

SBF Foundation Employability Fund

Case Studies
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An initiative by



Supported by



Evaluation by



SBF Foundation Employability Fund

SBF Foundation Employability Fund is an initiative to **enable the business community to play a role in supporting vulnerable groups to gain and sustain employment**, which is a key to their independence and integration to the community.

In May 2022, SBF Foundation initiated a Memorandum of Understanding with strategic partners, SHRI, NTUC's e2i and Tote Board to strengthen the ecosystem providing holistic employment support for these vulnerable groups.



About the vulnerable groups

There are many challenges that stand in the way of vulnerable groups gaining permanent employment. Most are unable to remain in a job for more than six months due to the unfortunate circumstances they find themselves in. Obstacles include social, emotional and systemic barriers.



Homeless individuals

- 78% male, 22% female
- 82% are above 45 years old
- 24% tertiary, 32% secondary and 44% primary education



Unemployed parents of at-risk children

- Between 25 to 50 years old
- Most of them are living in rental housing
- Most of them have PSLE to Diploma education



Women facing challenges

- Women from the bottom 10% of the socioeconomic group in Singapore
- 44% are Single Mothers
- 60% has lower than secondary education
- Monthly income of less than \$400 per capita



Persons with mental health condition

- 60% are 18 to 34 years old,
- 70% are low functioning hence not job ready
- 58% has tertiary education, 28% secondary

Achievements of the initiative



Since July 2020, our partners have achieved the following:



Employers engaged



Employers hired individuals from the four vulnerable groups



Individuals received employability support



Individuals employed

About the evaluation

FindJobs



HMLY



PINK PARLOUR
HAIR REMOVAL SINCE 2005



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SANKYU



teckwah



We conducted **22** interviews with business leaders, managers, supervisors and employees from the companies who have employed individuals from the four vulnerable groups.

Employers interviewed:

3x Founder / CEO / Managing Director
3x General Manager / Hiring Manager
5x Human Resource Director, Manager and Supervisor
3x Direct Manager and Supervisor

Employees from vulnerable groups interviewed:

- Administrative support
- Cleaner
- Customer service
- Data entry administrator
- Delivery driver
- Packing assistant
- Recruiter
- Sales support
- Waxing therapist

Benefits to employers

We are able to align hiring with company's inclusive employment policies and practices, and achieve CSR goals.

- Go Mama, McDonald's, Pink Parlour, Saladstop

We are able to address our own operational and staff deployment needs.

- Findjobs, Pink Parlour, Saladstop, Urban Culture

We have immediate access to a pool of local talent.

- Findjobs, HMLY, Pink Parlour, Saladstop, Skool4kidz, Urban Culture

Individuals are more appreciative of the employment opportunities.

- Go Mama, Sankyu, Urban Culture

Individuals from the group (single mothers) are a good fit with our business and clientele.

- Go Mama

Good employees who can contribute to our company, and also improve my own mental wellness.

- Findjobs

Benefits to employees

A working environment where employers and co-workers are supportive

- Employees from Findjobs, Go Mama, HMLY, Pink Parlour, Sankyu

Being employed and financial security improved while working on personal challenges

- Employees from HMLY, Saladstop, Urban Culture

Able to explore new role or industry, and not limited by past working experience or educational background

- Employees from Go Mama, Teckwah

Employers redesigned or allocated roles and responsibilities according to my skills and competencies

- Employees from Findjobs, Go Mama, HMLY, Urban Culture

Gained learning and development opportunities that allow professional growth

- Employees from Findjobs, Go Mama, Pink Parlour

Employers allow flexibility work arrangement that met personal needs

- Employees from Go Mama, HMLY, Saladstop

Case Study One

About Urban Culture

- Urban farming services
- Local business, with less than 50 employees

Motivation in hiring from vulnerable group:

- HR director has previously worked with employees from disadvantaged background and was keen to hire from the vulnerable groups after being connected with New Hope.

About the employee from vulnerable group

- Alan (not real name), 58, male
- Role in Company: Delivery driver
- Stopped work due to heart surgery and could only do non-strenuous work due to health condition
- Could not afford to rent a room because of unemployment and had to stay in the temporary shelter,
- Motivated to find a job that leverages on his extensive delivery experience

We are not a social enterprise or charity, we are hiring from the group because we need staff. However, we are also willing to give people a second chance, especially those who have gone through a tough time.... If you want to help a person to contribute their best, there will be some level of customisation in tasks and resources.

Human Resource Director, Urban Culture



- Drove with Alan for the first 2 weeks
- Trained how to use Google Map
- Translate delivery instructions into Mandarin



- Started with 3 days of work
- Used government grant to cover one month probation, then converted to permanent contract



- Fuel reimbursement changed from monthly to weekly to help cash flow
- Allow driving the company van to the shelter to reduce commuting time

Case Study Two



About HMLY

- Product Packaging Solutions
- Local company, with about 200 employees

Motivation in hiring from vulnerable group:

- It is a win-win arrangement for everyone
- Creates employment for individuals from vulnerable groups while addressing human resource needs

About the employee from vulnerable group

- Bernice (not real name), 51, female
- Role: Packing Assistant
- Has not worked for 10 years due to mental health condition
- Also a caregiver to her elderly parents
- Has computer skills
- Was looking for a part time job with flexible schedule with lighter workload

Addressing fear and resistance in employees from vulnerable groups when they join the company. Start them with a smaller team initially can help facilitate their adjustment and provide time and space to build confidence, and gradually move them to a larger team.

Human Resource Manager and Supervisor, HMLY



- Supervisor is very understanding and supportive.
- Worked with the other team members in creating a supportive working environment



- Regular check in about workload and stress level
- Gives constructive feedbacks
- Provides recognition of good performance



- Started Bernice with a smaller group to build her self-confidence, and gradually moved her into a larger group
- Broke down tasks into manageable steps

Case Study Three

About Go Mama

- Provides lactation pod system
- Local business, with less than 50 employees

Motivation in hiring from vulnerable group:

- Founder is motivated to support working mothers because she understands their challenges in juggling work and family responsibilities
- Empathised with their situation more after a DOT poverty simulation workshop

About the employee from vulnerable group

- Carol (not real name), 25, female
- Role in company: Sales and admin support
- Single mother and part time student
- Has previous administrative work experience. Was looking to gain a new career direction, and learn how to manage work, study and childcare duties

Many things get in the way and you need a champion in the company who has a strong faith and belief in inclusive hiring. I am the champion in Go Mama. I have always emphasised the importance of inclusive hiring with my partners and my employees. so they should expect that there will be colleagues from vulnerable background.

Founder, Go Mama



- Implemented workplace policies and practices that are caregiving or child-caring friendly (WFH, eldercare, childcare, back to school leave etc)



- Provided opportunities to discover skills and interests in Carol, and not restricting her to just administrative role



- Made work more task-based rather than time-based

Case Study Four

SANKYU

About Sankyu

- Freight forwarding services
- MNC with more than 200 employees in Singapore

Motivation in hiring from vulnerable group:

- General Manager is personally motivated in hiring persons recovering from mental health conditions. Has relatives who are also recovering from mental health condition

About the employee from vulnerable group

- Danny (not real name), 57, male
- Role in Company: Cleaner
- Worked with Sankyu for more than 6 years
- Was looking for a job near home, in stress-free environment with lighter workload to manage his mental health conditions

It takes more than one person in the company to make this work. Many people still have misconceptions about persons with mental health conditions.... Prepare staff (supervisors and co-workers) through awareness workshop is helpful. We need to keep an open mind, because knowing about the mental health conditions is very different from having a direct experience.

General Manager, Sankyu



- General Manager does regular check in (informal pep talk sessions) with Danny to build rapport and support in his adjustment to work



- Supervisor spent more time to engage Danny and understand his condition and situation
- Provided specific work instruction and close guidance



- Leveraged on job coach to address initial workplace communication issues between Danny and his supervisor

Key success factors in making inclusive hiring sustainable

Buy-in from leadership and internal alignment

- **Personal motivation** (personal experiences with individuals from vulnerable groups)
- Strong **commitment and collaboration across different stakeholders** within the company
- **Alignment with company's vision, mission and/or CSR goals**
- **Address company's operational needs, and not just about "doing good"**

Workplace education and support

- **Educate staff**, especially immediate supervisors and co-workers, on **issues related to the vulnerable groups**
- Train immediate supervisors and co-workers on **how to engage and support employees**
- Support immediate supervisors and co-workers in their **adjustment to employees** (e.g. Addressing any resistance or concerns about working with employees)

Support from case workers and job coaches

- Tap on case workers and job coaches, to **understand the background and needs of the employees**
- Involve social services agency partners in **awareness education and training** in the company
- Maintain **constant contact and communication with case workers and job coaches** to support employers and employees

Inclusive and supportive working environment

Adaptability in task allocation and design

Flexibility in administrative policies and procedures

Thank you to our inclusive employers

FindJobs



HMLY



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CMB Pte Ltd
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Clean Coat Services

Cold Storage
Crystal Jade
DFI Retail Group
Evershine Services
Grand Copthorne Waterfront
Guardian Singapore
HAM Creations
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Levi's
Little Village
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Pan Pacific Hotel
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RS Facilities Services
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