

MENDAKI SYMPOSIUM 2023

RETHINKING
WORK



COMPENDIUM 2023

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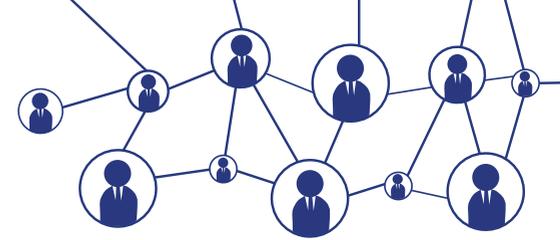
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PREAMBLE

MENDAKI Symposium 2023 Rethinking Work

The MENDAKI Symposium's key initiatives served to bring together leading academics, educators, policymakers, and practitioners to facilitate an exchange of ideas in the community.

This year's theme was "Rethinking Work", where we discussed employment, employability, and lifelong learning issues faced by the community amidst an evolving technological and economic landscape.

As a continuation from last year's symposium titled 'Rethinking Education', then-Senior Minister Tharman Shanmugaratnam highlighted in his Keynote Speech the need to narrow the income gap between academic and non-academic skills. This year, we continued the conversations with academics and industry professionals to gather insights and form close partnerships that could shape the ways we curate our programmes and influence the trajectories of future research and national policies.

We were pleased to welcome **Dr Tan See Leng**, Minister for Manpower and Second Minister for Trade and Industry, as our Guest of Honour who delivered the Keynote Address for this year's Symposium. The Symposium was also graced by **Mr Zaqy Mohamad**, Minister of State for Defence and Manpower, and Deputy Chairman of Yayasan MENDAKI ("MENDAKI").

The first session of the Symposium on "Evolving Career Landscapes" addressed the challenges arising from technological disruptions and highlighted strategies to strengthen support for youths and workers. In session two on "Family Friendly, Equal Opportunity Workplaces", the panellists discussed how we could better support workers with diverse needs and continue to preserve Singapore's harmonious workplace culture. The final session on "Integrating Education and Work" referred to the findings from MENDAKI's Employment and Employability study which was completed in 2022 to understand the current attitudes of the community towards upskilling and how employees, employers, schools, and policymakers could encourage lifelong learning.

These discussions would help to influence the strategies of various stakeholders to help uplift the community. In MENDAKI, we will continue our efforts to empower and navigate the community towards success through our programmes and services.



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PANELLISTS' BIOGRAPHIES



Dr Tan See Leng

**Minister for Manpower
Second Minister for Trade and Industry**

Dr Tan See Leng was appointed as the Minister for Manpower and Second Minister for Trade and Industry on 15 May 2021. Prior to this, Dr Tan was the Minister in the Prime Minister's Office, Second Minister for Trade and Industry and Second Minister for Manpower from 27 July 2020.

Dr Tan has served on the boards of several medical committees including Singapore Ministry of Health's Medishield Life Review Committee. He was also on the Advisory Board of Lee Kong Chian School of Business at Singapore Management University and has guest lectured at many international symposiums including the Harvard Business School's series on healthcare entrepreneurship.



Dr Walter Edgar Theseira

**Associate Professor of Economics
School of Business
Singapore University of Social Sciences**

Dr Walter Edgar Theseira is an Associate Professor of Economics, School of Business, Singapore University of Social Sciences. His Ph.D. is in Applied Economics and Managerial Science from the Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania. He has published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences and the Journal of Economic Behaviour and Organisation.

Dr Theseira has also advised Government agencies on economics research and is a Board Member of the Competition and Consumer Commission of Singapore. He served as a Nominated Member of Parliament in the 13th Parliament of Singapore.



Ms Fadhilah Abdul Rahman Zamawi

**Assistant Director, Economic Policy
National Trades Union Congress**

Ms Fadhilah Abdul Rahman Zamawi is the Assistant Director of Economic Policy at National Trades Union Congress (NTUC), where she works closely with the government, union and employer stakeholders to design and develop high-level strategies for NTUC's entry into supporting Skilled Tradespeople through the Career Progression Model and related initiatives. Ms Fadhilah is also currently the Programme Director at MENDAKI Club, where she leads the Self Discovery and Career Awareness Programme which aims to provide students with access to opportunities to broaden their thinking about their future.



Mr Johann Johari

**Assistant Director, Planning
Yayasan MENDAKI**

Mr Johann Johari is the Assistant Director of Planning where he oversees Organisational Development at MENDAKI. Prior to that, he was the Assistant Director of Future Ready, to develop youth and young professionals and equip them with relevant skills. He has served in MENDAKI for 15 years.

Mr Johann holds a Masters in Non-Profit Management from the Singapore University of Social Sciences. He also holds a BA in Economics and Political Science from the University of Western Australia.



Dr Irene Y.H. Ng

**Associate Professor of Social Work
National University of Singapore**

Dr Irene Y.H. Ng is an Associate Professor of Social Work and Steering Committee Chair of the Social Service Research Centre in the National University of Singapore. She holds a joint Ph.D. in Social Work and Economics from the University of Michigan. Her research areas include poverty and inequality, intergenerational mobility, and social welfare policy. Her current research projects include a study of in-work poverty among the young; social safety nets in East Asia; and the development of universal digital access.

She is active in the community, serving or having served in committees in the Ministry of Social and Family Development, National Council of Social Service, Ministry of Manpower, and various voluntary welfare organisations. She is currently the Vice-Chairperson of the Board of Youth Guidance Outreach Services.



Mr Abdul Samad Bin Abdul Wahab

**Vice-President
National Trades Union Congress**

Mr Abdul Samad Bin Abdul Wahab started his union journey in 2006 with Union of Power and Gas Employees and became General Secretary in 2015. He was also elected to the NTUC Central Committee. In 2019, he was re-elected and appointed Vice President since then. He is currently working in SP Group as a Principal Technical Officer, where he provides consultation to agencies, consultants, and contractors to protect power cables and gas pipes to prevent disruption.

Mr Abdul Samad has been chairing two committees in NTUC such as Membership, Oil Petroleum Energy Chemical Cluster from 2019. He also chaired the NTUC Care & Share Committee earlier in 2015. He was appointed as a Nominated Member of Parliament in 2021 for two and a half years. He is also currently a board member at SkillsFuture Singapore and NTUC Learning Hub.



Ms Hazlina Abdul Halim

**President
Persatuan Pemudi Islam Singapura**

Ms Hazlina Abdul Halim is the President of the Singapore Muslim Women's Association (PPIS), an organisation dedicated to inspiring women and strengthening families. PPIS and Oaks Plus Limited run 17 centres for women, families, and children — including seven early childhood education and two student care centres, two family service centres, a divorce support specialist agency, a fostering agency, as well as centres for young marriages and stepfamilies.

Under Ms Hazlina's leadership, PPIS published its first-ever research publication on the Aspirations of Muslim Women, built Singapore's first secular Halfway House for females, launched a post-graduate scholarship for women in partnership with Prophet Muhammad's Birthday Memorial Scholarship Fund Board (or LBKM), developed a new initiative called Women Space, and established Oaks Plus Limited which runs early childhood education centres.

Ms Hazlina is also the Chief Executive Officer of Make-A-Wish Foundation, a charity which transforms lives one wish at a time.



Ms Iryani Halip

**Senior Executive, Research & Design
Yayasan MENDAKI**

Ms Iryani Halip is a Senior Research Officer at Yayasan MENDAKI. After completing her Bachelor's in Mathematical Science at Nanyang Technological University, Ms Iryani gained research interests primarily focused on the behavioural insights affecting employment and employability of youth and adults. In 2021, Ms Iryani led Yayasan MENDAKI's Employment & Employability Study.



Ms Atiqah Halim

**Deputy Director, Future Ready
Yayasan MENDAKI**

Ms Atiqah Halim has over 15 years of public service experience in people, leadership, and organisational development. She is passionate about developing communities and enabling individuals and families to thrive and has recently completed a graduate diploma in Positive Psychology. She is also a certified life and career coach.

Ms Atiqah currently heads the Future Ready Team in Yayasan MENDAKI and is constantly looking at ways to inspire and future proof our Malay/Muslim youth and workforce.



Dr Silin Yang

**Deputy Director, Strategy
National Trades Union Congress**

Dr Silin Yang conducts strategic research studies to identify emerging trends that impact workers and the Labour Movement as the Deputy Director (Strategy) of NTUC. She holds a Doctor of Philosophy and has close to 20 years of experience in the education sector. Her experience teaching primary school pupils, higher education students, and adult learners is the source of her deep interest in training and learning.

Dr Silin Yang's current research focuses on adult learning, underemployment, and the future of human capital. She is also the founding editor of the Singapore Labour Journal and sits on the advisory committee of the Singapore Institute of Technology's Teaching and Learning Academy.



Dr Gog Soon Joo

**Chief Skills Officer
SkillsFuture Singapore**

Dr Gog Soon Joo is the Chief Skills Officer at SkillsFuture Singapore (SSG) and has held several posts in the Government sector. She leads a team of Jobs-Skills Analysts, Data Scientists, and Futurists, to identify global trends that impact business, jobs, and skills. Dr Gog and her team, work with local and international partners to prototype solutions in the areas of future of work, future of learning and future skills. Dr Gog's research interests include capitalism in the digital economy, new economy firms, skills ecosystems, and skills policies.



Ms Chelvin Loh

**Director
Skills Intelligence and Planning Division
SkillsFuture Singapore**

Ms Chelvin Loh is currently the Director of Skills Intelligence and Planning Division in SSG, which is a statutory board under the Ministry of Education. Ms Loh leads a team of skills policy officers, data analysts and scientists to chart policies that can support and lead SSG's skills innovation efforts, including the development and transformation of our national skills framework, skills-based credentialing, and skills-based talent attraction & development, and leverage machine learning and AI to power the next phase of our national jobs-skills intelligence engine.



Mr Sufyan Bin Mohamad Ali

Senior Executive
Digital Transformation Office
Singapore Malay Chamber of Commerce
and Industry

Mr Sufyan Bin Mohamad Ali is a Senior Executive at the Digital Transformation Office of Singapore Malay Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SMCCI). With a Bachelor Degree in Mechanical Engineering, certifications in Google's UX Design and Strategic Technology and Operation Roadmapping, Mr Sufyan brings a strong technical background to his role. Mr Sufyan is dedicated to helping businesses embrace digital platforms/services/features like TikTok Shop, Canva, Meta Business Suite and many more.

As a mentor for Tech For Good, Mr Sufyan is committed to empowering persons with disabilities and the elderly through technology. With his ability to translate complex tech concepts into simple terms, Mr Sufyan facilitates effective communication. He aspires to support Malay/Muslim businesses in their digital transformation journey, making a positive impact within his community. Mr Sufyan's passion for lifelong learning and problem-solving makes him an asset in driving digital transformation.

**OPENING
ADDRESS**

MENDAKI SYMPOSIUM 2023

OPENING ADDRESS

EMPLOYMENT AND LIFELONG LEARNING

WE CONSTANTLY NEED TO PICK UP NEW SKILLS TO STAY RELEVANT

REMAIN ADAPTABLE, NIMBLE, RESPONSIVE AND AGILE AS WE HAD DURING COVID

WE WILL NOT ONLY SURVIVE, BUT WE WILL EMERGE STRONGER!

DR TAN SEE LENG

SECOND MINISTER FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY
MINISTER FOR MANPOWER

FRIENDLY DOCTOR'S ADVICE *on* CAREER HEALTH

1 KNOW *thy* HEALTH

BETTER INSIGHTS AND AWARENESS OF YOUR OWN CAREER PROSPECTS

DO REGULAR "CAREER HEALTH CHECKS" TO FIND OPPORTUNITIES IN THE LABOUR MARKET

KNOW THE ECONOMY

WHERE IS IT HEADING?

HOW IS IT TRANSFORMING?

HOW IS IT GROWING?

& SEIZE THEM

2

HAVE A *Plan*

TAKE DECISIVE STEPS

RESKILL, UPSKILL AND TAKE ON NEW CAREER CHALLENGES

TO STAY AHEAD OF THE COMPETITION

STAND EVER READY TO SEIZE NEW OPPORTUNITIES

3

DON'T BE AFRAID TO ASK FOR *Help*

RE-EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT FOR DISPLACED WORKERS

Always Be Positive

CONSULT A FRIENDLY CAREER COACH

OPENING ADDRESS

By Dr Tan See Leng
Minister for Manpower

Mr Zaqy Mohamad, Senior Minister of State for Ministry of Defence & Ministry of Manpower and Deputy Chairman of Yayasan MENDAKI. Mdm Zuraidah Abdullah, CEO of Yayasan MENDAKI,

Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Introduction

Good morning! It is my pleasure to be here at the MENDAKI Symposium. I would like to thank MENDAKI for inviting me. I am glad to see many of you here today.

The theme for this year's symposium, Employment and Lifelong Learning, is an excellent and apt theme, because it is not just relevant to the Malay/Muslim community, but for everyone in Singapore.

In the vast overwhelming majority of our lives and our careers, it is very unlikely that you will end up just holding one job. And because of that, we constantly need to pick up new skills to stay relevant, particularly in the face of all these transformations and disruptions, so that we can continue to move up the career ladder and improve our career prospects.

Update on the labour market situation

Over the past year, Singapore has emerged from the shadows of COVID and we have roared back to life. Many of us here today would have had the chance to travel over the June holidays last month. I am sure that as you travelled, you don't see "Safe Entry" and "Trace Together" happening anymore.

In tandem with the re-opening, the labour market has improved significantly.

- a. Our total employment grew by more than 200,000 in 2022 alone, and the resident unemployment rate fell to 2.5% in March this year. This is well below the pre-pandemic levels.

The healthy and resilient labour market that we have did not happen by chance. We could turn around very quickly and robustly, and this is due to the very strong compact that we have, the efforts of the workers, employers, educational institutions, the community organisations, as well as the Government.

I am happy to note that MENDAKI has been an active partner in our efforts to help prepare Singaporeans for new opportunities. MENDAKI works very closely with MUIS, People's Association Malay Activity Executive Committees Council (PA MESRA) and other Malay/Muslim Organisations in the M3 network, to help us drive various employment and upskilling programmes. In the past year alone, the M3 network has strengthened its referral process, involving agencies such as NTUC's Employability and Employment Institute (e2i), NTUC LearningHub, Workforce Singapore (WSG) and SkillsFuture Singapore. All of them came together to better support Malay/Muslim workers with their employment needs - from training and upskilling to facilitating job placements. In 2022 alone, MENDAKI co-organised six career fairs with WSG and e2i and assisted in about 1,700 employment-related cases!

MENDAKI is also a strong advocate of lifelong learning. Its Raikan Ilmu (Celebrate Knowledge) campaign, which was launched in 2016, promotes the culture of learning within the Malay/Muslim community. In October 2022, MENDAKI organised close to 40 exciting activities, events and programmes across 11 M3 towns.

MENDAKI also has a range of fantastic ground up initiatives, such as the Professional Networks that help Malay/Muslim PMETs grow their social capital, and the Women At Work programme that helps Malay/Muslim women return to the workforce, that complements our WSG programmes.

Looking ahead, I hope that we can continue to count on the strong support of MENDAKI and our other community partners. This is as, while we have done well in 2022, we are already facing and are going to face significant headwinds for the rest of 2023. Our economy grew by 0.4% year-on-year, in the first quarter of 2023. This is slower than the previous quarter's 2.1%. There are stark realities facing Singapore and the global economy.

- a. The war in Ukraine continues to put upward pressure on global energy and food prices.
- b. The global economy has also seen turbulence, which has resulted in more disruptions to the international labour market. Our beloved country Singapore has not been spared.

Against this backdrop, many Singaporeans are understandably anxious about their jobs and the economy. But let me reassure all of you – never fear. If we can put the worst of COVID-19 – the black swan event that was the crisis of a generation – behind us, we, collectively as a people, can take on any challenge.

Journeying with our people

I have full confidence that if our people are united and remain adaptable, nimble, responsive and agile as we had during COVID, we will survive the coming storms. In fact, I don't think we will just survive, but we will emerge stronger.

Over the past year, I had the privilege of engaging Singaporeans from all walks of life through the Forward Singapore exercise. Through many meaningful conversations, I have heard a common theme from fellow Singaporeans. Whether you are a fresh graduate, mid-career worker, or in a later stage of your career, you all want to improve your career prospects and do better for yourselves and your families.

Rest assured that the Government is committed to supporting your aspirations. We will journey with you, with our people, every single step of the way, in all of your careers. What does this mean for Singaporeans in different seasons of life?

- a. For fresh graduates who are worried about the transition from school to the workplace, we will enable you to pursue diverse career pathways with good prospects
- b. For mid-career workers, we want to empower you to be employable and relevant, so as to achieve greater impact and to bring out the best in your teams or organisations. The Government will continue to invest in Singaporeans to ensure that you have the skill sets and capabilities to succeed throughout your working lives. For those who are looking to switch careers, we will support them in areas such as job search and skills development to help them achieve their career goals.
- c. For those who have unfortunately – because of curveballs or perhaps bad luck - lost their jobs, we understand, and we empathise with your anxieties and frustrations. We want to help you bounce back and emerge stronger than before.

Friendly doctor's advice on career health

Before politics, I served as a medical doctor. Perhaps, wearing the hat of a general practitioner, allow me to dispense some friendly doctor's advice on employability and lifelong learning. I want to use health as a proxy.

Know thy health

First, know thy health. I think you know that usually when you see a doctor, the doctor will tell you to do an annual health check-up to find out your body mass index, blood pressure and cholesterol levels.

In a similar vein, it is therefore important to have better insights and awareness of your own career prospects, where you stand vis-à-vis what is happening around the world and the industry, and how the economy is heading, where it is heading, how it is growing and how it is transforming.

Now, a lot of my older friends and colleagues will say that "ignorance is bliss" – sometimes it is better to avoid health check-ups to avoid hearing bad news. But given the advances today, it is always better to detect health issues early, so that you can actively intervene, either to prevent it or to put yourself in a better position.

Have a plan

Secondly, always have a plan. If you don't plan, there is only one way and that is downwards. It is good to have hope, but hope is not a plan, so don't just hope. Translate that hope – put down what you hope to see and then implement a plan. If we know the state of our health, the information is only going to be valuable and useful to the extent that we act on it by developing healthy habits, in terms of our physical exercise, the diet that we keep, and the rest that we take. You apply that in terms of looking for jobs, improving your career prospects – those are the parallels that you can draw.

As I have said in career health, we therefore need to take decisive steps to stay ahead of the competition and we should stand ever ready to seize new opportunities when they come. My colleagues and I from MOM – SMS Zaqy and the whole team – we stand ready to develop alongside with you a career plan, to help you to reskill, upskill and to take on new career challenges so that we can stretch and develop you to achieve mastery in your domain and improve your career prospects.

Don't be afraid to ask for help

Last but not least, if you are struggling, don't be afraid to ask for professional help.

We know that even for the fittest and healthiest amongst all of us, life will always throw curveballs, and people may experience health shocks. Some of us may experience employment shocks in our lifetime. People may fall into unemployment, through no fault of their own.

The key thing is to always be positive. Don't be afraid to ask for help. You can consult a friendly career coach from WSG or NTUC's e2i, who will be able to provide you career advice. The Government is also carefully studying how we can provide re-employment support for displaced workers, so that you can bounce back stronger from setbacks.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, remember your friendly doctor's advice:

- a. Do regular "career health checks" to find out the opportunities in the labour market and how to seize them.
- b. Develop a plan to upskill and reskill and take on career opportunities for growth and development.
- c. Don't be afraid to ask for help to bounce back. The Government will be here to journey with you every step of the way so that we can face these storms of life together and keep moving forward, emerging even stronger.

Thank you and I wish you a very fruitful and engaging conference ahead.

Source: Ministry of Manpower

Accessed from <https://www.mom.gov.sg/newsroom/speeches/2023/0713-opening-address-by-minister-for-manpower-dr-tan-see-leng-at-mendaki-symposium-2023>

SESSION ONE

EVOLVING CAREER LANDSCAPES

With the rise of automation brought about by technological advancement such as artificial intelligence (AI), the types of careers available are evolving. In the Future of Jobs 2020 report, the World Economic Forum predicted that job displacement due to automation will be offset by job growth in emerging professions. While there seems to be an increasing demand for jobs such as data analysts, AI and Machine Learning specialists, and Big Data specialists, there is also a decreasing demand for data entry clerks, administrative and executive secretaries, and accounting. How can we address challenges from the rise of technological disruptions and strengthen support for vulnerable workers?

MENDAKI SYMPOSIUM 2023

EVOLVING CAREER LANDSCAPES



DR TAN SEE LENG,
MINISTER FOR MANPOWER

DR WALTER EDGAR THESEIRA,
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

MS FADHILAH ABDUL RAHMAN ZAMAWI,
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

MR JOHANN JOHARI,
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

KEY TAKEAWAYS



PRESENTATION:



Are Differences Destiny? Reviewing the Skills Distribution of the Malay Community in the Context of the Future Economy

By Dr Walter Edgar Theseira
Associate Professor of Economics
Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS)

Notes:

Skill-Biased Technological Change and the Future Economy

- a. We are undergoing a massive, technology-driven shift in industry and labour markets, enabled by advances in robotics, big data, machine learning, and AI.
- b. Many economists believe both the high-skilled and low-skilled ends of the labour market will experience an increase in demand:
 - i. High-skilled workers will gain productivity because their skills are complemented by technology;
 - ii. Lower-skilled workers will be demanded for services that are hard to replace with technology.
- c. However, this raise concerns that medium-skilled workers will be increasingly replaced by technology, forcing them to 'upgrade' or 'downgrade' their jobs.

Overview of the Singapore and Malay Ethnic Group Labour Force

- a. Before independence, the Malay community was severely under-represented in high-skilled occupation positions.
- b. During Singapore's first phase of post-independence economic development (1970-1990), there was significant growth in mid-skilled work in manufacturing and growth in higher-skilled PMET positions. The Malay community experienced a slow transition to high-skilled work and became over-represented in medium-to lower-skilled work.

Overview of Recent Developments in Returns to Skills in Singapore

- a. The starting pay gap between university graduates and other tertiary education graduates has widened in absolute terms.

- b. Employment prospects have also weakened significantly for non-university graduates.
- c. Across university graduate disciplines, career prospects are diverging significantly, with disciplines linked to technological change enjoying high employment rates and significantly larger starting salaries.

High-Skill Education and Preparedness for the Future Economy

- a. The existing Singapore graduate population lags current education trends and may need help to meet the requirements of a technologically intensive labour market.
- b. While 44.5% of enrolled graduates were in STEM fields in 2021, today only 32% of all graduates are in STEM, and only 21.5% of Malay graduates are in STEM.
- c. From 2010 to 2020, enrolment in Autonomous Universities has proportionately increased faster in Business disciplines (16.4% to 27.5%), with corresponding reductions in STEM (53.5% to 44.5%). However, within the subfield of Information Technology, enrolment is up from 7.1% to 9.3%.
- d. Malay community graduates today tend to be over-represented in Humanities and Social Sciences (particularly in Education) and under-represented in Business and STEM.

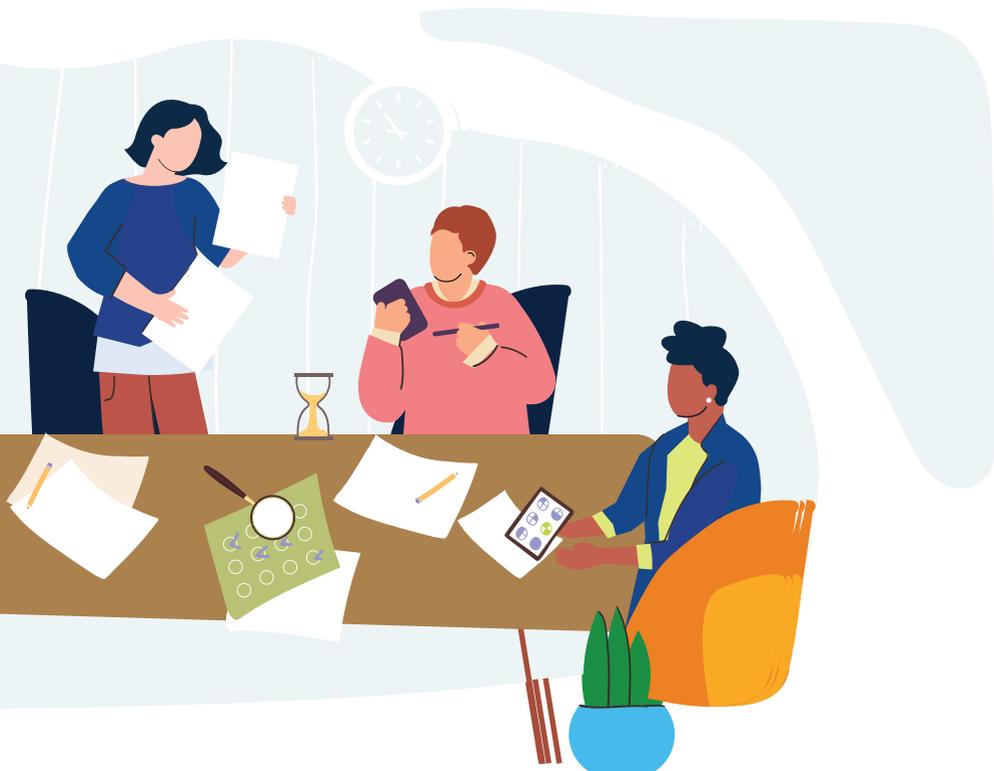
Next Steps

- a. Research may help understand the historic, and continuing, reasons for differences skill and occupational convergence in the Malay community. The role of policy, educational pathways, market opportunities and structure, and community preferences should be examined.
- b. It may be helpful to assess the skills capacity, preferences, and perceptions of the Malay youth and workers, with a view to understanding preparedness and interest in taking up technological-driven training in STEM and skills relevant for the future economy.
- c. Given that technological shifts are likely to continue to change the nature of work and the distribution of returns to skills, without the right adaptations in skills and training, existing gaps may remain or even widen.



Challenges of Youth in Education and Careers Today

- a. Youth may not be aware of the breadth of information available such as their options, the kinds of skills they can pursue, and their future pathways. Youth have to be empowered to distil the information available.
- b. Youth should not get too overwhelmed with the different options and pathways available when it comes to training and upskilling.
- c. If youth are not aware of their own interests and strengths, their efforts to upskill may not be as meaningful. Youth would need to know how the skills that they have learnt can be translated to their career pathways.
- d. It is important for youth to raise self-understanding and self-awareness of their own strengths and interests. Youth should take up the opportunities that are suitable for them instead of just following the trends.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

From Panel Discussion



Progress in Singapore's employment landscape

- a. As a society, we should keep moving on and not fall behind as the career landscape is evolving.
- b. There is a huge rise in continuous education & training throughout the career years (i.e., through lifelong learning) and this will be featured more prominently.
- c. There are opportunities for all Singaporeans to grow in their career with full support from the government.



Relevance of a degree

- a. Whether it is a degree or diploma, qualifications are still relevant. It serves as the foundational process in one's career journey.
- b. The concept of tertiary education allows one to go to an institution with access to subject matter experts and relevant knowledge and information put together in a concise module.
- c. A degree is still relevant to employers as an indicator of employability of employees and as a level of assurance. However, there are more pathways to prove potential other than a degree.



Importance of moving to Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics fields

- a. With a massive technology-driven shift in industry and labour markets, it is important for workers to take up training in STEM and skills relevant for the future economy.
- b. Given that technological shifts are likely to continue changing the nature of work and the distribution of returns to skills, without the right adaptations in skills and training, existing gaps may remain or even widen.



Garnering community efforts to improve employment prospects

- a. Engagement with MENDAKI and M³ has to be significantly strengthened for constant collaboration and feedback.
- b. The community can try to take a broad approach so that youth have more opportunities and be exposed to different industries and from this, they can delve further into their areas of interest to enhance their skills.



Changing the metrics of success

- a. Society should eradicate the idea of comparing with other races in measuring success.
- b. Success is defined differently for each individual and community.
- c. Metrics of success should be expanded to be more growth oriented.

SESSION TWO: FAMILY FRIENDLY, EQUAL OPPORTUNITY WORKPLACES

In Irving Janis' seminal work on decision-making, he coined the term "groupthink" to describe the excessive form of concurrence-seeking within a tight-knit group in which the members are figuratively cut from the same cloth. This development can have a detrimental impact on decision-making and outcomes as alternatives may not be considered. Extrapolating from this argument, it stands to reason that companies boasting a workforce with different views, expertise and experiences at all levels are less likely to be affected by this mental model. Incidentally, this is congruent with the Ministry of Manpower's introduction of workplace fairness legislation, enhancing support for flexible work arrangements, as well as enhancing employment support for vulnerable workers at the Committee of Supply 2023. This is to ensure that we secure family friendly, equal opportunity workplaces to get the best out of our human capital.

MENDAKI SYMPOSIUM 2023

FAMILY-FRIENDLY, EQUAL OPPORTUNITY WORKPLACES



DEGREE HOLDERS WILL LIKELY HAVE STEEPER PAY RISES WHILE ITE AND BELOW SECONDARY SCHOOL EDUCATION HOLDERS' SALARY ARE EXPECTED TO RISE AT A MORE GRADUAL PACE

TARGETED TRAINING & PRODUCTIVITY INTERVENTIONS

ARE CRUCIAL TO MITIGATE THE NEGATIVE IMPACT OF COVID-ONLOWER-WAGE WORKERS' MENTAL AND FINANCIAL HEALTH

THE FEMALE POPULATION HAS A HIGH DESIRE



TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE WORKFORCE



THE TOP PRIORITIES OF WOMEN

- JOB FLEXIBILITY
- JOB SECURITY
- EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

ASPIRATIONS OF WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE

- BALANCING WORK AND FAMILY
- CAREER ADVANCEMENT AND SALARY
- FULL-TIME EMPLOYMENT OR NEW ROLES

“THE FUTURE OF THE WORKFORCE IS *Young & Female*”



MS HAZLINA ABDUL HALIM, PRESIDENT

MR ABDUL SAMAD BIN ABDUL WAHAB, VICE-PRESIDENT

DR IRENE Y.H. NG, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

MS ATIQA HALIM, DEPUTY DIRECTOR

KEY TAKEAWAYS



ADVOCATING FOR WOMEN'S FAMILY-WORK BALANCE



INCLUSIVITY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

PRIORITISE TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT OF YOUNGER WORKFORCE TO ENSURE THEY REMAIN COMPETITIVE AND WELL-PREPARED FOR THE CHALLENGES



EXPLORE ON-DEMAND CHILDCARE OPTIONS OR POSSIBILITY OF COMMUNITY CHILDMINDING PROGRAMMES WITHIN NEIGHBOURHOODS

FINAL THOUGHTS



DELIBERATELY ERADICATE PREJUDICES AND PROMOTE INCLUSIVITY, CRUCIAL TO CALL OUT ANY INJUSTICES THEY ENCOUNTER

ENCOURAGING LARGER COMPANIES TO ADOPT A COMMUNITY AGENCY CAN FOSTER MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT WITH LOCAL COMMUNITIES, CONTRIBUTING TO THE WELL-BEING OF EMPLOYEES AND THE SOCIETY AT LARGE

LONG HOURS, SHIFT WORK OR WEEKEND WORK SHOULD BE REVIEWED AND REMOVED IF THEY ARE NOT EFFECTIVELY CONTRIBUTING TO THE COMPANY'S BOTTOM LINE



LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGY AND AUTOMATION CAN HELP FACILITATE FAMILY FRIENDLY PRACTICE



SHARING BEST PRACTICES AND RESOURCES IS VITAL FOR DRIVING PROGRESS IN ESTABLISHING FAMILY-FRIENDLY PRACTICES

PRESENTATION:



In-Work Poverty: Challenges of Getting By Among The Young

By Dr Irene Y.H. Ng
Associate Professor, Social Work
National University of Singapore

Notes:

Training, Wage, Mental Well-Being

- a. Objective of study is to gain a comprehensive understanding of the experiences and challenges faced by young, low-income, working Singaporeans during various life transitions.
- b. Over time, the gap between the earning power of individuals with different educational backgrounds is expected to widen. Degree holders will likely have steeper pay rises while ITE and below Secondary School education holders' salary are expected to rise at a more gradual pace. This trend poses potential challenges for young, low-income workers who may face difficulties in bridging this income disparity through their careers.
- c. Training participation patterns:
 - i. Lower-educated and lower-income workers tend to attend less training compared to the national average.
 - ii. The persistence of lower training participation continues: Individuals who did not attend training before are less likely to participate in subsequent training.
 - iii. Job type and function often play a pivotal role in influencing training participation. Companies tend to provide highly educated individuals with funding for training opportunities. In contrast, lower-educated workers are more likely to rely on self-funding, which could deter them from seeking further training. This disparity in access to training may perpetuate income gaps between different educational groups.
- d. Training effect on wages:

The research highlights that training has a more pronounced effect on wages for lower-educated non-PMETs. After attending training, these individuals tend to enjoy higher increments, suggesting that upskilling can be an effective avenue for enhancing income prospects for this specific group.



Psychological Well-Being & Impact of Covid-19

- a. Mental well-being and lower-wage workers:

Research indicates that lower-wage respondents experienced poorer mental well-being across all measures when compared to their higher-earning counterparts.
- b. Impact of COVID-19 on employment:

The COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately affected lower-wage workers in terms of employment. A significant number of lower-wage workers faced job disruptions and loss of earnings, with many unable to work remotely. The financial strains and uncertainty resulting from these challenges all lead to poorer mental well-being, contributing to increased stress, anxiety, and worsened discouragement.
- c. Challenges faced by lower-earning women:

Lower-earning women in particular face additional challenges in juggling work and family responsibilities. Many working full-time need to rely on childcare centres to care for their children while they work. However, the inflexibility of both work and care institutions can place a significant strain on these women, further impacting their psychological well-being.
- d. Recommendations:
 - i. To mitigate the negative impact of COVID-19 on lower-wage worker's mental and financial health, a repertoire of targeted training and productivity interventions is crucial.
 - ii. The importance of the progressive wage model cannot be overstated

SHARING:



The future is young, and the future needs help early

Ms Hazlina Abdul Halim
President of Persatuan Pemudi Islam Singapore

A recent study conducted by PPIS surveyed 1,000 women to understand their priorities and aspirations in the workplace.

The Top Three Priorities:

- a. Job Flexibility: This encompasses more than just flexible working arrangements. It also includes other forms of flexibilities, such as job-sharing opportunities. The desire for job flexibility stems from the need to balance work and family responsibilities.
- b. Job Security: Refers to the assurance that an employee can continue working in their current job for the foreseeable future.
- c. Employee Benefits: The type of employee benefits, such as the number of annual leave days, time off, and overtime pay, are essential factors considered by women when choosing a workplace. These benefits again significantly impact the family-work balance of women.

Aspirations of Women in the Workplace:

- a. Balancing Work and Family: Women aspire to have the flexibility that allows them to play a significant role in their families while actively contributing to the workforce. The desire for work-life balance coincides with their top priority, job flexibility.
- b. Career Advancement and Salary: Many women aspire to move up the corporate ladder and seek higher salaries. The drive for career advancement reflects their ambition and potential to excel in their chosen fields.
- c. Full-Time Employment or New Roles: Some women aspire to attain full-time employment or explore new roles that align better with their interests and career goals.

Conclusion:

The study reveals that the female population has a high desire to work and contribute to the workforce. How can we then helping these women achieve the desired outcome as per their aspirations?



KEY TAKEAWAYS



From Panel Discussion



Productivity gains should be shared with employees

NTUC Learning Hub aims to facilitate individuals in acquiring essential training. Training initiatives are guided by three clear principles: Wage, welfare, and work prospect. This training is often done in collaboration with the employers, where NTUC Learning Hub ensures that a salary review takes place upon completion of the training programme.

Furthermore, NTUC collaborates closely with employers to explore potential job redesign opportunities that align with the new skills employees have acquired via training. While enhancing productivity through training is crucial, it is equally imperative to ensure that the resulting gains and increased earnings are shared with employees.



Inclusivity for persons with disabilities

Addressing unconscious discrimination, especially for individuals with disabilities, presents significant challenges, primarily due to the limited willingness of many companies to hire such individuals. The willingness to employ people with disabilities often hinges on the nature of the job and the specific type of disability.

In certain cases, if an employee acquires a disability during employment and reports it, employers may explore the option of job redesign to accommodate the individual's needs.

Merely making broad statements advocating inclusivity across all companies is not practical and will likely not lead to meaningful change.



Advocating for women's family-work balance

To better advocate for women, it is essential to first understand the desires and preferences of the individuals we are advocating for.

Cultural factors play a significant role in perpetuating the belief that caregiving responsibilities primarily fall on women due to the gendered division of labour at home. If 1,000 men were surveyed, would they prioritise family as much as their female counterparts? If family emerges as a top priority, it would be a good sign as it signifies a shared aspiration.

While legislation and policies are instrumental in driving change, the real challenge lies in influencing change upstream and within households. Implementing upstream measures can have a broader and deeper impact, involving households directly and garnering support from family members. Male family members can play a pivotal role as allies in championing the cause of work-family balance.

In situations where households rely on a single income, there are avenues for additional support measures such as providing assistance for mothers to re-enter the workforce after taking a break from caregiving responsibilities.

In conclusion, improving the ecosystem of support within homes is crucial to enhance the aspiration for achieving a work-family balance.



Impact of foreign talent

One critical aspect of addressing the impact of foreign talent is to prioritise the training and development of our younger workforce. By equipping them with essential leadership skills and competencies, we can ensure they remain competitive and well-prepared for the challenges ahead.

The younger generation also seeks meaningful careers that ignite their passion and drive, something that allows them to get out of bed purposefully. The question is then what kind of workplace structures there are to foster such an environment conducive to their aspirations.



Young low wage workers do not have many options

Individuals employed in lower skilled and lower wage jobs often experience limited control over their working hours, which can include the requirement to work on weekends.



Support for caregivers

Employers and organisations should consider incorporating some “slack” in their staffing arrangements to provide coverage and support for employees during family emergencies or exigencies.

How much support is there for companies or SMEs to commit to the concept and prioritising of diverse needs (for example, of a person who is a caregiver)?



Impact of removal of Saturday childcare services

The removal of Saturday childcare services can have significant implications, particularly for lower-wage workers who may face challenges in accessing a robust ecosystem of support. These workers often have parents who are also working, which can make finding alternative childcare arrangements difficult.

As a result, there is a need to explore on-demand childcare options or possibility of community childminding programmes within neighbourhoods to address this gap. Another way is to have both parents more actively involved in childcare and household tasks, allowing for a more equitable distribution of responsibilities. Once again, this goes back to affecting change upstream in the households.

It is important to recognise the needs of mothers differ based on their children’s ages, e.g. infants have different need from children in preschools and so on. Employers should be willing to have a conversation with employees and try their best to be as inclusive as possible. Whenever there’s a new law that is implemented, there’s always support from the Union.



Last thoughts:

- a. Leveraging technology and automation can help to facilitate family friendly practice.
- b. Long hours, shift work or weekend work should be reviewed and removed if they are not effectively contributing to the company's bottom line.
- c. To deliberately eradicate prejudices and promote inclusivity, it is crucial for all individuals to play an active role in calling out any injustices they encounter.
- d. Sharing best practices and resources is vital for driving progress in establishing family-friendly practices.
- e. Encouraging larger companies to adopt a community agency can foster meaningful engagement with local communities, contributing to the well-being of employees and the society at large.

SESSION THREE: INTEGRATING EDUCATION AND WORK

During a conference organised by the Institute of Policy Studies, Singapore Perspectives 2023, Education Minister Chan Chun Sing noted that when industry and academia co-design, co-develop and co-deliver the pre-employment and continuing education modules for both students and adult learners, we refresh the skills of our people much faster. To encourage lifelong learning, the Singapore government has provided all citizens above 25 years of age with SkillsFuture Credits. However, in 2016, it was reported in Berita Harian, that out of the 126,000 Singaporeans who had utilised their credits, only 8.4% of them were from the Malay/Muslim community. This was similarly reported in Yayasan MENDAKI's Employment and Employability study, where 91.4% were reported to be aware of the MySkillsFuture programmes but out of those who were aware, only 30.6% reported to have utilised or participated in the initiative.

MENDAKI SYMPOSIUM 2023

INTEGRATING EDUCATION AND WORK

ONLY **8.4%** OF THE SINGAPOREANS WHO UTILISED THEIR SKILLSFUTURE CREDITS WERE FROM THE MALAY/MUSLIM COMMUNITY



OPTIMISE OUTREACH EFFORTS & TARGET SPECIFIC GROUPS MORE EFFECTIVELY



ACCORDING TO THE **MATTHEW EFFECT**

THOSE WHO BEGIN WITH ADVANTAGE ACCUMULATE MORE ADVANTAGE OVER TIME, & THOSE WHO BEGIN IN DISADVANTAGE BECOME MORE DISADVANTAGED OVER TIME, RESULTING IN A WIDENING BETWEEN THE TWO GROUPS



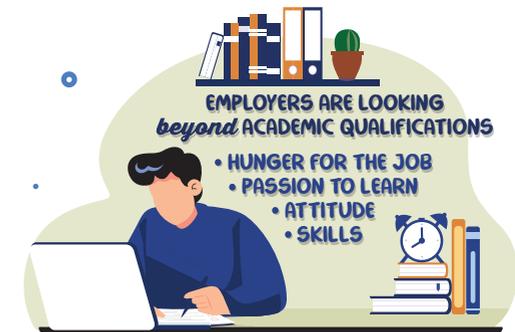
DR SILIN YANG, DEPUTY DIRECTOR

MS IRYANI HALIP, SENIOR EXECUTIVE

DR GOG SOON JOO, CHIEF SKILLS OFFICER



WORKERS SHOULD TO ACQUIRE SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE OUTSIDE OF THEIR EXPERTISE AND FIELD



EMPLOYERS ARE LOOKING *beyond* ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS

- HUNGER FOR THE JOB
- PASSION TO LEARN
- ATTITUDE
- SKILLS

REDUCING

FINANCIAL | INFORMATION | SITUATIONAL | LEARNING | APPLICATION

BARRIERS

EVERYONE MUST EMBRACE *Lifelong Learning*



KEY CHALLENGES FACED BY WORKERS



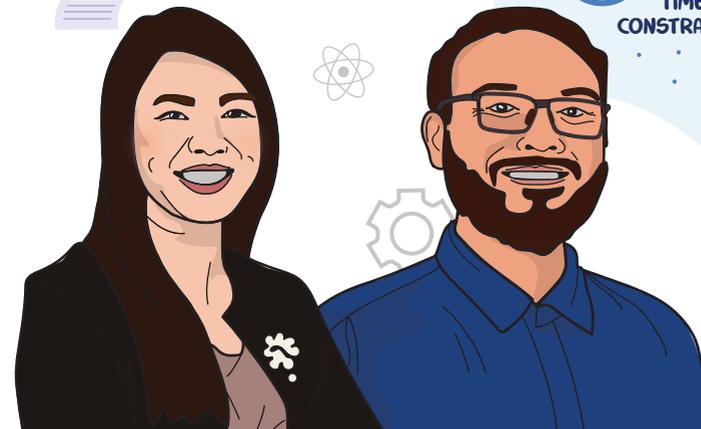
TIME CONSTRAINTS



UNEQUAL ACCESS TO LEARNING AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES



AWARENESS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF UPSKILLING



MS CHELVIN LOH, DIRECTOR

MR SUFYAN BIN MOHAMAD ALI, SENIOR EXECUTIVE

PRESENTATION:



Translating Intention into Action Findings from the Employment and Employability Study 2021

By Ms Nur Iryani Halip
Senior Executive Officer, Research and Design
Yayasan MENDAKI

Notes:

Employment and Employability Study Methodology

- a. Objective of study was to ascertain the motivations, deterrents, and demographics of respondents pertaining to skills acquisition, and employment assistance and upskilling programmes.
- b. Respondents were Malay/Muslim Singapore citizens and permanent residents between the ages of 15 and 55.
- c. Quantitative phase of study had a sample size of 1,002, followed by a qualitative phase which had a sample size of 18 participants over 2 focus group discussions.

Overview of the Working Respondents



- a. Top three Industries
 - 16.2% - Transportation & Storage
 - 10.3% - Health & Social Services
 - 9.6% - Wholesale & Retail Trade
 - 63.9% - Others



- b. Top three Occupations
 - 31.3% - Service & Sales Workers
 - 14.7% - Associate Professionals & Technicians
 - 13.1% - Professionals
 - 40.9% - Others



- c. Top three Job Functions
 - 33.3% - Operations
 - 16.1% - Logistics
 - 14.1% - Administrative
 - 36.5% - Others

Overview of the Non-Working Respondents



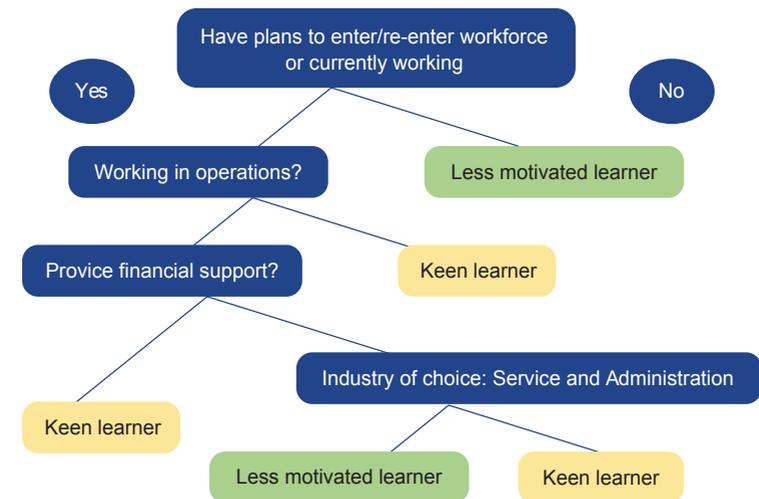
- a. Top three reasons for leaving the workforce
 - 17.9% - Caring for elderly
 - 15.4% - Temporary illness/injury
 - 12.8% - Caring for children
 - 53.9% - Others

- b. Attitudes towards re-entering workforce
 - i. Believe they do not have the qualifications
 - ii. Perceive that they are not updated on developments in the industry

Factors Affecting Motivation

- a. In this analysis, a keen learner was defined as a respondent who is interested in acquiring at least one hard skill and at least one soft skill
- b. This analysis aimed to find out how and where interventions could be introduced to convert a less motivated learner to a keen learner

ANALYSIS I: FACTORS AFFECTING MOTIVATION OF ALL RESPONDENTS



N=1,002, AUC=0.83

a. In the first node, those who are not currently working and had no plans to enter or re-enter the workforce were less motivated to participate in upskilling and learning. However, those who had intentions to return to the workforce were more likely to demonstrate a strong willingness to engage. Their primary motivation to enter or re-enter the workforce was to earn additional income for their families.

A majority of this segment earned below the median income of Malay households. This may prove to be a challenge for unemployed individuals with limited financial resources to go for training.

In addition, among those who were less likely to want to learn new skills we saw a bimodal distribution of peaks of in Gen Z (15-24 years old) and Gen X (50-55 years old).

The Gen Zs, on the other hand, have just completed their formal education and may not see a need to upskill yet. But, as reported in the local media, younger workers are also being affected by issues such as retrenchment. With less work experience, training and upskilling can help to insulate them from such negative developments.

As for Gen Xs, their priorities may have shifted, and no longer feel a need to upskill due to their vast experience. However, with the upward revisions to the retirement and re-employment ages, workers can be expected to participate in the workforce for longer periods. Instilling a growth mindset and encouraging receptivity towards learning can help older workers be less likely to be displaced.

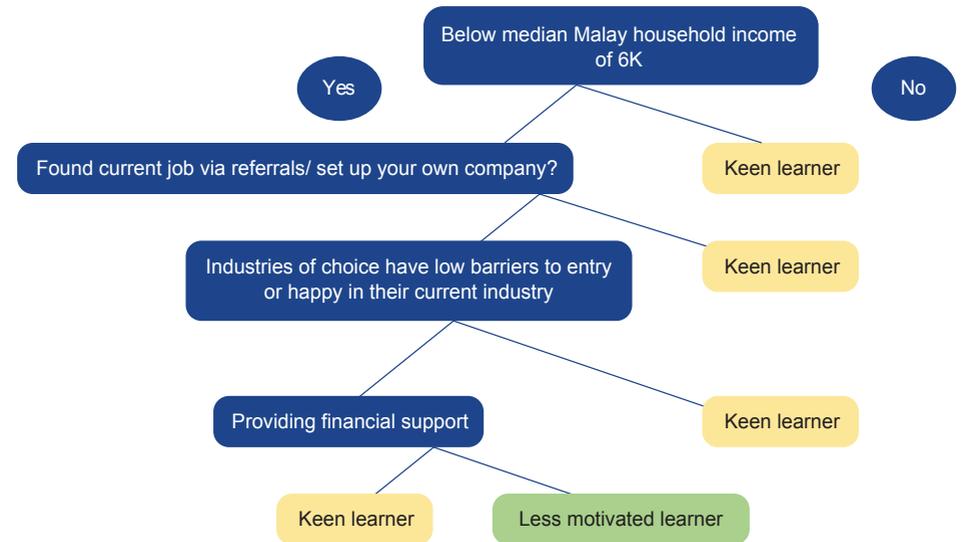
b. In the second node, those that were not working in operations job functions were keener to acquire new skills.

Those working in Operations job functions could be time-poor, with the possibility of unfixed or odd hours. COVID-19 introduced a new world of skills upgrading to Singaporeans – online learning, learning at your own pace.

c. In the third node, respondents that were providing consistent financial support – be it to family members or friends saw an external pressure to remain employed, and hence, they were more keen learners. They saw a tangible value of learning and training.

d. In the last node, respondents who were actively pursuing opportunities in sectors with lower barriers of entry such as Service, and Administration, were less likely to pursue upskilling. However, given the porosity of sectors like these, those currently in those sectors face substantial risks of disruption. There is a differing perception of the sector.

ANALYSIS II: FACTORS AFFECTING MOTIVATION OF ALL RESPONDENTS



N=639, AUC=0.71

a. In a second analysis, we found a link between income and positive attitudes towards training. This might be reflective of the entrenchment of the Matthew Effect. The Matthew effect refers to a pattern in which those who begin with advantage accumulate more advantage over time, and those who begin in disadvantage become more disadvantaged over time. Resulting in an ever-widening difference between the advantaged and disadvantaged.

We need to engage with lower income groups and gain a deeper understanding of their circumstances in the hopes of shifting the mental models towards continuous learning.

b. In the second node, respondents that found their jobs via referrals or were self-employed were less motivated to engage in learning. These respondents had a higher perceived social capital and were confident in their existing skill set.

c. In the third node, respondents that were providing consistent financial support – be it to family members or friends saw an external pressure to remain employed, and hence, they were more keen learners. They saw a tangible value of learning and training.

- d. In the last node, respondents who were actively pursuing opportunities in sectors with lower barriers of entry such as Service, and Administration, were less likely to pursue upskilling. However, given the porosity of sectors like these, those currently in those sectors face substantial risks of disruption. There is a differing perception of the sector.

ANALYSIS III: USAGE OF EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE AND UPGRADING PROGRAMMES

- a. From the quantitative part of our study, we saw more than 90% awareness of Employment Assistance and Upskilling Programmes (EAUPs) such as SkillsFuture Programmes, SkillsFuture Credit and WSQ Certifications. Despite 90% awareness, only one-third claimed to have utilised any of these EAUPs.
- b. In the first node, once a respondent is not a keen learner, they would not have utilised any of these programmes. Motivation to learn is high up on the variable importance plot, underscoring its significance in the utilisation of EAUPs.
- c. Among those who were keen learners, those aged 20-24 and 40-44 were less likely to utilise any of the programmes available. Despite Workforce Singapore having a Mid-Career Pathways programme for mature mid-career individuals above the age of 40 years old, this group remain less likely to utilise programmes such as these.

- d. Three groups of people were less likely to utilise the programmes:
 - i. Those working in trade jobs – electricity, gas, air conditioning supply, transport and storage;
 - ii. Those in professional jobs – real estate, scientific and technical activities; and
 - iii. Those who were not working – unemployed or outside the labour force.

- e. For those in trade jobs, possible reasons for underutilisation could simply be due to easily accessible job opportunities as these jobs tend to have lower barriers to entry.

For those in professional jobs, some reasons for underutilising EAUPs could be due to their robust in-house training programmes and compulsory training as part of their Continuous Professional Development hours.

- f. With the ongoing tech disruption and the advent of IR4.0, these workers should be riding the wave of change by upskilling and targeting new jobs created by disruption.
- g. By understanding individual life stages, we can optimise our outreach efforts and target specific groups more effectively.
- h. Individuals tend to re-evaluate priorities at key junctures be it faced by a transition, a turning point, or a trajectory. MENDAKI has stayed ahead of this is by creating programmes aimed at different age groups and bundling our Mendaki Tuition Scheme programme with EAUP info and resources to help both parents and children.
- i. It appears that the respondents with income lower than the median are not receptive towards training and upskilling. With this concept of time poverty in mind, as we increase our outreach and engagement, the challenge remains to convince them of the tangible outcomes of upskilling.



PRESENTATION:



SkillsFuture: A Collective Effort

By Dr Gog Soon Joo
Chief Skills Officer
SkillsFuture Singapore

Presented by Ms Chelvin Loh
Director, Skills Intelligence and Planning Division
SkillsFuture Singapore

SkillsFuture is a collective effort within the skills ecosystem

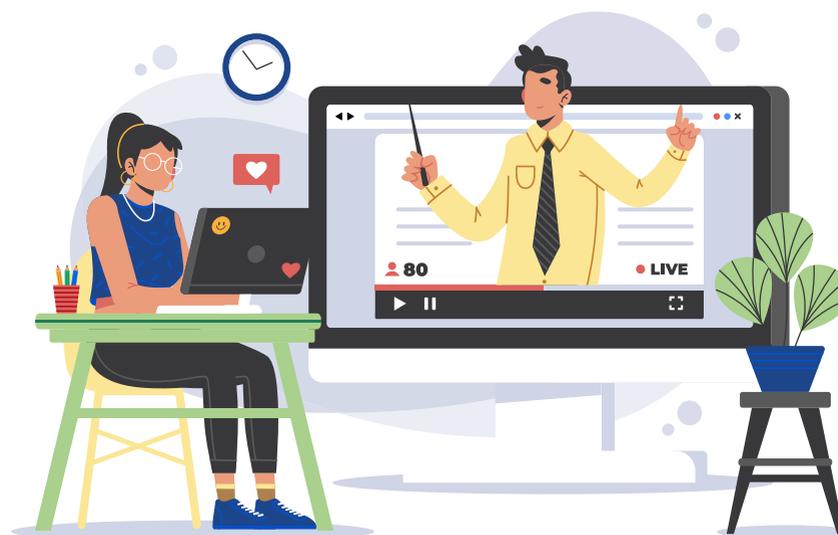
- a. Individuals: Enable individual ownership of lifelong learning
- b. Enterprises: Engage companies to articulate and aggregate skills needs; encourage skills recognition and skills-based HR practices at the workplace
- c. Training Providers: Raise the industry relevance, quality, and market responsiveness of the Training and Adult Education sector
- d. Ecosystem: Strengthen the link between skills supply to demand, and tighten the coordination between training and job placements

Continuous efforts in enhancing access to reskilling and upskilling

- a. Reducing Financial Barriers
 - i. SkillsFuture Credit for 25 years old and above
 - ii. Course fee subsidy up to 90%
 - iii. 40 years old and above receive additional support
- b. Reducing Information Barriers
 - i. Regular jobs-skills insights and annual skills report
 - ii. 1-1 Skills Advisory Service, Career Coaching (job seeker)
 - iii. Online portals: MySkillsFuture and MyCareersFuture
- c. Reducing Situational Barriers
 - i. Lesson schedule tailored for working adults
 - ii. Multi-modal learning design
 - iii. Stackable and bite-sized learning

Engaging workforce and employers in skills development for business competitiveness

- a. SkillsFuture Queen Bee (SFQB)
 - i. Harness SFQB's market influence and expertise to roll out industry-led learning to small-medium enterprises.
 - ii. Participating companies benefit from skills advisory support and curated training solutions in emerging and in-demand skills areas
- b. Skills Development Partner
 - i. Identify sectoral skills needs responsively
 - ii. Strengthen link between skills development and job redesign in their sectors
 - iii. Help employers better recognize their employees' skills
- c. Jobs Skills Integrator
 - i. Mobilise key industry players, training providers and employment facilitation outfits
 - ii. Aggregate industry manpower and skills needs to inform training and placement provision
 - iii. Ensure integrated training and placement services, especially for SMEs and mature workers



PRESENTATION:



Rethinking Training and Learning

By Dr Silin Yang
Deputy Director, Strategy Group
National Trades Union Congress

Skills Required of Workers Changing Rapidly

- a. In the past, we thought only routine tasks could be automated by artificial intelligence (AI)
- b. Now, with generative AI, acknowledged workers are equally at-risk
- c. Workers are required to acquire skills and knowledge outside of their expertise and field
- d. Traditional front-loading model of education will no longer be sustainable in today's context

Employers are looking beyond academic qualifications

- a. Potential employees need to display skills, attitude, passion to learn, learn fast, and hunger for the job
- b. For workers to stay relevant, everyone must embrace lifelong learning
- c. Education system must also cater for multiple entry points to nurture a broad range of skills and abilities

Key Challenges Faced by Workers

- a. Unequal access to learning and training opportunities
 - i. While skills mismatch is not new, workers with skills gaps are not the top priority to be sent for training according to business leaders
 - ii. Instead, priority is given to workers with high potential
 - iii. This puts a strain on the workers with skills gaps and mature workers, that would have benefitted from these training

b. Time constraints

- i. It is not easy to balance work, education and family
- ii. It is important to make training flexible and accessible for our workers

c. Level of awareness

- i. Workers who are aware of the importance of upskilling and have done so
- ii. Workers who are aware of the importance of upskilling but chose not to do so
- iii. Workers who have no awareness of the importance of upskilling and therefore have not done so

d. 3 C's of Training

i. **CORE**

Place workers at the core, and heart, of training and learning. This means moving away from a one-size-fits-all approach and recognise the unique needs, aspirations and priorities of every individual.

ii. **CRITICAL**

Training and learning is critical to enhance workers' employment and employability. Upskilling should not be treated as a co-curricular activity. If time is an issue, then training and learning should be brought to the workplace.

iii. **COLLABORATION**

To create a lifelong community that provides holistic support, everyone must work together. This includes government agencies, unions, schools, training providers, employers, employees and community.

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