



Tops You Up!



Unions are doing their best to help members and their families ride out the storm. With the new Scholarship/Bursary TOP-UP scheme worth \$1.2 million from the U Care Fund, money needed for handing out more bursaries and scholarships will be 'topped up', so unions do not have to foot the entire bill on their own.

By Vanessa Teo and Timothy Fernandez

100% Top Up For Regulars

Unions that have given out scholarships and bursaries in previous years will be entitled to a maximum top up equivalent to 100 per cent of last year's amount. Example: If a union distributed \$10,000 worth of bursaries last year and decides to increase it to \$30,000 this year, the U Care Fund will subsidise the amount by \$10,000. The union will only need to fork out \$20,000.

UWEEI Boosts Amount Substantially

The Scholarship/Bursary TOP-UP scheme has enabled the United Workers of Electronic and Electrical Industries to almost double the amount of bursaries and scholarships from \$64,400 in 2008 to \$120,000 this year to benefit more needy members' children.

Madam Zaleha Mohd Hussain, 51, whose children have benefited from bursary awards presented earlier, said: "I am a production operator and my husband is a storekeeper. Our pays are not high. With three children to support, it has been quite challenging. But the bursaries have allowed my two daughters to buy bus stamps and books, and have some spending money."

UWEEI is increasing the number of bursaries and scholarships this year because many of our members have seen their incomes decline due to loss of overtime work or shorter work weeks. We put a great deal of emphasis on education for our members' children, which we see as a truly meaningful way of improving their lives. Hence, every year we have been increasing our allocation, and the top up from the U Care Fund has come in really useful."

Halimah Jacob, NTUC Deputy Secretary-General UWEEI Executive Secretary

2008		2009	
UWEEI's Bursary and Scholarship Expense	UWEEI's Intended Expense	Amount Supported by U Care Fund	UWEEI's Nett Expense
\$64,400	\$120,000	\$55,600	\$64,400

CIEU Rewards More Deserving Recipients

The Chemical Industries Employees' Union presented bursary awards to 10 students in 2008 and will be increasing the number to 174 recipients this year.

A new beneficiary of the scheme is Madam Yew Bao Bao, 37, a merchandiser. Tasked with the heavy responsibility of bringing home the bread for her family of five because her husband has difficulties finding a job, she can now breathe a little easier.

"I have tried unsuccessfully to apply for a bursary award for my daughter, and she is finally receiving one this year. It is a relief to know that there will be some form of help coming my way," said Madam Yew.

The top up from the U Care Fund has enabled us to give out more bursaries to our members' children. Instead of increasing the value of the awards, we will be increasing the number of recipients. This is done with the current economic situation in mind. With this downturn, the number of people affected will definitely go up. We hope that by increasing the number of recipients, we can reach out to more who are in need."

Rajendran s/o Govindarajoo, CIEU President

2008		2009	
CIEU's Bursary and Scholarship Expense	CIEU's Intended Expense	Amount Supported by U Care Fund	Union's Nett Expense
\$18,700	\$45,600	\$18,700	\$26,900



FDAWU Motivates Students To Work Hard

The Food Drinks and Allied Workers' Union aims to make full use of the Scholarship/Bursary TOP-UP Scheme. Previous bursaries and scholarships served as a form of motivation for students, something the union was proud of.

Recent Ngee Ann Polytechnic graduate Darren Gavin Ho, 20, one of the top graduates in his cohort, is one such example.

"I have received bursaries from FDAWU since a young age. When my family went into financial trouble, the bursaries helped us cover the household expenses from month-to-month and also encouraged me to study harder," said Mr Ho.

In times of hardship, FDAWU will do its best to tide our members over. Every year, our members look forward to their children receiving scholarships and bursaries, as it is regarded as a reward for their hard work in school and good results. With the top up from the U Care Fund, FDAWU is happy to be able to increase the total number of awards for deserving recipients. It has been a form of encouragement for the students and we hope that it will spur more students to work hard."

Tan Hock Soon, FDAWU General Secretary

BATU Targets One Bursary For Every Needy Family

Previously, the Building Construction and Timber Industries Employees' Union was unable to meet the high demand of families applying for scholarships and bursaries. Thanks to the Scholarship/Bursary TOP-UP Scheme, the union will be able to increase the bursaries and scholarships amount this year by 85 per cent, to accommodate the increase in applications by 15 per cent.

We saw a higher number of applications this year because of the economic downturn. The parents of some applicants were either retrenched or had less overtime pay. There's also an increase in the number of lower-wage workers joining BATU. With the top up received this year, more children will be able to be awarded, and hence, help to lessen the financial burden of their parents."

Bobby Chew Kok Kong, BATU First Vice-President

50% Top Up For First Timers

Unions that have not given out scholarships and bursaries in previous years but are intending to this year will also get a boost from the Scholarship/Bursary TOP-UP Scheme amounting to 50 per cent of their budget. Therefore, if a union decides to give out \$10,000 this year, the U Care Fund will provide \$5,000 worth of funding.

UWPI Plans To Offer Bursaries and Scholarships

With the crisis likely to deepen, the Scholarship/Bursary TOP-UP Scheme has led United Workers of Petroleum Industry to consider giving out scholarships and bursaries to their union members' children this year.

2008		2009	
UWPI's Bursary and Scholarship Expense	UWPI's Intended Expense	Amount supported by U Care Fund	UWPI's Nett Expense
\$0	\$10,000	\$5,000	\$5,000

*Table is meant for illustration purposes only



MIWU Doubles Its Efforts

A union that can attest to the generosity of the Scholarship/Bursary TOP-UP Scheme is the Metal Industries Workers' Union. MIWU intends to present \$24,000 worth of scholarships and bursary awards this year – twice the amount presented last year – and receive the full 100 per cent subsidy.

Although the award aims to help those who are affected by the downturn this year, it has also benefited many lower-income parents in the past, such as Mr Peter Goh, 49, a storekeeper.

"As the sole breadwinner in my family, the book grant my daughter received last year has helped offset some of the course fees for her studies at the National University of Singapore. I am thankful for the help MIWU has provided to us and proud of my daughter for her hard work in school," said Mr Goh.

When MIWU heard about the Scholarship/Bursary TOP-UP Scheme, we decided that it was the perfect opportunity for us to help more of our workers. We will continue to do our best to help more members who need assistance, such as those recently retrenched or on shorter work weeks."

Tan Chai Kun, MIWU General Secretary

2008		2009	
MIWU's Bursary and Scholarship Expense	MIWU's Intended Expense	Amount supported by U Care Fund	MIWU's Nett Expense
\$12,000	\$24,000	\$12,000	\$12,000

The economic crisis has begun to affect the petroleum, petrochemical, storage and related industries. Our members, who usually received good bonuses, are now receiving little or no bonuses. Many have fallen into the category of 'low-wage' earners. With this TOP-UP scheme available, our executive committee will now discuss how to make use of it to help our members. We strongly encourage other unions to consider this option as well and hope that the initiation of this scheme will be able to help more needy members."

Karthikeyan Krishnamurthy, UWPI General Secretary