

LABOUR MPs IN PARLIAMENT

Hear what they have to say about different worker groups facing various issues and ways to help them secure a better future.



Facing Daunting Challenges

In Parliament: PM Lee outlines steps to build a stronger Singapore.

By **Ramesh Subbaraman**



Building a stronger Singapore and progressing together – that has been the central theme of the slew of speeches made in Parliament since the opening of the 13th Parliament on 15 January 2016.

Addressing the House on 27 January 2016, Prime Minister (PM) Lee Hsien Loong emphasised that be it terrorism, the economy or social cohesion, there is every reason to be confident that Singaporeans will overcome the challenges.

FACTORS FOR SUCCESS

Mr Lee said that for Singapore to succeed, the country needs good

policies and good politics.

The policies have to respond to the people's needs like enhancing social safety nets, making housing more affordable and accessible, improving public transport and managing the growth of foreign workers. There must also be policies that enable Singaporeans to achieve their aspirations, for themselves and for their children, by investing in education at all levels, and in SkillsFuture.

“That is what this Government has done for many years. And this is what my Government will do in this term. We will fulfil our promises. But in order to have these good policies done, we also must have good politics, because the two go hand-in-hand” said PM Lee.

Voicing Labour Concerns

Six Labour MPs speak up in Parliament to address issues concerning workers of Singapore.

Cover story spread compiled by **NTUC This Week team**

Following President Tony Tan's opening address in Parliament on 15 January 2016 where he announced the Government's priorities, policies and programmes for the next five years, various Ministries issued their addenda the following week outlining their plans for this term of Government.

From 25 to 29 January 2016, Parliament debated on the President's opening address. On the Labour front, six Members of Parliament (MPs) spoke on various issues pertaining to different worker groups and their future in Singapore.

Mr Melvin Yong and Mr Desmond Choo – both first term parliamentarians – opened the stage for their fellow Labour MPs when they gave their maiden speeches on the first day. They touched on the topics of Tripartism and young workers respectively.

They were followed by Mr Ang Hin Kee, who touched on freelancers; Mr Zainal Sapari, who spoke on rank-and-file workers; Mr Patrick Tay, who gave his views on Professionals, Managers and Executives; and Mr Heng Chee How, who addressed the concerns of mature workers.



In Parliament: The Labour Agenda (Quick Look)

Read what our Labour MPs are championing for the workers.

Desmond Choo

- ▶ Create a **stronger connection between schools and the workplace** to better prepare students for careers.
- ▶ Allow **eight weeks of Flexible Work Arrangement** for mothers on top of their legislated maternity leave.



Zainal Sapari

- ▶ Make it **mandatory to implement National Wages Council's recommendations** for workers in the 20th and 30th percentile.
- ▶ Implement **Progressive Wage Model in other sectors** to benefit more low-wage workers.



Ang Hin Kee

- ▶ With the employment landscape changing, **society and employers need to change their mindsets** on what defines a good job and stable income.
- ▶ Government to review policies to **consider needs of freelancers**.



Patrick Tay

- ▶ **Impose a PME dependency ratio** for companies similar to work permits and S Passes.
- ▶ There is a need for employers to have **a mindset change to hire mature PMEs** through the Career Support Programme.



Heng Chee How

- ▶ **Tap on ageing population** to address manpower needs.
- ▶ **Review CPF policies** to ensure workers' **retirement adequacy**.



Melvin Yong

- ▶ National tripartism must **cascade to strong sectoral tripartism**.
- ▶ Sectoral tripartism **must address sector-specific challenges and needs**.

For more details on these issues, look inside...

Future of Young Workers

25 January 2016 – Labour Member of Parliament and NTUC Director (Progressive Wage Model), Industrial Relations Department Desmond Choo urged the Government and employers to put in place structures that best allow millennials and young workers to succeed amidst a restructuring and renewing economy.

According to Mr Choo, employers play a key role in helping young workers become future-ready. Also touching on the issue of raising families, Mr Choo said that millennials not only want to succeed in their careers, but also in their family life.

Mr Choo proposed several recommendations to the House:

▶ **Create a stronger nexus between schools and the workplace**

- ▶ Ensure initiatives such as the Education Ministry's Education and Career Guidance Counsellors, ecareer.sg portal and the Individual Learning Portfolio (ILP) are well-synced to avoid duplication and enhance their awareness and usage.
- ▶ Tap on the inventiveness and dynamism of corporate volunteers to better prepare students for the evolving workplace.
- ▶ Government agencies should work closely with unions and U Associates to give young workers access to networks and resources.
- ▶ Beyond the Earn and Learn Programmes, incentivise companies to provide more work experience, apprenticeship and internship opportunities.

▶ **Employers should scan the business environment**

- ▶ Manpower Ministry should consider further measures to help companies – especially Small Medium Enterprises (SME) – that find it difficult to implement skills and career ladders.
- ▶ Employers should adopt outcome-based mindsets and allow for flexible work arrangements.

▶ **Help young workers succeed in family life**

- ▶ Afford mothers a legislated right to request for eight weeks of Flexible Work Arrangements on top of their 16-week maternity leave.
- ▶ The National Population and Talent Division to consider further moves to improve the paternity leave take-up rate.

“There are many facets to helping our millennials and young workers to be future-ready – more than what my speech can do justice to the topic. Regardless of the different facets or levers, the crux is perhaps to put young Singaporeans at the centre of this common future that we will want to build and empower them to succeed.”

Labour Member of Parliament and NTUC Director (Progressive Wage Model), Industrial Relations Department Desmond Choo



Strengthening Tripartism

25 January 2016 - Labour Member of Parliament and NTUC Director (Field), Industrial Relations Department Melvin Yong touched on the importance of tripartism and suggested several ways for the Government, employers and unions to continue building on it.

He said that for tripartism to be successful, there must be mutual trust and a 'give and take' understanding between all parties.

Each party must also be strong and representative of its constituents.

To achieve this, Mr Yong made this key suggestion:

▶ **Build on sectoral tripartism**

- ▶ A one-size-fits-all approach at the national level may no longer fully address the issues faced by the respective industries.
- ▶ Sectoral tripartism can also play an important role to help workers enhance their employability through continuous learning.
- ▶ Employers can leverage on sectoral collaborations to create higher value-added and better paying jobs.

“Efforts to enhance the tripartite relationship has to be deliberate, and our national tripartism must cascade to the sectoral level... I would urge for tripartism to be included in our national education so that every Singaporean child would know, appreciate and continue to nurture this key competitive advantage that our tiny red dot has.”

Labour Member of Parliament and NTUC Director (Field), Industrial Relations Department Melvin Yong



An Eye on Freelancers

26 January 2016 – Labour Member of Parliament and NTUC Assistant Secretary-General Ang Hin Kee highlighted the emergence of freelancers amidst a dynamic, fast-changing economy and evolving job front.

Mr Ang shared with the house how freelancers are fast becoming a distinct worker segment. A conservative estimate of freelancers in the workforce is 200,000, with numbers expected to increase, hence he called for them to be recognised and supported.

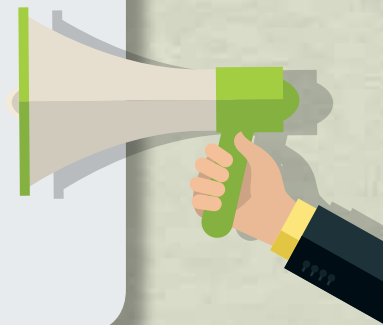
“Freelancers are working people too... They are responding to the new competition and adopting approaches that we may deem unconventional. Some regard their decisions as bold. Perhaps it is we who need the courage to adapt our mindset, policies and offer them stronger support.”

Labour Member of Parliament and NTUC Assistant Secretary-General Ang Hin Kee



Mr Ang elaborated on these three areas:

- ▶ **Change society's mindset**
 - › The employment landscape has changed, and society needs to move away from the past notion of what defines a good job, and a stable income.
 - › Freelance work ought to be viewed as a respectable vocation that is part of the new employment landscape.
- ▶ **New talent source for service buyers**
 - › Freelancers are a source of ready talent which companies looking for new ways to do business and reduce costs can tap on.
 - › Buyers should accord freelancers the same respect and treatment as they would a business partner.
 - › Priority must be to learn how to tap on the different capabilities out there, and treat freelancers fairly to achieve a win-win situation.
- ▶ **Government to tailor policies**
 - › While there are good schemes to help working Singaporeans, some of them may need to be reviewed to consider the needs of freelancers. It is timely to tailor policies to be more inclusive and benefit all worker groups.



Helping Low-Wage Workers

26 January 2016 - Noting that the President's call to develop a caring nation and renew our economy resonates strongly with the Labour Movement, Labour Member of Parliament and NTUC Assistant Secretary-General Zainal Sapari highlighted the numerous initiatives and programmes that the Labour Movement introduced over the years to transform thousands of workers' lives.

However, he added: "Singapore has changed remarkably over the past 50 years and the Labour Movement is presented with new challenges as we continue to grow. The business environment is evolving rapidly.

"Technological advancement, globalisation of jobs, shorter product cycles and future manufacturing demand us to think out of the box to ensure the Singaporean workforce can adapt to these changes and our economy remains competitive."

Mr Zainal proposed some recommendations to help low-wage workers:

- ▶ **Make NWC guidelines mandatory in the lower percentile**
 - › The dollar quantum wage increments in the National Wages Council's recommendations should be made mandatory for employees in the 20th and 30th percentile, in terms of basic salary.
 - › Alternatively, the Government could explore making this mandatory in the cleaning, security and landscape industries by factoring these as part of the licensing conditions.
- ▶ **Government to take the lead to help low-wage workers**
 - › The Government can play a greater role in encouraging their service providers with many low-wage workers to give Annual Increments and Annual Wage Supplement.
 - › Government procurement officers can be more worker-centric by being more proactive to look into the welfare accorded to the outsourced workers by their potential service providers.
- ▶ **Widen reach of Progressive Wage Model**
 - › The Progressive Wage Model (PWM) should be introduced to other sectors apart from cleaning, security and landscape to better the livelihoods of more low-wage workers.
 - › All Government-linked companies should lead by insisting all major projects and tendering should incorporate PWM for the workers.
- ▶ **Use more of public-private partnership**
 - › Venture further into employing a Public Private Partnership model as another tool to address widening income gaps, with greater emphasis on the human resource practices of the partners from the private sectors.

“Our workers' profiles have changed as well. Workers are now better educated and have greater aspirations. We also see an increasingly older workforce. They are choosing alternate career paths such as freelance and contract jobs. This re-emphasises the importance of the Labour Movement in reinventing itself, not only to remain relevant and continue to be the strongest voice of workers, but also to be part of Singapore's effort to develop a caring nation.”

Labour Member of Parliament and NTUC Assistant Secretary-General Zainal Sapari



Future of PMEs

28 January 2016 – Labour Member of Parliament and NTUC Assistant Secretary-General Patrick Tay put forward several proposals on how more can be done for Professionals, Managers and Executives (PMEs), a group of workers who will form the majority of the workforce within the next two decades.

Mr Tay, who is also NTUC Alignment Director for PMEs, recognised the likelihood of higher unemployment and PME redundancies, and lower employment creation within the next few years.

In his Parliament speech, Mr Tay highlighted the strengthening of the 3Cs – a Singaporean Core, the Connection of PMEs to jobs, and the Careers of PMEs – as the way forward.

Mr Tay urged several things to help PMEs:

▶ **Strengthen the Singaporean Core**

- ▶ Impose a foreign PME dependency ratio – similar to the one for work permits and S passes – for sectors that are weak in the Singaporean Core, or show weak commitment to implementing it.
- ▶ Impose stricter Employment Pass application conditions and requirements for these companies with a weak Singaporean Core.
- ▶ Move towards a Singapore PME-led and foreigner PME-lean economy for locals to fully exploit the labour market and realise their potential.

▶ **Better connect PMEs to jobs**

- ▶ Use jobs portals like the National Jobs Bank to give insights of in-demand jobs and identify the gaps in supply. This will help to solve the mismatch of skills and jobs, and marry aspiration, passion and skills with quality jobs.
- ▶ Change the mindset and expectations of employers of hiring mature PMEs through the Career Support Programme (CSP), which gives employers wage subsidies for PMEs aged 40 and above.
- ▶ Expand the CSP to all PMEs. The wage subsidies will better ensure PMEs will have jobs in the longer term.

▶ **Strengthen the careers of PMEs**

- ▶ Arm PMEs with the right skills, put them in the right jobs with the right expectations so they can embark on the right career.
- ▶ Promote skills-oriented learning from primary school to adult learning. Upskilling, deep-skilling, re-skilling and second-skilling will keep PMEs future-ready and future-proof.
- ▶ Employer support and the individual's own initiative will be vital in inculcating a culture of lifelong learning.

“As we move into an increasingly unstable, unpredictable and uncertain economic landscape, our workers need to recalibrate themselves and reset their mental models. Employers and businesses need not just re-adjust but to re-innovate and restructure. The Government needs to rethink and recreate, and we as the people need to not just triple our efforts but also re-tool ourselves to be ready, relevant and resilient.”

Labour Member of Parliament and NTUC Assistant Secretary-General Patrick Tay



Value in Mature Workers

29 January 2016 – Seasoned Member of Parliament and NTUC Deputy Secretary-General Heng Chee How raised in Parliament the issue of Singapore's maturing population and the local workforce. He urged the Government to put in place a mindset change and more policies to address the issue of the ageing workforce.

He also urged employers and industries to see the value in older workers and tap on their vast experience.

“The economy's chances of successful renewal and achieving a sustainable Singaporean Core rest squarely on how the Government and society rally and mobilise the entire population and workforce to lifelong learning, skills upgrading and adaptability. This is not only about programmes and funding.”

Labour Member of Parliament and NTUC Deputy Secretary-General Heng Chee How



Mr Heng surfaced several topics and recommendations in Parliament:

▶ **Tap on technology**

- ▶ Tap on ever-improving assistive technology, and world class age management and job design practices to enable productive employment regardless of age.

▶ **Look to the ageing population to address manpower needs**

- ▶ Companies and industries should tap intelligently on older workers who have valuable assets, instead of losing them through retirement or short-sighted retrenchment. If not, it will cause a loss in important institutional memory, knowledge and expertise.
- ▶ Human Resource policies, and systems and training opportunities must also adapt to evolving realities. It will be smart decision-making for business continuity and competitiveness to invest in older workers' training and development.

▶ **Working beyond 67**

- ▶ Workers should be given safeguards should they want to continue working beyond 67, which will be in the best interest of both the worker and the company.

▶ **Retirement adequacy**

- ▶ CPF contribution rate ceilings, differences and interest rates should be periodically reviewed to ensure they keep up and align with changes in nominal income, and labour and money market conditions.
- ▶ There should be a deeper study on the apportionment of CPF savings between the various uses, to ensure that the original and primary purpose of the CPF scheme to help strengthen retirement adequacy is sufficiently assured.
- ▶ Examine the experience of lubricating the monetisation of property assets in retirement.



2015 Labour Market Trends



Minister Lim sharing the details of the *Labour Market Advance Release 2015* with the media.

More efforts need to be directed towards creating a manpower-lean and productive workforce, says the Manpower Minister.

By **Ramesh Subbaraman**

Last year, Singapore saw its lowest total employment growth in 12 years since 2003.

Giving details of the *Labour Market Advance Release 2015*, the Singapore Ministry of Manpower said for the whole of 2015, total employment was estimated to have gone up by 31,800 or 0.9 per cent.

This would make it the lowest year-on-year growth since 2003, taking place amidst sluggish global economic conditions, a slower growth of the Singapore economy, and tightened supply of foreign manpower.

Giving his take on the current labour market situation, Manpower Minister Lim Swee Say said he expects the workforce to grow between one to two per cent in the next five years from 2015 to 2020.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE REPORT

Here is a quick look at some of the key findings in the Report made public on 28 January 2016.

- ▶ Local employment - up marginally by an estimated 100 (or 0.0%) in 2015. The Ministry of Manpower (MOM) described the growth as “flat”, following exceptional increases in 2013 and 2014. In 2014 alone, local employment grew by 96,000. Between 2016 and 2020, MOM estimates

local employment growth to be about one per cent.

- ▶ Foreign employment (excluding foreign domestic workers) continued to grow at a moderate pace at 22,600, or 2% in 2015. This was slightly lower than 2014.
- ▶ Unemployment remained low with preliminary estimates showing that the overall seasonally adjusted unemployment rate dipped slightly from 2% in September 2015 to 1.9% in December 2015.
- ▶ Median income grew strongly for citizens in 2015. The nominal median monthly income from work of full-time employed citizens rose by 6.5% over the year to \$3,798 in June 2015.
- ▶ There was a sustained rise in income at the median and 20th percentile over the last five years. The median income of full-time employed citizens rose by 32% (5.6% p.a.) in nominal terms from 2010 to 2015, or 16% (3.0% p.a.) after adjusting for inflation.
- ▶ Amid on-going initiatives to boost income of low-wage workers, income at the 20th percentile of full-time employed citizens rose by 31% (5.5% p.a.) in nominal terms, or 16% (2.9% p.a.) in real terms.
- ▶ For the whole of 2015, redundancies rose to 14,400, going up steadily since 2010. The increase in layoffs stemmed from manufacturing and services.

GOOD JOBS, FULFILLING CAREERS

MOM said the moderated employment growth in 2015 reflected the weaker global economic conditions and continued efforts to restructure towards a more productive and manpower-lean economy.

Minister Lim emphasised that as Singapore continues with its economic transition, his Ministry will step up efforts with the tripartite

“While unemployment rate remains low, we should continue to speed up the pace of retraining and upgrading to ensure Singaporean workers can take on new and quality jobs that come along. We will continue to monitor the job growth and employment growth, especially in manufacturing sector, and whether the jobs are coming to Singaporeans. We should ensure that our workforce is best optimised in landing with higher value-add jobs in the future economy.”

NTUC Assistant Secretary-General Cham Hui Fong

partners to strengthen the Singaporean Core in the workforce.

The aim is to help Singaporeans take on good jobs, build fulfilling careers and enjoy sustained increases in real incomes.

“If you look at the employment rate, today it is about 80.5 per cent which is quite high. If we increase the labour force participation rate through flexible work arrangements, job redesign and extending the re-employment age progressively, the employment rate can go up incrementally,” he added.



Building the Future

Want a future in the built environment sector? The newly launched manpower plan for the sector looks set to pave the way.

By **Shukry Rashid**

The Building and Construction Authority announced on 22 January 2016 its Sectoral Manpower Plan (SMP) to build up a strong core of local talent and meet the future manpower needs of the built environment sector*.

Outlining three key strategies, the SMP will focus on attracting and retaining local talents, creating high quality job development pathways, and deepening the skills of workers in the built environment sector.

NTUC Assistant Secretary-General (ASG) and Building Construction And Timber Industries Employees' Union (BATU) Executive Secretary Zainal Sapari welcomed the move and said that it is timely as it looks to develop a Singaporean core in this sector.

"This sector has a lot of potential in attracting and retaining local talent because it can provide good career prospects. Moreover, there is a lot of scope for this SMP to identify relevant and future skills required to meet the evolving needs of the construction sector given the challenges posed by rapid urbanisation and scarcity of land," he added.

FUTURE-READY SKILLS

Initiatives under the SMP include scholarship and sponsorship programmes, structured internships, SkillsFuture Study Awards and the Earn and Learn Programme for Diploma and ITE graduates.

These SMP initiatives will look to equip about 3,000 students and working professionals with future-ready skills in the next three years to build up capabilities in growth areas such as green building developments and productive technologies.

**Built environment refers to the human-made surroundings that provide the setting for human activity, such as buildings and parks to neighbourhoods and cities.*

GOOD TO KNOW



For more information on BCA's scholarship and sponsorship programmes, visit www.buildingcareers.sg.

Meeting Manpower Needs

Here's some good news for ICT employers looking to hire more workers – there's a new programme in town to bring more people into the sector.

By **Shukry Rashid**

Next U, the executive education subsidiary of NTUC LearningHub, has partnered with the Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA) to offer a place-and-train Professional Conversion Programme (PCP) for the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) sector.

The programme will target two specific job roles – Network Administrators and Software Developers/Applications Programmers.

This was announced by NTUC LearningHub during a 'Breakfast Talk with IT Sector' on 20 January 2016 where NTUC Assistant Secretary-General (ASG) Patrick Tay was guest of honour. The talk was attended by employers from the ICT sector.

ASG Tay said that even though the projected economy within the next few years is gloomy, employment in ICT sector remains resilient as many of the future jobs will directly or indirectly involve, or be integrated, with IT.

He added that there is also an emphasis on building a Smart Nation – Singapore's national vision of using technology to improve lives and businesses. Hence, manpower demand in the ICT sector remains the highest amongst the other sectors.

SINGAPOREAN CORE

ASG Tay said that the ICT sector is also one of the sectors where tripartite partners want to develop the Singaporean core.

"There are currently many jobs vacancies which Singaporeans can fill and some 4,500 of them are in the ICT sector according to the National Jobs Bank. Therefore, the Labour Movement wants to push very hard with this and other programmes to ensure those jobs are filled with the right people with the right pay, and with the right skills," he added.

One of the employers who has jumped on board the programme is FindSGJobs.com Founder Eric Poh who plans to expand his company.

"I'm glad for such an initiative. Having worked 18 years in the IT industry, it is hard to get IT staff. Such programmes allow us to train workers and put them into the job, and get government support in terms of funding," he said.

He elaborated that 70 per cent of workers in the industry are not locals and added "it's a good way to bring the locals in."



GOOD TO KNOW



Both employers and job-seekers who wish to find out more on the ICT PCP can visit: www.ntuclearninghub.com/pages/infocomm-technology-ict-professional-conversion-programme-pcp.

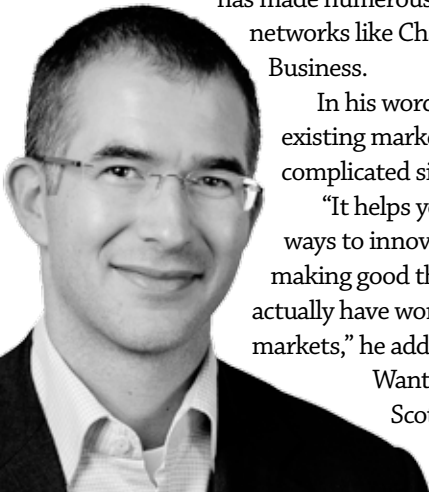
One to One with Scott Anthony

The upcoming U Associate Convention will see well-known speakers take to the stage. This week, we chat with author and managing partner of Innosight Scott Anthony. Next week: technopreneur Peter Ho.

By **Ryan Chan**

With the theme of this year's U Associate Convention centred around 'Disruptive Innovation', there are few as qualified to speak on how to constantly have fresh ideas and solutions as Scott Anthony.

In his 10 years with Innosight, he has been an advisor to senior leaders in major companies like Procter & Gamble, Johnson & Johnson and LG and has made numerous appearances on international media networks like Channel News Asia, CNBC and FOX Business.



In his words, disruptive innovations "transform existing markets or create new ones by making the complicated simple".

"It helps you to focus on sometimes non-obvious ways to innovate. We often think innovation is about making good things better, but disruptions often actually have worse pure performance, yet create huge markets," he added.

Want to apply disruptive innovation? Here are Scott Anthony's three key tips:

- ▶ Seek the intersections where different mindsets and

approaches collide because that's where good ideas always come from.

- ▶ Make a regular habit of spending time with current and prospective customers not to ask them what they want but to develop empathetic understanding of what they need, even if they can't articulate it.
- ▶ Recognise that ideas are only a starting point – the best ideas come out of a process of trial-and-error experimentation. So, don't get obsessed about developing a perfect idea – run an experiment and see what happens.

U Associate Convention 2016

Catch Scott Anthony at this year's Convention which hopes to push boundaries by disrupting current norms and innovate with new solutions.

What: U Associate Convention 2016

When: 18 February 2016, 12pm to 5pm

Where: NTUC Auditorium, Level 7, NTUC Centre, One Marina Boulevard

i To RSVP, email uassociate@ntuc.org.sg. For more information, visit www.ntuc.org.sg/uassociate.

Helping Students Transit

NTUC's e2i partners Republic Polytechnic to enhance career guidance.

By **Fawwaz Baktee**

NTUC's e2i (Employment and Employability Institute) and Republic Polytechnic (RP) signed on 22 January 2016 a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to strengthen education and career guidance (ECG) efforts and deepen industry knowledge for both students and staff of the tertiary institution. The signing took place at the RP Career Fair 2016, which was jointly organised by e2i and RP.

Besides complementing RP's ongoing ECG initiatives, the collaboration seeks to uplift students' employability through targeted programmes and talks, and sharpen RP staffs' capabilities in career guidance.

Under the MOU, e2i will work with each of RP's seven schools to organise sectoral-level career programmes that will allow students to



Signing of the MOU (from left): Republic Polytechnic Deputy Principal (Industry Services) Seto Lok Yin and Senior Director (Student Services and Planning) Fong Yew Chan with e2i Assistant Director (Professional Search and Career Guidance) Kristin Loh and Deputy CEO (Professional Services) Gary Goh.



discover their career interests and expose them to career opportunities.

The two will also continue to develop platforms like the career fair for students' gainful employment.

RP's ECG Counsellors, staff and e2i Employability coaches will also share best practices, experience in career advisory and their industry knowledge to strengthen their ECG capabilities as part of the agreement.

e2i Deputy CEO (Professional Services) Gary Goh said: "We have been working close to the ground with partners to identify the relevant skills that our workers should be equipped with to be future-ready. We look forward to a fruitful partnership with RP, the first at tertiary level, to provide new platforms for students to help them understand their career options in the various industries and further develop their employability."



Yankee Candle retail assistant Siti Musyawwarah says that the new system paired with the company's belief in empowering its employees has given her motivation to perform better at work.

As much as possible, frontline employees should be empowered with autonomy and transparent information to run the business well – this is the business philosophy Yankee Candle Managing Director Logan Wong adheres to. The retail chain specialises in scented candles and related accessories.

“Employees are like the business owners as well. I believe the success of this company depends on them. And to do this, they need relevant information to make on-the-ground decisions and boost sales,” he explained.

Unlike many other employers, Mr Wong provides his front line employees with information such as rental and labour costs.

“Rental and labour are probably the two biggest expenses of retail stores. If employees are kept in the dark about these things, there is no way they can appreciate what it takes to make a business succeed.



Forward-looking company taps on Inclusive Growth Programme to empower its employees.

By **Fawwaz Baktee**

“We measure the total labour cost on a monthly basis and then we provide it to the managers of the store. Not only do we give them information on the store they are working at, but also information of other outlets,” said Mr Wong.

By doing so, Mr Wong said he creates a healthy competition among the 12 Yankee Candle outlets across Singapore.

CHALLENGES FACED

Although ideal, this philosophy was not always easy to implement. After the company opened its fifth store in Singapore, it became clear to Mr Wong that work processes had to be improved in order for the stores to be managed more efficiently and productively.

“I was relying a lot on my own observations to manage the stores. I came to realise that more structures had to be put in place so I have data to support these observations. In many instances, what we feel is true may not be so when we look at the facts. These facts and figures are crucial to me to make informed decisions and to the employees whom I've empowered,” he said.

Without an integrated system, the company faced other challenges such as not being able to track stocks and sales in real time.

IMPROVING PROCESSES

In May 2014, Yankee Candle tapped on the Inclusive Growth Programme (IGP) provided by NTUC's e2i (Employment and Employability Institute) to address the issues.

The company acquired an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system that integrates a point of sale system, the company's inventory, human resource information, customer relationship management and accounts.

“The system really helps us with managing the store better,” said Yankee Candle retail assistant Siti Musyawwarah (pictured above), 23, who works at the JEM outlet.

“We often benchmark our sales to the outlet in Vivo City. With the system, I'm able to compare the two stores almost immediately to see how well mine is doing. And from the information, I will think about what I can do to help boost sales,” she added.

Ms Siti is one of the dozens of Yankee Candle employees who are earning a higher salary than the retail industry average through sharing of gains.

DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD?

Mr Wong conceded that giving his employees access to such information is a risk, but it is one he is willing to take.

“There will always be pros and cons to a process. I know that someone who quits the company can take the business plans to a competitor. Yes, we have those concerns but the truth is you can't give employees autonomy without empowering them with information and training. To me, the benefits definitely outweigh the drawbacks,” he said.

Staying Relevant

The role of union leaders continues to be critical as the Labour Movement (LM) evolves to meet the needs of the future, says SG Chan.

Story and Photo: **Jonathan Tan**

A closed door SGFuture Dialogue session was held between the top three union leaders from 34 unions with NTUC Secretary-General (SG) Chan Chun Sing on 22 January 2016 at Gardens by the Bay.

During the session, SG Chan highlighted that in the same way Singapore is preparing itself to adapt and evolve for the future, the Labour Movement too, must do likewise.

“If we understand what can threaten our mission and purpose, then we can take active steps to make sure that such scenarios won’t happen. Then we can continue to grow our LM from strength to strength,” said SG Chan.

Prompting the 130 union leaders in attendance to think a little deeper about the future of the Labour Movement here in



NTUC Secretary-General Chan Chun Sing addressing union leaders and getting them to think about future challenges.

Singapore, SG Chan also encouraged them to consider the possible factors which could threaten its existence in the next 35 years.

UNION LEADERS ARE KEY

SG Chan emphasised how union leaders are imperative to the stability of the organisation given their connections to the workers on the ground. Union leaders, therefore, have to build up these links and must always continue to strengthen them.

He added that even in an environment of

good relations between companies and workers, the union and its leaders can complement employers. By knowing the ground, union leaders can explain certain policies more effectively thereby complementing the work of the Human Resource department.

He also stressed the need for NTUC to continue to grow. There are many new jobs in new industries, how is NTUC going to adapt to represent them? He emphasised how outreach efforts have to be considered to reach out to all workers, even those in new industries.

Appreciating Past Contributors

SISEU membership numbers have been on a steady climb over the years, a result of the hard work by those who have stepped down.

By **Marcus Lin**



Well-wishers penning their hopes for SISEU's future.

As the name of the event suggests, the Singapore Industrial & Services Employees' Union (SISEU)'s Nostalgic Nite held on 22 January 2016 was an evening of good old times that brought together ex-SISEU Branch Officials, Executive Committee members, Council of Advisors, Trustees, union members, staff and supporters.

Without these people's support, SISEU President Lim Heng Khee said the union's ability to enhance engagement platforms and introduce new initiatives would not have been possible. He thanked them for their contributions that

allowed SISEU to grow from 3,600 members when it was formed 35 years ago in 1981 to the current membership of nearly 80,000.

Special Guest Senior Minister of State and former SISEU Executive Secretary Josephine Teo said SISEU brings back fond memories as it was her first union posting when she joined the Labour Movement in 2006.

GROWING OVER THE YEARS

Complementing the healthy leadership renewal framework in SISEU, she added: “In the last five years, SISEU has grown by leaps and bounds.

“You are the ones who have assembled great wealth of knowledge and this knowledge should be passed on from generation to generation so that SISEU can continue to build on the solid foundation which our predecessors have established.”

Senior Minister of State and former SISEU Executive Secretary Josephine Teo, referring to past contributors of SISEU

When I left SISEU in 2011, total membership was only around 58,000. Today, I am happy to note that SISEU has grown by 20,000 members in the last few years, bringing total membership to more than 78,000.”

SISEU General Secretary Lim Kuang Beng said the event serves to recognise the contributions of all those who brought SISEU to where it is today, and that they must not be forgotten even though they are retired. He added that although union membership is not a numbers game, SISEU's target now is to hit the 100,000 membership mark.



A Fresh Start

After leaving the corporate world, one man finds a calling in the security industry.

By **Fawwaz Baktee**

When the sun sets, Security Officer Jason Ng goes out to work. For six nights a week, he guards Astrid Meadows Condominium situated at Coronation Road West.

Unlike many of his colleagues, Mr Ng holds a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration from the National University of Singapore. He was also an assistant manager in an insurance firm for 15 years before becoming a security officer about a year ago.

"The company I was working for was bought over by another insurance firm. A lot of restructuring was going on, and I took that as an opportunity to have a break from my 9 to 5 routine. But instead of taking a few months, I took quite a while to look for a new job. Initially,

I wanted to just give security work a try. It's certainly something new compared to what I was used to doing previously," said the 45-year-old.

Mr Ng only works at night in order to care for his elderly parents in the daytime.

"Both my parents have health issues and I often need to bring them to the hospital for check-ups and keep an eye on them. This was also one of the reasons why I didn't go back to the corporate world. I know it would be harder to do this if I had a day-time desk job," he explained.

VIEWS ON TECHNOLOGY

The estate he guards has only one entry and exit point, which means only three security officers need to be on duty at any one time. Additionally,

the entry and exit point uses an automated barricade that can be controlled at the press of a button.

However, Mr Ng feels more technology can be used to improve his work.

"There are no CCTVs here since this is an older condominium so our officers need to spend an hour to patrol the area on foot to clock all 16 checkpoints. But if we implement the use of CCTV, I believe we can be more productive and efficient in guarding the estate," said Mr Ng.

IMPROVING THROUGH TRAINING

Although he is now receiving a lower salary than his job as an assistant manager, Mr Ng feels that the Progressive Wage Model (PWM) is a good initiative to improve the lives of security officers and the industry. His employer, Spear Security Force, pays all its 180 security officers the recommended base salary under the model.

Mr Ng has completed the required training modules required to be promoted to become a senior security officer.

With more training, Mr Ng hopes to climb the PWM career ladder to one day become a chief security officer.

"The industry needs professionals to improve its image. And to produce these professionals, agencies must invest in the training of their officers," he said.



NTUC THIS WEEK

MANAGING EDITOR

SHONA TAN-JAMES shonatan@ntuc.org.sg

ASSISTANT MANAGING EDITOR

GOY KAE LIP kaellip@ntuc.org.sg

EDITOR

NICOLETTE YEO nicolette_yeo@ntuc.org.sg

SUB EDITOR

GURMEET SINGH gurmeet_singh@ntuc.org.sg

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

MARCUS LIN marcus_lin@ntuc.org.sg

RAMESH SUBBARAMAN rameshr@ntuc.org.sg

EDITORIAL CONSULTANT

LIM LI YIN liyin@ntuc.org.sg

SENIOR JOURNALIST/NEW MEDIA MANAGER

JONATHAN TAN jonathan_tan@ntuc.org.sg

JOURNALISTS

SHUKRY RASHID shukryr@ntuc.org.sg

FAWWAZ BAKTEE fawwazf@ntuc.org.sg

RYAN CHAN ryan_chan@ntuc.org.sg

CREATIVE DIRECTOR

DANIEL GOH daniel_goh@ntuc.org.sg

SENIOR DESIGNER

MOHAMED NASUHAR SOEYOETI nasuhar@ntuc.org.sg

DESIGNERS

TAY EE WEE eewee.tay@ntuc.org.sg

IVAN TIMOTHY PRASETYA ivan_prasetya@ntuc.org.sg

SUBSCRIPTION

JENNY LIAU jennyliu@majoritymedia.com.sg

ADVERTISING BOOKINGS/QUERIES

PHONE 6622 7009

EMAIL sales@majoritymedia.com.sg

PUBLISHER

MAJORITY MEDIA PTE LTD

ADDRESS 73 Bras Basah Road, NTUC Trade Union House

#06-01 Singapore 189556

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EMAIL LMNewsroom@ntuc.org.sg

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Doubles	Doubles
Open (Men's & Ladies')	Open (Men's & Ladies')
Veteran (Men's & Ladies')	Men's Veteran
Men's U Live	

*Veteran categories apply to participants age 45 & above.
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Snapshots

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

By **NTUC This Week Team**

Stepping up to Give Back

It may only be the start of 2016, but more youths are already stepping forward to give back to the community.

nEbO's W.I.S.H. (Ways In Sharing Happiness) programme kicked off the year with a series of events to raise awareness of the health and wellness of the less fortunate. The programme saw over 500 volunteers participating, a 25 per cent increase from 2015.

This year's highlight, Paint a New Hope on 23 January 2016 saw youth volunteers visit needy households to assist in basic cleaning and spruce the homes up with a fresh coat of paint.

NTUC Alignment Director of nEbO Lim Eng Lee said: "I am really heartened and inspired by the commitment and dedication of our youth leaders. They gave up their time to contribute positively back to society and have in turn, through their dedication, inspired many of their friends and peers to do the same."



Youth volunteers at a tea calligraphy event, one of many events as part of W.I.S.H. 2016.

Savings for Pioneers

Thanks to the 15-month-long Pioneers OK! programme, an initiative by NTUC Social Enterprises' that ran from October 2014 all the way to December 2015, pioneers across Singapore got to enjoy a wide range of treats.

These included: A special 3 per cent discount on Mondays at NTUC FairPrice supermarkets, Foodfare eateries and Unity pharmacies; priority seating at Foodfare outlets; and courses for pioneers at NTUC LearningHub. A Pioneers Ok! roving truck was even commissioned to bring special healthy lifestyle activities to more than 8,000 pioneers in 26 different heartland locations.

With the Pioneer Monday discounts, NTUC Social Enterprises' have helped pioneers save more than \$4.1 million. This is in addition to the \$23.4 million in savings Singaporeans also received as part of the 'Big Value Bag: Made for Singapore' campaign that ran from July to December 2015 to help with the cost of living.

The exclusive Pioneer Monday discounts will carry on in 2016 at all FairPrice, Foodfare and Unity outlets.

MEMBERS' CORNER



Amazonia

1-FOR-1 Child Entry

Check out Singapore's newest, fully-integrated family fun centre!

Promotion valid from 1 - 29 Feb 2016. Applicable on public holidays before 12.30pm or after 5.30pm. Adult fees at \$1 per adult for first two adults, subsequent adult at \$5 each. Parents pay for one child and the second child enters free (the paying child is the one above 3-years-old). For more information, log on to www.amazoniafun.com/.

Gong Cha

5% OFF Total Bill

Chill out with these cool beverages!

Promotion valid till 31 Dec 2016 at all outlets except NUS Gong Cha. Present NTUC Card upon payment to enjoy the privileges. Valid for a-la-carte, standard full-priced menu items only.

Not valid for promotional items and/or set purchases and other discount programmes. Not valid for delivery orders. For more information, log on to <http://www.gongcha.com.sg/>.



提出工友关注课题

六名工运议员在国会探讨如何解决工友所关注的问题。

紧接陈庆炎总统于2016年1月15日在国会开幕式上谈到政府未来5年的首要施政事项，以及将推行的各种政策与计划，各政府部门接着分别在国会公布他们打算在本届实施的计划。

从1月25至29日，议员们开始回应总统的谈话。在工运方面，六名工运议员就各工友群体所面临的问题与他们的未来发展发表了看法。

身为新任议员，杨益财和朱倍庆在第一天便就劳资政协作和年轻工友的课题先后阐述了他们的政见。

过后，洪鼎基谈及自由职业者的问题；再纳则谈及低薪工友面对的课题；而郑德源提出了他对于专经执人员的看法；王志豪则发表了对年长工友的关注。

其他议员也起立发言，详情请继续阅读…

杨益财

工运议员兼总工业关系署（外勤）署长

- 将劳资政协作推展至各个行业层
- 行业领域劳资政协作须按各领域须求拟定相应的策略。



“必须重视劳资政三方关系的强化，全国劳资政协作也必须分层次在各行业执行…我想呼吁政府将劳资政协作纳入全国教育体系，让每一位新加坡孩童都对其有所认识，进而传承造就我国竞争优势的协作方式。”

朱倍庆

工运议员兼工业关系署署长（渐进式薪金制）

- 通过学府和职场之间的配合，提供就业指导，为学子做好准备。
- 在法定产假之余，允许为人母者享有8周的灵活工作安排。

“我们可以从多方面协助千禧一代和年轻工友做好应对未来的准备，其方法和方式肯定比我所提到的更多。但是，无论从哪一方面着手或使用什么方法，最关键的或许是将年轻工友置身在我们想要建设的未来环境中，并赋予他们应有的技能，从而走向成功之道。”



再诺

工运议员兼总助理秘书长

- 强制实施全国工资理事会关于薪金位阶处于第二十和第三十百分比的低薪工友的加薪建议
- 在其他行业实施渐进式薪金制，以便造福更多低薪工友。



“我们工友的教育程度逐日提高，期望也相对调高。我们也发现年长工友越来越多，他们大多希望从事自由职业及合约工作。这股趋势再次说明工运重塑自身的重要性。我们要跟进发展，继续当工友一股强而有力的声音，成为参与建立‘关怀国家’的一份子。”

洪鼎基

工运议员兼总助理秘书长

- 就业市场的景观已经发生变化，社会人士和雇主有必要改变思维，重新定义什么是好工作和稳定的收入。
- 政府应该审视现行的政策，多考虑自由职业者的需求。

“自由职业者也是工作人士…他们是顺应新的竞争形势而崛起的工作群体。对于我们来说，他们的谋生方式或许违逆传统，也有些人认为他们的决定是大胆的。或许，我们该做的是鼓起勇气，调整心态和修订政策，给予他们支持与鼓励。”



王志豪

工运议员兼总副秘书长

- 重新审视工作年龄涵义，让愿意工作的年长者继续作出贡献，以解决人手短缺的难题。
- 定期审视公积金政策，确保工友储蓄足够的退休金。



“新加坡经济转型成功和实现新加坡人核心的目标仰赖于政府是否能动员全国人民及劳动队伍朝向终身学习、技能提升和增强适应力。这不仅仅是关乎计划和资金的问题，而是是否具有清晰的头脑，拼搏精神，判断力和毅力的情况，以及最重要的坚定意志，为个人也为集体打拼美好的未来。”

郑德源

工运议员兼总助理秘书长

- 像针对公司实施工作准证和S准证的措施一样，实施专经执人员比例制。
- 通过职业支援计划招聘年长工友的雇主须要改变他们的固有思维。

“经济形势越来越不稳定，越来越难以预测，未来也呈现不确定性。为此，我们须要重新定位及调整心态。雇主和企业不但须重整生意也必须创新。政府则须要重新思考和再次创造。作为人民我们所需要的不只是再接再厉再努力，也须要掌握新技能，跟上发展步伐，具备灵活应变的能力。”



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面对严峻的挑战

李显龙总理和多名议员就总统的施政方针发表意见，他们概述了如何建立强大国家的见解。



建立繁荣昌盛的国家。这是多名议员和工运议员在陈庆炎总统于2016年1月15日在第13届国会开幕式上发表施政方针之后的谈话主题。

李显龙总理于2016年1月27日在国会中表示，新加坡人民有信心可以克服恐怖主义、经济发展或社会凝聚力方面出现的问题。

成功的因素

李总理强调，新加坡要取得成功，必须有良好的政策，以及良好的政治环境。

所有的政策都应回应人民的需要，比如加强社会保障，让房价合理化，人人买得起，以及改善交通、控制外籍工友的人数增长等。

此外，我们所制定的政策必须能让国人实现愿望。这些政策不仅有利于国人也能惠及他们的子女。比如我们全面投资于教育和未来技能辅助便是好例子。

总理说：

“这就是政府长年做的事，也是我领导的这一届政府所要做的事。我们一定会履行承诺。但要让政策付诸实施，政治环境也一定要好，两者缺一不可。”

工运议员的心声

工运议员在国会中反映了很多工友关注的事项。

他们谈论的重点包括关照年轻人，为他们做好应对未来的准备。这不仅是劳资政在全国范围推动的事，也是他们在行业层次内推行的事项。此外，工运议员也谈及代表人数日渐增多的自由职业者，以及重新雇佣年龄、聘请年长工友的问题。

在多名发言的工运议员之中，主管工业关系署及渐进式薪金制的职总署长朱倍庆，以及职总工业关系署（外勤）署长杨益财是在去年大选后首次在国会发言。