



## **PRESS RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

# **First 'Enabling Pathway Programme' Launched To Enhance Employment Opportunities For Students With Disabilities**

*Co-created by SIM People Development Fund (SIMPDF), SG Enable and the Institute of Technical Education (ITE), the Enabling Pathway Programme is a new ground-up Public-Private-People partnership to drive long-term employment opportunities and prospects for students with disabilities, with SBS Transit (SBST) as the inaugural employer-partner.*

**SINGAPORE, 3 SEPTEMBER 2024** – The SIM People Development Fund (SIMPDF), SG Enable and Institute of Technical Education (ITE) have today announced the launch of the Enabling Pathway Programme. The inaugural partnership under this programme – Enabling Pathway Programme (Land Transport Engineering) (EPP LTE) – brings SBST onboard as the first employer to support students with disabilities studying engineering courses at ITE.

The EPP seeks to enhance employment opportunities for students with disabilities in high-growth sectors with technical positions that demand a significant workforce; enhance the match between students with disabilities and their course of study and job opportunities; and support them throughout their journey from studies to internship, and eventual employment.

Minister for Transport Mr Chee Hong Tat launched the initiative at SBST's Sengkang Rail Depot at a ceremony earlier today.

The partnership spans three years, allowing up to 10 ITE students annually to participate in six-to-nine-month internships at SBST. These internships are designed not only to provide practical experience but also to pave the way for long-term employment opportunities. Additionally, students have the chance to pursue a Work-Study Diploma in Land Transport Engineering at ITE, with course fees fully borne by SBST. The EPP is open to ITE students enrolled in Automotive Engineering, Rapid Transit Engineering, Electrical Engineering, and Mechanical Engineering courses. The first batch of interns began their journey in July 2024. As part of the EPP, students on their internship will receive additional support from SIMPDF in the form of a \$2,400 Enabling Pathway Award.

Following the launch of the EPP LTE, there are plans to reach out to more land transport companies to join the EPP to offer internships and employment. In addition, there are plans to work with trade associations and companies to expand the EPP to other industry sectors to create more job opportunities for students with disabilities. SIMPDF has set aside \$250,000 to fund the Enabling Pathway Awards for 100 students over the next three years.



**Mr Patrick Tay, Chairman of SIMPDF, said:** “Our social mission is to enable all Singaporeans to upskill through creating new experiences and pathways. The Enabling Pathway Programme will create meaningful learning and development opportunities for these students. We look forward to forging future partnerships with other sector leaders to uplift more individuals, empowering them to contribute meaningfully to Singapore's workforce and society. Through these collaborations, we make inclusive hiring a reality, ensuring that no one is left behind in our pursuit of progress.”

Incorporated as a charity in 2020 with seed money from the Singapore Institute of Management (SIM), SIMPDF's social mission is to support Singaporeans who are Dependent, Disabled, Disconnected, and Displaced in realising their career potential through access to learning pathways and experiences.

As the focal agency for disability and inclusion in Singapore, SG Enable is a key partner of the EPP. **Mr Ron Loh, Deputy Chief Executive of SG Enable said:** “SG Enable is committed to building the disability-inclusive employment ecosystem, and the Enabling Pathway Programme adds to the existing breadth and depth of support we offer persons with disabilities and employers. By leveraging the unique strengths of each collaborating organisation, we look forward to enhancing our partnership with SIM People Development Fund, SBS Transit and the Institute of Technical Education so that more students with disabilities can have a smoother transition from school to employment, and a pathway towards different employment opportunities. We invite corporates to join us in realising our vision of building an inclusive society and enabled lives, as we create more job opportunities for persons with disabilities.”

"Inclusivity is at the heart of ITE's mission", said **Ms Low Khah Gek, CEO of ITE.** "The Enabling Pathway Programme reaffirms our dedication to ensuring that every student, including those with disabilities, has access to meaningful education and employment opportunities. Through our collaboration with the SIM People Development Fund, SG Enable, and SBS Transit, we not only expand pathways but also create a supportive journey from education to employment. This empowers our students to reach their fullest potential and succeed in their chosen careers."

Mr Jeffrey Sim, Group CEO, SBS Transit, said: "We are pleased to participate in this Enabling Pathway Programme as it brings us to the next level in our inclusive hiring practices. It is a first for the industry and as the programme's pioneer, we are excited to provide internships to ITE students with disabilities, who are taking land transport engineering courses. Not only does this align with the students' interests and areas of study, it also offers the prospect of future full-time employment for them. This is a meaningful programme, which supports Forward Singapore in moving the nation towards a more inclusive society and we hope more employers and other public transport operators would come onboard too."

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## APPENDIX A – INFORMATION ON THE INTERNS’ SCOPES

Name of Intern	Scope
Nur Arfa Taqiah Binte Mohamad Noor Azhar	Works in the signalling department of the North East Line Component Service Centre at Sengkang Depot, where she conducts detailed component inspections and assists in repair processes.
Mohammad Umran Bin Mohammad Zakirrom	Attached to the preventive maintenance team of the North East Line Rolling Stock Department. He performs interior inspections of Light Rail Vehicles, assessing the condition of seats, stanchion poles, air conditioning levels, and emergency doors.
Thanigai Arasu Shriram	Works in the Downtown Line Systems department at Gali Batu Depot. His responsibilities include maintaining depot and train-borne video surveillance, PA systems, and access management systems at the depot premises.
Muhammad Irfan Shahid Bin Mohammad Shalihin	Works in the Downtown Line Rolling Stock department where his responsibilities include soldering faulty train parts to restore them to working order and assisting with the delivery of repair parts between the workshop and warehouse.

### ABOUT SIM PEOPLE DEVELOPMENT FUND (SIMPDF)

The SIM People Development Fund (SIMPDF) was set up to support Singaporeans from all walks of life in upskilling through access to learning pathways and experiences. SIMPDF has been a registered charity with Institution of a Public Character (IPC) status since March 2021. Their donors are given tax deductions for their donations to SIMPDF. They are governed by a diverse and independent board of directors. Please visit <https://www.simpdf.sg> for more information.

### ABOUT INSTITUTE OF TECHNICAL EDUCATION (ITE)

The Institute of Technical Education (ITE) was established as a post-secondary institution in 1992, under the Ministry of Education. ITE is a principal provider of career and technical education and a key developer of national skills certification and standards skilling Singapore for the future economy. It offers three key programmes - (1) Pre-Employment Training for youths after secondary education (2) Continuing Education and Training for adult learners and (3) Workplace Learning and Work-Study Programmes with employers. Under its 'One ITE System, Three Colleges' Governance Model, ITE has three Colleges - ITE College Central, ITE College East and ITE College West. For more information, please visit <https://www.ite.edu.sg>.



## **ABOUT SBS TRANSIT**

SBS Transit is a leading multi-modal public transport operator that is focussed on delivering safe, reliable and pleasant journeys. Operating close to 200 bus routes with a fleet of over 3,300 buses, it is Singapore's largest and most established public bus operator. It also operates 83 kilometres of rail tracks over 79 stations including the North East Line, which is the world's first fully automated, underground heavy metro system, the 42-km long Downtown Line, and the Sengkang-Punggol Light Rail Transit Systems. Every day, its network of buses and trains carries more than 3.5 million passenger trips. A publicly listed company, SBS Transit is a member of the ComfortDelGro Group, which is a leading global land transport company.

## **ABOUT SG ENABLE**

SG Enable, the focal agency for disability and inclusion in Singapore, enables persons with disabilities to live, learn, work and play in an inclusive society. SG Enable creates equitable opportunities for persons with disabilities through thought leadership, sustainable social innovation and impactful partnership. Guided by core values of professionalism, innovation and empathy, SG Enable envisions a more inclusive Singapore and enabled lives. Set up by the Ministry of Social and Family Development in 2013, SG Enable is a registered charity and an Institution of a Public Character. For more information, please visit <https://www.sgenable.sg>.

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