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upturn the downturn

e2i Is Right On Track

In his first visit to NTUC's e2i (Employment and Employability Institute), Minister for National Development and Chairman of the Singapore Labour Foundation Mah Bow Tan came away impressed and determined to do more.

Mr Mah was one of two Ministers and six Members of Parliament who toured e2i on 22 July 2009 to see what they can bring back to their constituents. The others were Minister for the Environment and Water Resources and Jalan Besar GRC MP Dr Yaacob Ibrahim; Pasir Ris-Punggol GRC MP Charles Chong; Marine Parade GRC MP and NTUC Fairprice Co-operative Limited Managing Director Seah Kian Peng; Jalan Besar GRC MP Denise Phua; Joo Chiat MP Chan Soo Sen; NTUC Central Committee member and Nominated Member of Parliament Terry Lee; and Bishan-Toa Payoh GRC MP and NTUC Assistant Secretary-General Josephine Teo.

Mr Mah shared his observations: "First of all, I want to commend and congratulate the team here for putting up this facility, and for running and manning it. As Chairman of the SLF, I was involved in the funding of the set-up of e2i.

"At that time, when NTUC Secretary-General Lim Swee Say was discussing it to the SLF Board, the idea was to have a place where workers are able to be matched with jobs and to be prepared for the jobs. Conceptually, that made a lot of sense. But to see it actually working out so well, it is really gratifying and really money well spent.

"It is something that I wholeheartedly support. I am happy to see the work that is being done here and to talk to some of the workers who are here seeking assistance, undergoing training and waiting for interviews. And for those who have already gone through it, to see the letters of appreciation. It's work that needs to be done. It's painstaking work but it's work that has a lot of meaning and it makes a lot of difference to workers. It is a worthwhile project."

Mr Mah also revealed some topics discussed with e2i Chairman Ong Ye Kung and e2i Chief Executive Officer Ang Hin Kee and others: "We of course discussed many other things as well. Related issues like how, going forward, we want to be able to improve the system further. We offered some suggestions on how we can further improve; we made some comments about working together with Community Development Councils and also, of course, working with employers to make the process even more efficient and effective.

"We are on the right track. With this in place, we should be able to mitigate some of the negative effects of the recession and help Singapore and Singapore workers get over this recession."

By
Marcus Lin and Naseema Banu Maideen

A pair of hand-holding trainees show watching Ministers and MPs the finer points of service.

"There is a comprehensive service here which provides a complete package from screening to interviews to job preparations and training. At the end of the day, employers interviewing job seekers who have gone through the various processes at e2i save a lot of time. e2i also provides a good service to job seekers by moderating their expectations and training them in relevant areas. Overall, it is a very commendable effort by e2i. In the past, I was referring my residents to Community Development Councils. e2i is now another avenue that I will refer our jobseekers to, especially those who need further training and also those who are job ready."

Charles Chong, MP for Pasir Ris-Punggol GRC

"I am very impressed by the efforts put in by e2i to reach out and help a lot of Singaporeans. The processes here are very precise and there is a lot of care to ensure that the job matches really work. There are lots of efforts to sieve out job seekers who are job ready from those who are not. One thing I find quite amazing is that, to a large extent, e2i does a lot of work on behalf of the companies, such as screening and interviewing, saving a lot of work on their part. These efforts to help Singaporeans get jobs is very valuable because having the flexibility to serve as a bridge between the companies and the prospective employees reduces the anguish and time taken by our job seekers to find jobs."

Dr Yaacob Ibrahim, Minister for Environment and Water Resources and MP for Jalan Besar GRC

"I have been very impressed by the systematic and structured way by which e2i has done its job assessment, placement and support processes. I especially like the concept of the one-stop centre where all these facilities are stationed at one place and potential employees can access these different stations all at one stop. This is very useful for them. I am also particularly impressed by the shared responsibility between the job seekers and e2i, which is very important to ensure that the workforce is resilient after the economic crisis gets over."

Denise Phua, MP for Jalan Besar GRC

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Living It All Up To U

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Living It All Up To U

By
Yeo Khee Leng
Chief Executive Officer, NTUC Club

When I was at school, my understanding of young and old was simple. All of us who could play football at 2 pm without worrying about sunburn or heat stroke, frolic in flooded longkangs (monsoon drains) without worrying about catching some flu bug – we were the young ones. Everybody else was OLD – they were the ones who kept saying that we were silly and would fall sick running around in the hot sun and jumping into dirty water.

Yup, teachers were old, Grandpa and Grandma were old, so were the uncles and aunts you met every Lunar New Year. Parents were not only old, but had special powers over you that made you never forget which generation was boss. In those days, if you were past mid-40s, you were labelled as middle-aged. I even recall one of my older cousins (he was older by just a few years and I already thought he was old and wise) telling me that he had to make it big in his career by the age of 30 because it would be downhill all the way after that!

In those days, I never thought about growing old. I was born in 1953 and when I turned 17 in 1970, the new millennium was still 30 years away, such that I thought I would never really get there. Maybe by then, someone would have discovered an elixir that would keep everybody young.

Life has since flashed by and I just turned 55 last year. That was the age just about every "old person" I knew in my younger days retired upon reaching this life milestone. But lo and behold, my 55th birthday came and went without a bang. With no new aches and pains, no deceleration in pace of life, I could still walk 18 holes and not pant, and even managed to walk 36 holes of golf at one time (OK, I confess that I did struggle a bit at the end). I didn't even think about giving CPF a call to check when I could withdraw my money.

You know, maybe someone did discover some form of elixir of youth after all. Many of my friends from childhood who I keep in touch with still sound the same when we get together – a bit of childhood naughtiness even creeps out in our conversation as we go back the years. And all my new friends who I got to know from university through National Service and the various organisations I have worked with prior to this current one, we form various alumni groups and get together once in while. They too seem to stand still in time.

OK, some hair have turned white, some hair even turned invisible, and most of us now talk about grown-up kids, instead of our babies. One or two can even boast of a couple of grandchildren. Apart from that, these cohorts of over 50s don't seem to act like they have shifted gears at all. In fact, it seems like they want to go even faster.

In the Labour Movement, some 71,000 members are over 55 years old. And over the next 10 years, some 151,000 more unionists will join the ranks of this golden age group. It is becoming a rapidly growing community within the Labour Movement, one that is deserving of more attention.

Under LM2011, this group was aptly called the Silver Collar to differentiate them from the traditional White Collar and Blue Collar workers and also the Gold Collar workers. Different entities have mounted programmes to serve the Silver Collars. The Silver Collar movement has now been given a makeover and is now called the U Live community with more focused support for a balanced Work! Live! Play! programme. As they say, "Life is for Living".

Gone are the days when 55 meant that you step aside and take a deserved break from work. Even 62 is not considered too old. Many are getting re-employed and making valued contributions at the workplace. The new 55+ is still healthy and knows how to stay healthy. The new 55+ is happily active because he is healthy and participates in activities not only with fellow 55+s, but all ages and can teach the young ones a thing or two.

The new 55+ strives to remain productive in work. Job redesignation at the workplace can easily bring out the best in a worker at any age. Most importantly, the new 55+ can tap on his rich personal experience and find new purpose as a mentor, as a trainer, and as an advisor. Happy and healthy, productive and purposeful… These are the Hallmarks of the U Live Community. I am 55+ and proud to be a member of the U Live Community.

NTUC This Week
Be Connected And Win Contest

Stand to win 5 pairs of Grandstand tickets (worth $20 each) to watch the Singapore Lions match up against the China national football team at the inaugural National Day Challenge 2009 on 12 August 2009. Answers to the 3 questions can be found at www.ntucclub.com/Usports

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Email your answers to *info@usports.com.sg* & stand to win 5 pairs of Grandstand tickets to watch the Singapore Lions match up against the China national football team at the inaugural National Day Challenge 2009 on 12 August 2009.

Answer the following questions correctly and win.

Question 1: Name 2 new sports introduced in U Games 2009/2010.

Answer 1:

Question 2: Where will the Beach Games be held on 4 October 2009?

Answer 2:

Question 3: Which two countries are involved in the inaugural National Day Challenge 2009?

Answer 3:

Name: _____

Address: _____

NRIC: _____ DOB: _____

Union: _____ Occupation: _____

Contact Number: _____ Email: _____

All fields **ARE** Compulsory. All entries must reach us by 3 August 2009.

U Live THE GOOD LIFE

Seriously, Life Starts At 55

U Live Puts Spring Into Mid-Lifers

By
Marcus Lin

In recognition of the rapidly burgeoning numbers of NTUC members who are 55-years-old and above, currently 71,000 with another 151,000 members in the next 10 years, the Labour Movement has introduced a new U Live community to help them Work, Live and Play to the fullest.

Launched with a big party on 22 July 2009 at DXO, U Live preaches active ageing by encouraging them to stay employed, enriched and engaged through its re-employment schemes, cause-centric initiatives, and age-specific interest groups and privileges. The aim is to give them productive, purposeful, happy and healthy lives.

NTUC Club Chief Executive Officer Yeo Khee Leng said: "More importantly, it is also a very strong signal that we want to give to our members. That if you join the union from young, we will take care of you for work-related matters like Collective Agreements, retrenchments, training, etcetera. Even when you grow old, the union will continue to take care of you all the way to a ripe old age. We will still be here for you."

With U Live, the NTUC communities circle catering to different age groups is complete. To drive it on, "we have a group of U Live champions or U Live ambassadors. These are members with us who are 55 and above who have seen the benefits of U Live membership and will help bring more members in," said NTUC Industrial Relations Director Cham Hui Fong.

Meanwhile, she emphasised that the battle on the re-employment front rages on: "We have to change the mindsets of employers, their employees who are actually co-workers, and also the public. Because a lot of the time, the employers are not willing to take on these older workers because they foresee that the public who are the customers may not like to be entertained, to be dealt with by older people.

"Mindset change is not something that you can legislate or change overnight. That is something that we hope can change over time when people start to see the value of older workers. What is important is that we have to continue to profile workers whether in their 40s, 50s or 60s who are still productive and can add value and do a good job. We have to profile more of such good cases so that employers will begin to see. Employers will themselves grow old one day. It will happen to anyone of us."

She said that there are counselling programmes for workers and employers which are also needed for line managers who may also be younger than the workers they are assessing: "At the end of the day, HR may have a good set of policies that says they will re-employ but the ones who actually determine the suitability of the workers are likely to be the line managers. So we need the line managers to go through some inter-generational courses."

Ms Cham added that campaigns to educate the public and change their perceptions are also important and that there has to be continuing engagement with HR and line managers and training for workers. New initiatives will also be introduced by this year to make faster progress in the re-employment rate of workers above 62 both in the unionised and non-unionised sectors. Re-employment legislation in January 2012 is not far away.

You Are As Old As You Feel

Coincidentally, guest-of-honour at the launch NTUC Secretary-General Lim Swee Say himself turned 55 on 13 July 2009 and became a member of U Live. He was very happy to reach the milestone. "Some of us when we turn 55 will start to feel old. But for me, I am feeling young again," he said and looked forward to at least another 30 years of leading a P2 H2 life - productive, purposeful, happy, healthy.

Looking back on his life, he joked: "When I was in secondary school, I played basketball. When I was in JC, I played football. When I started to work, I played tennis. Now, I play golf. You notice, the ball that I play with gets smaller."

SG Lim also told the lively gathering to be encouraged by the fact that 59-year-old Tom Watson beat much younger men, including Tiger Woods, to be runner-up in the recent prestigious British Open golf championship.

Each Happy In Their Own Way

Mdm Kamsiah Mohamad
Age: 57
Employment status: Transit Security Officer, SMRT
Remarks: Active Golden Bowl member. Bowl with friends to maintain social contact & maintain a healthy lifestyle. Believes in enjoying a balanced lifestyle.

Visit www.ulive.sg for details.

Ms Dorothy Chiok
Age: 67
Employment status: Supervisor, Telephone Operations Department, Parkroyal on Beach Road Hotel (worked 37 years with hotel)
Remarks: Food, Drinks and Allied Workers' Union (FDAWU) member. Passionate to serve customers. Keen to continue working - to keep fit & stay connected to outside world. With U Live, she continues not only to work and contribute but also take part in the many activities lined up to lead a happy and meaningful life. She also won the May Day Model Worker Award in 2007.

Mr K R Letchumanan
Age: 67
Employment status: Retired from full time employment. Was a civil servant for 30 years. Presently, a Senior Coach for archery and shooting.
Remarks: Was a coach for archery and shooting for 19 years since the days he was working full time. After he retired at 62, he continues to coach in archery and shooting, as both sports are his passion. He believes in enjoying life, doing things he loves.

Rev Up Your Rah Rah For Team NTUC Bowlers

Team NTUC continues to maintain its lead in the 4th SBF National League 08/09. With just two more "bowling weeks" to go, Team NTUC leads Changi Beach Club by 6 points, and current third-placed Marine Bowl by 28.5 points. There are 18 teams competing. Team NTUC will be in action again on 2 August 2009 at SuperBowl Jurong. This is the first time that Team NTUC-Bowling has gone so far in a national compeition. Go give them your support.

CPF LIFE Bill Is Passed

By
Marcus Lin

Parliament passed the Central Provident Fund (Amendment) Bill on 20 July 2009 that included the establishment of the Lifelong Income Scheme or CPF LIFE to help care for an ageing population and provide lifelong income for the elderly.

Manpower Minister Gan Kim Yong told Parliament: "Over the years, our CPF policies have evolved to better address our changing needs and they will continue to evolve. CPF LIFE is our unique response to address the challenges of our ageing population and it marks an important milestone in the evolution of the CPF."

This development does away with the Combined Minimum Sum Scheme which will be terminated in 2013 when CPF LIFE is introduced. CMSS allowed couples aged 55 and above to jointly set aside 1.5 times of their minimum sum, while withdrawing the rest of their CPF savings. It was because a couple living together needs less income than two singles living separately. As a member's monthly income stops when he or she dies, the surviving spouse can then only use his or her own CPF LIFE income. Mr Gan said those already in the CMSS can remain so.

Mr Gan also said: "Let me assure members that all CPF members born in 1958 or later will be automatically included in CPF LIFE if they have at least $40,000 cash in their Retirement Account when they turn 55. A portion of the members' Retirement Account savings will be used to participate in an annuity scheme.

"It is the age at which this annuity kicks in that would be prescribed by the minister. This age defines the 4 CPF LIFE plans offered to the members. However, in making their choices, members only need to consider the level of monthly income and bequest amount. The age at which the annuity kicks in is secondary."

While supporting the Bill, NTUC Deputy Secretary-General Halimah Yacob raised several points for clarification. One was her concern that the increasing numbers of part-time, contract and low-wage workers with less than $40,000 in their accounts might be out of the scheme.

"With the economic cycles of boom and bust becoming shorter, companies will continue to look at ways of making their labour force very flexible by minimising their permanent liabilities. We have seen the income of those at the lowest 20th percentile stagnating and has even declined for some occupations. As our low-wage workers are the ones who need such a scheme the most as they are not likely to have discretionary savings or other assets, I would like to ask the Minister to study this issue carefully so that we can have a truly inclusive CPF Life scheme," said the Labour Member of Parliament.

Mr Gan assured: "For members with low CPF savings but want to participate in the scheme, the Government will help them to do so. Members with less than $20,000 in their Retirement Accounts will receive a pro-rated L bonus upon opting in for the scheme. They will enjoy the full L bonus if they top up their account savings to at least $20,000."

SPUR For Taxi Operators

Labour MP Yeo Guat Kwang asked Mr Gan whether the Skills Programme for Upgrading and Resilience (SPUR) will be extended to self-employed taxi operators and tour guides to which the reply was: "There are already several generic SPUR courses relevant to taxi drivers and tour guides. For example, they can hone their service skills through WSQ Service Excellence training or improve their English language skills through Employment Skills Systems training at Continuing Education and Training Centres.

"The Singapore Workforce Development Agency has been working with the Singapore Taxi Academy and the taxi companies over the past two years to train new taxi drivers who are entering the sector, through the Taxi Vocational Licence course. About 2,900 taxi drivers were trained under this programme funded by WDA. WDA is also working closely with the STA to develop customised programmes to improve the language and service skills of taxi drivers. These programmes will also receive 90% course fee subsidy under SPUR."

NTUC Central Committee member and Singapore Insurance Employees' Union President Terry Lee Kok Hua took his Oath of Allegiance together with eight other new Nominated Members of Parliament in Parliament on 20 July 2009.

CPF members who are born in or before 1954 can apply to join the scheme from September 2009. Members who are born after 1954 can apply to join the scheme when they turn 55; those born after 1957 and have at least $40,000 in their Retirement Account will be automatically included in the scheme.

There are four CPF LIFE plans:
LIFE Plus Plan offers higher monthly income but leaves behind less for beneficiaries.
LIFE Basic Plan gives a lower monthly income but a higher bequest amount.
LIFE Income Plan offers the highest monthly income but nothing for beneficiaries.
The default plan is the LIFE Balanced Plan which provides a moderate retirement income and something for beneficiaries upon passing away.

SG Lim: Stay On Course, Prepare To Switch Gear

"The Labour Movement's retraining efforts cover three main areas. The first is to make the workers more employable. During good times, many companies have no time to train their workers. These companies should make use of this opportunity towards employability enhancement. The second area is functional training that focuses on training a worker to do the job that he does today better. The third area is training workers with new capabilities - training workers with skills to be able to do the job of tomorrow better. Some companies are using this downturn to install new production processes and work systems. This is just the right time to train workers to handle these new systems."

Lim Swee Say, NTUC Secretary-General

"We are working closely towards our three key performance indicators we started off with in the beginning of this year. Firstly, to avoid record retrenchments by not exceeding the 29,000 recorded in 1998. Secondly, to avoid record unemployment by keeping it below the 5.2 per cent recorded in 2003. Thirdly, to strive for 'more up when up' and to make use of the lull periods to upgrade the capabilities of our workers. We will also do more to increase employment like in the areas of re-employment of older workers. We should not allow the downturn to defer or delay our progress made in these areas."

Cham Hui Fong , NTUC Competency Director (Industrial Relations)

By
Naseema Banu Maideen

Stay on course and prepare to switch gear soon.

NTUC Secretary-General Lim Swee Say says staff and unionists alike should work with companies to continue to cut costs, save jobs, up-skill and re-skill workers, in particular, those who are affected by retrenchments. For soon, "we will need to switch gear and build new capabilities to prepare for the upturn."

SG Lim conveyed this message as he gave an update on 17 July 2009 on the industrial climate in unionised sectors.

Even with a better performance of the second quarter this year, there is still uncertainty in the business outlook across various industries.

The first quarter of the year saw high retrenchments, shorter work weeks and temporary layoffs. The record high retrenchment figure of 4,744 was the highest since the Labour Movement started capturing such data in 1998. This climate improved in the second quarter of the year when the pace of retrenchments, shorter work weeks and temporary lay offs slowed considerably, said NTUC Competency Director (Industrial Relations) Cham Hui Fong.

There was a sharp drop in retrenchments to 1,406 in this second quarter. The electronics sector had some recovery in demand. Madam Cham highlighted that this slight recovery was not sparked from an increase in consumer spending but from low inventory levels arising from production freezes in earlier months. The chemical and petrochemical industries also saw some improved demands.

These conditions can be attributed to the gradual improvement in pockets of sectors in the electronics and chemical clusters. The Government's boost through the Jobs Credit scheme and SPUR (Skills Programme for Upgrading and Resilience) also had a major impact in reducing retrenchments.

"Companies were also cautious not to overly downsize the workforce as they would need to ramp up production when economy recovers. Workers and unions also cooperated with employers in implementing cost-cutting measures," added Madam Cham.

Managing The Impact

The manufacturing sector continues to bear the brunt of retrenchments in this downturn. More noticeably, the retrenchments affect more PMETs (Professionals, Managers, Executives and Technical People). About 1 out of 5 affected is a PMET, as compared to 1 out of 10 in 1998. Most of these retrenched PMETs are from manufacturing industries.

To date, NTUC's e2i (Employment and Employability Institute) has assisted 3,212 retrenched workers with employment advice, counseling, job placements and training.

Since the introduction of SPUR, 36,190 workers from 175 unionised companies have embarked on SPUR courses at e2i.

In addition, the Labour Movement has hyped its care and share drive to help affected workers in this crisis. It raised more than $23 million in its U Care Fund's till in May this year. Almost $10 million from this fund has already been disbursed to unions.

Stepping Ahead

8 out of 10 of Singapore's top export countries have bleak outlooks with shrinking economies and high unemployment.

As largely an export-oriented country, Singapore's domestic economy is not likely to see a strong rebound. Madam Cham warned that the possibility of another wave of retrenchments cannot be ruled out as unions are still receiving pockets of retrenchments notifications.

There are early signs of more companies' plans of shorter work weeks than in the second quarter of 2009. Companies are also likely to cut or freeze wages with uncertain business prospects.

SG Lim said that many companies have implemented wage cuts in the first and second quarters and that the Labour Movement will fully support these measures when management takes the lead in taking an earlier and deeper cut.

"Cutting costs to save jobs can only buy us time. Having bought the time from having found the ways to hold on to excess manpower, we must turn this into an investment.

"This opportunity is for us to build capabilities towards that investment. If we do it right, we can position ourselves stronger and be prepared to survive the downturn. In fact, this is the best way for us to upturn the downturn," said SG Lim.

First Quarter of 2009

*1 Electronics, chemical and petrochemical, metal works, hospitality, construction and building management sectors faced low and declining demands which led to poor business performance.

*2 24,135 workers affected by shorter work-week and temporary lay-off.

*3 4,744 workers retrenched.

Second Quarter of 2009

*1 Some recovery in the electronics sector was seen mainly because of higher inventory-driven demand arising from earlier production freezes and not because of increased consumer spending. The chemical and petrochemical sector also saw improved orders.

*2 7,608 workers affected by shorter work-week and temporary lay-off.

*3 1,406 workers retrenched.

First Half of 2009

*1 Unionised companies in the metalworks, electronics, chemical/petrochemical, construction and building, and hospitality sectors saw poorer business performance as the impact of the economic downturn hit Singapore. In contrast, the marine, healthcare, land transport, education and high-end pharmaceutical sectors did better.

*2 31,177 workers in the unionised sectors were placed on shorter work-week and temporary lay-off as companies cut cost to save jobs. In 1998 during the Asian Financial Crisis, affected workers numbered 14,898 and after the September 11 incident, affected workers numbered 45,561.
Workers also faced a longer duration of shorter work-week and temporary lay-off as compared to the past crises. **The man-days lost due to shorter work-week and temporary lay-off in the first half of 2009 was 4 times higher than 1998 and as high as the whole of 2001.**
The unions understood the need to help companies stay afloat and thus, convinced their members and workers to accept smaller pay packets as a result of shorter work-week and temporary lay-off. These painful but necessary cost-cutting measures have helped to avoid a massive rise in retrenchments at the unionised companies.

*3 Despite tripartite partners' effort in helping companies cut cost to save jobs, some unionised companies still resorted to retrenchments as global demand and production fell drastically. The first half of 2009 saw 6,150 workers in the unionised sector being retrenched, mostly in the manufacturing sector, followed by the services sector. **The first quarter saw record high retrenchments followed by a two-third drop in number of retrenchments in the second quarter.**

SG Lim Tells OTC Institute Graduands:

Stay Focused And Press On

By
Naseema Banu Maideen

Union leaders in Singapore can be most effective in contributing to the welfare of workers in this global crisis, more than union leaders around the world.

And they have fared well, working together with a tripartite partnership consisting of a supportive Government and socially responsible employers.

NTUC Secretary-General Lim Swee Say gave union leaders this pat on their backs as he cautioned them to fight on with the same spirit for the unclear economic climate ahead.

"On the whole, looking back at the last six months, we have done very well. Unemployment rate in Singapore is at 3.3 per cent, still among the lowest in the world, as compared to 9.5 per cent in the United States and 8.9 per cent in Europe. For an export-oriented Singapore economy, this is not too bad," said SG Lim, who was addressing union leaders who have graduated from the Ong Teng Cheng Labour Leadership Institute in a dialogue session on 17 July 2009.

SG Lim stressed that union leaders should continue to engage companies in cost-cutting measures to save as many jobs as they can in the next six months.

"Stay focused on course and continue to cut costs and save jobs. Continue to up-skill and re-skill workers and build new capabilities to prepare for the upturn."

He urged union leaders to work towards achieving the three key performance indicators set by the Labour Movement early this year, one of which is to avoid record unemployment.

"Every worker who is retrenched need not necessarily be an unemployed worker. At NTUC's e2i (Employment and Employability Institute), there are 18,000 jobs today. 75 per cent of these jobs pay more than $1,000. 42 per cent of these jobs pay more than $2,000. There are about 9,000 jobseekers out there for these jobs. But 80 per cent of them are not job ready," said SG Lim.

"At the last count, 5,421 older workers from 747 companies within the unionised sectors are on re-employment. About 300 of these companies have implemented formalised human-resource policies on re-employment and are pro-actively seeking new initiatives to ensure that their re-employment efforts are sustainable and scalable. Within the unionised sectors, we are running very fast."

SG Lim Swee Say says the Labour Movement's progress on long-term initiatives like re-employment of older workers should not slow down.

"The purpose of the Jobs Credit scheme is to save jobs. So any company that does not retrench workers is helping us. Whether it is profitable or not, local or a multi-national company, any company that does not retrench workers is a friend of tripartism. If companies are profitable, then the Jobs Credit scheme will make them even more profitable. Part of these profits will be paid out as corporate taxes. Within the unionised sectors, we, as union leaders, should push for bonus sharing to ensure that workers share the results of cost-cutting measures."

SG Lim Swee Say clears union leaders' queries on the Jobs Credit scheme and states its impact on saving jobs in Singapore.

"With the all the bigger economies becoming more competitive, it will be a different world with different challenges. We should then also be well prepared to take on these challenges."

SG Lim Swee Say urges union leaders to prepare their workers for bigger challenges in the world after the downturn.

When SPRING Comes

By
Vanessa Teo

The wave of the downturn may sweep away businesses, workers, and profits, but strong Labour Management Relations will stand firm and may even be the key towards the upturn. This has been proven sound by the exemplary LMR between SPRING Singapore and SPRING Singapore Staff Union.

The extent of support management has shown to SSSU can be seen in its willingness to cooperate and compromise when unexpected issues arise. On the week starting 20 July 2009, SPRING Singapore implemented a new initiative where employees are separated into two teams for a trial period of two weeks: One team works from home. This is one of the measures to contain the spread of the Influenza A (H1N1-2009) virus and also to ensure business continuity if any staff was to get infected with the virus. This measure could have affected the Wellness Bazaar organised by SSSU coming up on 30 July 2009 if not for the good relations between management and union.

Said SSSU President Tan Kheok Juay: "Management was concerned with the backlash on the measure if people from the two teams were to mingle during the bazaar. The company could have just instructed us to postpone the bazaar, which would cause us a lot of trouble as we have already hired external vendors.

Instead, management actually proposed to us to add a line in the advertisement, stating at what time each respective team should turn up. This way, management did not have to worry about affecting the measures and union also didn't have to postpone the event. The fact that managment consulted us first just shows how it is truly concerned for SSSU's activities."

Besides always seeking union's opinions before making decisions affecting them, SPRING Singapore also showed much support to union efforts by always offering its premises free of charge to conduct recruitment drives. To help SSSU boost its membership strength, management even offered to pay one year's union membership fee for every new or existing staff that signs up. This led SSSU to be the winner of the Membership Awards - highest monthly net percentage awards, in May with a membership increase of 6.28 per cent.

"The Executive Committee really treasures the support from the management in terms of lending us its facilities to conduct our meetings and recruitment drives, and we really want this strong relationship to last. The support from management is also our motivation to increase our membership strength," Dr Tan said.

SPRING Singapore is also taking this chance during the downturn to create more job opportunities for PMETs (Professionals, Managers, Executives and Technical People) by supporting an entrepreneurship training initiative with participating polytechnics to develop entrepreneurship courses for PMETs who are interested to start up their own businesses, and will support up to 70 per cent of the course fees. In total SPRING Singapore has set aside a budget of $500,000 for this.

Said SPRING Singapore Deputy Director (Entrepreneurship Development) Sim Choon Siong: "We hope this course will help PMETs who want to start businesses to be better prepared. When they do start and build successful businesses, they can then create jobs and businesses for others, whether or not the downturn is over."

SPRING Singapore Staff Union was formed in 1994 and represents employees of SPRING Singapore. It has 218 Ordinary Branch Members and 31 General Branch Members.

New NTWU Exco Has Hands Full

SG Lim Calls For Re-Think Of Buses Wage System

By
Marcus Lin

Leaders of the National Transport Workers' Union were given a pat on the back by NTUC Secretary-General Lim Swee Say on the occasion of their Quadrennial Convention of Delegates on 20 July 2009. SG Lim told delegates that NTWU has done very well over the years and the union leaders are respected a lot.

"When I say 'we', it refers to not just NTUC, but also the management and the Government. Whenever we talk about NTWU union leaders, we hold you in high regard. You make a difference not just in terms of providing a service to the public, but also in the ability to mobilise the ground, to support important national policies," said SG Lim.

"So for NTWU, leadership is very important. The reason you are where you are today is because you have the leaders who are not only visionary but more importantly, people full of courage. You have union leaders who dare to do the right thing even if it is not popular. You are prepared to carry the ground to achieve them and that is very important."

Guest-of-honour SG Lim recounted doing a lot of counting during this economic downturn, "not counting dollars, not counting cents, but counting blessings," adding that "the first blessing that I count is that compared to the rest of the world, our Labour Movement is able to do so much more."

Recalling the recent International Labour Conference in Geneva, Switzerland, SG Lim said that union leaders there were, bar none, facing situations that were not at all encouraging and they "felt depressed because they could not do much to help their members."

Problems that surfaced included tripartism breaking down, desperately considering job protectionism, politics getting into the way, or Governments with no money for assistance packages.

The list goes on, said SG Lim, but the point is that Singapore has the ability to get things done quickly and other countries are envious that the Government does not have to borrow money to do so. Nevertheless, he was quick to add that the record negative figures for the first quarter this year in Singapore and elsewhere speak for themselves and notifications for further retrenchments have already been received: "We can count our blessings, but we have to be realistic for the second half of the year."

SG Lim pointed out that though the public transport sector may appear recession-proof, it is still affected indirectly by the downturn. More commuters who can't afford to drive or take taxis will resort to MRT and buses, "and when they do, they make more noise." They have higher expectations, are more price-sensitive and expect faster, cheaper and better public transport.

Addressing the constant challenge of the shortage of bus captains, he said public transport companies are caught between a rock and a hard place. If they were to increase the starting pay, it has to be done across the board which will raise wage and operating costs and this will in turn be passed on to commuters.

SG Lim suggested for management and union to consider: "My view as the Secretary-General of NTUC is that there is a solution. And the solution is basically one whereby we should restructure our wage system for the bus captains. Firstly, enhance the starting pay. If we don't enhance the starting pay, we cannot attract more Singaporeans to come into this area. We are wasting our jobseekers. So we have no choice, we must enhance the starting pay.

"Secondly, our wage system must reward more and more on the basis of performance. In other words, we have to find a way to raise starting pay and at the same time reward the better performing bus captains better. In this way, we kill two birds with one stone."

He said this way, "bus captains will be happier because their pockets have more salary. But more importantly, this performance-based wage system will bring out the best in everyone. It is a greater incentive for everyone to give of their very best."

However, he added the caveat that it will not be easy as union leaders will have to carry the ground as some will not agree.

National Transport Workers' Union
Executive Committee for the term of office 2009 to 2013

President	Mohd Rasi Taib
Vice-Presidents	Ong Leong Chin Isnin Juaini
General Secretary	Fang Chin Poh
Assistant General Secretaries	Mak Mun Whai Dominic Poh Pwey Lihn
General Treasurer	Joseph Nagarajan
Assistant General Treasurers	Rosmani Juraini Oh Geok Tee
Executive Secretary	Seng Han Thong
Acting Executive Secretary	Ong Ye Kung
Deputy Executive Secretary	Tan Boon Toy
Executive Committee Members	Edros Talib Goh Poh Peng Jasbeer Singh Koh Khim Chye Lau Lye Hock Lee Hong Chian Andrew Liau Cheng Boon Lim Hock Chwee Maimunah Ismail Mohamed Jonid Ng Kim Piow Ng Mau Kwai Ong Yeo Seng Nelson Sim Kim Huat Seah Cheng Phoe Steven Tan Tee Hiang R Balan Kalisalvam Kelaver Syed Omar Syed Osman Lim Poh Suan Patricia Low Siew Luan
Internal Auditors	Tan Teck Gin Peh Chee Kang
Assistant Executive Secretary	Jimmy Wee

Settle New SCOREs

Inmates Have Better Chance At Food Industry Jobs With NTUC Foodfare-SCORE CA

By
Nicolette Yeo

As we battle the downturn, ex-offenders who are trying to reintegrate into society as workers should not be left behind. Despite NTUC Foodfare Co-operative Limited's involvement in culinary rehabilitation programmes, it is determined to "Do More" for inmates by ensuring they gain life and employability skills so that they can find decent jobs upon release and gain a new lease of life.

Mr Tan Kan Chiew, NTUC Foodfare Chairman made this point at the Collective Agreement signing ceremony between NTUC Foodfare and Singapore Corporation of Rehabilitative Enterprises on 22 July 2009. The aim of this CA is to take their existing collaboration on facility management and training of inmates in culinary skills to a higher level.

Said Mr Tan: "Our partnership with SCORE is not just an offer of our services and expertise, but a shared commitment to provide inmates with a set of marketable skills in food preparation."

Since 2003, NTUC Foodfare has trained inmates with courses, such as basic food hygiene, Good Manufacturing Practice and F&B service training. It has also been managing Changi Prison's central kitchen facility at Cluster A which supplies 8,000 meals cooked by inmates for inmates at Changi as well as at the Changi Women's Prison and Tanah Merah Prison.

Under the CA, NTUC Foodfare's participation will include the running of the new Cluster B which serves up 22,000 meals daily. It will also establish the nationally recognised ITE Industrial Skills Certificate in Food Preparation which can lead inmates to jobs in the hospitality and F&B related industries when they are released.

Mr Kong Mun Kwong, SCORE Chairman and NTUC Foodfare Director, pointed out that the food industry is particularly well-received by the inmates as it suited their general profile.

"The range of jobs available in the food industry is the widest than any other industry in Singapore. From the dishwashers to the cooks, these jobs suit any inmate with the talent. They don't require a PhD or MBA degree to become the No. 1 chef," said Mr Kong.

NTUC Foodfare sweetened the deal with the presentation of a cheque for $100,000 to SCORE to kickstart advanced culinary courses for inmates with potential.

Employment SCOREcard

The NTUC Foodfare-SCORE culinary training programme trains about 100 inmates annually. NTUC Foodfare Co-operative Limited has since employed 30 ex-offenders, while SCORE has successfully placed 88 former inmates with the F&B employers under their care.

A Fairytale Story

IRO Charlene Ong Recalls Her First Encounter With Union Works

Vanessa Teo

By
Vanessa Teo

More than 10 years ago, Industrial Relations Officer Charlene Ong from the Building Construction and Timber Industries Employees' Union witnessed the sincere help from a union - Food, Drinks and Allied Workers' Union, which protected her mother's innocence and saved her job. From that day onwards, union works left a deep impression on her.

"My mother has been a union member for the past 30 years, and is working in a company as a cashier unionised under FDAWU. I remember being told by my mother that a bag of money went missing during the closing of accounts one night, and she, as the team leader, was held responsible. Coincidentally, there was no tape in the Closed Circuit TV to prove her innocence, and the police was called in. This was when her union IRO stepped in to help, and eventually the company decided not to press charges against her and even continued to hire her until today. As a young girl then, the IRO was really my hero," said Miss Ong.

This began Miss Ong's journey on becoming an IRO as she looked towards emulating her "hero". Came 2007, Miss Ong's friend who was successfully recruited as an IRO broke the news to her. This sparked off Miss Ong's curiosity and she went to look at the IRO job advertisement her friend highlighted. While reading the job description, the incident of how the IRO rendered help to her mother came floating back to her and this was when she realised this may just be the right job. Miss Ong's On-The-Job-Training with BATU began in June 2007, and she was fully seconded to BATU in June 2008.

Miss Ong's journey as an IRO was not as smooth sailing as to her first encounter with the union where like a fairytale story, a hero came to save the day. She faced challenges along the way because she was young.

"When I just started out as an IRO, I was only 22. Many of the businessmen were quite skeptical about me. They would doubt my capability and also see me as a young girl with no experience in the business world. This often posed as an obstacle in my job."

This did not deter Miss Ong, and she learned that with sincerity and determination, even the toughest obstacles can be overcome.

Said Miss Ong: "I was raised by my grandmother, so I am able to speak and understand Hokkien. This helped me very much in my work and many members became more open and trusting towards me when I speak to them in their language."

"I remember there was once when I was posted to a company that was anti-union. It had the perception that unions were here to create trouble and interfere in the way it ran its business. This gave me a very difficult time in the Collective Agreement negotiations and it took me two years of tough negotiation and sincere approach before the Collective Agreement was concluded. However, it was all worthwhile as the company, from being anti-union, now even allows us to conduct recruitment exercises for its staff."

Miss Ong continues to find satisfaction in her job.

"The kind of satisfaction you get when members and management say 'thank you' cannot be found anywhere else. Not only do I get to help people out there, I've also learnt to be more patient through handling of grievances in my work. I have also become more extroverted and my family and friends have welcomed this new vocal and chatty me well," said Miss Ong.

Starting On A Clean Note

UCCW And e2i's Push For BSI Benefits 705 Conservancy Cleaners And Will Benefit More By 2010

Best Sourcing Initiatives Lead The Way To Better Lives… NTUC Secretary-General Lim Swee Say (third from left) observes a cleaner on an auto-scrubber, which reduces his cleaning time by 20 per cent.

"Buyers have a choice before them. Go for poorer quality, drive down cost, and squeeze workers. Or go for efficiency and quality, at a higher price, with better-skilled workers. The Labour Movement's choice is the latter, which is better for workers. From a broader perspective, Singapore's future lies in building capability and raising quality."

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

"NEA and Town Council's good efforts can be replicated in other cleaning sectors. With BSI, the focus is not placed on the contract price but value, performance and productivity. Workers under BSI do not face downward pressure on wages as service providers do not depress prices. Instead, workers are valued for their services and performance. This motivates workers to go for training and when their productivity increases, they may command better pay."

Zainudin Nordin, UCCW Director and NTUC Alignment Director (No Collar, Care and Share)

By
Naseema Banu Maideen

A mop with pail of water in one hand and a broom in another. Madam Masliyati Amat Ali, 47, would walk around with these weighty cleaning tools every morning in Holland Close where she works as a conservancy cleaner. When she spots areas with stubborn stains, she would walk back to the main office under the blocks to pick up stronger detergents to scrub them off.

But these strenuous routines have changed since eight months ago. Madam Masliyati has now attended training courses like the National Skills Recognition System in Clean Residential Estates that enables her to perform her job with more ease and efficiency.

"I now park all my cleaning equipment on a cart. I can also move around and clean faster. Now that there is a lift landing in every storey in the blocks, I can easily manage my cart too," she said. Moreover, Madam Masliyati also earns about $750 after the training programme and also benefits from Central Provident Fund contributions.

Better skills that comes with better pay packets for 705 conservancy cleaners like Madam Masliyati is just one of the benefits of "best sourcing".

This is the reflection of the successful pilot run efforts of NTUC's Unit for Contract and Casual Workers and e2i (Employment and Employability Institute), together with the National Environment Agency and Holland-Bukit Panjang Town Council in promoting "best sourcing" for cleaning contracts.

These partners will continue to work together to implement Best Sourcing Initiatives on all future cleaning contracts by 2010 in a bid to transform and level up the cleaning industry.

The cleaning industry was previously plagued by "cheap sourcing" practices where buyers irresponsibly awarded contracts to the cheapest bidder. In order to undercut one another's prices to secure contracts, service providers compromised on service quality, and workers' training and welfare. This negatively impacted residents, workers, buyers and service providers.

But these practices were eroded when UCCW and e2i worked closely with NEA and HBPTC to implement BSI which ensures contracts are awarded based on best value for money, bearing in mind quality and performance standards instead of solely prices.

Said Dr Teo Ho Pin, Chairman of Holland-Bukit Panjang Town Council: "Through BSI, we are able to raise the cleanliness standards in the estates with high performance standards and trained conservancy workers. We could also assure and encourage the conservancy companies to invest in good human resource practices such as providing training, fair pay and written employment contracts for their workers. This would in turn help the companies retain and attract better-skilled conservancy workers to serve our residents."

The service providers under BSI deliver better performance through job re-designs, training of workers and usage of better equipment.

Clean Solutions Private Limited is one of them. It sends its workers for NSRS training and the cleaners use equipment such as "Ride-on Sweeper" vehicles to improve efficiency by four times. Previously, two workers had to use four hours to clean a car park. Today, it takes only one worker to clean the car park in two hours.

"This Job Re-creation Programme that ties in with BSI has increased our workers' efficiency and the estates are also much cleaner now. This training also motivated them to take up more training courses to enhance their skills, said Mr Frank Ngoh, Property Manager of Holland-Bukit Panjang Town Council.

A Clean Affair

Union Advisor Gets 12 Cleaners On Board UCCW

By
Nicolette Yeo

Although Roselan Ramut was born with a lazy eye condition that severely impairs his vision, and he has to single-handedly raise his six-year old son, the 37-year old cleaner considers himself "lucky".

He and 10 workmates from Ban Chuan Trading & Engineering Private Limited were presented with memberships to NTUC's Unit for Contract & Casual Workers on 18 July 2009 which looks out for their welfare and well-being.

"I am happy to get this membership. The benefits are something like half-price at the clinic, greater insurance coverage… I also believe in taking up the courses to upgrade myself."

The workers have Mr Christopher De Souza to thank. The Member of Parliament for Holland-Bukit Timah GRC initiated the idea for the cleaners under his constituency to join UCCW because he heard it promoted Best Sourcing Initiatives that would ensure CPF contributions for the workers and allow them to reap the benefits of the Workfare Income Supplement.

"I was particularly drawn to the Workfare Income Supplement. I spoke in Parliament about why there is a need to contribute to Medisave before you get WIS. And the answer I was given is that they want co-ownership. The government also wants the contract workers to have co-ownership of their savings," said Mr De Souza.

Mr De Souza, who is Advisor to the Food, Drinks and Allied Workers' Union, had earlier approached the Ghim Moh Market & Shops Merchants Association to see if it could enforce compulsory CPF contributions on the employers and was successful on a certain level. But he needed help from UCCW to deal with official matters.

Clean Sweep... Mr Roselan Ramut (centre) showing off his UCCW membership card. Surrounding him are (from left) Member of Parliament for Holland-Bukit Timah GRC Christopher De Souza, son Mohammed Rozaimi, and Ban Chuan Trading & Engineering Operations Manager Anand Sanmugam.

Said Mr De Souza: "Together, we have a mechanism now where there are certain incentives given by the Merchants Associations that have the employer contribute to workers' CPF. As a result, most of the workers in my constituency get WIS."

So how does joining UCCW benefit Mr Roselan? The divorcee will now receive WIS for work done in 2009. He will also get to enjoy a plethora of benefits from his UCCW membership, including subsidised medical care at $13 per visit at all NTUC Healthcare clinics islandwide as well as additional NTUC Income life insurance coverage of $4,000 (working hours) and $8,000 (outside working hours) at just $12 a year.

This will come in handy for Mr Roselan because his job can sometimes be dangerous. He recalled an incident when he got injured when a heavy drain metal cover landed on his toe.

Mr De Souza is optimistic that this tie-up with UCCW will work out because it presents "a win-win situation" for all parties involved.

"Employers benefit because the contract workers are motivated; patrons of the stalls benefit because their tables are clean; and contract workers themselves benefit because they get WIS and payments into their CPF," said Mr De Souza.

A Caring Employer

Mr Roselan is also "lucky" in the sense that he works for a very caring employer. When the suggestion was put forward to allow its workers join UCCW, Ban Chuan encouraged them to sign on by extolling the virtues of their benefits, such as the additional insurance coverage.

Said Mr Anand Sanmugan, Operations Manager: "Most of them come from not well-off families. It is very heartbreaking to see them sick or have some problems whereby they cannot work which are not covered by insurance. On our part, we will try to give them some sort of monetary reimbursements to help them tide over this period, but it is not enough."

"It would be great if UCCW and Holland-Bukit Timah GRC's tie-up can be extended to all constituencies to help all the contract and casual workers. Best Sourcing Initiative ensures that workers' welfare is well looked after in terms of CPF contributions and other proper employment terms so that they do not lose out on the Workfare Income Supplement. More often than not, the low salary they receive is insufficient for these workers, and that is where things like our additional insurance coverage can kick in to help."

Zainudin Nordin, UCCW Director and NTUC Alignment Director (No Collar, Care and Share)

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On A Higher Plain

SISEU Scholarships, Bursary Grants and Progress Awards Take Students Further

Mr Tham and family.

Mr Ang Chin Seng and family.

By **Roshini Mohan Krishnan**

Pictures by **Alvin Toh**

For sisters Qian Ya, 12 and Shi Min, 16, their bursary awards could not have been timelier. Their father, Mr Ang Chin Seng, 43, was recently retrenched from his job as a technician and he has been jobless since. The family of five tries to get on by the little that Mrs Ang earns from odd jobs.

"My daughters are in Primary 6 and Secondary 4. It is a very important year for both of them and they often need to stay longer in school for supplementary classes. Sometimes I feel sad that I cannot give them some extra pocket money for food to last them the whole day," said Mr Ang.

"With this bursary, they can now use some for assessment books and we can use the balance on buying necessities like rice and vegetables," he added.

The sisters are among 482 recipients of the Singapore Industrial & Services Employees' Union Scholarship, Bursary and Progress Awards. The presentation ceremony, held at Downtown East on 19 July 2009, was attended by Finance Minister Tharman Shanmugaratnam, who is also Chairman of SISEU's Council of Advisors, and Mrs Josephine Teo, NTUC Assistant Secretary-General and SISEU Executive Secretary.

In total, $100,000 worth of scholarships and bursaries were given out to the children of SISEU members - $50,000 more than last year. The number of recipients also increased from 283 to 483, about 70 per cent more than last year. Each received between $100 and $1,000. All recipients also received an additional $30 Popular Bookstore vouchers to help defray their schooling expenses.

The awards presentation forms part of SISEU's larger efforts in helping members tide over the economic downturn, with the union contributing more than $654,000 through its care and share efforts to help and benefit members through channels like the U Care Immediate Assistance, U Care Bursary and Scholarship TOP-UP Scheme, U Stretch vouchers, Back-to-School or Public Transport and Utilities vouchers and Gift-From-The-Heart initiative. These are in addition to the workplace assistance, in areas like industrial relations, employment and employability, which the union has been providing its members at the work front. SISEU aims to provide at least $700,000 worth of assistance to help members through these difficult times.

In her opening address, Mrs Teo reassured members that SISEU will try its best to help out its members during this difficult economic climate. She also stressed the importance of having good family support.

"External help to our members is important, but family support is equally crucial to help them tide through this tough period," she said.

For many SISEU members, these bursaries and scholarships for their children are a welcomed reprieve.

Mr Mohamed Naseem, 51, is the sole breadwinner and has four children to support. Both his son and daughter were each awarded a $200 bursary and they have been receiving this bursary since the inception of this programme.

"Most of my salary goes towards household expenditures like food and utility bills. It is very hard nowadays as I do not get overtime pay anymore. My mother is also a former cancer patient and I need to take care of her medical bills as well. At least, now my children will have some extra money for them to spend on books and stationery," said Mr Naseem.

In the case of Mr Leonard Tham, his scholarship award of $1,000 will go a long way in funding his dream of studying abroad. The 23-year-old National University of Singapore undergraduate was selected for an exchange programme in Poland. However, the sudden retrenchment of his mother left him with second thoughts about going.

"I did not want to place further strain my family's finances. So I am really grateful for this scholarship as it will definitely help finance my semester abroad," said Mr Tham.

Mr Mohamed Naseem and family.

Double-Up

SMMWU Gives Help To Twice The Number Of Students – Thanks To New Bursary And Scholarship TOP-UP Scheme

By **Nicolette Yeo**

InfinITE Rewards... A beaming Siti Zulaikah receives her ITE scholarship from NTUC Assistant Secretary-General and SMMWU Executive Secretary Ong Ye Kung

It has always been the mission of The Singapore Manual & Mercantile Workers' Union to render as much assistance as it can to needy workers and their families, especially in terms of bursaries and scholarships for members' children.

Thanks to the new Bursary and Scholarship TOP-UP Scheme rolled out by the U Care Fund which encourages unions to top-up as much as 100 per cent of what they spent the previous year, SMMWU has achieved some degree of success despite being in the middle of a deep recession.

At its scholarship and bursary awards presentation on 19 July 2009, the union spent $99,740 on 343 beneficiaries, of which $45,000 came from the U Care Fund. This is more than double last year, and translates to 159 more awards of a higher value to help more children gain better education.

Presenting the award for ITE and university scholarships, NTUC Assistant Secretary-General and SMMWU Executive Secretary Ong Ye Kung, said: "The U Care Fund raised more than $23 million this year. All this is to help members pull through this crisis; pull through this recession.

"We set aside $400,000 from the U Care Fund, to provide help for workers who are badly affected by the downturn. We will give immediate relief, such as vouchers, as well as bursaries and scholarships as we have done before."

ASG Ong also took the opportunity to drive home the importance that joining a union like SMMWU is the gateway to a better life in the future.

"Why did your daddy or mummy decide to join the union? It is really to secure their livelihood so that they can have better jobs, better lives, and better provide for their families. A better life comes along when you, as children, can do better than your parents.

Mr Noh Abdul Shukor and family.

"The key is to have better education, study hard and do well in your studies. This is why across so many unions, and at SMMWU, we focus so much on the education of children. Year after year, we give out scholarships and bursaries to help children do better in school."

One recipient of this year's "bumper crop" of academic awards is Mr Noh Abdul Shukor. As the sole breadwinner of a family of four school-going children, the finances of the 46-year old Jardine Cycle & Carriage Limited clerk were already stretched. In good times, he used to take home $1,800 a month. Now, due to reduced overtime, he has to survive on an income of between $1,400 and $1,500. Although he regularly applies for bursaries and scholarships for all his children, this is the first time he has received more than one – an ITE scholarship for eldest daughter Siti Zulaikah, and secondary school bursaries for younger daughters Nur Faizah and Nadia.

"I am really quite surprised and happy at the same time. We are in bad times now, so it is a real relief. Whenever I find that the money is not enough, I will take it out for school needs, like pocket money and makan," said Mr Noh.

The joy of SMMWU's generosity is shared by Mr Mohamad Salleh Ibrahim, 55. For nearly five years, the storeman at Clouet Trading Private Limited battled liver disease which left him bedridden very often and vomiting all the time. Although his medical fees were taken care of by insurance, the low-income worker still incurred a substantial amount in transport fees to and from the hospital. Despite having to undergo a painful liver transplant in February this year, his children's education never left his mind. He applied for – and received a Polytechnic bursary for his daughter Siti Munirah and Junior College scholarship for his son Mohamad Yusof.

"My budget is very strained, so I applied for a bursary and a scholarship to help cover things for my children, like bus fare and pocket money. With this kind of money, I can save on one or two months of their spending," said Mr Mohamad.

Even middle-income members like Mr Mogan s/o Ramasami are now able to reap the benefits from SMMWU's expanded budget for bursaries and scholarships, albeit in a different way.

This is the first time the 49-year old Senior Property Officer at EM Services Private Limited applied for scholarships for his university-going daughters Kalaivani and Shalini to recognise their academic excellence.

"Scholarships give them recognition for their studies that will inspire them to do better. There are also monetary gains," said Mr Mogan.

Both girls shared that they are likely to be spending their awards on costly school books which cost an average of nearly $150 a term.

Mr Mogan s/o Ramasami and family.

"SMMWU has been giving out scholarship and bursary awards for 35 years now. With help from the NTUC U Care Fund's Bursary and Scholarship TOP-UP Scheme, we are now able to benefit more of the needy members' children and help them to realise their dream of a better education. Knowing that they are well taken care of in this area is the union's greatest reward."

Law Swee Hong, SMMWU Deputy Secretary-General

8.22

By
Brigadier-General Tan Chuan-Jin
Chairman, National Day Parade 2009

Why 8.22? Is there some significance?

If you recall, engendering reflections is a key objective for us in our National Day journey this year. We are using our Pledge as a basis to shape our various and many efforts. For example, one of the questions for reflections is "What does the Pledge mean to me?" The title of our short film competition is "My Pledge". Elements of our Pledge also underline each chapter of the 10-chapter show during the National Day Parade.

The highlight will be our Pledge Moment where at the end of the parade, just after we sing our medley of National Day songs in unison with our fireworks, we will all take our Pledge together. Why stop at just gathering various people to stand in front of the stage and lead the audience in reciting our Pledge? Let's do that with ALL Singaporeans around Singapore and the world.

With one voice at one moment, we can all unite as one people and pledge ourselves to what we believe in.

We will sound the Civil Defence siren with chimes to remind all of us at that moment, so that we can all join in and pledge ourselves. We have at least 10 grassroots and National Service organisations having mass gatherings to watch the National Day Parade live and to participate in this moment. Kentucky Fried Chicken, Delifrance, McDonald's Restaurant and other outlets are also supporting this idea. Can you imagine if even more food chains and other outlets are involved? Our Pledge could be broadcast over their public announcement systems and the respective managers could lead everyone in taking our Pledge at the same time. A number of shopping malls are also coming on board and we hope that many more would do so. We are hoping that Singaporeans overseas would also organise themselves to watch the live broadcast over CNA International and/or via the Internet.

So, why 8.22?

We did think of 8.44 since it is our 44th National Day this year. But it was too late in the show. We thought of 8.09 in honour of 9th August, but that would have been too early. As our parade and show started shaping up, it looked as if it would be around 8.20 pm or so when we would be reciting Our Pledge. So after some profound discussions and sophisticated calculations, we concluded that 8.22 sounds rather cool… So there it is.

Do join us and be part of a magical and special moment for all of us Singaporeans.

8.22. Our Pledge Moment. Join us. Be there.

P.S. My dear friend, the late COL Bernard Tan would have been amused. He had this Pledge idea in 2003, and I remember that we all had a good laugh... We thought he was mad! Well, my friend, a few years late, but this moment will be happening.

NTUC is targeting for 10,000 voices to recite our Pledge together at the Padang at 8.22 pm.

In Review... Deputy Prime Minister Teo Chee Hean waves from the gallery as he watches the National Education Show on 18 July 2009. He is accompanied by National Day Parade Organising Chairman, Brigadier-General Tan Chuan-Jin (left).

Family On Parade

By
Vanessa Teo

There is no one too young or old for the Labour Movement Family, and in the NTUC Parade and Ceremony Contingent, we find our youngest participant Siti Nur Badi'ah Johari, 20, who will be taking part in the National Day Parade for the first time.

"I am proud to be a Singaporean and I want to show everyone out there how proud I am through practical action by taking part in the parade," said Miss Siti, who is taking night classes for Early Childhood at a private school. Accompanying her are her parents, Union of Telecoms Employees of Singapore member Mr Johari Arwee, 50, who is taking part in the NDP for the fourth time, and Madam Siti Sadi'ah Kemat, 48, a Housing and Development Board Staff Union member who is into her eighth year in the NDP. This is also the first year they are taking part in the NDP as a family.

Chin Boon Lian

All In The Family... From left: UTES Member Johari Arwee, NTUC President John De Payva, U Sports Senior Executive Charles Khng, Student Siti Nur Badi'ah Johari, HDBSU Member Siti Sa'diah Kemat, Food, Drinks and Allied Workers' Union General Secretary and NTUC Contingent Commander Tan Hock Soon.

"The Labour Movement is a big family, so of course we want to join this together as a family where we can all understand each other's challenges during tough training times and encourage one another. Even though this year's challenge is greater because we have to march for 3.2 kilometers, I still want to do my best because I know I represent my union and country", Madam Siti said.

"It is also a national honour that we civilians can take part in this major celebration," Mr Johari added.

Journey To The Parade

We Will Get There

By
Shirley Tan-Oehler

Pictures by
Gary Goh *NDP 2009 Parade & Ceremony Secretariat*
and **Chin Boon Lian**

Remember the days, we set out together with faith?
Remember the times, so fine, when we thought that nothing could stand in our way?

92 NTUC members from various unions, their families and friends made the commitment to go the distance. The oldest is 67-year-old Mohan Raghavan, an LTA Civil Engineering Inspector and a member of the Amalgamated Union of Statutory Board Employees, and the youngest is 20-year-old Siti Nur Badi'ah Johari, a student.

Then things weren't the same.
The life that we knew had to change.

The first briefing was held at Downtown East followed by the first training session at Pasir Ris Park. They had to learn how to march as a contingent. "Left... Left... Left, Right, Left." It wasn't just the feet they had to move together, they had to swing their arms to a specific height and in time too.

We've struggled through, the darkest storms we thought we couldn't tame.
Together we've tried, as we stood side by side.

From March 2009, they started attending weekly training sessions in preparation for the National Day Parade on 9 August. Together physically, Mr Johari Arwee, a member of the Union of Telecoms Employees of Singapore, his wife Madam Siti Sadi'ah Kemat, a Housing and Development Board Staff Union member, and their daughter Siti Nur Badi'ah Johari, a student, encourage each other on. Together in spirit, Madam Nor'aidah Ahmat from the General Branch marches with her son, Muhammad Effedni Moohamad from the Ministry of Education's Civil Defence Cadet Corps contingent. So, too, Madadm Sheela Sebestian from Healthcare Services Employees' Union with her son Shaun Pillai who is in the SAF Contingent.

I knew we'd build a new world, a world of hope for ever after.
Deep in my heard I just know, right from the start we will grow.

Training took the NTUC Contingent from Pasir Ris to Nee Soon Camp and Marina Bay. Rain or shine, they showed up. They were there.

Look where we are, we've come so far. And there's still a long long way to go...
With all my heart, I will care. I'll play my part, I will share.

NTUC and Ministry of Defence supplied refreshments to replenish weary bodies and spirit.

With family and friends, together we'll stand
And in the end, hand in hand
We will get there!

Yes, in two weeks, they will go on parade. They will get there!

Don't Stand On Ceremony

NTUC President Visits Labour Movement's National Day Parade Contingent On 18 July

Picture Portrait... NTUC President John De Payva was garlanded and asked by many NTUC members to pose one for the album during his visit on 18 July 2009. He gamely obliged all who made the request.

Walking Fit... From left: Mohan Raghavan, 67, LTA Civil Engineering Inspector (AUSBE); Yeo Bee Hiong, 62, Nan San Primary School Attendant (GB); Tan Hock Soon (back row), NTUC Contingent Commander, FDAWU General Secretary; John De Payva, NTUC President; Tan Kee Jwee, 60, National Cancer Centre Account Assistant (GB); Leo Sequeira, 64, retired teacher, he used to teach at Montfort junior School (STU); Kalimuthu Manoharan, 55, Mechanical Support Officer with Ministry of Home Affairs (AUPE).

谈五十五后的新生活

撰文：**杨启龙**

当我还是一名学生时，我对年青人与老年人的理解是简单的。我们大家都能够在下午两点钟的时候踢足球，而不担心会被太阳晒伤或中暑；或在大水沟中嬉戏，而不担心会被传染某种流行感冒—因为我们当时都是年轻人。每个年长的人都重复指我们太傻了，在酷热的太阳毒晒之下，这么跑动和跳入大水沟的脏水中去，是会生病的。

是的，老师们年老了，爷爷奶奶们也年老了，而你们拜年时见到的伯父伯母们和叔婶们也年老了。父母亲不止年纪大，还具有影响年轻一辈的特别权力，而使你们从来不会忘记哪一代人是主导。在那些日子里，如果你年已过45岁，你就会被视为中年人。我甚至还记得我有一位年纪比较大的表亲，他只不过比我大几岁，而我还以为他老成持重。他对我说，他必须在30岁的时候升上高职，因为在那以后，一个人的职业前途将往下坡路滑落！

在那些日子里，我从来不去想一个人会逐渐年老的问题。我是在1953年出生的。当我在1970年达到17岁的时候，距离一个新的世纪还有30年之久，使我以为我永远不会真正活到那个时候。或许到了那个时候，某个人会发现一种长生不老药，使每个人都能永保青春。

从那时开始，人生的宝贵时光飞驰而过，我去年刚好55岁。这个年龄是我年轻时所知道的退休年龄。但你瞧，我的第55个生日无声无息地来了又去了。身体没有新的疼痛，生活的节奏也没有减速，我依然能够在高尔夫球场上打18个球洞而不会气喘吁吁，甚至还能够一次过地设法打完36个球洞。我还是行的，虽然在最后阶段是有些吃力。我甚至没有想到要打电话去中央公积金局查询我什么时候可以领出存款。

你或许知道某位人士可能已经发现某种可以保持青春的药方。和我一直保持联络的儿时朋友，在相聚时还是以同样的语气谈论同样的话题—我们谈到过去的岁月时，总是不期而然地慢慢地显露一点儿时的淘气顽皮。而我在大学和国民服役时期所认识的朋友，以及我加入职总服务之前在各个机构共同工作过的同事们，我们组成了各个不同的群组。我们的群组成员不时相聚在一起。他们也似乎保持旧时的音容笑貌。

是的，岁月不饶人，一些朋友的头发已经显露灰白，而一些朋友的头发已经看不到了。而我们中的大多数人现在谈的话题是已经长大的孩子，而不是小孩。其中有一两个人甚至自豪地大谈他们有了几个孙子。除此之外，这一群年已过半百的朋友，似乎没有显示有转换人生 “车速排挡”的老态。事实上，他们似乎还要跑得更快！

在职工运动的组织中，大约有7万1000名工会会员的年龄超过55岁。而在今后的10中，大约再有15万1000名工会会员将加入这个金色年龄群体。在职工运动中，这将是一个增长迅速的群体，一个值得我们给予更多关注的群体。

在“工运2011”愿景中，这个群体贴切地被称为“银领”工人，以便区别传统的“白领”和“蓝领”工人，以及“金领”工人，同时推出相关计划，为这群银领工友服务。现在这些计划注入了新的元素，更加注重推行辅助计划，促使银领工友保持工作，生活和休闲的平衡。为此，原有的银领运动现在改称为“U生活社群”。这正如人们所说的：“生命就是为了生活。”

一个人到了55岁便意味着必须离开工作岗位而享受退休生活的日子，已经一去不复返。今天即使一个人到了62岁也不被认为太老。许多人到了这个年龄获得重新雇用，而对职场做出有价值的贡献。新的55岁开外的工友依然健康，并且知道如何保持健康。新的55岁开外的工友之所以是快乐和活跃，乃是因为他们身体健康，而且还能与同龄人和其他年龄层的工友共同参加活动；此外，他们也能够传授年青人一些工作经验。

新的55岁开外的工友力求在职场上保持生产力。职场重新设计工作让任何年龄层的工友容易发挥最大的工作效能。而最重要的是，新的55岁开外的工友能够利用他们丰富的工作经验，作为工友的导师、培训者和指导者，赋予了新的生命意义。他们快乐和健康，具有生产力和具有生活目标……这些就是“U生活社群”的特点。我是一名55岁开外的人，并且以作为“U生活社群”的一名成员而感到自豪。

透明是劳资互动的关键

大众钢铁集团的工厂先后在2008年的12月和今年的1月关闭了一个星期。由于全球经济危机，产品需求减少，该厂为了避免生产过剩，只好采取这个办法节省成本。幸好该公司跟大众钢铁场雇员联合会关系良好，工友们、会员们无须遭受裁员和工厂长时间关闭的痛苦。

在工厂关闭的那一个星期里，大众钢铁场雇联关注工友们的收入，也已作好准备不让工友们吃亏。另一方面，公司最关心的是高昂的储存成本，如果员工在缺乏需求的情况下继续生产，势必造成产量过度，库存增加，必须租用额外的地方储存产品。在了解了双方的问题之后，大众钢铁场雇联便跟管理层紧密合作，设法为工友和公司创造双赢局面。

该会秘书长法伍兹说：“那些已经用完年假的员工，我们要求公司允许他们在工厂关闭的那一个星期继续工作。唯一不同的是他们不在生产线工作，而是整理厂房。这样工友们就不须大幅度削减工资。”

此举受到工友的欢迎，也乐意请假或更改日常职务。这就是管理层、工会和会员通力合作的成果。而工厂每周举行的对话会，也让生产线督工和高级副总裁互通信息，拍板解决工作上遇到的难题。

法伍兹指出：“对话会上，我们讨论会员福利和商业需求。双方坦诚布公，互相交流，取得工友的信任与合作。”

作为良好劳资关系的全力支持者，大众钢铁厂也打算跟王鼎昌工运领袖学院讨论未来合作联办劳资关系课程，以便把良好的劳资关系提升为公司的经营策略。

于1984年成立的大众钢铁场雇员联合会代表大众钢铁集团的雇员。它目前总共有233名普通分会会员，其中67人是一般分会会员，23人是不可议薪会员。

与乐龄人士一起庆祝生日

职总推出独特的U Live生日游戏，让年龄到达55岁的乐龄人士和职总会员度过快乐的生日。首批366名到达55岁的乐龄人士只要上网登记自己的生辰，便有机会在2009年8月31日之前赢取28元奖金。如果奖金已经被别人赢取了怎么办呢？别失望，只须再次登记生辰，还是有机会在2009年9月11日到2010年8月31日之间参加每周幸运抽奖，赢取88元的奖金。

U Live生日游戏公开给所有年龄在55岁以上的乐龄人士和职总会员参加。有兴趣报名的人士只需拥有一个有效的电子邮件户口就可以上网参赛，网址是www.ulivebirthdaygame.sg。主办单位将通过电邮或打电话通知所有的得奖者。此外，得奖者的名单也将会刊登在“生日游戏”（Birthday Game）的网页上。

U Live是55岁以上乐龄人士的专属社区。开辟这个社区的目的是通过一系列的工作、生活和玩乐服务，让他们过着积极和充实的生活。U Live所展开的活动包括活跃老龄、重新雇佣、兴趣小组和各种优惠。就以生日游戏来说，组织这项活动是为了鼓励更多乐龄人士和退休人士接触到网络世界，让他们从中学习新事物、用电邮和朋友沟通、阅读U Live社区的信息等。

任何乐龄人士想参加U Live，请在7月25日至26日到兀兰、淡滨尼、裕廊、女皇镇和大巴窑图书馆，现场了解各项详情，也可浏览www.ulive.sg，了解U Live的相关信息。

就业与职能培训中心
方向正确
协助工友渡过难关

王得天报道　图片提供**就业与职能培训中心**

2009年7月22日，国家发展部长马保山和环境与水源兼回教事务主管部长雅国博士率领国会议员们到职总属下的就业与职能培训中心参观，并同在该中心接受培训的学员交流。当天，嘉宾们除了观察求职者接受培训的过程之外，也参观在现场所展示的工作资料。

以下是一些议员在这次参观之后所发表的看法：

“培训中心从筛选、面试、工作预备到培训提供了一个完整的配套，服务全面化。当雇主面试在中心完成培训的求职者时，便省却了很多时间。中心在调整求职者的期望和提供相关培训方面也做得很好。整体来说，中心的努力值得赞扬。过去，我都是推荐居民们到社区发展理事会。但就业与职能培训中心现在是另一个我可以推荐求职者去的地方，特别是那些须要接受更多培训和那些已经做好工作准备的人士。

— 白沙、榜鹅集选区国会议员张有福

“中心的工作人员为了帮助国人提升能力和摆脱困境做了很多工作，让我留下非常深刻的印象。这里的服务程序非常细致。工作人员为了确保工作配对确实有效，很努力地区分哪些求职者具备条件哪些还没做好准备。我发现到一点，中心替公司做了很多的工作，比如说筛选和面试，省却了公司的时间。这点是非常珍贵的，这等同于搭桥，缩短了求职者的寻找工作时间。我也对中心的员工年龄留下印象。他们都是年轻人，他们的热忱将鼓舞求职者抱着正确的求职态度。总的来说，就业与职能培训中心承担着艰巨的任务，我在此祝他们一切顺利。

— 环境及水源部长兼回教事务主管部长雅国博士

就业与职能培训中心总裁洪鼎基（右）向部长和议员们介绍工作展览厅所提供的工作职位。

就业与职能培训中心的两名求职者以走猫步的表演方式向现场的来宾自我介绍，逗得大家哄堂大笑。

“中心的工作评估、安置工作和支援程序结构严谨，系统清晰，让我留下非常深刻的印象。我特别喜欢一站式的服务方式。这里集合了所有的设施，方便求职者，对他们很有帮助。我也特别对求职者和中心人员显示出来的共同责任感留下印象。我想这点能够保障工作队伍在经济危机过后具备回弹能力。

— 惹兰勿刹集选区国会议员潘丽萍

“当我驾车进入就业与职能培训中心时，看见许多人冒着大雨来中心参加培训。我对这一幕留下深刻印象。这说明很多人都愿意到此接受培训。参观之后，我进一步了解中心如何协助工友。从筛选到各个不同的环节，中心的工作人员都带着同理心帮助求职者。他们对工作充满热情，尽力协助更多的国人找工作。

— 官委议员李国华

“我要表扬和恭喜所有参与设立和管理设施的工作人员。作为新加坡劳工基金的主席，我也参与设立中心的筹款工作。记得林瑞生秘书长当初提到这件事时，他建议为工友提供一个工作配对和为工作做准备的地方。概念上是正确的。现在这项计划运作得很好。我们所花的金钱是值得的。我很高兴见到这里的现况。我跟那些到这里求助的人士和参加培训的学员交谈之后，更加感受到这项工作的意义重大，值得我们付出心血和努力。我们的方向正确，应该可以减轻经济不景气所造成的不良影响，并且能够协助工友渡过难关。

— 国家发展部长马宝山

吸引国人
从事公共交通业

过去三年来，巴士业者已经调整了工资，但还是没有办法吸引本地人从事巴士行业，只好转向中国和马来西亚招聘员工。尽管如此，从工运的角度来看，创造工作很不容易，应将难得的工作机会让给本地工友。

> **全国交联的领袖不止有理想，也有实现理想的勇气和胆量。他们坚持正确理念，发动工友实现目标。**
>
> **— 林瑞生赞扬全国交联领袖**

王得天报道

我国的公共交通行业面临两大挑战：

第一、业者在为搭客提供良好服务的同时该如何确保收费便宜；

第二、巴士车长短缺。

职总秘书长林瑞生于2009年7月20日在职总中心参加全国交通工友联合会的会员大会时指出，全球经济不景气影响了公共交通行业。现在很多拥有车子的人放弃驾车而改搭地铁和巴士，他们要求提升公共交通服务的水平，并且在他们的工资没有增加的情况下，希望交通业者能减低车资。至于巴士车长短缺的问题，就不单纯是经济不景气的后果，而是求职者和工作性质不配对造成的。这样的情况属于结构性失业。

林瑞生总结巴士公司难以吸引本地人担当巴士车长的原因："有两种类别的工友：第一种是本身没有三号和四号驾驶执照，不够资格申请巴士车长的工作；第二种则是埋怨巴士车长的工作太过辛苦，工资又不高而不愿意申请。"

为此，他认为要解决这个问题就必须依靠劳资政三方伙伴共同努力使巴士车长的工作更加吸引人，以便减少求职者和工作之间的配对矛盾。其中最直接的方法便是调整工资，提高巴士车长的起薪，同时执行论功行赏的制度，鼓励员工提升服务品质。

不过，秘书长也认识到这并不是一件容易的事情。过去三年来，巴士业者已经调整了工资，但还是没有办法吸引本地人从事巴士行业，只好转向中国和马来西亚招聘员工。尽管如此，从工运的角度来看，创造工作很不容易，应将难得的工作机会让给本地工友。为了突破这个瓶颈，他鼓励新的执委在下来四年里，借助劳资政三方的力量，提高巴士车长职位的吸引力，使到我国公共交通行业的服务既好又便宜。

林瑞生在讲话中也高度肯定交通工联的贡献，赞扬他们敢于坚持正确的路线，为工友谋福利。当天陪同林瑞生参加会员大会开幕礼的其他嘉宾还有职总会长德培华、两名职总助理秘书长王乙康和杨莉明，以及全国交通工联会长刘来福等人。

我国优势令人羡慕

我国的劳资关系巩固。每当我们遇到问题时，双方能够坐下来一起协商解决办法，但外国的情况却并非如此。

职总秘书长林瑞生提起他前阵子到日内瓦参加国际劳工组织大会时的见闻。

他说："美国的失业率创下86年来的新高，达到9.5%，更糟糕的是失业率仍在上升，工会领袖无能为力。欧洲的工会领袖的日子也不好过，他们的失业率一直在提高当中。爱尔兰在一年前的失业率大约是3%，但今天却提高到11%，他们的劳资政协作现在消逝无踪，投资家也已纷纷离开。一名来自法国的工会领袖告诉我，欧洲已经出现工作外流的现象，使得该区的工友失去良好的工作和薪金，没有钱进行消费，进而造成全球的消费信心无法恢复、全球经济不会在短期内复苏。"

林瑞生也透露，某国的工会领袖告诉他，他们的总工会原本想推行类似我国的雇佣补贴、技能提升与应变计划，也想成立类似我国的就业与技能提升培训中心，只是碍于政治派别的矛盾，使得政府不愿拨款支持工会展开有关的措施。在韩国，他们有工会、政府、雇主和非政府组织四方的协作关系，可是当地政府无法提供经费，结果四方美好的愿望和理想只能停留在决议的阶段。而英国的工会领袖在听闻职总协助推行的各种劳资政计划之后问职总会长德培华，我国政府筹借了多少钱推行计划。当他知晓了新加坡政府是动用过去的储备后又问，要是经济不景气延后到2010年，我国政府还有能力支持下去吗？德培华回复说，答案当然是肯定的，我国政府有足够的财力，只要是必须做的事，工会将积极推行。

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转逆势

准备条件 力争上游

王得天报道/摄影

尽管我国第二季度的经济表现有所进步，但职总劝请我国公司继续借助技能提升与应变计划控制成本、保住工作，并借机充实能量，待日反弹。

2009年7月17日，职总发表半年回顾报告。报告称，今年上半年，有组建工会的公司为了削减劳工成本，开始缩短每周工作日，甚至暂时裁退员工，受此措施影响的个人达3万1100人。不过第二季受影响的人数比第一季明显减少，从2万4000多人减少到7600多人。而被裁退的员工也从第一季的4700多人减少到第二季的1400多人。很明显的，有组建工会的公司为了控制成本和保住工作所采取的措施已经奏效。此外，电子和化工业订单增加是带动劳动市场改善的部分原因。但上半年已经受到打击的塑料、机械和纺织业接下来情况可能更严峻。

职总也表示，全球经济前景仍旧不明朗，加上职总已经接获一些公司打算裁员的通知，并且有迹象显示更多公司将会实施缩短工作日的措施，因此不排除今年下半年可能出现另一波的裁员潮。按职总秘书长的估计，下半年被裁的人数可能多达几百到几千人。

总结上半年的情况时，林瑞生秘书长表示，上半年第二季裁员人数减少跟职总鼓励公司培训员工，以及缩短工作周和冻结薪金花红等措施脱离不了关系。然而，通过削减成本来控制裁员人数只能够达到暂时性的效果，所以雇主必须利用时间投资在剩余的劳动力，培训员工学习新能力。与此同时应继续推行削减成本措施，继续执行灵活工作制，避免大幅度裁员的现象。

职总已经为大约半数在上半年被裁退的工会会员提供培训，协助他们回返工作岗位。另外，已有3万6000多名来自175家有组建工会的企业的员工在技能提升与应变计划下接受培训。

当天陪同林瑞生出席发表会的还有职总工业关系署署长詹惠凤。

她指出，全球的展望还是不明朗，很多国家的就业情况继续恶化，美国作为世界最大的市场也面对消费疲弱的问题。有鉴于此，我国经济不可能出现强力反弹，倒是很有可能削减或冻结工资，至于员工是否获得花红将根据公司的业绩来决定。她建议在这样的情况下，我们必须专心致志避免创下最高的裁员和失业记录，并在经济复苏之后力争上游。

职总秘书长林瑞生（左）和工业关系署署长詹惠凤分别说明上半年的就业与裁员形势。

“职工运动的再培训工作有三个侧重：一、提高工友的就业能力—在经济好景时，很多公司没有时间培训员工，现在这些公司应该利用时机提升员工的就业能力。二、职能培训—提高工友目前的职业技能。三、掌握新能力—培训工友掌握未来需要的技术。有些公司正利用低迷的时期实施新的生产程序。这是培训员工适应新程序的良机。”

— 职总秘书长林瑞生

“我们在今年年初便跨步朝向三大关键业绩指标。首先是避免裁员人数超越1998年的2万9000人记录；其次是失业率避免超越2003年的5.2%；第三是准备好强力反弹，即充分利用低迷时期，提升工友的工作实力。此外，我们也努力提高就业人数，例如协助年长工友重新受雇等。我们不能允许经济不景气耽搁了这方面的工作。”

— 职总工业关系署署长詹惠凤

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吸引国人从事公共交通业