SUSS
SINGAPORE UNIVERSITY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

Future Skills and Lifelong Employability

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What does lifelong learning means? Same words different answers

UNESCO

GLOBAL ANCHOR

Learning at every age, in every setting: formal, non-formal and informal.

Rights & inclusion

Europe

A SOCIAL RIGHT

EU target: 60% of adults learning every year by 2030.

Cohesion & employability

United States

MARKET-LED

No single national policy. Employers, community colleges, Workforce Pell for CET.

Choice & credentials

China

STATE-LED

A “learning society” where everyone can learn, everywhere, at all times (2025 plan).

National development

Singapore

TRIPARTITE

SkillsFuture: a national movement run by government, employers and unions.

Workforce Transformation

PRIORITY SHIFTS WITH ECONOMY & INCOME LEVEL

Emerging Economy → Foundational literacy

Developing Economy → Vocational upgrading

Developed Economy → Reskilling for AI & ageing

Sources: UNESCO UIL; Cedefop; China's Education Powerhouse Plan; SkillsFuture Singapore.

Why it matters: Three societal pillars, and where Singapore stands

	GLOBAL BENCHMARK	SINGAPORE
Economy *Productivity*	WEF: 39% of core skills change by 2030. 59 of every 100 workers need training.	Training participation hit a record 54.8% (2025). Retrenchment 27.8% (PMET) vs 13.1% (non-PMET).
Social compact *Cohesion*	OECD: 1 in 3 adults lack foundational skills, and they are the least likely to train.	Forward SG makes lifelong learning its first key shift, backed by Workfare Skills Support (Level-Up).
Wellbeing *Purpose*	OECD: Skills are linked to health, trust and life satisfaction.	Older adults with lifelong learning attitude are more likely to report higher life satisfaction, quality of life and psychological health.

Sources: WEF Future of Jobs 2025; OECD Survey of Adult Skills 2023; MOM Labour Force 2025; MTI (2024); Forward SG (2023); SMU ROSA (2024); Fang & Sim.

Singapore has moved from learning to employability

2000–08
Build capacity

WSQ framework · CET Masterplan. Institute for Adult Learning

Focus: Train as many workers as possible

2009–20
Make learning accessible

SkillsFuture (2015) · credits and subsidies · Skills Frameworks

Focus: Reach every segment of the workforce

> 2021
Drive outcomes

Formation of SWDA (July 2026) · Skills-First Framework for Action · policy towards employability

Focus: PMETs and career transitions

2026

Economic Strategy Review: AI "will allow firms to produce more with fewer workers."

- Career bridges to resilient jobs
- Earlier help before retrenchment
- Work-based learning as stackable credit

Sources: SkillsFuture Singapore; SWDA (Jul 2026); Economic Strategy Review (2026); MOM.

Each technology wave diffuse faster. Create more new jobs (?)

Wave	Time to mass adoption	Jobs created vs lost	What lost out
Internet (2000s)	~15 years: 6.5% → 43% of the global population	2.6 created for every 1 lost Adjacent industry- eCommerce	Clerical, travel, print, retail
Mobile (2010s)	~6 years: Smartphone → 77% of mobile (US)	Mobile app economy: 0 → 2.5M jobs (US) Adjacent industry– ride hailing & delivery	Cameras, maps, music players
Generative AI (2023+)	**Under 2 years: 40% of US adults**	Forecast: 170m created, 92m displaced by 2030 – what adjacent industries?	Early signal: −13% for ages 22–25 in most AI-exposed jobs

1. **Net positive, but not for the same people**
2. **Adoption keeps speeding up: 15 → 6 → 2 years**
3. **Institutions stay slow. That gap is where lifelong learning works**

> *"We can acquire a skill and hold on to it for our life" is no longer a sustainable approach.*
>
> Kristalina Georgieva, IMF Managing Director, IMF–World Bank Annual Meetings, Bangkok, 12 Oct 2026

Sources: ITU; Pew; PPI (2017, 2020); MOT (2025); Bick, Blandin & Deming (2024); WEF (2025); Stanford SIEPR (2025).

We can't predict the jobs. We can build the capacity to ADAPT

#2

SG Global rank for AI use

64.3% of working-age people used generative AI, against 18.8% worldwide (June 2026)

Usage is not the same as skills.

More training does not automatically mean more capability

SUPPLY OF TRAINING

- ~200 AI courses on the SkillsFuture portal
- Complimentary 6 months premium AI tools subscription
- Training participation at a record 54.8%

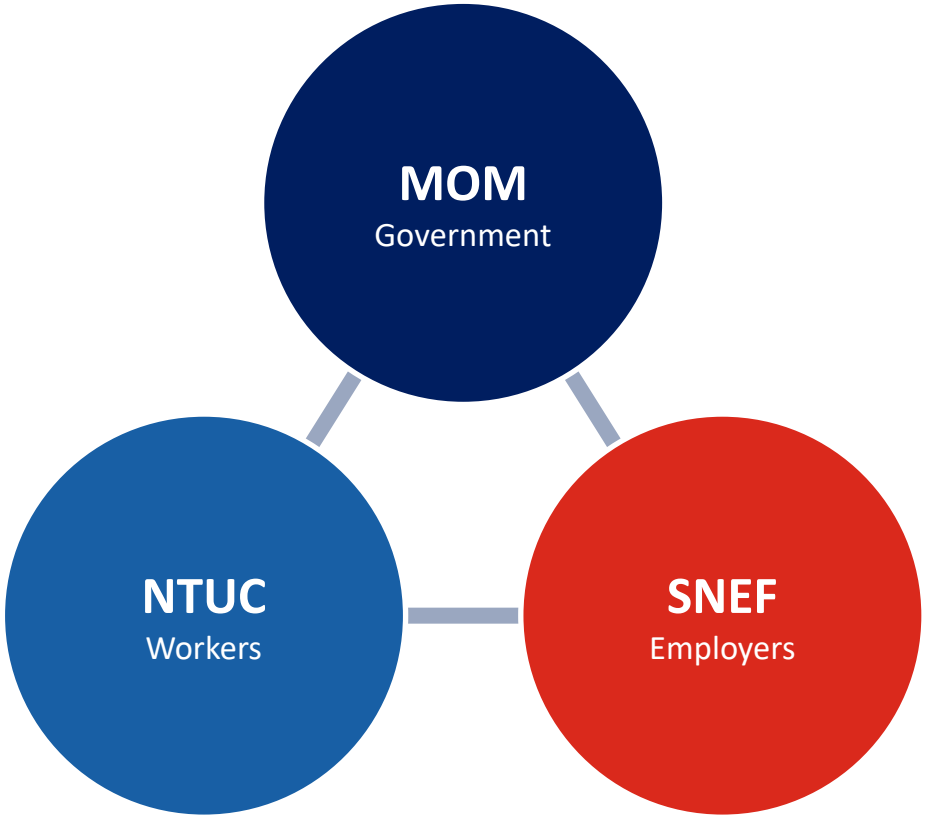
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WHETHER IT CHANGES WORK

- 95% of organisations get minimal return from Gen AI pilots
- 11.3% of non-trainees don't know which skills to learn
- Much adult training is short and compliance driven

Sources: Microsoft, Global AI Diffusion Q2 2026; SkillsFuture Festival 2026; MIT NANDA (2025); MOM Labour Force 2025; OECD Trends in Adult Learning (2025).

Tripartism- Singapore Shared Platform for Change



3,800+

Company Training Committees (CTC) since 2019

300,000+

Blue and white-collar workers benefited

1M+

NTUC AI training places planned

Oct 2026

Skills-First Framework for Action. Tripartite Job Council

"We may not be able to protect every job. But we will protect every worker."

PM Lawrence Wong, May Day Rally 2026

Sources: NTUC (May Day Rally 2026); Mothership (May 2026); Tripartite Alliance Limited.

However workers still don’t have the motivation to learn

No time	**36%**	Build learning into work: training committees, practicums, short modules
No perceived need	**18.7%**	A real return: credentials employers recognise, better pay or promotion
Unsure which skills	**11.3%**	Lifelong career guidance, backed by skills data

WHAT LEARNING IS FOR, BY LIFE STAGE

EARLY CAREER

Getting in

Work-study programmes: 9–11% wage premium

MID-CAREER

Changing course

Career bridges; Level-Up: 36,000+ users in year one

LATE CAREER

Staying engaged

Purpose and contribution; re-employment to 69

Sources: MOM Labour Force 2025; MTI (2024); MOE PQ (Sep 2025); MOM (2026).

Make careers navigable, Make skills count, Redesign jobs first

THE SYSTEM

Career guidance	Job-search coaching	→	Lifelong career guidance, school to retirement
Recognition	Unused credentials	→	Skills Passport counts in hiring; public service first
Funding	Paying for hours	→	Paying for outcomes; CPD based on capability
Providers	Teaching knowledge	→	Learn, build, deploy: courses that lead to jobs

1.6%

of 315,000 Skills Passport users have shared it with employers

EMPLOYERS

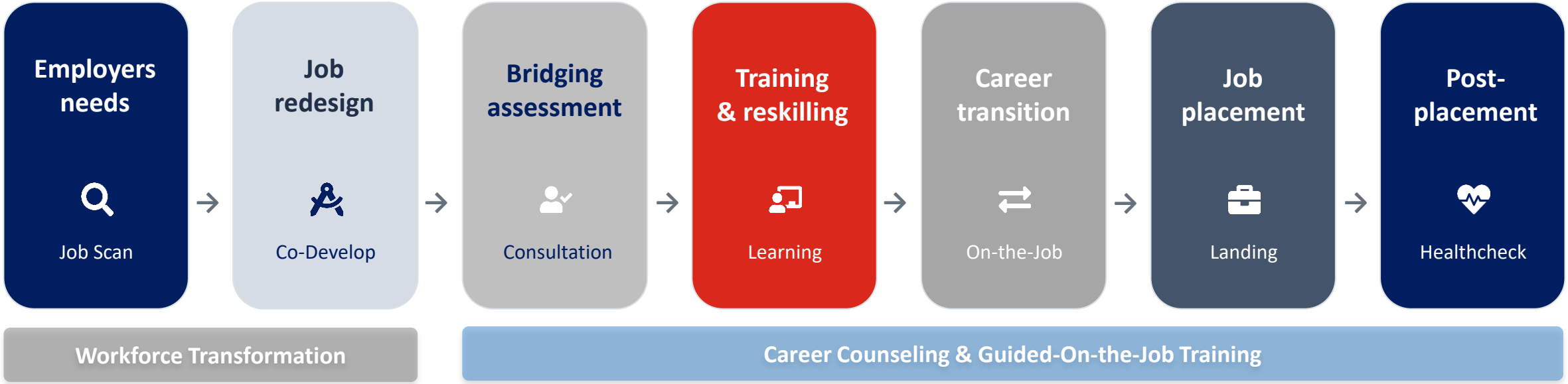
Jobs first	Buying AI tools	→	Redesign the work, then choose the tools
Expertise	Grants on the shelf	→	Certified HR pro in 200+ staff firms (Jul 2028)
Career bridges	Layoffs	→	Redeploy through shared work activities

70%

of an SME's job-redesign costs funded (Job Redesign+, up to S$150k)

Sources: SSG Careers & Skills Passport factsheet (Apr 2025); MOE (2020); OECD career guidance (2021); MOM Enterprise Workforce Transformation Package (2026); MOM/IHRP (Sep 2026); ESR (2026); MIT (2026).

The End-to-End Delivery Model



> 55% Target Career Transition trainees in work within 6 months.

What's new: Pre-consultation with employers and job seekers to set the right expectations. On-the-job training as a practicum that leads to a permanent job.

Sources: MySkillsFuture (SCTP); MOE PQ (Sep 2025); Economic Strategy Review (2026).

One career, five lessons

1991	Every 3 years	Oracle	Retrenched twice	Today
IBM	New roles	China	M&A, De-Globalisation	SUSS Academy
An employer invested a full year in me	I chose to move, to keep learning – exercise Agency	I learned by working in another country	A coach to find a job. A counsellor to find a purpose	Gerontology, Community work. A new career in lifelong learning

Lifelong learning is the key to lifelong employability.

It is also the key to a life of purpose.

THANK YOU