



CAREER PROGRESSION MODEL FOR THE SKILLED TRADES

Key Insights

Research Partnership between **National Trades Union Congress (NTUC)**
and **Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS)**

Experienced and highly skilled essential tradespeople, including plumbers, electricians, and air-conditioning and mechanical ventilation mechanics, often grapple with the issue of low wages, exacerbated by the negative perception associated with the skilled trades sector—often depicted as 'dirty, dangerous and demeaning'. These challenges, coupled with low fertility rates and an ageing population, hinder the recruitment of younger local workers to fill the gaps left by retiring tradespeople.

This study seeks to provide insights into professionalising skilled essential trades and establishing a strong local core of skilled tradespeople in Singapore.



KEY FEATURES OF OVERSEAS SKILLED TRADES PROFESSIONALISATION FRAMEWORKS*

	GERMANY	AUSTRALIA	FRANCE	UK	NORWAY	PHILIPPINES
Spearheaded by public-private partnerships	○	○	○	○	○	○
Training and career pathway	○	○	○	○	○	○
Financial aids and/or grants	○	○	○	○	○	○
Career coaching and guidance	○	○	○	○	○	○
Placement assistance	○	○	○	○	○	○
Certification provided	○	○	○	○	○	○
Involvement of trade unions	○	○	○	○	○	○
Attracting youths into skilled trades	○	○	○	○	○	○

Key learning points across overseas skilled trades professionalisation frameworks:

- Develop a **holistic apprenticeship pathway** that supports continuous skill advancement and career growth
- Establish a **strong mentoring system** to cultivate skilled and motivated workers
- Involve the **trade unions in strategies and legislation formulation** to meet market needs for skilled trades

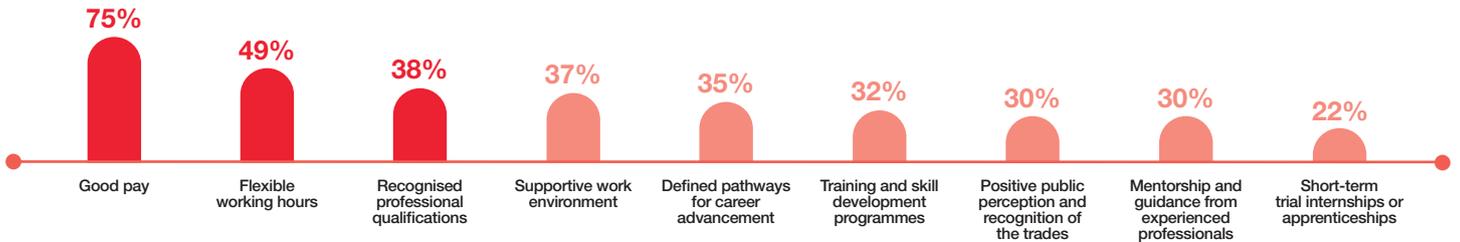
YOUTH RECEPTIVENESS TO SKILLED TRADES IN SINGAPORE[^]

About **1 in 4 youths** would consider a career in the skilled trades if given the chance with those interested mainly searching online (59%) for more information about skilled trades.

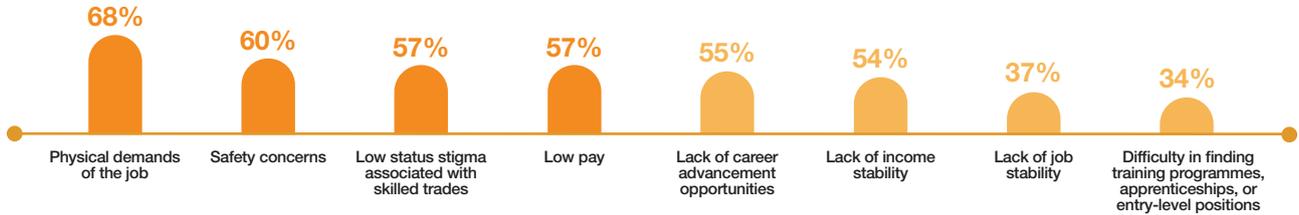


* Refer to the Research Report for details on the skilled trades professionalisation framework in each country.
[^] An online survey was conducted with 1,080 Singaporeans and Permanent Residents aged 18-35 in July 2023.

FACTORS THAT WOULD ENCOURAGE YOUTH TO PURSUE A SKILLED TRADES CAREER#



CHALLENGES OF PURSUING CAREER IN SKILLED TRADES#

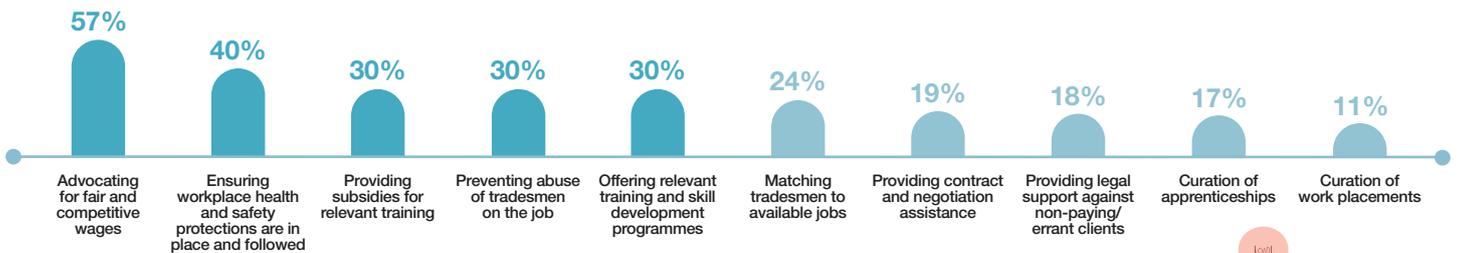


DESIRED ROLE OF UNIONS FOR TRADESMEN IN SINGAPORE#

Do trade unions play an important role in helping tradesmen in the industry?

Yes, 84%

No, 16%



KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

How unions can help, together with tripartite partners:

1

Establish a multi-tiered Career Progression Model for essential skilled trades

2

Leverage NTUC's Training and Placement Ecosystem to identify and match interested candidates with relevant experience and/or background to prospective companies

3

Develop communities of practice to provide mentorship and social support

4

Develop a skilled trades price framework for essential skilled trades

Multiple selection possible.



To view the full report, visit www.ntuc.org.sg/research-careerprogressionmodel

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