Tote Board – Enabling Lives Initiative
Grant Call 4b: Transition to Work

Problem Statement

Work is an important part of modern life. It provides individuals with income and a sense of self-worth, and more importantly, it gives people an ability to set directions in their lives.

SG Enable aims to support persons with disabilities in seeking and transiting into employment, so as to help each individual maximise their potential and live meaningful, empowered lives. However, persons with disabilities face a variety of challenges in finding work and sustaining in employment.

This Grant call seeks to support initiatives that facilitate better transition from non-work to work for persons with disabilities.

Transition to Work

Successful integration of persons with disabilities into society through Employment

SPED Schools
IHLs & Mainstream Schools
Hospitals
Community
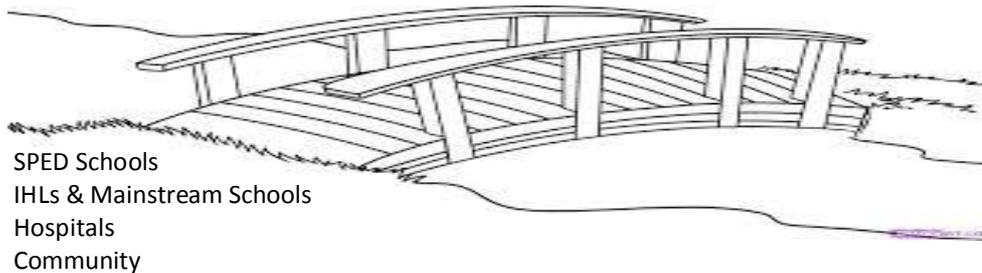
Challenges

Persons with disabilities face a variety of challenges in finding work and sustaining employment. Some of the challenges include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Work readiness of the PWD
- Insufficient Career Guidance received to make right employment choices
- Lack of Internship or Work Experience Opportunities
- Caregiver / Family support to encourage PWDs to work
- Limited Use of Assistive Technology as an enabler

Work Readiness

A number of factors can affect the work readiness of persons with disabilities. While many persons with disabilities want to work, some of them may not be quite ready to work in an open and competitive environment. The factors affecting work readiness are also different for persons with different disabilities.

Disability Type	Some Factors Affecting Work Readiness
Persons with Intellectual Disabilities	- Work attitude and behaviour - Work stamina - Independent travelling - Social skills - Ability to adapt to new situations
Persons with Autism	- Self-regulation skills - Work attitude and behaviour - Work stamina - Independent travelling - Social interaction - Ability to adapt to new situations
Persons with Acquired Disabilities	- Coming to terms with acquired disabilities - Coping with acquired disabilities and re-learning basics of daily living - Change in job skills or scope of work and learning new skills - Work attitude, motivation and expectations - Coping with change in financial situation and level of independence

Career Guidance

Often, persons with disabilities do not receive appropriate career guidance or have access to career guidance tools (e.g., career profiling tools). Consequently, some persons with disabilities enrolled in academic courses that are not appropriate for them (e.g., a person with low vision who will eventually become blind enrolls into an electrical engineering course that requires him/her to look at diagrams) or seek jobs that do not match their abilities or interests.

Internship or Work Experience Opportunities

Persons with disabilities frequently faced challenges in seeking internship or work experience opportunities. Without such opportunities, persons with disabilities lack exposure to real work environment and do not have access to valuable learning experiences.

For persons with disabilities in the Special Education Schools, work experience opportunities provide them with a discovery process to identify their interests and strengths. Work experiences are also valuable for these persons with disabilities to build a portfolio to showcase their abilities for potential employers to see them in action.

For persons with disabilities studying in institutes of higher learning, internship opportunities are valuable for them to apply classroom coursework to the positions they are seeking to fill. Internship opportunities not only opens up networking opportunities with relevant industry people but also build up the resumés of persons with disabilities to ensure that they can compete on an equal footing for jobs with their peers.

Caregiver / Family Support

Persons with disabilities are not the only group of persons who need support in transiting to work. Their caregivers and families also need support / information in helping them to help their children or family members with disabilities to transit to work. Caregivers or families may be worried about

their children or family members travelling independently to work, fear that they may face discrimination or bullying at the workplace or do not think that their children or family members will be able to handle the work. Consequently, some of them may be very reluctant to allow their children or family members with disabilities to work. A change in mindset and equipping the caregivers with practical strategies to help them support their children or family members to work are important.

Use of Assistive Technology as an Enabler

Many challenges faced by persons with disabilities can be overcome by the use of technology. Some of these challenges include communication, independent travelling, and access to learning and information etc. While the assistive technologies may be available, they may require customisation or software development to enable the persons with disabilities in the work context.

Considerations

Applicants are welcome to submit proposals that address one or more of the needs highlighted in the previous section. The table below shows some of the possible areas for the projects:

Caregivers Support	Work Readiness	Transition Management Systems	Community as a Resource
• Caregivers education • Supporting caregivers during transition • Caregivers involvement / capability to train PWDs	• Independent travelling and independence at work, e.g. purchase of meals • Work ethics and soft skills • Vocational rehabilitation and work readiness training	• Profiling of students and job seekers to identify job interest and/or career aptitude • Career guidance • Matching of relevant training and jobs • Assistive technology in facilitating transition	• Participating in community activities for those who are not ready for work yet • Other work options in community near to home

Do consider the following when you are conceptualizing your project:

- Adopting a person-centric approach (eg: needs-based assessment);
- Adopting a system approach – identify common challenges faced and see how these can be solved;
- Work with caregivers as a key partner to facilitate the transition to work for persons with disabilities;
- Community integration as a key principle; and
- Can start small with pilot projects and iterate with improvements.