

Symposium on In-Work Poverty and the Challenges of Getting By Among the Young

PROGRAMME BOOKLET

 29 Mar 2023



PROGRAMME

0900 Registration

0930 **Opening Address**

Welcome Remarks by SSR Co-Director
A/P Eddie M. W. Tong

Guest-of-Honour Speech
Dr Tan See Leng, Minister for Manpower

IWP Principal Investigator's Presentation
A/P Irene Y.H. Ng

1015 **Panel 1: The Mystique of Job Preparation**

Job (Non) Search
A/P Vincent Chua and Mr Tan Zhi Han

Training for Mobility
A/P Irene Y.H. Ng, A/P Ho Kong Chong, and Mr Asher Goh

Panel 1 Discussion
Moderated by A/P Terence Ho

1120 Lunch

PROGRAMME

1230 **Panel 2: The Grind of Work**

Time Poverty

Dr Gerard Chung and Mr Tan Zhi Han

Gig Workers

Dr Mathew Mathews, Ms Thian Wen Li, and Mr Shamil Zainuddin

Panel 2 Discussion

Moderated by Ms Lin Suling

1335 **Panel 3: The Intersection of Family and Work**

Work-Family Conflict, Arguments and Stress

Dr Ong Qiyan and Ms Evelyn Kok

Mothers' Work-Care Tensions

Dr Neo Yu Wei and Ms Nurul Fadiah Johari

Panel 3 Discussion

Moderated by A/P Teo You Yenn

1440 Intermission

1450 **Closing Discussion: The Future of Work for Low-Income Young People**

*With panellists A/P Irene Y.H. Ng, Dr Neo Yu Wei, and Mr Shamil Zainuddin;
Moderated by Dr Mathew Mathews*

1545 Networking Tea

1615 End

THEME OF SYMPOSIUM

This Symposium will share findings from the research study on “In-Work Poverty and the Challenges of Getting By Among the Young” (IWP). Funded by the MOE Social Science Research Thematic Grant, the IWP research study has been ongoing since 2019 to gain new insights on the kinds of “in-work” poverty and challenges faced by low-income lower-educated young workers in Singapore (aged between 21 and 40).

The Symposium will outline the various work experienced by low-income lower-educated young workers — including job preparation, the nature of poor work, and the intersection between family and work.

GUEST-OF-HONOUR



DR TAN SEE LENG

Minister for Manpower and
Second Minister for Trade and Industry

Dr Tan See Leng was appointed as the Minister for Manpower and Second Minister for Trade and Industry on 15 May 2021. Prior to this, Dr Tan was the Minister in the Prime Minister’s Office, Second Minister for Trade and Industry and Second Minister for Manpower from 27 July 2020.



Panel 1: The Mystique of Job Preparation

MODERATOR



A/P TERENCE HO

Associate Professor in Practice,
Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy,
National University of Singapore

JOB (NON) SEARCH

While human capital factors contribute to growing wage inequalities between professional and non-professional workers, less studied however is the role of social capital as a source of occupational wage polarisation. In this presentation, we pay particular attention to non-searching, which refers to the flow of unsolicited job information to recipients, including the job matches that result. Drawing on wave 1 of the survey, we uncover human capital and social capital pathways to unequal wages between high-skilled and low-skilled workers. Most prominently, non-searching is associated with better wages for experienced, professional workers, but not for non-professional workers and workers with less work experience. This implies that the circulation of job information and job opportunities are unequal, accumulative over time, and are limited to specific occupations.



A/P VINCENT CHUA

Associate Professor,
Department of Sociology and Anthropology, NUS



MR TAN ZHI HAN

Research Assistant and Data Analyst,
Social Service Research Centre, NUS

TRAINING FOR MOBILITY

Training is a core component of Singapore's push to uplift wages and improve job prospects through lifelong learning. This presentation highlights the profile and experiences of young workers as they navigate through training alongside work and caregiving responsibilities. Drawing on data from two waves of survey and qualitative interviews, the results show that while training improves wages, access to training remains unequal. The presentation further explores the barriers to, and possibilities of young workers engaging in training and discusses the implications of training in relation to low-wage work.



A/P IRENE Y.H. NG

Principal Investigator, IWP,
Associate Professor, Department of Social Work, and
Steering Committee Chair, Social Service Research
Centre, NUS



A/P HO KONG CHONG

Associate Professor,
Department of Sociology and Anthropology, NUS, and
Head of Studies, Urban Studies, Yale-NUS College



MR ASHER GOH

Project Manager (IWP) and
Research Assistant, Social Service Research Centre, NUS



Panel 2: The Grind of Work

MODERATOR



MS LIN SULING

Insight Editor, The Straits Times,
SPH Media Trust

TIME POVERTY

Using data from wave 1 of the survey, we conceptualise work-based time poverty along two dimensions: (i) long and late working hours, and (ii) nonstandard and uncontrollable hours. Through structural equation modelling, we found that individuals in low-wage work are more time poor in terms of nonstandard and uncontrollable hours. These hours worsen work-to-family conflict and together, they mediate the relationship between low wage and two psychological well-being outcomes: generalised anxiety disorder and self-efficacy. As our sample contains young workers aged 21 to 39 in Singapore, our findings suggest the need to work with policymakers and employers to address workplace time poverty challenges that are beyond what young workers themselves can control.



DR GERARD CHUNG

Research Fellow,
Singapore Institute for Clinical Sciences, A*STAR and
Adjunct Research Fellow,
Social Service Research Centre, NUS



MR TAN ZHI HAN

Research Assistant and Data Analyst,
Social Service Research Centre, NUS

GIG WORKERS

Earn “Good Money” while getting to “Be Your Own Boss” and work in “Flexible” work settings are some of the promises suggested by platform companies. Scholars however have pointed out the “grind” that is expected to realise these promises. Some go as far as calling platform work a case of Necrocapitalism for profiteering off the backs of precarious workers with relatively little protection. What about the case of Singapore? What are the lived experiences of young platform workers here and how does it compare with other jobs they have tried? With data generated from ethnographic fieldwork we will illustrate the journey, bumps and all.



DR MATHEW MATHEWS

Head of IPS Social Lab and Principal Research Fellow,
Institute of Policy Studies,
Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, NUS



MS THIAN WEN LI

Research Associate, Social Lab, Institute of Policy Studies,
Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, NUS



MR SHAMIL ZAINUDDIN

Research Associate, Social Lab, Institute of Policy Studies,
Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, NUS



Panel 3: The Intersection of Family and Work

MODERATOR



A/P TEO YOU YENN

Associate Professor,
Provost's Chair in Sociology,
Nanyang Technological University

WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT, ARGUMENTS AND STRESS

Having to juggle with the responsibilities at work and at home could be stressful, especially when individuals do not have the resources to pay for services that would help them meet some of these responsibilities. Using survey data collected weekly through a mobile application over a period of eight months, we examine the stress proliferation process of work-family conflict experienced by low-wage workers. We find significant spill over in the experience of stress at home and at the workplace arising from work-family conflict, suggesting that investments to mitigate work-family conflict could have multiplier effects in promoting work and family stability among low-wage workers.



DR ONG QIYAN

Adjunct Senior Research Fellow,
Social Service Research Centre, NUS



MS EVELYN KOK

Research Assistant,
Social Service Research Centre, NUS

MOTHERS' WORK-CARE TENSIONS

Deciding between work and caregiving is not a choice for many women in Singapore. Working mothers often depend on childcare centres and other family members for support. In this presentation, we illustrate how mothers make decisions about work and care. Through our interviews, we developed a typology of mothers' work-care options based on the socioeconomic resources available to them. Current childcare services benefit women who are in better-paying jobs with regular hours, while mothers who work in jobs with non-standard hours face limited options for childcare. We argue that high-quality childcare services should be standardised and accessible for women of all socioeconomic backgrounds. Workplace policies should also be more supportive of mothers' caregiving needs.



DR NEO YU WEI

Adjunct Senior Research Fellow,
Social Service Research Centre, NUS



MS NURUL FADIAH JOHARI

Research Associate,
Social Service Research Centre, NUS



Closing Discussion:

The Future of Work for Low-Income Young People

MODERATOR



DR MATHEW MATHEWS

Head of IPS Social Lab and Principal Research Fellow, Institute of Policy Studies, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, NUS

PANELLISTS



A/P IRENE Y.H. NG

Principal Investigator, IWP,
Associate Professor, Department of Social Work, and
Steering Committee Chair, Social Service Research
Centre, NUS



DR NEO YU WEI

Adjunct Senior Research Fellow,
Social Service Research Centre, NUS



MR SHAMIL ZAINUDDIN

Research Associate, Social Lab, Institute of Policy Studies,
Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, NUS

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Any opinions, findings and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this programme booklet and the symposium are those of the project team's and do not reflect the views of the Ministry of Education, Singapore.

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FEEDBACK FORM

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@nus-social-service-research-centre



@socialserviceresearch.nus



The Shaw Foundation Building, Block AS7,
Level 3, 5 Arts Link, Singapore 117570



ssr@nus.edu.sg