

Ms Komalavalli Pakirisamy – Public Service Medal (PBM)

Since 1993, Ms Komalavalli Pakirisamy has been serving with distinction as a union leader of the Inland Revenue Authority of Singapore Staff Union (IRASSU), from when she was first elected to the Union's Executive Council at the age of 23. In the 26 years of serving in the union, she has served in various capacities, including president and vice president. She has served 17 years in her current role as the president of IRASSU.

Since 2000, Ms Komalavalli Pakirisamy has also served and contributed as a member in various National Trades Union Congress (NTUC) committees, such as Industrial Relations (Public Sector), Financial and Business Services Cluster, Public Service Cluster, Women, Employment and Employability, and Stewardship and Governance Committees and Training Council. She also held the position of Alternate Member to the National Wages Council negotiations in 2016. Through these appointments, she has always given her strongest support towards the Labour Movement (LM) and tripartite causes. In 2006, she was presented the Comrade of Labour Award at May Day to recognise her contributions towards IRASSU and NTUC.

As president of IRASSU, Ms Komalavalli Pakirisamy strongly believes in fostering and developing good Labour-Management Relations (LMR) and championing the welfare of workers. Under her leadership, IRASSU and IRAS have forged a highly collaborative employer-union relationship. Through maintaining open communication and consultation, she has managed to establish a high level of trust with IRAS' Senior Management, Human Resource partners as well as union members. These efforts have translated to enhanced benefits for members as well as steady growth in union membership figures. The strong LMR forged over the years was also key during the change of leadership of four Commissioners of Inland Revenue, as the management team holds IRASSU in high regards. She has been a strong advocate of the Public Service Transformation (PST) Movement, often championing the reskilling efforts of junior staff to increase their deployability within IRAS.

Ms Komalavalli Pakirisamy also devotes her time to recruit and induct suitable candidates, inspiring them to serve as IRASSU's Executive Council members. Her exemplary leadership and sharing of knowledge and experience has helped groom and shape the younger members to aspire to be greater leaders. Besides being a unionist, she has shown great dedication and commitment as an employee throughout her 30 years with IRAS. She first joined IRAS as Assistant Tax Officer in 1989, thereafter rising through the ranks to become a Principal Tax Officer today.

To support and encourage members in their lifelong learning efforts, Ms Komalavalli Pakirisamy introduced the Lifelong Employability Training Grant Scheme (LETGS) for IRASSU members in 2009 to help members stay employable and relevant to industry needs, even in their later years. This scheme has thus led IRAS to being recognised as a progressive and caring employer. Under LETGS, she led her team to enhance these resources; gradually expanding the scope of courses covered under these learning initiatives in 2012 and 2018 respectively. In recognition of her efforts, she was awarded the IRAS Commendation Award in 2009.

Leading by example, Ms Komalavalli Pakirisamy has since completed two programmes during her tenure as IRASSU President: Master's (MHRM) and Post-Graduate Diploma in Workplace Psychology. Indeed, she has shown the spirit of lifelong learning and how everyone, regardless of age, can choose to upgrade and upskill.

Under her watch, Ms Komalavalli Pakirisamy has seen through two restructuring exercises. In both exercises she worked relentlessly with the management to ensure that her members are ready for the upcoming transition. During an outsourcing exercise in 2018, she worked with NTUC Learning Hub, NTUC's e2i (Employment and Employability Institute) and *Play2Lead* to introduce the concept of micro-learning

via mobile to affected members who were aged mostly 55 years and above. These learning activities helped members to be resilient, agile and adaptable for the future workforce, and equipped them with useful and relevant tools required in a new-age working environment.

As part of the efforts to prepare members for the outsourcing exercise, members who wanted to remain in IRAS were given a choice to try out two jobs for a period of six weeks each before the outsourcing exercise began. For the others, help was rendered through NTUC's e2i to source for alternative employment. Throughout the process, Ms Komalavalli Pakirisamy took the initiative to personally ensure that relevant resources and support were available to the affected members. She played a key role as a trusted moderator for the many difficult conversations that took place between IRAS management and the affected members.

As a member of the Labour Movement, Ms Komalavalli Pakirisamy has always been a strong advocate and supporter of the LM's initiatives. As the voice for her members, she has stepped up to the calling and participated in ministerial talks and seminars, often sharing her views on national issues that would potentially impact her members. Her inputs were important as it helped to connect policies and schemes to the ground. She would often research and seek better understanding of the topic first so as to better translate these topics for her members.