



Publication: The Straits Times, Forum Online

Date: 12 February 2014

Headline: Employment improves quality of life for disabled people

Employment improves quality of life for disabled people

Published on Feb 12, 2014

IT IS heartening to know that more assistance is being given to people with disabilities ("Bizlink to pay disabled workers basic living wage" and "SMU to make life easier for disabled students"; both published last Saturday).

However, it is challenging for disabled people to remain employed for long because of factors such as communication problems, poor relationship with colleagues and social exclusion.

While agencies can help in recruitment, job placement, training and vocational assessment, long-term employment for disabled people requires close collaboration between the involved parties, such as the employer, the employee and his family members.

We have a framework to hire disabled people through training and skills development, but we must not forget their intrinsic needs.

One of the factors that determines quality of life is job security.

Dr Noel Chia Kok Hwee has stressed the importance of focusing on work capacities rather than disabilities ("Focus on the disabled's work capacities"; Monday).

Another way of looking at work capacity is to determine whether the potential employee is suitable for a particular position. This calls for proper job matching and an employee orientation programme.

Self-actualisation can be attained when the disabled person is confident and motivated in his work. This can be achieved through a close collaboration between the employee and a mentor at work.

Only after this can we talk about the ability of the disabled person to perform at work.

There is no one-size-fits-all method to improve the quality of life for disabled people.

But when gainfully employed, persons with disabilities can feel confident that they can make a difference and contribute to the economy.

Arnold Chua Chee Keong