

*Symposium on Globalisation and the
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Globalisation and Youth Employment

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Globalisation and Youth Employment

- **1 out of every 6 person in the world today is between 15 and 24 years old**
 - 1 billion young people between 15 and 24 years old
 - This is 18% of total world population
- **World youth unemployment rate has increased from 11.7% in 1993 to 14.4% in 2003**
 - 14.4% rate is more than twice overall unemployment rate of 6.2%
 - 88 mil unemployed youth = 47% of 186 mil unemployed globally
 - Youth unemployment can be as high as 25% in some countries

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- **Major policy priority for trade unions**
 - Integrating youth and youth employment
 - Must be placed high on agenda of government's macroeconomic policies and effective implementation programme
 - Investment in education and training
 - Assist least developed countries to raise literacy and education levels

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- **ILO Recommendation on Human Resources Development, Education, Training and Lifelong Learning**
 - Employers must behave responsibly and provide opportunities to young people through training, career development and a safe and healthy work environment
 - ILO HRD Recommendation provides good framework for human resource development
 - Social partners, through social dialogue, should explore this Recommendation as a basis for promoting employment and decent work

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- **General trend of youth employment in Singapore**
 - Decline in labour force participation rate of young people between 15 and 24 years old
 - Labour force participation rate declined from 25.3% in 1993 to 13% in 2003 for those aged 15 – 19; and declined from 80.2% to 71.6% for aged 20 – 24
 - One key reason: Longer period that young people stay in the education system which has been steadily increasing over the years with better educational opportunities and economic growth

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- **General trend of youth employment in Singapore**
 - Unemployment among young people rose from 7% in June 1998 to 7.8% in June 2003
 - However, pace of increase was slower compared to overall average unemployment figure, which rose from 3.2% to 5.4% over same period
 - Generally, the young do not face a serious unemployment problem in Singapore

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- **General trend of youth employment in Singapore**
 - On average, younger workers who are retrenched take a shorter time to find another job compared to older workers as they have better skills and qualifications

Age, years old	No. of weeks taken to find another job
20 – 29	7.8
30 – 39	12.3
40 – 49	14.1
50 – 59	15.8

Figures as at June 2003

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- **General trend of youth employment in Singapore**
 - While number of unemployed youth rose from 17,000 in 1998 to 20,000 in 2003, their share of total unemployed shrank sharply from 27% to 17% over same period
 - This partly reflects the ageing workforce and the delayed entry of youth into the labour market

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- **General trend of youth employment in Singapore**
 - Global trend of using more contract work becoming more discernible in Singapore
 - Viewed as an opportunity to gain as much experience as possible from different employers to enhance employability
 - Also some are concerned with the lack of certainty and stability
 - As economy matures, there may be a mismatch in expectations and realities among the young

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- **Educational opportunities**

- With effect from Jan 2003, primary education is compulsory in Singapore (about 10 – 11 years of basic education)
- Channelled into either technical or academic education where employment prospects are good

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- **Unions' role in promoting Lifelong Learning and Employability**
 - Job creation and skills upgrading
 - Enhancing wages and employability through skills training/upgrading, employment assistance programme, job re-design and proactive review of employment policies
 - Advocating portable medical and skills training benefits
 - Strengthening social safety net

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- **Unions' role in promoting Lifelong Learning and Employability**
 - Skills Redevelopment Programme which was started in 1998
 - Total training places todate: 187,316
 - Survey shows SRP achieved its target in reaching out to older workers and lower educated workers to go for training and skills upgrading to stay employable
 - Skills Development Fund

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- **Employment Assistance Programme**
 - SNTUC Joblink Centre was set up on Feb 2002 – one-stop job placement centre
 - Pre-counselling and training for job seekers
 - “Train and place” programmes
 - To date, 6,656 job interviews have been arranged
 - About 30% of job seekers at the Joblink Centre are unemployed and below age of 30 years

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- **Union membership**

- A current challenge for trade unions in Singapore to stay relevant to changing and increasingly diverse profile of workers in knowledge-based economy
- Increasing job churn and industry restructuring
- Seamless Membership Scheme
- Organising strategies must be adapted; recruitment campaigns etc

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- **Union leadership**

- Trade unions must create opportunities for young people to achieve their aspirations, contribute ideas and participate actively in making decisions to shape the future
- Induct more young men and women to serve in labour movement
- Establish Youth Chapters in unions
- Strengthen bonding and networking among young and senior union leaders through regular dialogue sessions and forums; engage the young at various levels and foster a greater sense of belonging

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- **Union leadership**

- Training courses for young union leaders
- Ong Teng Cheong Institute of Labour Studies
- Structured leadership training programmes
- National Level:
 - Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports
 - National Youth Council; Singapore Youth Awards, Outstanding Youth in Education Award etc

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- **Conclusion**

- The young is our future
- Integration into society through creation of employment and opportunities
- Youth development and employment must be placed high on governments' agendas
- Employers must provide opportunities to the young to acquire experience and skills in a decent work environment
- Unions need to re-strategise to attract more young members
- Strengthen social dialogue at all levels

Thank You