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# WHY YOUTHS ARE FINDING IT HARD TO GET JOBS

## THERE ARE WAYS TO SET A CAREER PATH WITHOUT PRIOR EXPERIENCE OR SKILLS

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**W**HEN writing a resume, many of us seek advice from our parents or our trusted "companion", Google. And, when we have the right "people connection", finding a desired job becomes an easier task.

What happens when we do not have those connections in the first place? Imagine being based in a small town with limited access to jobs in large or established corporations. How do we apply for jobs with limited qualification, experience and skills?

The bigger question is, are parents – and education institutions – preparing our youths to face practical situations such as job interviews, workplace environments, and difficult bosses or people?

### THE SAD TRUTH

According to a McKinsey report, 87% of graduates stated they would like to get more career advice, 63% of alumni said their university could do better at communicating with them, 79% of graduates need help in finding employment, and one-third of students felt lost in their career path.

However, students are not the only ones finding it difficult to secure employment. Thirty-nine per cent of employers stated that it is becoming increasingly difficult to find skilled labours to fill in vacancies for high-skilled jobs. Why the mismatch?

**Skim Latihan 1Malaysia programme (SL1M)** was set up to enhance employability rates among graduates through collaborations with government-linked agencies as well as the private sector. These organisations implement or participate in the SL1M programme as part of their corporate social responsibility. To learn how the SL1M programme works and find out how companies benefit through the SL1M association, refer to the related infographic charts.

Recently, 60 such companies were in Alor Star, Kedah – under the SL1M northern region road show – to conduct on-the-spot interviews and hiring. Our team from **Leaderonomics** had the opportunity to witness, first-hand, the job-seeking and recruitment trends that are out there today.

**Leaderonomics Campus** was also part of this mega road show, helping over 400 students strengthen their curriculum vitae (CVs) through their free "CV Clinic" – a community engagement programme run by the Campus team.

Head of **Leaderonomics Campus** Aaron Tang and senior analyst Awatif Ghapar were among the key speakers and facilitators who provided participants with some insights into CV writing, what makes a great resume and questions we should ask and avoid during interviews.

The team reminded students that having a great-looking CV is not good enough and that they should be flexing their soft skills – especially when they lack experience and technical or operational skills – to prospective employers, during their job interviews.

The myth that millennials are lazy or entitled was proven to be truly just a myth as the programme saw hundreds of students and jobseekers who've travelled from near and far exploring, observing and going the extra mile to set a future for themselves.

As the campus team sat with some of the students, we discovered that many had been unemployed for months – some even a year – despite having high qualifications like a doctorate or a Master's degree. Some also had plenty of work experience.

### WHAT IS THE ACTUAL PROBLEM?

#### EMPLOYERS SAY

Employers who were present at the SL1M event say one of the key traits they look for in graduates is the ability and willingness to learn.



Their field of study aside, companies say they are willing to train these graduates – upon hiring – to prepare them for various roles. This is to help graduates step out of their comfort zones, and strive when they have no relevant prior experience or qualification.

Mohd Najib Mohd Seth, manager of corporate planning in Boustead Holdings Bhd told us: "One graduate from the SL1M programme applied to us. He was very shy initially, and claimed to be an introvert. But we hired him and trained him. And now, he is part of our corporate planning team."

"What we expect from graduates is the right attitude and the willingness to develop and enhance their soft skills," he adds.

A representative from a well-known telecommunications company told us that they, too, had hired a SL1M graduate and trained him to join the sales team. According to them, this person went on to make half a million in revenue within six months.

One of the leading banks in Malaysia that participated in the road show also expressed their desire for new hires with good attitude and foresight.

They shared about a time they hired a graduate with a background in electrical engineering who was finding it tough to get a job in that industry. They encouraged him to step out of his comfort zone and try the sales path instead. With some support and motivation, he is now one of the top sales persons for the company in Kedah.

It's not always about qualifications, grades or academic achievements in these employers' books. We were told that while graduates may have low CGPA scores, some perform exceptionally well as they are hardworking and have a range of soft skills such as good communication, time management, critical thinking skills, a persevering spirit, adaptability, and public speaking skills.

Employers we spoke to mostly want graduates who are able to contribute to real-life situations. However, they also said that they wouldn't throw a fresh graduate into the deep end of the pool on their first day. Depending on the industry, the company will offer training courses before assigning a role to the employee.

#### EMPLOYEES SAY

At this roadshow, we also met successful SL1M graduates who were hired from previous



Resume-writing tips, CV assessment and on-the-spot interviews are among the activities that take place at SL1M roadshows.

field programmes, organised by the Economic Planning Unit.

"It was an honour for me to be a SL1M-UMW participant as it gave me a real-life exposure of the working environment. My superiors and colleagues had helped me understand my tasks under the human resource (HR) function by clearly guiding and explaining the processes and procedures," says UMW Toyota Motor Sdn Bhd group human resource personnel Jalaluddin Ali.

Another computer science graduate we spoke to who found it difficult to secure employment for a year after graduating applied to be part of the SL1M programme. Upon approval, he underwent a six-month training with one of the top government funding companies in Malaysia and is now a part of their HR support team.

Last year alone, the same company had hired 3,000 graduates and job seekers who were sent to all their partnering companies through the SL1M programme.

### WHY ARE YOUTHS STRUGGLING?

Siti Raudhah Abu Bakar, a job seeker and fresh graduate who has been on a job hunt for two months says: "I have been sending out my resume to several companies, and attending countless interviews but



Singer Faizal Tahir, who is also the SL1M spokesperson, entertaining the crowd while providing information on the SL1M roadshow.

the education system – as well as parental and societal pressures – emphasises good grades.

While aiming for good grades is necessary, public schools begin segregating students based on grades and indirectly, this system determines an individual's future by dividing them into science and arts stream after their PT3 examination.

This system could sometimes work against students whose strengths and interests lie in differing fields. Thus, these students might not be able to realise their passion, or pursue tertiary courses related to their field of interest – without forking out thousands of Ringgit. Those who are not able to afford private education will find themselves in a limbo-like state.

The SL1M programme helps to fix this problem by providing opportunities for all. No matter their background, qualifications, results or experience, companies who take part in the SL1M initiative focus on encouraging anyone who is willing to learn and adapt to a role.

The success stories that have come out of this initiative in the past years have proven to be rewarding. It tears down the segregation and belief system that only the high achiever or the privileged will attain greatness. The programme is inclusive and provides an opportunity for those who are determined to achieve more and improve themselves.

#### SL1M Roadshow 2017

- Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS), Kota Kinabalu, Sabah – July 22-23.
- Melaka International Trade Centre (MITC), Ayer Keroh, Melaka – Aug 26-27
- Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSII), Tanjung Malim, Perak – Sept 23-24

Companies that endorse the SL1M programme are entitled to double tax deduction on monthly allowance of not less than RM1,000 paid to graduates for a maximum period of a year including expenditure and fee incurred to conduct training for the graduates. The total amount of deduction allowable for training purposes shall not exceed RM5,000 for the year of assessment. All SL1M qualifying companies, programme and modules must be endorsed by EPU.

To find out how you can implement the SL1M programme into your company, e-mail directly to [azatul.wahab@epu.gov.my](mailto:azatul.wahab@epu.gov.my). Do visit SL1M's official Facebook at Skim Latihan 1Malaysia for latest updates and announcements.

## SL1M FAST FACTS



**WHAT**  
SL1M is a talent marketability programme that assists unemployed graduates increase their chances of employment by enhancing their soft skills, knowledge and technical capabilities.



**WHO**  
The programme is under the purview of the Economic Planning Unit (EPU) under the Prime Minister's Department and is done in collaboration with GLCs and other private corporations. Unemployed graduates from rural areas or low-income families, or those who are currently employed in a job that doesn't match their qualification are eligible for SL1M.



**HOW**  
Companies that recruit graduates under this programme will help transition these graduates into the roles they are hired for through targeted training programmes. As an incentive, the government provides double tax deduction for these organisations. Training cost are also fully or partially reimbursed through the HRDF-SL1M incentive, depending on the arrangement. Training duration is dependent on the company and can extend to a maximum period of 12 months. Graduates can visit the SL1M portal at [sl1m.my](http://sl1m.my) to apply for this programme. The form can also be downloaded and attached with supporting documents to be sent to the EPU Secretariat.

#### TRAINING PROGRAMMES

Companies will focus on soft skills training and on-the-job training as well as other modules that will help increase their scalability and marketability such as a communication, creative and analytical thinking skills, organisational adaptability, value-driven professionalism, and grooming and business etiquette.

## FACT

### STUDENTS, GRADUATES, & EMPLOYABILITY



## A DEGREE IS NOT ENOUGH

You can't rely on your degree alone to automatically open doors after you graduate. It will certainly unlock doors - But however good your degree class, however relevant your subject to the career that you'll be applying for, it is likely that you will be competing for this job with a number of other graduates who are equally well-qualified academically. These are some of the skills that employers are looking for.



## THIS IS WHAT YOU CAN DO

Once your degree has unlocked the door, you'll need the right mix of skills, abilities and personal qualities in order to turn the handle and give the door the push that will open it to you. These skills can be obtained by involving yourself in some of the activities listed below:

