

# THE STRAITS TIMES

## Help women to upskill, get into better skilled jobs to ensure job protection, says President Halimah



President Halimah Yacob during a dialogue session with United Women Singapore board members, staff and other participants on Jan 16, 2021. ST PHOTO: TIMOTHY DAVID



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SINGAPORE - Across the world, many have lost their jobs due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and a number of news reports suggest women may have been hit harder.

President Halimah Yacob on Saturday (Jan 16) addressed this issue during a visit to United Women Singapore (UWS) at Tanglin International Centre as part of her community engagement efforts. UWS is a local non-profit organisation that advances women's empowerment and gender equality.

During a dialogue session with UWS board members, staff and other participants, Madam Halimah said there was a fundamental problem working women face.

She said: "We have to take a step backwards and look at what are the jobs that are being lost - in the United States, Singapore and the European Union.

"Because of Covid-19, many jobs are lost in the service industry... Women are disproportionately represented in these sectors."

She added: "We have to ask, how do we make sure women get into better and higher skilled jobs - where you don't have to be present in the workplace, physically performing but you can stay at home and do it... That's the fundamental problem."

This would ensure greater protection for jobs for women, she said.

During Saturday's visit, Madam Halimah was introduced to some UWS programmes, including Girls2Pioneers that aims to inspire and encourage girls and young women to explore and pursue careers in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (Stem).

UWS reaches out to girls from various places including schools, religious schools and lower-income households.



Madam Halimah being introduced to UWS' Girls2Pioneers programme. ST PHOTO: TIMOTHY DAVID

The programme has benefited over 26,000 girls between the ages of 10 and 16 since its inception in 2014.

Another programme is the Buy To Save fund raiser, which promotes sustainable fashion while raising funds for UWS' key initiatives.

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