

Unit To Union

UCCW Members Take Up Full Union Membership



By
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The first move is to engage, educate and embrace the pool of vulnerable contract and casual workers. The next move is to uncover as many ways as possible to improve their lives through training workshops, awareness seminars and welfare programmes. What next?

NTUC's Unit for Contract and Casual Workers is not stopping members who walk through its doors to leave for places which will further uplift their lives – the unions. In fact, it is encouraging them to do just that.

For the first time, the unit worked with NTUC's membership department and several unions to convert 57 of its members to become union members. Over two days in December last year, these members signed up readily to fork out \$9 every month to enjoy the full benefits of union membership.

"I joined UCCW two years ago. I saw how NTUC can help not just me but my family. I only had primary school education. I also have a hearing problem. So, I could not find a job better than a cleaner's.

"But UCCW officers kept asking me to go for training. I was not sure at first but decided to go back to school at NTUC's e2i (Employment and Employability Institute). The Attitude, Skills and Knowledge workshop conducted in Mandarin gave me new hope. I am now eager to learn basic English," said Mr Yong Kwek Tong, 60, through a translator.

Mr Yong, who works with Integrated Property Management Private Limited, is now a union member with Singapore Industrial & Services

Employees' Union. He will now be able to enjoy workplace representation on top of the menu of benefits that come with union membership.

"I used to work as a bus technician. I was a member of the National Transport Workers' Union. Then I got retrenched, and I did not have enough to pay membership fees. Through UCCW, I found another chance to become a union member again," he said.

Madam Saraswathy d/o Ramasamy, 52, has not tasted the benefits of union membership. Nonetheless, she was willing to commit \$9 from her take-home pay of \$700 to become a member of the Amalgamated Union of Public Employees.

Madam Sarawathy, a cleaner with ISS Group, joined UCCW in November 2009.

"I have friends who have attended training courses and awareness talks organised by UCCW. Now, they know more about their rights at the workplace. Many have also received U-Stretch vouchers which help to save costs. These are attractive benefits. I also want them and so, I joined as a union member.

"Now, I want to find out about savings schemes for union members," said Madam Saraswathy.

Her union is currently assisting her to open a savings account with NTUC Thrift and Loan Co-operative Limited, which offers services exclusively to union members.

UCCW has about 9,000 members. It hopes to convert 500 members to full union membership in 2010.



“ We first reached out to convert members who have benefited from UCCW's outreach activities – be it a training courses, an awareness workshops or welfare programmes such as U-Stretch vouchers. As these workers have a sense of what union membership can offer, they have come forward more willingly to sign up as union members. This success of converting 57 of our members as full-fledged union members is very encouraging for us. We will be riding on the momentum which is one of our key strategies this year to help our contract and casual workers.”

Zainudin Nordin, NTUC's Unit for Contract and Casual Workers' Director