

LM2011
Labour Movement For All
All For Labour Movement

Uth! Moving Forward



On 28 and 29 October 2006, members of Young NTUC got together for a common purpose – to make the labour movement a part of the lives of youth. Amid the brainstorming sessions, they also had the chance to actually row a dragonboat that helped them to internalise the idea that only by rowing together as one can you power the boat.

PASSION is what brought Young NTUC members to their Local Workplan Seminar – to map a vision for Labour Movement 2011 – specifically the Uth! Movement Dragonboat.

A number of them had attended the Labour Movement Seminar. So here was another opportunity to continue building on that seminar and to push forward with new ideas and vigour.

The seminar sought to give youth leaders and representatives of Young NTUC an opportunity to clarify and articulate their vision for the youth as part of the larger vision of LM2011 – to build a community of young leaders in the labour movement.

“We are co-parents of the Uth! Movement. We are trying to nurture this movement into something significant. Our success depends on how well we engage people who are not yet members, or members whose lives we have yet to touch,” new Labour MP and champion of the Uth Dragonboat Josephine Teo told the participants.

Referring to the leaders in labour movement, she said: “Here’s a bunch of people who give of themselves to help others, and in so doing, transform lives.

“It’s all about rowing in sync and teamwork. You really have to look out for each other and making sure that the strokes are accurate. Coming back to real-life, it’s how we look out for each other, supporting each other.”

– Podisingho Phoebe Elizabeth

It is the same spirit we hope to bring out in our youths.”

Apart from giving a rundown of the Uth! Movement events planned in 2007, there was time to take note of some initiatives that have already kicked off – like Uth!Stage – a platform to help young people nurture their artistic talents.

Said ExxonMobil Singapore Employees Union Exco Member Zhou Zheng Hua, 31: “Uth! Stage provides the training for young people. Also, it gives them a platform to accomplish their personal goals. This is the kind of quality programme that the ground wants.”

He said that the nine Dragonboats under LM2011 “cover every angle”, referring to various age groups and nationalities.

Speaking of dragonboats, the group had a chance on the second day of the seminar to row a dragonboat at Kallang River.

It took some time to get used to rowing together but eventually the group steered their boat past the Benjamin Sheares bridge.

That exercise left an impression on United Workers of Petroleum Industry Exco Member Mohd Fadzli Aliman, 30: “All the elements and fundamentals of

LM2011 are there. Teamwork, cooperation and what we set out to achieve.”

Mrs Teo, who beat the drum to help the dragonboaters row as one, said: “When we have the right people with the right attitude on board, we can make a difference.”

Singapore Bank Employees’ Union Assistant General Secretary Podisingho Phoebe Elizabeth, 32, couldn’t have agreed more.

“It’s all about rowing in sync and teamwork. You really have to look out for each other and make sure that the strokes are accurate. Coming back to real-life, it’s how we look out for each other, supporting each other,” she said.

The seminar also helped her to realise that there are like-minded union members who want to do more for the young.

“It is more in-depth than what we did at the Labour Movement Seminar. It’s good because we get the people to think. We have all the unions here so we can just brainstorm on how we want to get there. We can share our ideas. Now that we have this discussion, we found out that there are other unions out there with similar ideas. So we can actually join forces,” said Miss Podisingho.

Port Officers’ Union Vice-President Benjamin Tang, 30, said: “It’s heartening to note that we are getting a lot of support from NTUC. It matters since all of us are volunteers. It also helps that the ideas are getting clearer and more focussed. It shows that we now share the same vision.”

Mr Tang recalled that at the Labour Movement Seminar, a participant suggested that there should be a youth observer on the NTUC Central Committee.

“We are laying a path for the next generation to come in, so we have to lay a good path for them to walk on.”

– Allan Seah

“The openness to that suggestion is a sign that NTUC is serious about making the youth movement a vibrant one,” he said.

With each successive session, the young participants got a clearer picture of what LM2011 entails.

Said Young Singapore Industrial & Services Employees’ Union Chairman Allan Seah, 33: “We are getting a clearer picture of what LM2011 is all about. We feel that we are part of it. With LM2011, we can see that the youth are fully involved in achieving the vision for the labour movement.”

Mr Seah noted the importance of the role that the Uth! Movement plays in the labour movement’s future.

“We are laying a path for the next generation to come in, so we have to lay a good path for them to walk on,” he said.

At the end of the two days, Mrs Teo told the participants that: “As we go about organising the various programmes and initiatives, remember, the union has the power to change lives. If we change lives for the better, our efforts will be worth the while.”



A Young Unionist’s Five Cs

YOUNG NTUC Chairman Edwin Lye said that the youth arm carries the NTUC brand, so understanding how the various departments in NTUC work will play an important role in helping to further youth work.

In addition, there is a need to understand and establish strong ties with the various stakeholders within the labour movement.

These stakeholders include long-serving union leaders whose experience will help to drive the Uth! Movement forward. Their priceless experience will help them to negotiate new paths and avoid potholes and obstacles.

Mr Lye shared a version of the 5Cs that he hopes will become “a structure or process where they can journey with the rest of the labour movement towards LM2011 and beyond.”

Also, brainstorming took off during the two days of the Young NTUC Local Workplan Seminar. During one of the sessions, hexagon-shaped post-it notes were used to cluster ideas around a common theme.

Ideas flowed rapidly from the Young NTUC members. They were encouraged to ask what they wanted to see in their unions that would make them more appealing to the youth. ■

