social impact.”

NTUC Income has eight branches and seven business centres throughout Singapore. Its contact centre serves approximately 6,500 customers daily, apart from its outgoing calls.

Four New Campuses To Drive Productivity

By
Naseema Banu Maideen

Starting with humble beginnings to provide basic computer and language literacy courses, NTUC LearningHub Private Limited has evolved to meet the needs of the changing workforce by focusing on its capabilities of providing quality training to a large number of workers at low cost. It has lived up to its social mission of supporting employability of workers from rank-and-file workers to retrenched workers to back-to-work women and Professionals, Managers, Executives and Technical people.

On the same track, since April this year, it has set up four new campuses to serve these customers with varying needs to equip them to keep pace for a productivity-driven economy.

Employability Campus

Said NTUC LearningHub Chief Executive Officer Zee Yoong Kang: "There are sets of customers with specific needs and we have set up an Employability Campus targeted directly to create the courses that will help them. This campus is targeted at people who have employability gaps and we will work with our partners at NTUC's e2i (Employability and Employment Institute) and Community Development Councils to help them."

The core products of this campus will be employability skills, workplace literacy, employability camps, Certificate for Service Professional courses and basic Information Technology courses.

Trades Campus

A second Trades Campus will focus on providing training courses in industry-specific skills. NTUC LearningHub has a strong foundation in training workers in the shipbuilding, marine, construction and manufacturing industries on aspects like workplace safety and health.

"We will continue to cater to the specific needs of employers in these industries. We are also moving into the hospitality sector to provide similar courses," added Mr Zee.

PMETs Campus

The third campus will target the market segment of PMETs. NTUC LearningHub is strengthening its global partnerships with renowned training hallmarks like the Fashion Institute of Technology and Juran Institute.

Shared Mr Zee: "We will collaborate with these international organisations to arm our PMETs with world-class, high end productivity skills. We are currently in talks with major Ivy League and state universities in the United States of America. We are also working with established local partners like the National University of Singapore Extension, Republic Polytechnic and Nanyang Polytechnic.

"We feel that these cutting-edge organisations already have a lot of experience applying many of the productivity concepts to the service sectors. And what we want to do is to learn from them on how we can overcome many of the challenges in the services and manufacturing sectors. The needs of the workforce constantly evolve. If we do not evolve, we will not survive because we will be irrelevant to our workers. So, we have to be one step ahead to serve them better."

Corporate Campus

NTUC LearningHub has also eyed providing total training solutions for corporations with its fourth campus – the Corporate Campus.

"We will be going big on the offensive to talk to major corporations in Singapore. When they outsource most of their training needs to NTUC LearningHub, we can package all the different programmes that we have according to their needs and administer a total training solution for them," said Mr Zee.

The four campuses set up by NTUC LearningHub will operate from its various facilities.



“Our overall social mission for NTUC LearningHub is to support employability of the workforce. The Employability Campus will focus on helping people with employability needs, especially lowly-skilled workers, low-wage workers and vulnerable workers, improve their overall employability. For Trades Campus, the aim is to improve the skills levels of the major industries. The PMETs Campus will bring world class skills to improve the competitiveness of our PMETs as they do not have employability gaps but just need deeper skills in their respective fields. The Corporate Campus will focus on helping corporations to be better able to improve their workforce. We are restructuring our core offerings to be more customer-focused. With the new structure, we are able to offer to our customers a more holistic service, be it training options for staff or in the perspective of an upgrader or a jobseeker”.

Zee Yoong Kang, NTUC LearningHub Chief Executive Officer



From left: Chief Executive Officer of NTUC LearningHub Zee Yoong Kang and Nanyang Technological University Centre for Continuing Education Director Seah Ben Hun.

Bridging Two Of The Best In Continuing Education

NTU CCE Partners NTUC LearningHub With Support From NTUC's Membership Department

By Muneerah Bee Mohamed Iqbal

“We find that after our PMET (Professionals, Managers, Executives and Technical people) members and potential PMET members graduate, they would appreciate opportunities to hone back their skills and keep themselves updated,” said Zee Yoong Kang, Chief Executive Officer of NTUC LearningHub Pte Ltd.

For this very reason, NTUC LearningHub is partnering Nanyang Technological University Centre for Continuing Education to offer a range of existing courses to NTUC union members. More than 100 short courses from fields such as Accounts, Business, Communication Skills, Engineering and Information Technology will be offered.

Established in 1991, NTUC CCE has been conducting professional and personal development courses for the PMETs group. Seah Ben Hun, who is NTUC CCE Director, said that this mutually beneficial partnership will allow NTUC CCE to avail its courses to a wider audience and fulfil its social goals is to impart knowledge and skills to the community.

At the Memorandum of Understanding signing on 28 April 2010, Mr Seah said: “NTUC LearningHub is a very important institution that has been involved in training of the workforce in Singapore. I think they play a very significant and successful role over the years. Last year, Mr Zee Yoong Kang and his team shared some of their ideas about extending the training of the workforce beyond the rank-and-file workers to the PMETs. We are very excited and we feel the partnership is a great opportunity for us to pursue a common goal.”

This collaboration will also expand the diverse range of short-term programmes and workshops available to working professionals and specialists in various fields. These programmes are reviewed every six months to ensure that the courses meet the training needs of PMETs.

Mr Zee said: “Over the last few years, many international experts in the field recognise NTU as a very high quality university. The profile of the skills that NTU is strong at is very relevant to many of our key target groups. We can also benefit from the strength that NTU has especially in engineering, technology, finance and accountancy as these are areas that often move very fast.”

With this partnership, NTUC LearningHub can now provide customised training and consultancy services to corporate clients in areas where it lacks in-house capability, such as engineering content. In order for registered professional engineers to renew their practicing certificate, the Professional Engineers Act requires them to undergo continuous professional development. Engineers who attend NTUC CCE courses will gain Professional Development Units upon completion of the programme.

NTUC's Membership Department will also play an active role in this collaboration, as an active partner to bring more professional development benefits to members, as well as providing a long term joint marketing platform for NTUC CCE courses. Union members can enjoy 10 per cent discount for all the NTUC CCE courses. Centric Director (Membership Communities) Gong Wee Lik said: “Professional development is a very important component of our PMET strategy. This partnership between NTUC LearningHub and NTUC CCE will broaden the choices of courses for our members to improve themselves through knowledge acquisition and to meet their personal aspirations.”

Know The Culture, Learn The Customs And Break The Barriers



Employees at OMEGA's boutique at ION Orchard serve Chinese and Indian customers regularly and attending the customised course will equip them with knowledge on their culture and customs.

By Naseema Banu Maideen

Lesson One: When Chinese customers walk into a retail outlet and talk to you in loud voices, they need not necessarily be angry. Speaking loudly is just one of their common etiquettes back home in China.

Lesson Two: And when an Indian customer seems very interested in buying a product but still walks off without buying on the same day and returns back after a day or two day to purchase it, he is not necessarily indecisive. He could have been waiting for an auspicious day and time to purchase the product. Making new purchases at an auspicious time is a culture among Indians.

These were some lessons on understanding the culture of Indian and Chinese customers that participants of the pilot customised service course conducted by NTUC's e2i (Employment and Employability Institute) and Orchard Turn Developments, which manages the iconic ION

Orchard shopping mall, walked away with on 15 April 2010.

With increasing visitorship to the mega mall from countries like China and India, customer service staff are occasionally faced with communication barriers when serving them. As a tool to break this bottleneck that hampered their productivity levels, NTUC's e2i and ION Orchard came up with the Service Excellence Workforce Skills Qualifications course to equip tenants with better knowledge to understand this tourist segment.

Service Quality Centre was roped in to adapt the existing WSQ 'Offer Customised and Personalised Service' course to include content on understanding Chinese and Indian culture, customs and etiquette. The first class of 25 participants from 16 mall tenants such as Hugo Boss, Larry Jewellery and Omega rolled out on 29 and 30 March 2010. Since then, more tenants have signed up their service staff to attend this course.

Said Mr Mohamed Nizam Mohd Naim, 28, who works as a concierge at ION Orchard: “While I have been in the service industry for

about 12 years and have handled many Indian customers, there were still some new tips that I picked up. I now know that Indians like to shop with their families with two or even three generational members. So, they will have different preferences and queries. The next time I encounter such customers, I will prepare myself to serve them better and maybe activate my other colleagues on duty at the same time to serve their needs promptly.”

For 21-year-old retail associate, Mr Muhammad Zaid Abdul Aziz, who works with Outdoor Venture Private Limited, the course added to his vocabulary of words in the Chinese and Indian languages. “We deal with about six to seven Indian and Chinese customers in a day. Learning simple words on basic courtesy will help in interacting with them,” he said.

Companies which are interested to find out more about the course can call NTUC's e2i hotline at 6474 0606 from 9am to 6pm on Mondays to Fridays.

Constantly Identifying Industry Needs

“We want to deepen the skills of our service staff so that they can quickly and effectively respond to the demand of new markets. Working with ION Orchard on this initiative is a cinch, as they have been setting the benchmark for high service standards in the retail sector. On our part, NTUC's e2i will continue to be at the forefront of identifying industry needs, and tailoring training programmes to meet the needs of our workers and employers.”

Ang Hin Kee, Chief Executive Officer, NTUC's e2i (Employment and Employability Institute)

Breaking Bottlenecks With Better Training

“Since all of our staff are Singaporean, they previously were not able to grasp the mindsets of these Chinese and Indian nationals who frequent our boutique and this caused them to be at a disadvantage when it comes to providing a superior customer service. The course definitely gave our boutique staff a more in-depth knowledge of the Chinese and Indian nationals that they serve, enabling them to understand their culture and behaviours better and in turn helping them provide a world-class customer service that is synonymous with our brand, OMEGA.”

David Ponzio, Vice President of OMEGA, The Swatch Group, South East Asia



By Vanessa Teo

Making A Public Jobs Breakthrough

She landed jobseekers in jobs with the National Environment Agency, placed PMETs with the Ministry of Manpower as Enforcement Officers, prepared jobseekers as Singapore Customs Officers for Tax Refundable work at Changi Airport, and the list goes on. NTUC e2i's (Employment and Employability Institute) Principal Employability Coach Candy Chua is one who does her best to help match jobseekers to jobs in the public sector. And of course it was a success.

“When e2i was set up, we decided to reach out to the PMETs apart from the traditional rank-and-file workers. With the link-up from the Amalgamated Union of Public Employees, we needed to let the public sector know that NTUC's e2i can also be a platform where you can look for suitable candidates for all types of jobs. And I am glad to say that we made a breakthrough in this. In our partnership

with NEA, we successfully placed about 60 jobseekers as environmental health officers, and this was a success to us because to find a job in the public sector is definitely not easy,” said Miss Chua.

Matching jobseekers to jobs is only part of Miss Chua's duty. She also has to double up as a coach and prepare jobseekers for their jobs. In one such instance, Miss Chua effectively helped jobseekers 'win' partners from Singapore Customs over.

Miss Chua shared: “As part of our 'proposal' to engage Singapore Customs as a partner employer, we invited them to sit in with us for the five-day Certified Service Professional course, to let them see for themselves how our jobseekers are transformed over this five days. On the first day, they saw the jobseekers come in t-shirt and jeans, but from the second day onwards, they saw how our jobseekers made an effort to change, and started coming in shirt and pants instead. From there, we introduced some of our mature workers with good attitudes for their consideration.”

“They were pleased with the CSP training, and were happy with what we arranged for them.

In the end, we managed to place some of our jobseekers as Singapore Customs' officers with them.”

Joining the Labour Movement family in June 2005 and after five years into the job, Miss Chua is given a new portfolio, that is, to focus on the up and coming energy utilities industry. Currently exploring possible training and recruitment opportunities within the industry, Miss Chua is also working closely with various government agencies and the Union of Power and Gas Employees.

“We are looking to see if there are any ways we can prepare our workers currently, so that when the industry starts to emerge and needs workers, we will have a ready pool of trained workers. At the same time, we also want to have a training course on standby to train people who are new to the industry when the time comes,” said Miss Chua.

Moving forward, Miss Chua hopes to see the new energy utilities industry grow, and to continue to assist more workers who are interested in this new sector within the next few years.

Breaking Productivity Bottlenecks In Security And Landscaping

By **Nicolette Yeo and Vanessa Teo**
Pictures by **Alvin Toh**

Less is more may well be the new tagline for the security and landscaping industries strategy to be Cheaper Better Faster. At the Learning Journey on 23 April 2010, leading security firm APRO Asian Protection Pte Ltd and established landscape company Kiat Lee Landscape and Building Pte Ltd demonstrated how they tapped on technology to do a better job with less manpower. The presentations took place at Borneo Motors (Singapore) Pte Ltd and Esplanade Park respectively.

Jointly organised by NTUC's e2i (Employment and Employability Institute) and Ong Teng Cheong Labour Leadership Institute, it is the latest effort in the Job Re-creation Programme to highlight the progress made by the two sectors.

“I think this is the way forward. There are bottlenecks in the past that led us to not take these steps but now I think the bottlenecks are being removed and I hope we can have more and more companies following the good example of these two companies.”

Ong Ye Kung, NTUC Assistant Secretary General and NTUC e2i Chairman



Distinguished guests included NTUC President John de Payva, NTUC Secretary-General Lim Swee Say and NTUC Assistant Secretary-General Ong Ye Kung, and other Directors of NTUC.

Mr Ong, who is also Chairman of NTUC's e2i, commented: "There are commonalities between these two examples. First, they use technology and some equipment. Second, as a result of what they do,

the requirement for manpower came down. Third similarity is that, as a result, the pay of the workers all went up. In the case of APRO, we see how the pay has gone up. In landscaping, we see the pay of the workers, the supervisor as well as the tree pruner going up."

However, Mr Ong was quick to assure that the reduction in manpower did not lead to job losses in any way but instead generated

win-win-win outcomes for service providers, buyers, and workers.

He explained: "The manpower that was freed up in APRO allowed them to contract more jobs and re-deploy the security officers to take on more jobs. Likewise for Kiat Lee Landscape, the boss also said he freed up a few workers and re-deployed them to another site so his business expands as a result. The service provider also finds it worthwhile to purchase this equipment and save on manpower cost, and as a result, it works out for him. At the same time, he has spare resources to pay his workers. For the buyer of the services, they are not paying more because it is more efficient; they are actually paying the same or less and are getting better service. Kiat Lee Landscape said that now cutting trees is so much faster, especially when they do it on the highway. They are minimising traffic disruption further so it benefits the customer. For the workers, they are all being paid 30 per cent more and have better skills, better productivity."

Sowing Small, Reaping Big



The old crane lorry with a shaky bucket.

The new crane lorry with added safety features.

TRADITIONAL TREE PRUNING work required a total of six workers - two for traffic control, one as a driver, one as a crane operator, one as a supervisor and one as a landscape worker. And the problem was? Overuse of manpower and a high level of danger for the workers.

Recognising that this was a bottleneck in its work operations, Kiat Lee Landscape and Building Pte Ltd brought in a new crane lorry to address this problem, and its new functions were exhibited at the Learning Journey on 23 April 2010 at the Esplanade Park.

With the new crane lorry, productivity increased greatly with manpower going down by two persons yet still delivering the same amount of output and more. With more automation functions, the new lorry allows the driver to multi-skill and double up as the supervisor while the landscape worker who prunes the trees also plays the role of a crane operator.

"The work process is now faster and smoother because the landscape worker can operate the machine according to his own needs. In the past, it was the operator at the bottom that was operating the machine, and he had to shout to communicate which sometimes delay the process. With the landscape operator operating the machine himself, productivity level has increase by about 10 to 20 per cent," said

Kiat Lee Landscape and Building Managing Director Royston Soh.

Besides successfully reducing manpower, safety levels have also increased and made work conditions better for workers.

33-year-old landscape worker Yosuf Sarder Jamal Sarder shared: "The crane lorry bucket in the old lorry used to shake a lot and was very dangerous. But now, the crane lorry bucket is controlled automatically so it doesn't shake so badly anymore. This has helped me improved my productivity because I can control where I want to go so I can do my work faster."

Supervisor Soh Cheng Chuan, 39, who is also the driver, shared the same sentiments: "The new lorry definitely works safer, and now that it's safer, I no longer have to worry about the workers and can focus on other areas of my job such as ensuring that the public does not enter the danger zone where tree branches are falling."

With better and safer jobs, workers who perform dual functions will also see about 15 per cent increase in their pay. For instance, Mr Yosuf saw his daily pay increase from \$25 plus overtime pay to \$30 plus overtime pay. Mr Soh also saw his pay increase from \$1,100 plus overtime to \$1,350 plus overtime.

The Cheaper Better Faster approach brought about a win-win situation for all employers,

workers, as well as service buyers at the receiving end, and National Parks Board is one very satisfied buyer.

"We can see a vehicle like this has been able to do the work quicker and have less impediment to the traffic and people walking by. They are also able to prune more trees in the same period of time. The price we are seeing is also the same, so we are actually getting a better product," said Centre for Urban Greenery and Ecology Career Centre Assistant Director Neil Power.

Securing Win-Win-Win Outcomes

THE SECURITY INDUSTRY

is on the brink of a revolution. APRO Asian Protection Pte Ltd's development of CCTV monitoring and the one-of-a-kind Fence Intrusion Detection System looks set to create more business for security companies, provide enhanced service for buyers, and improve employment terms for security officers. The revolutionary new system was unveiled at Borneo Motors (Singapore) Pte Ltd's premises at the Learning Journey on 23 April 2010.

And the results speak for themselves. From 33 APRO security officers working the traditional 12-hour shifts, there are now 29 operating on shorter 8-hour shifts. They can also look forward to higher salaries. Nevertheless, the standard of security surveillance has been enhanced considerably. APRO Managing Director Bobby Lee pointed out that the excess manpower will be re-deployed to other sites and will also enable the company to take on more jobs.

The new system combines digital video recording, receivers and the Internet to remotely monitor the ongoings at the seven sites in Borneo Motors. It uses fingerprint scanning for security



From left: NTUC Assistant Secretary-General Ong Ye Kung, President John De Payva and Secretary-General Lim Swee Say at the presentation at Borneo Motors.

so their pay is calculated automatically without intervention from humans. The other part is the guard tour system to monitor the guards patrolling the premises. Usually, it is in the assignments but nobody reads it until one week later. Now, my 24-hour command centre will watch them on a real time basis. The moment they don't clock-in, we will call up and ask, 'What's happening? Have you fallen sick? Why are you not there?' Then we have to dispatch our patrol officers to check that the assignment is secured."

Mr Ramadass, APRO's Alarm Management Centre Supervisor, added that the new system, being real time, would also be able to rectify errors or incidents on the spot, thus breaking the productivity bottleneck of the one-week delay. Furthermore, security assignments would now have more details so that officers know what to expect from the sites.

Mr Ramadass, who is in charge of the command centre, observed that security officers' welfare would also be enhanced: "Security officers will know that they are being monitored

officers to clock in and radio frequency tags to monitor their whereabouts. This would effectively break the previous productivity bottlenecks of time consuming call-in reporting and inefficient barcode monitoring.

Mr Lee detailed: "We are able to manage our guards at all our sites. We know what time they arrive, when they are late, what time they go back, if they are missing - and that's just for attendance. At the end of the day, that information is integrated with the payroll system

for their safety because if anything happens to them, we will know. Some areas we have only one guard and they are on the high risk side because they don't have anyone to back them up. Let's say he fainted and didn't go for his round. If nobody answers, we will send somebody down to check."

39-year-old APRO Security Supervisor, Mr Akbar K A A Rawoof, shared that the new system enables him to be more productive: "When we go on our rounds, the clock-in system serves as a protection for us, is safe and convenient to use, and keeps me more alert about the surroundings. With this system, I can get more detailed printouts. Every printout will show me the situation at the moment and most places are checked thoroughly. I'm happier with the new system."

Despite having to pay more for APRO's services, Borneo Motors' General Manager, South Asia Information Systems & Special Projects, Mr Koh Kok Tian said it is a small price to up customer productivity.

He explained: "This technology improves the level of service. On top of that, it increases the efficiency of our security systems within the premises so that in itself is an advantage for us. Over time, if you look at the standard of service and want it to be a certain level, cheap doesn't mean good. If we pay a little bit more, they get the level of service required for our business. Our customer is very important, our premises are very important and we have to make sure that that takes precedence over cost."



NTUC Secretary-General Lim Swee say (left) thanking Kiat Lee Landscape and Building Managing Director Royston Soh (centre) for his continuing efforts to be 'Cheaper Better Faster'.

SOS Pillar Leow Ching Chuan Passes Baton

Long time Singapore Organisation of Seamen General Secretary Leow Ching Chuan has stepped down as union chief, amid touching tributes from union leaders, shipping companies and members. He passed the baton to Mr Kam Soon Huat whom he groomed. Mr Leow will still maintain links with SOS as its Executive Advisor.

Mr Leow has served SOS for 34 years - first as an Industrial Relations Officer and then as Executive Secretary in 1976 before becoming the seafarers' union General Secretary in 1982.

At the SOS Leadership Renewal event held on 16 April 2010, Minister, Prime Minister's Office and SOS

Advisor Lim Boon Heng applauded Mr Leow for his perseverance in leading and connecting with the seafarers he served.

In his tribute, Mr Lim highlighted how Mr Leow had the difficult task of explaining to seafarers to opt for a more gradual increase in wages or risk out-pricing themselves out of the market; and how the leadership had to critically and objectively face the problem of displaced seafarers and set up Seacare to provide



Outgoing SOS General Secretary Leow Ching Chuan (in blue) receiving a Token of Appreciation. Sharing his joy are (from left) NTUC Secretary-General Lim Swee Say, SOS Advisor Lim Boon Heng, SOS General Secretary Kam Soon Huat, SOS President Mohamed Idris Mohamed Ibrahim and SOS Executive Secretary Daniel Tan.

alternative jobs for displaced seafarers.

"If SOS had not done that, then I think it would have been very difficult for the SOS leadership to be able to continue carrying the members onward," Mr Lim pointed out.

With Mr Leow at the helm, SOS membership rose to the present 19,758 mark and has collective bargaining agreements with 762 ships. Seacare Co-operative, a social enterprise set up by the SOS in 1994, now has

25 subsidiary companies and eight associated companies with an annual turnover of nearly S\$30 million and a thousand employees.

"Singaporeans are fortunate to have trade union leaders like Brother Leow who are willing to sacrifice and give workers a better life," Mr Lim said.

Also speaking highly of Mr Leow was NTUC Secretary-General Lim Swee Say who described him as an "effective, passionate and committed leader who is highly worker-centric".

The hallmark of a truly effective union leader, said SG Lim, is "someone who sticks it out and does his best in that position every day, and at the same time never forgetting that the day will come when he would really need to

pass the baton on to the next person.

"For the last 20 years, he has been nurturing Kam Soon Huat to be his successor. This event is a testimony to the selfless and passionate unionist that Mr Leow is and that he is the sort of role model who reminds all of us that we should do our very best for the Labour Movement and in continuing to nurture new blood. In doing so, I believe we can grow from strength to strength for a long time to come."



Hello, Old Friend... (from right) FDAWU General Secretary Tan Hock Soon, NTUC Secretary-General Lim Swee Say, FDAWU President Abdul Subhan Shamsul Hussein and FDAWU Executive Secretary Heng Chee How.

A Re-Visitation Of Old Ties

By **Gerald Tan**

Industrial Relations Officer, Food, Drinks and Allied Workers' Union

When NTUC Secretary-General Lim Swee Say paid a visit to the Food, Drinks and Allied Workers' Union on 23 April 2010, it was not a first. He was previously the Executive Secretary of FDAWU, and he took part in numerous meetings held in the very same premises.

Many current FDAWU Executive Council members had previously served with him and they were glad to welcome back an old friend. During his visit, SG Lim was given a presentation of FDAWU's recent efforts and upcoming plans.

In his address to the union leaders and staff of FDAWU, SG Lim commended the good progress of FDAWU and attributed it to the union's "hardworking leadership". He also reminded the union leaders and staff that the priorities in 2010 for FDAWU and the Labour Movement as a whole would be fourfold: Encouraging companies to share profits with workers; making sure our wage system remains flexible; supporting an increase in the employer's contribution rate to the CPF; and pushing for productivity gains.

During the question and answer session, the issue of the re-employment of older workers dominated, alongside the issues of service charge and foreign workers.

NTUC Club Helps Stranded SIA Passengers

Staff of NTUC Club recently aided stranded SIA passengers affected by the havoc caused to flights in Europe because of ash from a volcanic eruption in Iceland. There was a sudden influx of stranded passengers from SIA due to the cancellation of flights to Europe during the period 18-23 April 2010 when NTUC Club resort staff assisted about 350 stranded passengers.

NTUC Club staff responded to the call and did their best to cater to the needs of the stranded guests. Staff from the resort division stayed for long hours and did duties that were out of their normal job scope to ensure that the guests felt comfortable and were well-taken care of.

They demonstrated commitment to their work and went out of their way to help, living up to NTUC Club's core values of Care, Passion, Trust and Service Excellence, and being Cheaper Better and Faster.

The British Ambassador and the Singapore Airlines Manager both extended their sincere thanks and appreciation to NTUC Club staff for going the extra mile in taking good care of all the stranded British citizens and passengers from countries like Italy, France and Germany.

Some of the things that NTUC Club staff did included:

- Resort staff worked long hours to ensure everything was in order and the Resort Manager came back from medical leave to work (e.g. reception counter usually closes at 10pm but during those days it opened till 4am to welcome stranded guests; reservation staff worked late to assist with rooms booking and allocation of rooms).
- Housekeeping staff cleaned rooms till late hours.
- Engineering staff doubled up as 'bellmen' to deliver luggage to rooms (usually the resort does not provide such services).
- Most guests were escorted to their rooms as they were already feeling physically and emotionally tired and staff did not want them to feel lost in the resort.
- Staff made trips to pharmacies outside Downtown East to purchase prescribed medication for many guests.
- Staff also accompanied a few guests who needed medical attention to nearby hospitals.
- Staff assisted to co-ordinate meal arrangements with different F&B outlets.
- SDE's meeting room was converted into a mini Business Centre and the IT team set up three laptops with internet access so that guests were able to communicate with their loved ones.

Running For Union Unity



By
Muneerah Bee Mohamed Iqbal

A bright cheery Sunday morning saw about 1,200 people foregoing sleeping in on a weekend to participate in U Run 2010 at Downtown East on 9 May 2010. To conclude NTUC Club's U Games this year, U Run welcomed runners from the open and union categories to a challenging 8 kilometre route from Aranda Country Club to Downtown East and through Pasir Ris Park. For participants who preferred to enjoy a relaxing jog while bonding with friends and family, a free and easy route was also available.

With two categories available, the open and union categories, U Run also serves as a May Day celebration for the public to enjoy a day of fun with their family and friends and lead a healthy and active lifestyle together. A member of the Amalgamated Union of Statutory Board Employees for 12 years and a Senior Port Inspector at the Maritime Port Authority, winner of the Individual Men's (Union) category Iskandar Akil, 39, said: "The event was well-organised, even with a separate open category and union category. I'm very happy to participate and being able to come in first for the Individual Men's (Union). And I'm also happy that AUSBE came in first in the team union category."

With the success of U Run, NTUC Club will continue to develop running as a union sport to promote physical well-being and family bonding. Unionists and members can expect more annual running events by NTUC Club. Guest-of-Honour NTUC Assistant Secretary-General Ong Ye Kung said: "U Run adds a lot more fun and vibrancy to our May Day celebrations and it is also a good reminder for all unionists to keep fit and stay healthy. With a whole series of events presented by NTUC Club, such as this running event, the activities show that as a Labour Movement we reach out to broad segments of the workforce. We are walking next to them as they work live and play."

In conjunction with the 'Power of U' campaign, ASG Ong also awarded Azlina Md Kassim, 34, with a \$5,000 NTUC Income Growth-Linked Policy and Yang Jianwu, 27, with 1 million NTUC LinkPoints. They are the first weekly winners in the 'Power of U' draw, where all NTUC members stand a chance to win every week till the end of May.

It was a pleasant surprise for Mr Yang, an Industrial Relations Officer at Chemical Industries Employees' Union, who found out about the draw after his purchase at G2000. "I went to www.powerofu.sg and I just decided to try my luck in the draw. Now that I've won 1 million LinkPoints, I'm going to transfer it to the Thrift and Loan account and save it. I would also like to thank NTUC Membership Department for allowing NTUC staff to participate in the draw."

As an added bonus, NTUC Membership



NTUC Assistant Secretary-General Ong Ye Kung (right) with champion of Men's Team of 8 (union) category, NTWU, Team B

Department also threw in additional special prizes for the two lucky winners. Madam Azlina, a member of the Singapore Manual & Mercantile Workers' Union since 1998, received \$179 worth of dining vouchers for four from a 'Power Of U' merchant, Carousel at Royal Plaza on Scotts. She said: "I bought car insurance from NTUC Income last week and that was how I entered the draw. I plan to celebrate Mother's Day with my family with the Carousel voucher today." Mr Yang, on the other hand, was presented a spa package for him and his partner at The Spa @ Aranda worth \$150.

Sports For All

“The support for U Run today is tremendous! In fact, unions support for sporting activities has been on the increase over the past year or so and we've added events like running and cycling on top of the games such as football to try to cater to as many interests as possible. We are also looking to create a series of year-long programmes which our union athletes and runners can participate in and get together.”

Yeo Khee Leng, NTUC Competency Director (Internal Affairs) and NTUC Club Chief Executive Officer

Men's Individual

Position	Name
Champion	Iskandar Akil (AUSBE)
2 nd Place	Tan Hock Leong (NTWU)
3 rd Place	Wong Tuck Mun (SIASU)
4 th Place	Mohd Akbar Nagutha Maricar (FDAWU)

Ladies' Individual

Position	Name
Champion	Lynly Tan Ling Li (SBEU)
2 nd Place	Onn Yan Chang (HSEU)
3 rd Place	Apple Lim (SATSWU)
4 th Place	Lim Bee Bee (SURAWU)

Men's Veteran

Position	Name
Champion	Seng Wang Siang (PUBEU)
2 nd Place	Liew Poh Leong (HDBSU)
3 rd Place	Eswaran Sakthivel (SPWU)
4 th Place	Goh Hor (HDBSU)

Men's Team of 8 (Union)

Position	Union
Champion	AUSBE
2 nd Place	NTWU, Team 'B'
3 rd Place	SIASU
4 th Place	PUBEU
5 th Place	AREU

Women's Team of 6 (Union)

Position	Union
Champion	SURAWU
2 nd Place	SBEU, Team 'A'
3 rd Place	SMMWU
4 th Place	UWEEI
5 th Place	HSEU