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A FRESH NEW START

Mr Kwoh Choo Chye is just one of many out there in a shifting economy who are finding new jobs with help from the Labour Movement. *Find out more inside.*

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CONTINUING TO HELP WORKERS



Local employment growth continues to slow and unemployment numbers have gone up, but the Labour Movement is doing all it can to continue helping workers.

By **Ryan Chan**

While the unemployment rate has fluctuated between 2.6 to 2.9 per cent for the past five years, it hit 3 per cent for the first time as of June 2016. This was revealed by Manpower Minister Lim Swee Say when he gave an update on the latest labour market developments in Parliament on 10 October 2016.

Net increase in local employment growth has also continued to slow. From 2012 to 2014, an average of 226,000 locals joined the workforce, with 153,000 leaving each year – an average net increase of 73,000 workers per year during that period.

In 2015, the number of locals entering the workforce dropped by 36,000, while the number of those leaving it increased by 37,000. This resulted in a net increase in local employment of just 700. In the first half of 2016, that number further dropped by 200 to give a net increase of just 500 over the past 18 months.

LABOUR MOVEMENT EFFORTS

While the figures have not been encouraging, Minister Lim acknowledged the help that Workforce Singapore and NTUC's e2i (Employment and Employability Institute) have been rendering to workers.

As of August 2016, there were 20,000 active jobseekers. Together with Workforce Singapore, e2i has successfully helped to place more than 13,000 of these workers in sectors such as infocomm technology, healthcare, early childhood care, transport and logistics (*read about how e2i helped place two such workers on page 4*).

NTUC also has initiatives in place to nurture the workers of tomorrow through their youth membership arms like Young NTUC and nEbO. These programmes have helped youths like Kristina Manik gain valuable skills outside the curriculum (*read about her story on page 5*).

At the heart of the Labour Movement is its unions helping workers. The United Workers of Electronic & Electrical Industries helped 60-year-old Kwoh Choo Chye through retrenchment. After 20 months of jobseeking, Mr Kwoh secured a job in the public transport industry (*read more about his story on the facing page*).

Next week's issue, 23 Oct 2016: Look out for our coverage on how the Labour Movement is helping to prepare workers for jobs of tomorrow.

HELP FROM THE UNION

“Don’t just look at the gifts or promotions when taking on union membership. The most important thing is the protection you get in the event anything like retrenchment happens,” shares 60-year-old Kwoh Choo Chye, who makes a career switch with some help from the Labour Movement.

By **Ryan Chan**



It may not be every day that you hear about a 60-year-old bouncing back from retrenchment to find gainful employment again. However, with the Labour Movement’s assistance, that is exactly what Kwoh Choo Chye did.

He sought to stay relevant, attending courses and, after an arduous journey amounting to almost two years, he made a career switch to the public transport industry.

SURVIVING RETRENCHMENT

Mr Kwoh was a production supervisor who was made redundant when his company underwent restructuring. His union, the United Workers of Electrical & Electronic Industries (UWEEI), worked with the management to ensure workers received their retrenchment benefit packages. Each of the affected workers was also given a list of courses they could attend at NTUC’s e2i (Employment and Employability Institute) to boost their employability.

At e2i, an employability coach sat with them to assess their skill sets and match them with potential jobs. Each month, e2i would send them a list of companies they could approach and apply to.

“The e2i courses taught resume writing, and important body language during interviews like posture and walking. Some people think that

these courses will not help much, but they go a long way in helping you to be more confident during job interviews,” said Mr Kwoh.

PROBLEMS FACED

Faced with finding a new job, Mr Kwoh soon found out that the market was entirely different from the one he had first entered many years ago.

“Technology changes and there are plenty of jobs out there for us, but we can’t take them because we don’t have the necessary skills. This is where upgrading needs to come in. Attending these courses made me realise that the demands of the market are so much different than when I first started working,” shared Mr Kwoh.

At times, companies were reluctant to hire him after discovering his age.

“At the end of the interview, they (the interviewers) would ask for my age, after which their stance would change towards me. Although there are guidelines in place not to let age be a factor in hiring, their reluctance showed in their body language.

“But I don’t blame them. Perhaps they want to take in a younger worker who can remain at the company longer,” said Mr Kwoh.

ADVICE FOR OTHERS

Twenty months after receiving his retrenchment letter, Mr Kwoh successfully landed a new job in August this year in the public transport sector.

While it can be a frustrating journey to find another job after getting retrenched, Mr Kwoh stressed the importance of using the time to upgrade oneself and to be patient.

“Apart from the e2i courses, I completed a six-month IT course during these 20 months. One part of this course focused on passenger customer service, which taught me how to properly respond when a customer makes any queries. This helped me during my interview with the transport company,” he explained.

Mr Kwoh has been thankful for the assistance the Labour Movement has rendered to him.

The good retrenchment benefits he received allowed him to wait for the right opportunity to come along, instead of jumping at the first available job.

He had this advice to share: “Don’t just look at the gifts or promotions offered when taking on union membership.

“The most important thing you get when joining is the protection you get in the event anything like retrenchment happens.”



SUCCESS FAVOURS THE SEEKER

Source: **e2i (Employment and Employability Institute)**

Edited by **Jonathan Tan**

Support from an NTUC's e2i (Employment and Employability Institute) coach helps a retrenched worker embark on a job in an entirely new industry.

Misfortune hit 52-year-old Mary Tan (not her real name) hard the moment she unexpectedly lost her job as a secretary when her company was restructured. Having worked in the company for less than a year, Mary was not entitled to any retrenchment benefits. Complicating matters, one of her elderly parents had been diagnosed with cancer.

Financially and emotionally burdened, Mary further endured a string of rejections from positions she had applied for, seemingly because of her age.

A REFRESHED PERSPECTIVE

After months of job searching without success, Mary was eventually recommended to e2i. The turning point came when Adeline Lim, a career coach from e2i's Professional Search Team, began working together with her.

On her coach's advice, Mary attended an Executive Workshop where she learnt how to craft a succinct yet strong resume – a skill that had been forgotten after 20 years of being unused.

Her coach also helped match her with potential jobs and employers, even though some of them were different from that of the secretary role she was used to.

Within a few short months, Mary eventually secured a new role as a programme analyst at a bank and even received a higher salary than previously.

It might have been an unfamiliar role in an entirely new industry, but at the assurance of her coach that she had similar skill sets the job required, Mary's challenging journey had begun smoothing out.

Working with an employability coach from NTUC's e2i (Employment and Employability Institute) helps this mother re-enter the workforce.

The desire to care for her family saw Meilan take on the role of a full-time housewife soon after marriage. While it was a role she delighted in, increasing family expenses made her decide to re-enter the workforce at age of 39 to supplement the family's income.

Success in the job search though was not forthcoming. After years of trying, Meilan had yet to find a job and she soon lost confidence in her ability to secure one. It was then that she approached e2i for help and began working together with employability coach Susan Loo.

REGAINING HER CONFIDENCE

With her coach's support, Meilan was able to overcome her doubts and began to embrace continuous learning and attended courses in computer skills, English literacy and also participated in an Employability Camp organised by e2i.

With her newfound confidence and new skills, Meilan soon secured a job with the National Library Board as an assistant librarian.

"What I also found important was having a good relationship and cooperation between myself as a jobseeker and the employability coach in helping to find out what a person's skills gaps are, and what jobs may suit them," she shared.

Sharing her thoughts, Meilan's coach Susan said: "When I first met Meilan, she seemed lost and lacked confidence ... She was very willing to learn and accepted my advice when I was showing her where her weak spots were and what steps she needed to take in order to close those skills gaps. Her cooperation with e2i enabled her job search journey to be a smooth one and I am truly happy for her."

GOOD TO KNOW



Keen on getting the same boost in your job search? Career coaching could be just what you need. Find out more here:

e2i Career Services Centres

e2i west

Level 2,
80 Jurong East Street 21
Singapore 609607

e2i central

HDB Hub Bizthree 490 Lorong 6
Toa Payoh, #07-11 (Lift Lobby 1)
Singapore 310490

Opening Hours:

Monday – Friday: 9am – 6pm Saturday: 9am – 1pm

Sunday & Public Holiday: Closed

Website: **e2i.com.sg**

Preparing Workers of Tomorrow

How has nEbO been helping youths to be work-, world- and life-ready? Kristina Manik shares her journey.

By **Ryan Chan**

While NTUC continues to focus efforts on those in the workforce, nEbO is also doing its part by ensuring youths are well equipped to enter the working world.

The Labour Movement's junior membership arm nEbO allows youths to take the initiative to spearhead events, giving them the platform to develop skills that will help them as they enter the working world.

Her participation in these events has led 19-year-old Kristina Manik to develop essential skills like speaking with confidence, benefiting her both in school and during her internships.

MORE CONFIDENCE

By her own account, the Republic Polytechnic (RP) student used to be a shy, soft-spoken person before she entered RP. Through her active participation in nEbO events after becoming a member three years ago, she has since found her voice.

She said: "I learnt to speak more confidently and be more outspoken. In RP, we make presentations on a daily basis and having these skills help."

"When spearheading nEbO events as chairman or vice-chairman, we have to communicate efficiently among the organising committee and to the other participants.

"Events like these gave me the platform to speak confidently to a large body of people, which I don't think I would have received if I wasn't in nEbO."

“Events like these gave me the platform to speak confidently to a large body of people, which I don't think I would have received if I wasn't in nEbO.”

THANK YOUR INTERN DAY

Kristina was part of nEbO's recent Thank Your Intern Day (TYID) on 10 October 2016, where she was vice-chairperson of the organising committee.

Aimed at helping members enjoy a quality internship, TYID reaches out to interns each year to make them aware of their rights at work. The main event this year involved a dinner for interns to interact and engage with their employers while getting their pressing questions answered by a panel comprising Singapore University of Technology and Design Deputy HR Director Anthony Keh, ITE College Central Deputy Principal Chong Leong Fatt and SNEF Director Edwin Lye.

While many see internships as one of the obligations to fulfil as part of their tertiary education programme, Kristina hopes that students can make the best of the opportunity given to them.

She said: "Instead of viewing internships as a required criteria for graduation, students should embrace the challenges and opportunities that come with being a young member of the workforce. Adapting to a new environment, from school to work, is definitely not easy, but when you realise the benefits and see growth in your potential, it's really worth it."

AFTER GRADUATION

As a student taking up a Diploma in Human Resource Management in Psychology, Kristina believes communication is an essential skill to have when she eventually enters the workforce.

"In human resource, there are times when we would be required to speak to the company's employees, especially during events like staff engagement programmes, and I believe this skill will help me when the time comes," she explained.

At only 19, Kristina is already keeping an eye out for the path ahead.

"I've started to attend Young NTUC events like the the SGfuture: Labour Movement series on transferrable skills and career identity. The talk got me thinking about the career path to take upon graduation.

"As a young adult entering the workforce, the journey ahead is long and unpredictable, but through this event, I learnt the importance of making long-term career goals but remaining open to opportunities," she added.



Creating a Winning CV

See your Curriculum Vitae (CV) stand out better with these useful tips from NTUC's e2i (Employment and Employability Institute).

By **Jonathan Tan**

In most cases, your CV is the first ticket to whether you land the interview or get bypassed. Detailing your personal information, educational qualifications, work experience and skill sets, the CV is the quintessential professional guide for prospective employers to get to know you a little better.

And in two pages or less, it should reveal who you are and what you have to offer the organisation.

For a better idea of just how a CV should be, here are six easy tips to note:

1. GRAB ATTENTION

Make use of keywords to catch the interest of recruiters as they skim through applications. Keywords detailing main skills, and your best and most quantifiable

achievements should come up front. Other personal details can come later.

2. BE SPECIFIC

Instead of generalising your work experience, be specific. Terms like project management are too broad, so state the specific area of your experience, such as project management (infrastructure). Also, note that qualities such as meticulousness are not competencies – they are standard requisites for almost all jobs.

3. AVOID JARGON

Use clear, simple terms that can be easily understood by the 'target audience' reviewing your CV. Avoid acronyms as they can be overlooked or confusing.

4. KEEP THINGS SIMPLE

Ideally, your resume should be written in clear and concise sentences and formatted as a Microsoft Word document. Avoid fancy logos or extensive tables as they affect how your CV get shortlisted should you upload them through an online system.

5. BE ACTIVE

Keep applying for 'fresh' jobs that come up on job portals. It is really first-come-first-served and recruiters often move on from the application portal or process once they've shortlisted enough suitable candidates.

6. BE CONSISTENT

Ensure consistency in your details for resumes submitted across various platforms.

Pick The Right Course

Keen on upgrading your skill sets? Consider this GROW model to help you decide what's right for you.

Every so often, taking a step back and considering where we stand in our careers can help us better plan for the future. According to Kristin Loh, the head of career guidance at NTUC's e2i (Employment and Employability Institute), "to stay on top of the competition, you will want to make sure that you're relevant."

One way to do that is to consider taking up courses and amassing skills that will be relevant to you personally and professionally.

"Think about what is missing in your arsenal of skills and consider the skills that can help," said Kristin.

With a bounty of course options available on the market, consider the following GROW model to help you whittle down the choices to the most useful course.

Go: Think about where you want to go and what you want to achieve at work.

Reality: Consider the skills you have and the skills you lack.

Obstacles: Consider any gaps in skills you may have, and if there is anything holding you back from achieving your goals.

Workplan: Think about the possible steps you can take to achieve your goals.

Jobseekers, Mark your Calendar!

Looking to make the transition into a new job? Here's a list of events and job fairs happening in October that you can make a date with.

By Jonathan Tan



Event: Human Resource e-Career Fair 2016

When: Now till 27 October 2016

Where: hr.e2i.findsgjobs.com

What to expect: Co-organised by NTUC's e2i (Employment and Employability Institute) and local job portal FindSGJobs.com, this digital career fair offers a curated selection of human resource roles for interested Singaporean jobseekers. Participating companies include Koi Café Group, Metta Welfare Association, Casio Singapore and ECON Healthcare Group, among others.

Event: ICT Virtual e-Career Fair 2016

When: Now till 18 November 2016

Where: it.e2i.findsgjobs.com

What to expect: Another collaboration between e2i and FindSGJobs.com, this digital career fair offers a wide selection of roles within the burgeoning information and communications technology (ICT) sector here in Singapore. Targeted specifically at Singaporean jobseekers, participating companies include ST Electronics, NEC Asia Pacific, Singtel, Big Box Singapore and M1, among others.

Event: ICT Onsite Career Fair 2016

When: 20 October 2016, 12.15pm – 5pm

Where: Devan Nair Institute for Employment and Employability Registration Hub, Level 1, 80 Jurong East Street 21, Singapore 609607

What to expect: Get access to a curated offering of jobs from leading companies in Singapore's growing ICT sector. In addition to talks on building a career in this vibrant area of the economy, complimentary employability coaching will also be available to help jobseekers enhance their chances of securing new employment.

i Register online at e2i.com.sg/calendar/events

Event: Banking Career Fair

When: 21 October 2016, 1pm – 5pm

Where: Raffles City Convention Centre, Level 4, Orchard Room, 80 Bras Basah Road, Singapore 189560

What to expect: Gain access to opportunities in compliance, technology and wealth management and premier banking roles at leading local and international banks here in Singapore. At the same time, participate in the industry sharing sessions which will detail Singapore's banking landscape.

i Register online at e2i.com.sg/calendar/events

Event: Executive Career Management Talk

When: 25 October 2016, 7pm – 10pm

Where: Devan Nair Institute for Employment and Employability, 80 Jurong East Street 21, Event Hall 3, Singapore 609607

What to expect: With cloud computing and technology trending in today's economy, find out how you can harness these developments to boost your personal productivity and effectiveness at work. This talk will not only share the common tools but also detail the importance of cyber security and how you can protect yourself in an increasingly digital world.

i Register online at e2i.com.sg/calendar/events

Event: Jobs Bank Connect

When: 28 October 2016, 9am – 1pm

Where: Devan Nair Institute for Employment and Employability, 80 Jurong East Street 21, Singapore 609607

What to expect: Find out more about the collection of jobs on the National Jobs Bank portal and learn how to navigate, search and apply for the thousands of available listings. Professional trainers at the workshop will share resume writing tips to boost your chances of getting your profile shortlisted.

i Register online at e2i.com.sg/calendar/events

Event: Job Fair for Student Care Centres

When: 28 October 2016, 1pm – 5pm

Where: Devan Nair Institute for Employment and Employability, 80 Jurong East Street 21, Level 1, Event Hall 2, Singapore 609607

What to expect: Targeted at jobseekers with a passion for working with children, the job fair will feature a range of positions available at student and child care institutions for Singaporean applicants.

i Register online at e2i.com.sg/calendar/events



MOM: Update on Labour Market Developments

Manpower Minister Lim Swee Say shares how his Ministry will continue to help workers as employment growth continues to slow.

By **Ryan Chan**

In response to questions posed by Members of Parliament (MPs), Manpower Minister Lim Swee Say addressed three key areas in his Parliament speech on 10 October 2016: labour market developments (*read more on page 2*), employment support for workers and regulation of foreign manpower supply.

FOREIGN MANPOWER REGULATION

Despite the drop in local employment, Minister Lim cautioned that the Ministry of Manpower's (MOM) policy on foreign manpower must be balanced.

Taking in too many will result in the city becoming too reliant on foreign manpower, while reducing their numbers to zero, combined with slow local workforce growth, will result in zero growth in Gross Domestic Product.

NTUC Assistant Secretary-General and Labour MP Patrick Tay also asked for updates on the "triple weak" companies – firms that are essentially weak in building the Singaporean core.

Minister Lim said that of the 100 companies identified in February this year as "triple weak", 20 of them have worked with the Tripartite Alliance for Fair & Progressive Employment Practices (TAFEP) for good human resource practices and sent Singaporeans for training. These companies have since been removed from MOM's watchlist.

"For the remaining 80 per cent, even though many have made improvements, we think that a lot more can be done and we will continue

to monitor them. In fact, there are currently 300 EP (Employment Pass) applications among them that are still being closely scrutinised until we are convinced that they have met our fair consideration requirements," explained Minister Lim.

SUPPORT FOR WORKERS

Labour MPs Ang Hin Kee and Desmond Choo also asked about new efforts to match jobseekers with jobs and if more was being done to help workers better prepare for new jobs.

Minister Lim said that MOM will be transforming the National Jobs Bank into a one-stop, non-stop online marketplace that will negate the need for jobseekers to wait for the next job fair.

MOM will also be leveraging on the Skills Framework where jobseekers can see a specific sector's career paths, occupations, skills requirements, training programmes and even their wage progression clearly highlighted. The Skills Frameworks for the hotel and early childhood care and education sectors have already been launched and Minister Lim said more sectors will follow soon.

CONTINUED EFFORTS

The Ministry will also be continuing its efforts on the Adapt and Grow initiative. Announced during the Committee of Supply Debate, the Career Support Programme (CSP) will continue providing wage support for professionals, managers, executives and technicians (PMETs).

“Jobs are the best welfare and full employment is the best protection for our people and our workers. We need our businesses to do their part, to transform and grow; and we need our people to do their part too, to adapt and grow.”

Manpower Minister Lim Swee Say

Since the start of 2016, MOM has also rolled out 24 new Professional Conversion Programmes (PCP) for PMETs in 14 sectors. There are more in the pipeline and these will see the number rise to more than 50 by year end.

Minister Lim said: "Jobs are the best welfare and full employment is the best protection for our people and our workers. We need our businesses to do their part, to transform and grow; and we need our people to do their part too, to adapt and grow."

"Last time round during the global financial crisis, we cut costs together, we saved jobs together and upturned the downturn together. This time round, our challenge is: transform together, adapt together and grow together. Working together, we can succeed once again."



Precision engineering of the future will make use of advanced and value-added techniques like robotics, lasers and optics.

Growing the Precision Engineering Industry

The precision engineering industry is set to grow with the introduction of a transformation map, with 3,000 jobs expected to be created by 2020 for PMETs

By **Shukry Rashid**

Some 3,000 new PMET (professionals, managers, executives and technicians) jobs will be created by the year 2020 through the Precision Engineering (PE) Industry Transformation Map (ITM).

Launched by Trade and Industry (Industry) Minister S. Iswaran on 12 October 2016, the ITM was introduced in conjunction with a Memorandum of Understanding signing event at local precision engineering company Meiban.

Led by the Singapore Economic Development Board (EDB), the ITM is the first roadmap for the manufacturing sector, and identifies growth areas to take Singapore into the future of manufacturing.

NTUC's Supervising Lead for the Electronics & Precision & Machinery Engineering cluster Melvin Yong, who was at the event, said: "The union supports the launch of PE ITM to better help the industry, and enable our workers to move into future and higher value-added jobs."

He added that the tripartite partners will need to work closely, especially on the sectoral level, to build the industry's capabilities, create employment and manage workers' transition.

GROWING SECTOR

In 2014, the PE industry employed 94,000 workers and contributed \$8.8 billion in Value Added (VA, the gross domestic product-by-industry), which is about 15 per cent of Singapore's manufacturing VA. Through the PE ITM, the industry's VA is expected to grow to \$14 billion by 2020.

The key idea of the ITM is to shift towards higher value-added activities by growing complementary sectors such as robotics, additive manufacturing, sensors, advanced materials, and lasers and optics.

Mr Yong said that workers must be well-equipped to take on these future jobs. He added: "While there are good efforts within the ITM to attract new entrants into the industry, more proactive and dedicated help must be provided to the existing workforce to help them stay ready, stay resilient and stay relevant to the changing PE landscape."

The scope of the Precision Engineering Sectorial Tripartite Committee will also be expanded to provide inputs on the progress of ITM's objectives. The committee will be a key channel to engage companies, industry associations, schools and the workforce in the implementation of the ITM.

New Training Programme for Accountants

There's help now through a new programme for the accounting industry to move forward to meet the challenges of the digital economy.

By **Ramesh Subbaraman**



NTUC Secretary-General Chan Chun Sing (second from left) meeting participants at the CPA Congress.

How can Singapore's accounting profession ensure it does not become obsolete by just continuing to focus on basic book keeping services? Throwing the challenge to the industry was NTUC Secretary-General (SG) Chan Chun Sing. He urged the industry to level up to meet the challenges of the digital economy.

To help achieve this, NTUC U Associate member CPA Australia and NTUC e2i (Employment and Employability Institute) have come up with a new training programme for accountants and finance professionals to improve their business and finance advantage in the economy.

All workshops will start in 2017 and registration will open in December 2016.

FUTURE-READY SKILLS

CPA Australia said the programme offers 20 courses. The training covers key areas such as finance operations, advanced finance operations, business operations, and personal effectiveness.

"With digital disruption redefining our roles at the workplace today, it is quite timely to roll-out this programme which will equip our accounting and finance professionals in areas such as cyber security and analytics.

"The Labour Movement will continue to partner CPA Australia to ensure our accounting and finance professionals can progress in their careers and be future-ready," said Mr Vivek Kumar, director of NTUC U Associate and Future Leaders Programme.

EXPANDING THE PROFESSION

Details of the new programme were announced at the CPA Congress on 11 October 2016.

Addressing some 400 participants from the industry, SG Chan suggested three ways for the profession to ride the IT wave and globalisation. First is to go beyond just providing basic services.

"This requires those in the profession to also provide some value-added services that include finance, law, business and business strategy.

These are the areas where CPA Australia can leverage on the U Associates network to help our accounting profession to level up their competencies," said SG Chan.

Second is to globalise accounting services and for this, the profession needs cross-cultural international competencies.

"If you look at Singapore as one of the nodes in the global eco-system, we have no choice but to serve the global market," said SG Chan.

And third is to build on Singapore's brand of trust and integrity.

GOOD TO KNOW



Those interested in the training programme can contact CPA Australia at **6671 6500** or email sg@cpaaustralia.com.au.

SIA Fosters Learning Culture at Work

National carrier Singapore Airlines (SIA) tops up SkillsFuture Credit for staff and urges them to upskill to ride the digital wave.

By Ramesh Subbaraman

SIA held the Learning and Innovation Week for staff for the first time from 10 to 14 October at the SIA Training Centre, focussing on the digital revolution that is impacting jobs in the airline industry.

Besides exhibits on the latest gadgets, there were also speakers from the IT industry and the Labour Movement urging a change in mindset towards upskilling.

SIA'S TRAINING COMMITMENT

SIA invests heavily in training each year to the tune of some \$45 million, said the company's Executive Vice President, Human Resources and Operations Ng Chin Hwee.

To further signal its commitment to lifelong learning, the SIA Future Learning initiative was launched on 12 October.

There was also some good news for all staff – the company will be topping up their SkillsFuture Credit by \$500 dollars, on top of the Government's earlier amount of \$500.

"This will help boost the Government's SkillsFuture efforts. It also signals SIA's commitment to training and continuous learning for workers.

"The unions in SIA have already come on board with us. They recognise the importance training is to members' progression and advancement into the future," emphasised Mr Ng.

NTUC Assistant Secretary-General (ASG) and Advisor to the Singapore Airlines Staff Union (SIASU) Cham Hui Fong welcomed the move.



SIA staff make enquiries at the LearningHub booth.

"This certainly shows their commitment that they want to encourage the workers to make full use of the SkillsFuture and upgrade themselves.

"But we need the middle-management to encourage their staff to go for training," said ASG Cham.

THE WORKERS' COMMITMENT

Ninety-five per cent of SIA ground staff are Singaporeans who can take advantage of the SkillsFuture Credit. However, the Singapore Airlines Staff Union (SIASU) is concerned if workers have the time to go for training.

"At our end, we will negotiate leave for them to take examinations and some time off to attend the courses. Our workers come from the middle age profile and they find it difficult to attend these classes.

"We need the support of the company to ensure that the launch of SIA Future Learning takes off," added SIASU General Secretary S Rathakrishnan.

Training providers are also concerned about workers not knowing which course to take.

"... the future is changing so fast and not many people have a clue of what is going to come up in the next few years.

"This uncertainty gives them a sense of paralysis because they don't know what courses to take and what to equip themselves with," said NTUC LearningHub CEO Kwek Kok Kwong.

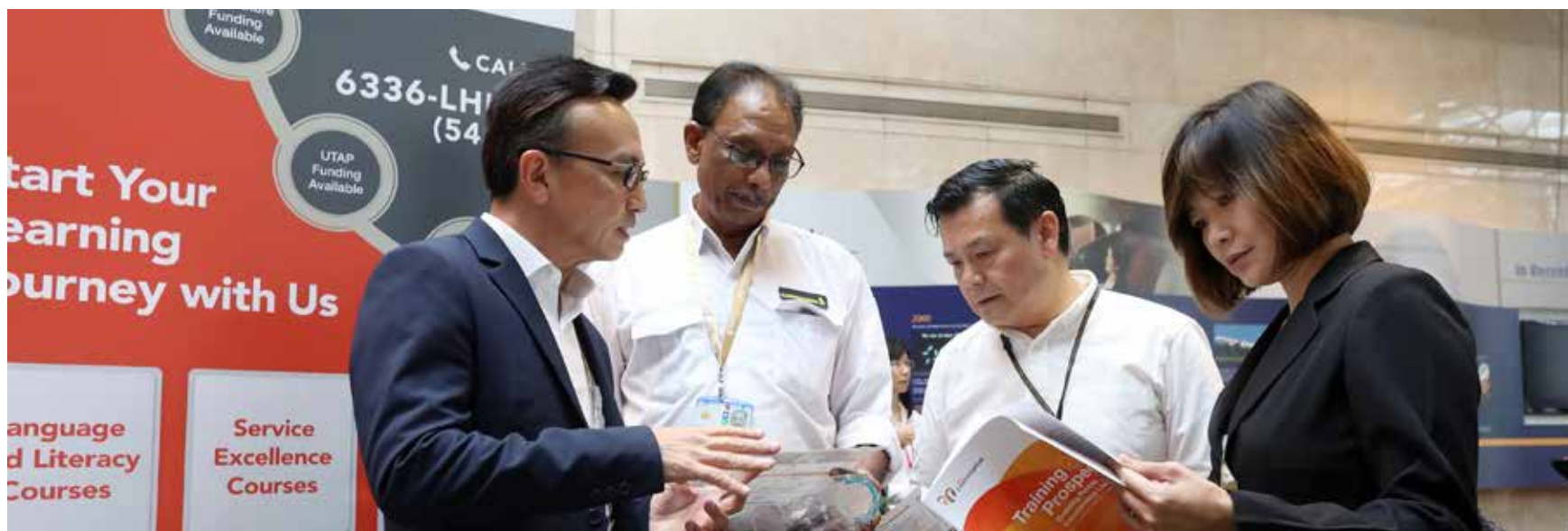
To make things easier for its staff, SIA management curated 120 relevant SkillsFuture courses into a catalogue. According to SIASU, this will reduce workers' confusion on what course to take.

"With the added \$500 and NTUC's Union Training Assistance Programme (UTAP) (see box below), we can focus on the 120 courses and upskill our current job and improve our employability," said SIASU Executive Secretary V Somasundaram Pillai, who is an aircraft technician with SIA.

GOOD TO KNOW

UTAP (Union Training Assistance Programme) is an individual skills upgrading account specially for NTUC members. Union members enjoy UTAP funding at 50% of the unfunded course fee capped at \$250 every year.

Stop by skillsupgrade.ntuc.org.sg to find out more about UTAP and how it can help you in your lifelong learning plan.



LearningHub CEO Kwek Kok Kwong (left), SIASU General Secretary Rathakrishnan (second from left), SIASU President Alan Tan (third from left) and ASG Cham Hui Fong at the SIA Learning Festival.

Taking the Plunge

“Don’t doubt yourself. Just go for it,” says Yamini Yusof. She leaves the corporate world as a financial agent to become a beach patrol officer to enjoy a new working life.

By **Fawwaz Baktee**

It was beach patrol officer Yamini Yusof’s first day at work four years ago and she was sitting at the patrol headquarters at Sentosa’s Palawan Beach when the phone rang.

“Is this the beach patrol HQ? There is an emergency!” the voice on the other side said. In a calm manner, Yamini, now 31, asked what the emergency was. The voice responded: “A man collapsed at Beach Station. I think he’s having fits. Can you hurry here?”

When she got to the station, she saw the victim lying next to the ATM, gasping for air.

“It didn’t look like he was having fits. From my training, I realised that the man was instead having a cardiac arrest,” Yamini recalled. She broke out in a cold sweat when she could not feel the man’s pulse.

Yamini put her training to the test, taking out the automated external defibrillator. She continued to perform Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation while waiting for the ambulance. And because of Yamini’s quick thinking, the victim survived.

CAREER SWITCH

Yamini used to be a financial agent. Even though she was earning more then, she was not satisfied with her job.

“Being a financial agent, the job was kind of lonely. I was stuck at a desk on most days and I had to make cold calls daily. There was no personal interaction with my clients. It was challenging as well but I found that it was just not for me after a while.

“I became a beach patrol officer because it was the polar opposite of what I was doing

then. Here, I’m not bound to four office walls and I get to enjoy the sun, sand and sea. Interaction with people is also more personal,” said Yamini.

Her current job consists of patrolling the beach, looking out for swimmers from the beach’s watchtower and being the first to arrive in the instance of emergencies.

According to Yamini, common incidents include swimmers getting cramps while in the water and stings by marine life such as stone fish and jelly fish – all of which Yamini is trained to handle.

WOMAN ON THE JOB

Yamini is also the only full-time female beach patrol officer and on top of that, she wears a hijab on the job.

“If I have to go in the water to save someone, I wouldn’t hesitate just because I have a hijab on. And I would do anything to ensure the safety of the people at the beach,” she said.

For people who are thinking of a career switch, Yamini said they should follow their gut and just take the plunge.

“Don’t doubt yourself. Just go for it,” said Yamini.

“I became a beach patrol officer because it was the polar opposite of what I was doing then. Here, I’m not bound to four office walls and I get to enjoy the sun, sand and sea. Interaction with people is also more personal.”



By **Ramesh Subbaraman**

Did you know that 28 of the 33 branches of the United Workers of Petroleum Industry (UWPI) are located on Jurong Island? According to 50-year-old Benedict Chan Wai Meng, president of the union, members come mainly from the companies operating on the island. In total, UWPI represents 4,800 members.

The lead technician at The Polyolefin Company (Singapore) Pte Ltd is grateful to have understanding bosses who allow him to meet the demands of being a union leader.

NTUC This Week: When did your journey with the Labour Movement begin?

Benedict Chan Wai Meng: My experience with union work started in 1988/89 when I joined my company branch. I sat in the annual increment negotiations. In 1994, I served as branch assistant secretary, then branch vice-chairman and later became the vice president of the Singapore Petrochemical Complex Employees' Union (SPCEU). This was a house union made up of six companies back then. SPCEU merged with UWPI in 2000 when we were constrained by our recruitment as we could only recruit members from six companies. I became vice president of UWPI in 2003 and president in 2006. As president, I have been part of the union's core industrial relations team which negotiates and interacts with management, NTUC and the Ministry of Manpower.

What are your key roles in the union?

Our industry is very much driven by collective agreements, training and safety issues. For UWPI, we only have one full-time staff. The rest of us are all part timers. Everything we do depends on planning our timing correctly. We either need to get the time off or we are doing things on our off days and rest days. I am still working on shift after 29 years and so I am very grateful to my company bosses. They understand that as president, I need to move around. They give me clear room to move and do the work I need to do.

What does training and retraining mean to you and in what ways have you upgraded yourself?

We need to constantly keep up with the latest issues globally as our industry comprises global players. I did the industrial relations training at Ong Teng Cheong Labour

“We need to constantly keep up with the latest issues globally as our industry comprises global players.”

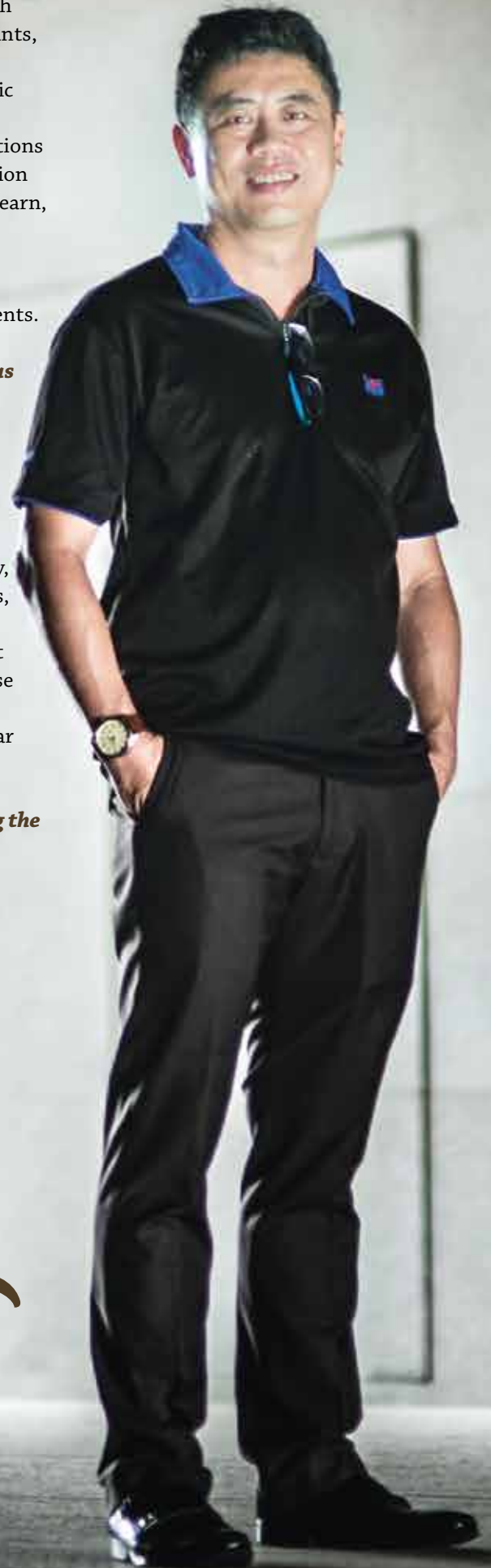
Leadership Institute, including the Diploma in Employment Relations programme. With the help of the Government and NTUC grants, I also did my BA Psychology with Business at UniSIM. For UWPI, we insist on the Basic Certificate in Industrial Relations and the Intermediate Certificate in Industrial Relations for all branch officials. My advice to my union comrades is to seize every opportunity to learn, be it formal classes with examinations or short courses or seminars. It can be as simple as attending forums where union leaders get briefed on the latest developments.

Could you share with us how the union has helped its members?

Recently, in one of our companies, we had a technician in his early 30s who was terminated because the company said he was sleeping on the job. We brought the case to the Ministry of Manpower because we disputed the facts of the case. Eventually, from a dismissal with no additional benefits, we managed to convert it to a resignation. He got an additional three months payment and due bonuses. He was very happy because this happened last year and the good thing is within a week, he got a new job in a similar industry.

What are the immediate challenges facing the union in this current economic scenario?

When there is an increase in cost pressures, companies expect more from less. So less overtime and more job responsibilities. Fortunately, the management in the companies in our industry recognise the skills and experience of our people. On its part, UWPI needs to encourage its members to embrace individual responsibility in training and upgrading.



FACE 2 FACE WITH
Benedict
CHAN

GIFT FROM THE HEART

Some 2,000 low-income union members and their families receive help from CIEU and FDAWU through the annual Gift from the Heart event.

By **Shukry Rashid**

Some 2,000 low-income union members and their families took home goodie bags containing \$100 worth of essential household items such as rice, flour and canned food, along with NTUC FairPrice vouchers.

This took place as Chemical Industries Employees' Union (CIEU) and Food, Drinks and Allied Workers Union (FDAWU) came together to hold their annual Gift from the Heart event on 8 October 2016 at D'Marquee @ Downtown East.

The event was graced by NTUC Assistant Secretary-General (ASG) Patrick Tay, who said that the event was a big effort by both unions.

"Many of the members here are going through difficult times with the current uncertain economy. But I believe as one family, we can work together, stand tall and strong to pull through whatever difficulties that come our way," he added.

Also for the first time since the event was organised, NTUC's e2i (Employment and Employability Institute) and NTUC LearningHub set up booths for members so that they get to know more about the Labour Movement's assistance and programmes.



ASG Patrick Tay (left) gives out goodie bags containing essential household items to low-income union members.



Lucite International Human Resource Manager Tan Quee May (right), who volunteers for the event on behalf of her company for the first time, says: "We hope that our contribution will provide some relief to our low-wage workers to defray their cost of living."



Lim Ah Hiok (left), 57, has been working as a cashier for FairPrice for the past 20 years. The sole breadwinner since her husband (right) had a heart bypass surgery seven years ago says the goodie bag will help her a lot through difficult times.



Nisa Uswatun, 46, has been working as a part-time cashier at FairPrice since her husband became bed-ridden six years ago. With two school-going children, Nisa and her family also benefit from NTUC's U Stretch and U Care Back To School vouchers every year.



Hilton Singapore Housekeeping Supervisor Mallamah Marimuthu (right), 50, is benefiting from the initiative for the first time. She and her security officer husband (left), spends about \$200 a month on household expenses.

Finding Satisfaction in Security Work

Is the security industry only suited for mature workers? Meet a young couple working in the security line who tells us otherwise.

By **Fawwaz Baktee**

The security industry is commonly, although not accurately, thought of as one that is more suited for mature workers. Honestly, the people who have this opinion cannot be faulted because mature workers, above the age of 50, do make up a huge chunk of the industry. But that does not mean the job is unsuitable for the young.

In fact, the Labour Movement along with its tripartite partners have been working hard to get more youths to join the industry. They have come up with the Progressive Wage Model (PWM) that kicked in last month, and a specialist track that gives officers an alternative route in their security work, which includes an opportunity to become an executive protection officer.

It was because of this that I recently grabbed the opportunity to meet a young couple – both in their late 20s – working as security officers for Spear Security Force to gather their thoughts on the issue.

A CHANGE IN MINDSET

“I think it’s an issue with the mindset that only old people are suited for security work. When I say that, I mean it not only for the general public but also young people who don’t even consider the line,” said 27-year-old Nor Hazimah Haron.

She has been working in the industry since 2014 and is a qualified security supervisor. However, she currently only does relief work and works four days a week in order to take care of her household.

Her husband, 28-year-old Muhammad Ridhwan has been in the security line for a year longer than Hazimah and currently works as a security supervisor at a condominium.

Ridhwan said: “I used to work as a delivery rider. When I came across an advertisement in the papers, it captured my eye. I didn’t earn much and when I saw that the pay for a security officer was more than what I earned, I made the switch.”

The transition for Ridhwan was easy as he had served in the Singapore Police Force for National Service.

Hazimah, on the other hand, came from the food and beverage (F&B) industry. It was when Ridhwan told her about his work that she got interested to try out the security line.

“I needed a switch of jobs. I wanted to try new things and see how I could apply my skills in other industries. Security work has lot of similarities to F&B such as customer service, but at the same time there are also a lot of differences such as the working culture and environment,” said Hazimah.

Both told me that the industry veterans working with them have helped them with their transition.

“We learn a lot from observing our seniors. There was this one time when I had to wheel clamp a car and was unsure of how to do it. My colleagues showed me how and I learned on the job,” said Hazimah.

WORK-LIFE BALANCE

However, the couple also said that a drawback that would deter young workers from entering the industry was the long working hours that may not allow them to find work-life balance.

“It’s not easy at all. Because 12 hours a day and six day a week can be really hard to handle for some people. How Hazimah and I try to work it out is that we message or call each other during our break-time.

“I understand it’s due to a shortage of manpower that officers need to work long hours, but I think if we are able to shorten the working hours somehow, it would benefit everyone in the industry,” said Ridhwan.

In the meantime, both Ridhwan and Hazimah plan to progress in their careers.

They said: “We find the work fulfilling. For young people, we would tell them to give the security line a try. With the PWM and all, I’m sure things will only get better for us.”



Snapshots

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

By **Ramesh Subbaraman**

Valuing Teachers

Singapore's teaching profession has been the subject of discussion recently, following an article in *The Straits Times* on 3 October 2016 titled "5,000 teachers leave service over five years."

Responding to concerns, Singapore Teachers' Union (STU) President Mike Thiruman said teaching is a demanding and complex profession and has become even more so in the last decade.

However, as early as 2004, STU started working with the Ministry of Education (MOE) to roll out the Teacher-Assistants scheme to address workload issues.

He emphasised that a teacher's work cannot be the sole determinant of a child's development. Parents also play a crucial role in creating a healthy learning environment for their child to flourish in.

"Teachers, like the rest of us, are only human. That they play an often

understated and unappreciated role cannot be an excuse to deprive them of the rest and respect that they deserve.

"If we value our children, we must value the people who dedicate themselves to nurturing them," said Mr Thiruman.

STU said it stands ready to partner MOE in discussions on improving the working conditions of teachers and to explore avenues to retain experienced teachers.

That is because losing even one good teacher is one too many, added Mr Thiruman.



Against Kickbacks

It is important to send a strong signal that Singapore does not condone bosses who collect kickbacks from workers as a condition of their continued employment with a company.

And that too from migrant workers who don't earn much and work very hard to support their family, said Migrant Workers' Centre (MWC) Chairman Yeo Guat Kwang.

His response followed a recent case highlighted by the Ministry of Manpower (MOM).

On 11 October 2016, MOM charged the Managing Director of Lian Lee Wooden Case Maker Co Pte Ltd for the collection of kickbacks amounting to more than \$105,000 from 20 of his workers as a condition for their continued employment with the company.

MOM has recovered and returned the monies to all the affected foreign workers.

"MWC has come across a number of such cases and reported them to the authorities for investigation. We wish to remind all employers that it is illegal to require the payment of money, whether up front in cash, or through subsequent deductions to salary from migrant workers in return for application or renewal of work permits or any other employment benefit or opportunity," warned Mr Yeo.

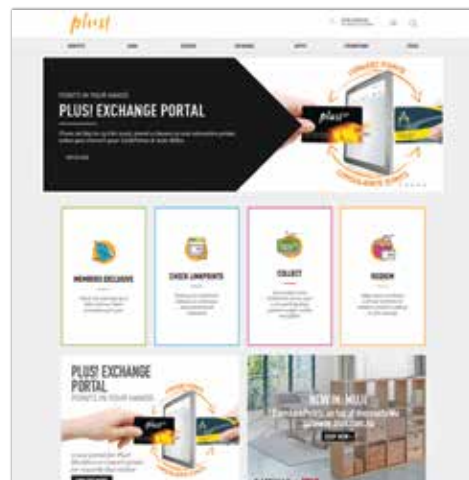
i Workers who are pressured to pay monies to keep their jobs or face other employment issues which they cannot resolve with their employers can call the **Migrant Workers' Centre's 24-hour helpline at 65362692.**

Plus! Exchange

NTUC members can now convert their LinkPoints to points of partnering loyalty programmes and vice versa, thanks to Plus! Exchange.

All they need to do is to log in to connect their accounts of partnering programmes via a one-time authorisation or at the Plus! Exchange Partner's platform. They can then convert points for rewards.

i Log in to plus.com.sg/exchange to see what's in store for you.



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ANDROID

工友 生命线

在寻找工作上须要协助？
工运一直在这方面不遗余力。
以下是三则实例：



工运青少年组织nEbO成员, 克里蒂那

工运的青少年组织nEbO 鼓励并协助年轻人参与主动性组织活动，也为他们提供掌握技能的平台，以助将来踏出社会时做好准备

今年19岁的克里蒂那便是在参加活动后提升了自信也学会了公共发言等必备技能，让她在求学和实习时更加得益。

据她透露，在报读共和理工学院之前，自己是一位性格内向，不善于言表的人。自三年前加入nEbO和活跃参与组织的活动后，她终于重拾信心，勇于发言。

克里蒂那说：“我学会如何更有自信的发言，也没那么内向了。在共和理工学院，我们每一天都需做演示，这些发言技能可说是一大助力。”

“当我们在nEbO活动中担任主席或副主席时，必须有效地和组织委员会成员及其他参与者沟通。”

“参加这类活动给予我向大批群众说话的平台，如果不是nEbO会员，我应该不会有这种学习的机会了。”

身为专修人力资源管理心理学的文凭班学生，克里蒂那认为懂得如何与他人有效的沟通是将来踏入社会工作后的必备技能。

她解释：“在人力资源部门工作，须要和公司同事沟通，尤其是在员工活动中更加需要这种技能。我相信自己的沟通技能将来必定能派上用场。”

“我开始参加职总青年团主办的“新加坡未来”，以及工运主办的可转移性技能和职业志向等系列活动。这类讲座促使我思考毕业后该选择什么样的职业道路。”

她表示：“以一位踏入社会工作的年轻人，其前程之路漫长且难以预测，但通过这些活动，

我了解了制定长期职业目标的重要性，也知道该同时对机遇保持开放的态度。”

为了照顾好家庭，美兰决定在婚后担起家庭主妇一职。虽然她乐意担当此角，无奈家庭开销日益增加，39岁的她决定重返职场帮补家用。

然而，历经整年的搜索与应征，美兰未能找到工作，也因此而逐渐地失去自信。所幸后来她得到职总就业与职能培训中心就业能力导师陈玛丽的协助，终于实现了重返职场的愿望。

在就业能力导师的协助之下，美兰克服了心中的疑虑，前往学习电脑技术和英文，也参加了由就业与职能培训中心主办的就业能力营。

在掌握了新技能之后，美兰很快便在国家图书馆找到一份助理员的工作。

她说：“我觉得有一点很重要，就是求职者须与就业能力导师合作。如此，才能对症下药，确认个人的技能缺口，并从而筛选较适合的工作选项。”

辅导员陈玛丽表示：“初次见到美兰时，她显得迷茫，也缺乏自信…还好，她勤奋好学，又十分接纳我给予她的点评，并且接受如何改善她的技能缺口和弱点的建议，下决心弥补不足。她积极并愿意和我们配合合作，使得她在求职道路上更加顺心。我衷心为她感到高兴。”

如今，年届60岁的人被裁后 还能找到差事并不常见。但在工运的协助之下，郭子才就做到了。

他努力跟进需求，报读相关课程，经过近两

年的努力，终于转行成功，得以在公共交通业任职。

郭子才原本在制造业当生产线管工，公司进行重组后，他便失去了工作。此时，电子与电器业工友联合会与管理层合作，确保每一名被裁工友都能得到合理的裁员抚恤金。除外，每一名被裁工友都可从职总就业与职能培训中心提供的课程中选择适合自己的课程，从而提高受雇能力。

同时，工友们也和就业能力辅导员进行技能评估与工作配对。每一个月，培训中心都会寄发一份相关的招工讯息，让工友前往应征。

郭子才说：“培训中心教导我们如何写履历、面试时须注意的坐姿和肢体语言。有些人认为这方面的帮助不是关键，但我却认为懂得这些知识让我在求职时，更有自信、更有把握。”

在接到裁退信的20个月后，郭子才于今年8月份加入了公共交通业。

经历过被裁后的煎熬，郭子才强调自我提升和忍耐的重要性。

他说：“在这段工作空窗期，我先后参加过培训中心的课程，以及为期半年的资讯科技培训班。其中，乘客服务科目导师教会我如何正确回应乘客的询问。这些知识在我到交通公司面试时全都用上了。”

回首过去，郭先生非常感谢工运的协助。他劝说：“在考虑加入工会时，不要一味的只顾会员优惠等此类服务。对我而言，加入工会的最大好处是在意想不到的情况时能得到适当的职业保障和帮助。”