



SPEECHES/INTERVIEWS

September 25, 2020

Opening Address by Mr Lawrence Wong, Minister for Education, at Virtual SkillsFuture Advice Memorandum of Understanding Signing Ceremony & SkillsFuture@CDC Dialogue Session

1. I am very happy to join you all today for this MOU signing ceremony.
2. We started SkillsFuture six years ago because of the importance of lifelong learning in this era of rapid change, and have been hard at work during this period to create this new nationwide culture of lifelong learning. This work now takes on greater salience and importance now because of COVID-19. Providing Singaporeans with the opportunities to upgrade their skills has certainly become even more critical and urgent during this period. This is why we launched the SGUnited Jobs & Skills Package. Our teams at both the Ministry of Manpower and Ministry of Education have been hard at work rolling out the various initiatives with our stakeholders.
3. Since joining MOE, many people have been asking me – what should I do to better prepare myself or my children better for this very uncertain future? And I think underlying that question is the hope that perhaps they may be able to get some answers or special content or formula that would allow them to be more successful, or be in a more advantageous position. But the reality is that any content you learn today, even the most cutting-edge content, may easily become obsolete or irrelevant in a few years' time.
4. So the best way to prepare yourself for the future is to develop a habit of lifelong learning and skills mastery in everything you do. The old mindset that learning has to be front-loaded in the early years of our lives – during school years and before we start work. This old mindset is deeply entrenched in our society, in many societies, and it has to change. It will take time to change this – amongst employers and individuals, and society at large. But will do everything we can to facilitate this mindset and cultural change.
5. That's why in 2017, we launched SkillsFuture Advice in partnership with the Community Development Councils (CDCs) and Employment and Employability Institute (e2i). Our aim was to reach out to Singaporeans to provide them with access to information about skills and training, job opportunities and the labour market, and more importantly, to empower everyone to take charge of your own skills development and learning journeys.
6. I'm very glad that since the launch of SkillsFuture Advice over the last three years, the programme has successfully reached out to more than 110,000 unique individuals, and far exceeded the target that was set of 80,000. This has helped us reach out to many people to better plan their careers and chart their own skills upgrading needs.
7. During this COVID-19 season, our SkillsFuture Advice partners have done even more. They have stepped up their outreach efforts to Singaporeans who have been impacted by the economic situation. They have been reaching out to the community through the SkillsFuture Advice workshops held at local career fairs. Through these sessions, the CDCs have been guiding and matching jobseekers to jobs and skills training opportunities.
8. I would like to thank all our Mayors and SkillsFuture Advice partners for their contributions and hard work.