

# "thisweek

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# Through *the Labour Movement* Lens



We present you the Unusual Labour Movement's best moments in 2016, capturing moods, colours, events, faces and places...

# Our Unusual Labour Movement

The 'Unusual Labour Movement' – that was the main vein that carried NTUC through 2016. We continued to grow and strengthen our network by bringing into our fold new faces, groups, associations and professionals to make the Labour Movement bigger, better and more relevant to meet the changing needs of workers across all sectors, ranks and profiles.

Complementing the work of its 59 affiliated unions, two affiliated associations, 11 social enterprises and six related organisations, the Labour Movement now includes U Associate (professional associations and guilds), U SME (small- and medium-sized enterprises), and U FSE (freelancers and self-employed).

NTUC Secretary-General Chan Chun Sing took the opportunity to highlight in his blog post in February that the Labour Movement was focusing on becoming 'unusual' in three ways: to constantly reinvent itself to take care of all workers; ensure workers remain competitive; and grow from strength to strength to buck the worldwide trend of a declining relevance for unionism.



This year's May Day Rally at Downtown East had 1,500 attendees, with our U Associates joining our unions and associations in bearing flags for the march in.





Amidst the backdrop of the various National Day observance ceremonies, the Labour Movement partners were encouraged to network to build stronger ties and develop fresh ideas.



*At A Glance*

**OUR UNUSUAL LABOUR MOVEMENT'S FAMILY NETWORK COMPRISES:**

- **59** affiliated unions and **2** associations.
- **43** U Associates across **22** sectors.
- **13,000** partner SMEs accounting for over **325,000** workers.
- U FSE reached out to **49,000** freelancers.
- **11** social enterprises.
- **6** related organisations.



A passion for building sustainable cycling trails saw Lim Hui Min take on a career in the green space as a trail consultant.

# Future Jobs

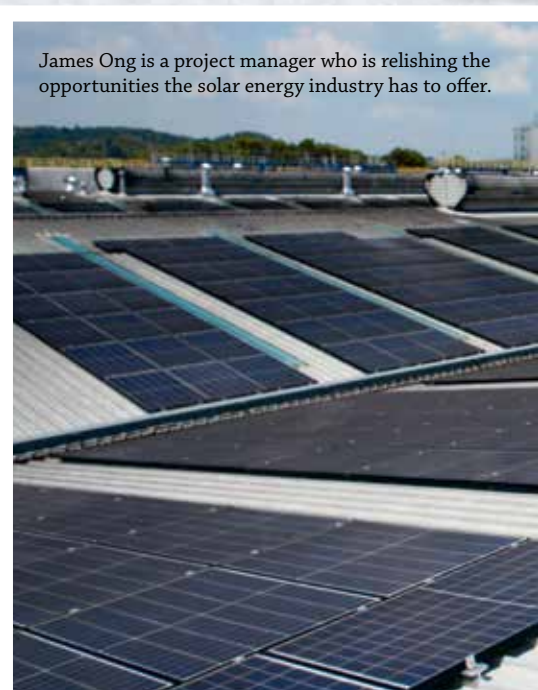
Despite the combination of cyclical and structural changes, there are certain sectors in the economy that are emerging as glowing beacons of opportunities. Some of the reported bright spots include information and communications technology, cyber security, green jobs, early childhood care and healthcare.

An evolving employment landscape will mean that today's skills may not be enough to see a worker transit into the future. This is where NTUC's new Future Jobs, Skills and Training (FJST) capability will bridge the gap - it will seek out future labour landscapes and career opportunities, define necessary skills and training to prepare workers for these future jobs, as well as connect workers to these opportunities. FJST is slated to be operational in January 2017.

As our ports become increasingly automated, crane operations will be executed remotely by specialists like Sam Yu.



James Ong is a project manager who is relishing the opportunities the solar energy industry has to offer.





Intan Ismail is currently an infant educator and is studying to achieve the necessary qualifications to take care of older children.



High tech farming methods have enabled farm supervisors like Jaslin Koh to grow viable careers in urban Singapore.



Research associates like Tan Hwee Cheng work tirelessly behind the scenes to support Singapore's success in the field of medical science.



In the fast-growing field of medical technology, design engineers like Reese Wong are helping turn life-saving concepts into reality.



For 49-year-old Tai Chee Weng, the switch into healthcare has been a calling he finally answered.

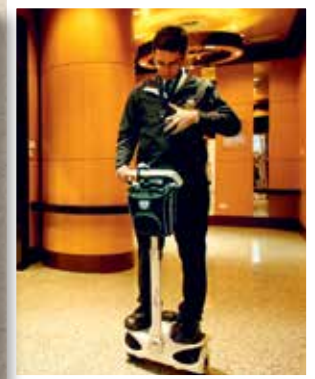
*At A Glance*

**FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES BY 2020**

- **30,000** more Information and communications technology jobs.
- **20,000** more healthcare jobs.
- **4,000** early childhood jobs.



Alexandrene Huang, 28, works in landscaping, one of the industries covered under the Progressive Wage Model.



Technology will continue to complement the Progressive Wage Model by adding value to the work done by workers in sectors like security, cleaning and landscaping.

# Progressive Wage Model

The year 2016 brought with it some good news for workers in the landscape and security industries – the Progressive Wage Model (PWM) was made a compulsory licensing condition for companies hiring them.

Landscape workers and security officers now benefit from higher pay and clearer career progression.

The cleaning sector, which was the first to implement the PWM, will also be seeing new improvements coming its way soon. *(See story on page 16.)*

## — At A Glance —

- The PWM now covers more than **40,000** cleaners, benefits almost **30,000** local security officers and about **3,000** local landscape workers.

# Productivity

Productivity took centre stage in 2016 and we have reason to believe it will come back bigger and better in 2017, especially with trends moving towards doing things smarter in the evolving workplace. On our part and in line with the national move to improve productivity, NTUC's e2i (Employment and Employability Institute) launched the second phase of its Inclusive Growth Programme (IGP) this year. NTUC's U SME Secretariat is also one of the multipliers for the Manpower Ministry's Lean Enterprise Development (LED) Scheme, which helps small- and medium-sized enterprises improve productivity.



Small- and medium-sized enterprises such as Folks Collective (top-left), Concorde Security (middle) and Johong Hardware & Paints (bottom-right) have enjoyed greater productivity, thanks to initiatives like the Inclusive Growth Programme. Workers have also benefited through wage increments.



## At A Glance

- ▶ Since its launch in 2010, the IGP by e2i has benefited over **2,050** companies that embarked on **2,740** productivity projects.
- ▶ More than **100,000** workers across **30** sectors have seen their wages increase.
- ▶ Low-wage workers have seen their wages increase, starting from an average of **18%**.
- ▶ Over **1,400** small- and medium-sized enterprises have benefited from the LED Scheme since its launch in August 2015.

# Mature Workers

When it comes to working till older or retiring earlier, it is entirely an individual's choice. The re-employment age is set to increase to 67 in July 2017, and government agencies, the Labour Movement and companies are all pitching in to make it easier for those who choose to work beyond a certain age. WorkPro, which was introduced in April 2013 to augment local manpower, foster progressive workplaces and strengthen the Singaporean core, was enhanced this year. Now, any local company can receive grants of up to \$480,000 to support initiatives that benefit workers, especially those aged 50 and above.



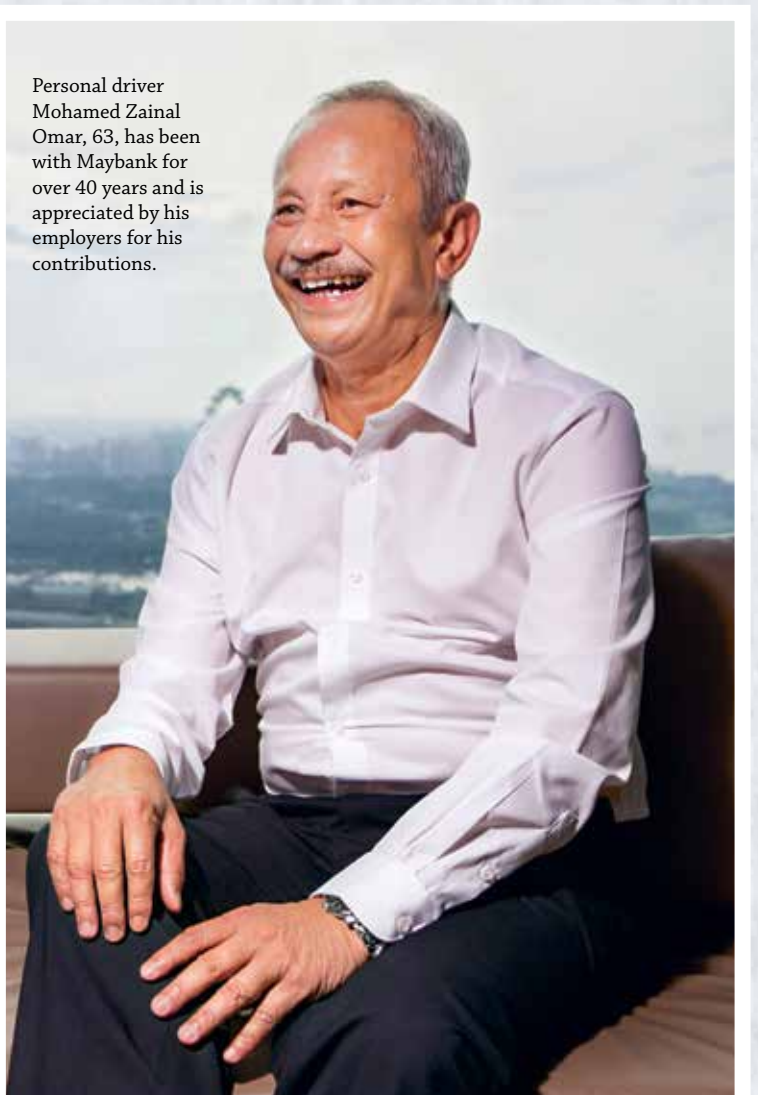
Singapore General Hospital Senior Enrolled Nurse Chan Kwai Hing, 72, attributes her long career to keeping physically active.



Packer Ng Eng is glad that her employer, Kleen-Pak Products Pte Ltd, allows her to work on flexible hours.



FairPrice Xtra cashier V Serateri, 62, chooses to continue working as it engages her and keeps her mind active.



Personal driver Mohamed Zainal Omar, 63, has been with Maybank for over 40 years and is appreciated by his employers for his contributions.

## At A Glance

- WorkPro was enhanced this year to further encourage employers to create age-friendly workplaces.
- A total of **\$66 million** will be made available to companies under WorkPro schemes such as the **Age Management Grant** and the **Job Redesign Grant**.
- The Tripartite Guidelines on the Re-employment of Older Employees was revised this year, in tandem with the change in the re-employment age.



Harry Koh (left) and Shawn Ng (right) are the president and general secretary of the National Private Hire Vehicles Association.

Did you know that come 2020, more than half of Singapore's workforce will be made up of professionals, managers and executives (PMEs)? You may well be one of the individuals making up the fast growing number. To take care of PME's through a scenario where their job roles are changing rapidly and even becoming obsolete, the Labour Movement is putting into place a few support systems. One of them is U PME's Career Activation Programme (CAP), among many others. As many PME's are also turning to freelancing, NTUC held its first 'Fair for Freelancers' this year to represent them.



Mina Koskinen, 38, reached out to e2i and U PME Centre when she was looking to get back into the job market.

# Professionals, Managers & Executives / Freelancers



My First Skool Senior Teacher Nurhamizah Salehudin, 27, was nominated by her employer for a Professional Development Programme for her exemplary contributions.

Taking care of all workers, our Labour Movement also looks after the needs and interests of freelancers.



## — At A Glance —

- Launched in June 2015, CAP has assisted **137 PMEs** over **15 sessions**.
- **24%** of PMEs assisted were successfully placed into new jobs.
- The number of volunteers, also known as career activists, **rose to 37**, up **from just 3** when the programme first started. These volunteers are workers who share their own career and personal experiences and industry insights.
- There are about **200,000** freelancers in Singapore.
- The 'Fair for Freelancers' on 7 September 2016, organised by the NTUC Freelancers and Self-Employed Unit (U FSE) and e2i, was attended by **400 people**.



The Migrant Workers' Centre and Centre for Domestic Employees have been championing the fair treatment and integration of our foreign friends earning a living in Singapore.

# Our Foreign Friends

What does it feel like to work in another country and not be able to see your family for months or even years? For many of our foreign friends, this is their reality. Added pressures include having to adapt to a different language and culture.

Those were just a few of the reasons the Labour Movement became increasingly inclusive in 2016. With the launch of the Centre for Domestic Employees in January, more foreign domestic workers and their employers were given assistance through the help of professional and dedicated staff such as Rebecca Huang (*pictured bottom right*). Meanwhile, since coming onto the scene in 2009, the Migrant Workers' Centre (MWC) has been championing for the fair treatment and the integration of our foreign friends in Singapore. Highlights of this year included the introduction of MWC Help Kiosks at all migrant workers' recreational centres, and the MWC May Day celebrations held at the Terusan Recreation Centre in Jurong.



Above: MWC Chairperson Yeo Guat Kwang spreading some Lunar New Year cheers among migrant workers during this year's festive season.

Right: Minister of State for Manpower Teo Ser Luck catching up with our foreign friends at the MWC May Day celebrations.



## — At A Glance —

- Since opening its doors in January this year, CDE has handled **500** foreign domestic workers cases.
- MWC has reached out to **650,000** migrant workers since 2009.

# A Day in the Life of ...

Through the course of the year, we have occasionally left the comfort of our air-conditioned office to experience what life is like in jobs we often overlook. From shadowing an arborist responsible for the trees on Sentosa island to putting in a shift as a ball bearing machine operator, the experiences have taught us valuable lessons about the struggles, dedication and motivations that everyday working people go through. To these heroes who have kindly offered us a glimpse into their lives, thank you.



"Being a Zupervisor lets you make kids' future job aspirations come true – all while you have fun yourself. It's tiring, but there is a satisfaction in seeing all the kids happy."  
– Ryan Chan



"From my experience as a ball bearing machine operator, I appreciated how redesigning a job to help mature workers can go a long way in helping them stay gainfully employed."  
– Ramesh Subbaraman



"It is inspiring to witness the passion and love arborist Daniel Seah has for the trees in his care. They are like his children!"  
– Jonathan Tan



"Mentally and physically exhausting, being a waiter is much harder than it seems, but waiters like Eileen make it look like a breeze."  
– Shukry Rashid



Nurhazimah Abdul Halim, assistant general secretary of the Singapore Malay Teachers' Union.



Rosmani Juraini, president of the National Transport Workers' Union.

# Leaders

Union leaders, armed with industrial and employment knowledge, are the go-to people whenever workers face issues. Many people also tend to forget that these leaders are workers themselves. Apart from them, leaders of associations and small- and medium-sized enterprises also play an equally important role in ensuring workers' needs are attended to – all under the umbrella of the Unusual Labour Movement. *NTUC This Week* thanks all of them for freeing up some time in 2016 to share with us and readers their thoughts on what matters most to them when it comes to workers.

## — At A Glance —

- **114 union leaders** graduated from courses offered by the Ong Teng Cheong Labour Leadership Institute (OTCi) in 2016.
- **Over 2,500 leaders** have been equipped with labour-related knowledge since OTCi was formed in 1990 as the Singapore Institute of Labour Studies.



Nicholas Khoo, chairman and co-founder of the Singapore Cybersports & Online Gaming Association.



Bernard Soh, president of the Singapore Institution of Security Officers.

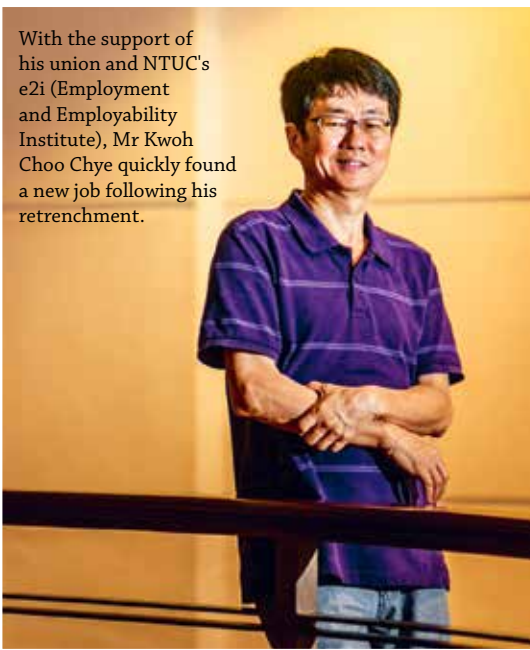


Manogaaran Karuppiah, president of the Singapore Urban Redevelopment Authority Workers' Union.



Financial support from the Labour Movement enabled single-mother Joanna Yap to juggle work and care for her two daughters.

With the support of his union and NTUC's e2i (Employment and Employability Institute), Mr Kwoh Choo Chye quickly found a new job following his retrenchment.



# By Your Side

A downturn is currently affecting the world and it has certainly made a dent on Singapore.

This year alone, more than 9,000 workers were released by companies that were restructuring, relocating or closing down.

Throughout the year, unions, NTUC's e2i (Employment and Employability Institute) and several departments in NTUC stepped up to help displaced union members in various ways to get them back on track into the job market.

Low-wage workers and low-income families were not forgotten. The Labour Movement, through its various initiatives and programmes such as the NTUC-U Care Fund, increased efforts to help them through the trying times.



The unions and e2i played a big role in assisting workers like Rosslinda Habas through retrenchment.



Mdm Nisa Uswatun is thankful to NTUC-U Care Fund for making a pleasant difference to her family.

## — At A Glance —

- ▶ To date, the Labour Movement has **raised a total of \$88.58 million** and **disbursed over \$74 million** to its low-wage beneficiaries through the NTUC-U Care Fund.

# Snapshots

A quick round-up of what went on in and around the Labour Movement recently.

Compiled by **NTUC This Week team**

## SOS Pledges Funding for Schemes

The Singapore Organisation of Seamen commits \$3 million to help shipping companies and seamen navigate through the economic slowdown.

The Singapore Organisation of Seamen (SOS) has committed an additional \$3 million to the union's three existing schemes. These schemes are: the Seacare Sailors' Home Scheme (SSS), which helps to reduce the accommodation expenditure of seafarers; the Seacare Medical Scheme, which provides free medical examinations for members, their dependents and management staff of shipping companies; and the Seacare Maritime Training Scheme, which provides members with training grants when they enrol in courses approved by the union.

Each of the three schemes will receive a funding of \$1 million over a period of two years, starting from 2017.

Speaking at the joint anniversary celebration of SOS and Seacare on 1 December 2016 at Resorts World Convention Centre, SOS President Mohamad Abu Bakar said: "The strong collaboration of SOS and Seacare, our business arm, has brought many advantages to our members throughout these years. We are proud to say that we are continually enhancing our various welfare schemes to ensure their relevance and applicability.

"These schemes – covering the areas of maritime training, provident funds, medical and healthcare, and lodging – are dedicated to our members' professional development and lifestyle needs. Some of the schemes are even extended to their dependants to ensure that they too are also well taken care of.

"We hope the token of contribution from the union will help lessen the financial burden for shipping companies during this period of economic transition."



“Today I am very happy to note that SOS and Seacare will be committing \$3 million to take care of the welfare of our seamen in the area of housing, medical and training. This comes on top of all the various measures the Labour Movement has rolled out to help the maritime industry to stay on course and to ride through the tough times.”

*NTUC Secretary-General Chan Chun Sing, making the announcement of the additional funding at the SOS 45<sup>th</sup>/Seacare 22<sup>nd</sup> joint anniversary celebration at Resorts World Sentosa.*

## Remodeling the Manufacturing Industry

New training programme aims to build capabilities in robotics and automation to get the manufacturing industry up to speed with future trends.



Hands-on experience with robots awaits participants at the training programme with RACE.

A new training programme has been launched to help build up know-how and capabilities for Singaporeans in robotics and automation, following a memorandum of understanding between NTUC's e2i (Employment and Employability Institute), Workforce Singapore (WSG) and the Robotics Application Centre of Excellence (RACE) on 1 December 2016.

The move comes at a time when the manufacturing landscape is evolving to Industry 4.0, which is about creating a smart factory.

### PROGRAMME FOR UPGRADING

The Robotics Applications Training & Education Programme (RATEP) is designed to meet the needs of individuals who have no experience in robotics and automation and engineers and technicians who want to upgrade themselves.

Jointly developed by professors from Nanyang Technological University and industry robotic leaders, the training content features five levels of competency – novice, beginners, competent, proficient and expert.

More than 2,000 professionals, managers, engineers and technicians (PMETS) are set to benefit from the programme. According to RACE, the first class will begin on 11 January 2017.

e2i's CEO Gilbert Tan noted: "Industry 4.0 is the future of productivity and growth for the manufacturing industry and both working people and employers need to be prepared to transform and stay relevant.

"Through this collaboration, e2i will work closely with partners to help employers and workers manage and work alongside new technologies."

Those who are interested can visit [www.race-robotics.com](http://www.race-robotics.com) for more information.

# Public Feedback on Budget 2017

In preparation for Budget 2017, the Ministry of Finance is seeking views and suggestions from all Singaporeans. Individuals, households and businesses are invited to share their thoughts on a range of national issues that include how the Government can better develop Singaporeans, support families and help local enterprises grow through innovation and internationalisation.

Interested persons can contribute their feedback from now until 13 January 2017 online at the pre-budget microsite [www.reach.gov.sg/budget2017](http://www.reach.gov.sg/budget2017). Information on locations for engagement events will also be available on the website.

**i** For more information on Singapore's budget process and updates on Budget 2017, please visit [www.singaporebudget.gov.sg](http://www.singaporebudget.gov.sg).



## Workfare Income Supplement Payment



From 1 January 2017, workers will receive their Workfare Income Supplement (WIS) payment every month compared to the current practice of every quarter.

This was announced during the Budget debate in March 2016. The Manpower Ministry explained that the move will provide workers with a more timely reward for work.

Workers who work in January and February can expect to receive their monthly WIS payment at end March for work done in January and at end April for work done in February. Under the current quarterly payment arrangement, they would have received payment for work done in January and February only in June.

The WIS rewards work and encourages upskilling by supplementing the incomes and retirement savings of older lower-wage Singaporean workers.

## New MOU to bring IT closer to PMEs

More help is on the way for professionals, managers and executives (PMEs) to arm themselves with relevant and in-demand technology and digital skills as NTUC's U Associate inked a memorandum of understanding with General Assembly, a skills and training provider, on 7 December 2016.

The partnership will see both parties work towards creating training workshops and engagement sessions with PMEs to keep them updated about the latest trends and skillsets necessary to remain competitive at the workplace.

For a start, General Assembly will work with U Startup, a new NTUC initiative to help startups and technopreneurs. The focus will be on skilling PMEs to take on opportunities in the fast-growing information technology (IT) sectors through a series of 'Tech and Digital Learning Days' workshops some time in 2017.

"U Startup is happy and excited to partner with General Assembly to reach out to PMEs and working people, to equip them with necessary technology and digital skills, expand their networks through the NTUC U Associate ecosystem and offer them more opportunities to be future-ready.

"As the number of startups in Singapore grows, more employment opportunities will also be created for our working people," said Vivek Kumar, director of NTUC U Associate and U Startup.

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ANDROID

# A Big Half-Step Forward for Cleaners

“A full step forward happens when our cleaners are not worse-off working at the same place or building even if there is a change in the cleaning service provider,” writes NTUC Assistant Secretary-General Zainal Sapari in his latest blogpost.

Despite the breakthrough in uplifting the lives of cleaners in Singapore with the introduction of the Progressive Wage Model in the cleaning sector, more still needs to be done.

This was said by NTUC Assistant Secretary-General (ASG) Zainal Sapari in his latest blogpost titled “Can you help, please” on [labourbeat.org](http://labourbeat.org), as he called for all industry stakeholders to do their part in helping cleaners continue to have a better pay and live a better life.

He talked about cleaners having their annual leave and salary reduced when they find themselves working for a new service provider at their worksites. Many cleaners also do not get an additional wage supplement at the end of the year, unlike many other worker groups.

“It is heartbreaking to explain to these cleaners why they are not getting their 13<sup>th</sup> month bonus. It is also common to be asked why their salaries remain the same every year,” said ASG Zainal.

## RECOMMENDING IMPROVEMENTS

ASG Zainal also assured that the Tripartite Cluster for Cleaners, which he chairs, is in the final stages of coming up with new recommendations to address cleaners’ expectations of being given annual increments and bonuses.

“These recommendations may be seen as a half-step but, it is a big half-step based on my guess on the possible reactions of service providers and service buyers. A full step forward happens when our cleaners are not worse off working at the same place or building even if there is a change in the cleaning service provider,” he said.

Citing the transport industry as an example where the Government, unions and other stakeholders intervened to have companies satisfy conditions in order to tender operating contracts, ASG Zainal said: “If such conditions or reassurances can be given to cleaners when there is a possible change in a cleaning contractor, it will be



a giant full step ahead for the welfare of cleaners.”

He added that there will be challenges for all stakeholders should such conditions be put in place but assured that it would be “a positive change that would have a major impact on our most vulnerable group of workers.”



Read the full post ‘Can you help, please?’ on [labourbeat.org](http://labourbeat.org).

## UCC: Helping More Low-Wage Workers

NTUC U Care Centre is expanding its network to reach out to and assist at least 15,000 low-wage workers next year by working with community associations of various ethnic groups.



NTUC ASG Zainal Sapari (right) mingles with community partners from Malay-Muslim organisations at the recent UCC appreciation lunch.

The NTUC U Care Centre (UCC) plans to reach out to about 3,000 more low-wage workers next year from its current number now. This will be made possible through new partnerships with more Malay-Muslim organisations and associations of other ethnic communities.

“Uplifting the lives of low-wage workers and their families can only be achieved when members of the community work together. Our partners share our vision and we thank them for joining hands with us to ensure our workers are equipped with knowledge needed to improve

their lives,” said NTUC Assistant Secretary-General and UCC Director Zainal Sapari at the UCC appreciation lunch for partners on 3 December 2016.

## REFINING STRATEGIES

To further refine its strategies and improve the Malay-Muslim community’s participation rate in its programmes, UCC collaborated with seven more Malay-Muslim organisations this year, adding to the partnerships with the Enhanced Mosque Clusters and Mendaki SENSE since 2014.

As a result of these partnerships, UCC has reached out to about 12,000 low-wage workers in the Malay-Muslim community to date.

When UCC engaged about 1000 low-wage workers on employment matters, it found that many were unaware of the availability of training opportunities.

UCC added that many back-to-work mothers also did not know how to go about looking for jobs that offer flexible options.

## EXTENDING REACH

UCC has also established partnerships to help low-wage workers in other ethnic communities such as the Sikh Welfare Council Singapore and Sree Narayana Mission (Singapore).

The centre is also discussing with the Chinese Development Assistance Council and Chinese clans and associations on how it can reach out to low-wage workers in the Chinese community.

About 10,000 students from three ITE colleges, polytechnics and universities have also benefited from UCC’s partnerships with educational institutions through talks on their rights as part-time employees when working.