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## NEWS/BUSINESS/FINANCE/LIFESTYLE EDITORS For Immediate Release

### **Fair Opportunity Inclusive Recruitment Fair** Removing barriers to employment for students with disabilities

**Hong Kong, 12 October 2016** – Organised by leading NGO CareER and supported by Community Business, an Inclusive Recruitment Fair will take place on Saturday, 15 October in Hong Kong. The half day Fair is part of the Fair Opportunity programme, a pioneering initiative which supports higher education students with disabilities as they transition to employment. Earlier this year, the Fair Opportunity Programme was recognised with an ‘Innovation Award for Inclusive Organisation’ by the Hong Kong SAR Government’s 2015-16 Talent-Wise Inclusive Organisations Recognition Scheme.

‘Students with disabilities, who through their sheer determination, ingenuity, optimism and work ethic, have made it through to university, are clearly a talent pool worthy of consideration based on merit’, said Fern Ngai, Chief Executive Officer of Community Business. According to research conducted by Civic Exchange in 2012, they comprise a small but significant talent pool and are intelligent individuals with strong family support and nearly 100% course completion rate.

The Fair is an exclusive channel for students and graduates with disabilities to meet leading corporates who are committed to creating a diverse workforce and an inclusive workplace culture that values differences. It also provides these inclusive employers with a pool of capable talent who are available for employment or internships. To prepare the students and participating companies for the Fair, two separate workshops are being held:

1. On 30 September 2016 (Friday), a Capability Building Workshop organised by CareER and hosted by AIA MPF prepared the students with job seeking skills and their confidence. Recruitment experts shared CV writing and interviewing skills, dress code, and etiquette; experts from Facebook and LinkedIn discussed online profiling with the students, whereas Interview Hero discussed interview manner and formal interview dress code, and Laneige taught students about personal outlook and grooming skills. A mock interview session conducted by AIA MPF enabled the students to put what they learned into practice. Each student had a professional photo taken by Nikon.
2. A workshop for employers will be held on 5 October 2016 (Wednesday) to build their disability confidence by learning about what to consider when recruiting people with disabilities, including language, etiquette and workplace accommodations. Experience and best practices will be shared between like-minded companies and those already employing people with disabilities.

The main event of the Programme is an Inclusive Recruitment Fair where companies have the opportunity to position themselves as an employer of choice for disabled talent, interacting directly with the students to explore employment opportunities, including full-time roles and internships. The Fair will be held at The HUB, KPMG, Hysan Place, a venue which is accessible for people with disabilities.

According to the Employment of High-Educated Disabled Persons Survey released by CareER in 2016, almost 40% of high-educated candidates with disabilities received a job offer only after

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waiting for over 6 months, while average waiting time was 4.8 months. While almost 80% of employer respondents recognise the capabilities of disabled people, only 17% of the respondents were willing to hire them. The major concerns included 'office environment limitation' (60%), 'nature of work is not suitable' (46%), and 'lack of channels/opportunities to meet/get to know these disabled candidates' (42%).

'Usually when people or companies have had little exposure to people with disabilities, they tend to focus on their disability or medical label, rather than on the individual and his or her abilities,' said Ms Ngai, in a recent interview with South China Morning Post. 'They are biased because they are more concerned about what a person with disabilities cannot do, rather than what they can do.'

An increasing number of companies recognise that a diverse and inclusive workplace is good for business. However, they hesitate when it comes to employing people with disabilities due to false assumptions, misunderstanding and fear. Community Business' research "**Tapping a Pool of Disabled Talent**" explored the experiences and perspectives of students with disabilities as they seek the transition to employment. It provides valuable insights and recommendations to employers looking to market and differentiate their companies as an employer of choice for this talent pool. Internationally, there is research study showing a solid business case for employing people with disabilities and that dispels some of the misperceptions and myths about hiring people with disabilities. Companies who employ people with disabilities will often realize benefits for all employees and the organization as a whole, including higher employee engagement and morale. The truth is, as suggested by Benny Lee, Business Consultant of VEI, 'Talent has no limits. The only disability in life is a bad attitude.' Mr. Stephen Fung, Chief Executive Officer at AIA MPF, is believed that anyone deserves a stable retirement and future and this belief motivates the company to support disability employment. Both corporates value disability talents, are committed to giving them opportunities, and encourage more employers to join force in creating a more diverse and inclusive Hong Kong.

Frank, a first class honours university graduate who is visually impaired, was employed in 2015 after over 9 months of job searching. Having participated in the Fair Opportunity Programme that year, he was hired by CSL as a Customer Service Officer, a role that leverages his excellent communication skills and logical process orientation. Jocelyn, another participating student of 2015, currently works full time in the global markets team at ANZ. CareER played a significant role in following up their cases and is proud of their current work status.

Community Business has been running its annual Inclusive Recruitment Programme in Hong Kong since 2013 and has partnered with CareER since 2015. Compared with 2015, there has been a 23% increase in enrolled students and a 17% increase in participating companies in 2016. Since the Programme's inception in 2013, 131 students have participated, with 35% subsequently securing an internship or full time employment.

#### **Useful links:**

Inclusive Recruitment Fair:

<http://career.org.hk/en/fair-opportunity/programme/inclusive-recruitment-fair>

Diversity & Inclusion, Community Business:

[http://www.communitybusiness.org/focus\\_areas/D&I.htm](http://www.communitybusiness.org/focus_areas/D&I.htm)

Tapping a Pool of Disabled Talent, Community Business:



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<http://www.communitybusiness.org/DIANIndia/DisabilityDeliverable/>

Civic Exchange Annual Reports

<http://www.civic-exchange.org/en/about-us/annual-reports.php>

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### About Fair Opportunity

Fair Opportunity, previously named Open to You, is an award-winning initiative of Community Business. The yearly programme has created a significant positive impact over the years regarding building disability confidence of students and employers, and creating employment opportunities.

2016 Sponsors and Participating Companies: AIA MPF, ANZ, Bank of America Merrill Lynch, Dialogue Experience, Goldman Sachs, HACTL, HAGSL, Hang Lung Properties, HK Broadband, HSBC, J.P. Morgan, KPMG, Manulife and Value Exchange Inc.

### About CareER

Care in Education and Recruitment (CareER), founded in 2013, develops a talent pool of tertiary educated individuals with disabilities and create pre-employment peer networking opportunities for them, in order to support them in finding employment with corporates in Hong Kong. CareER has been appointed by Community Business to be the exclusive organizer of Fair Opportunity in 2016.

### About Community Business

Community Business is a not-for-profit organisation (Hong Kong Charity Number 91/6560) whose mission is to lead, inspire and support businesses to have a positive impact on people and communities. A recognized leader in promoting responsible and inclusive business practices in Asia, Community Business conducts research, facilitates networks and events, leads campaigns and provides consultancy and training. Our focus on responsible business is aligned to 5 mission-led themes:

- Investing and supporting local communities
- Tackling inequality in the workplace
- Ensuring happy, healthy, and engaged employees
- Promoting social inclusion
- Building responsible business partnership

Founded in 2003 and based in Hong Kong with a presence in India and the United Kingdom, Community Business works with companies of all sizes and from diverse industries across Asia, harnessing the power of business to drive social change. For more information, please visit <http://www.communitybusiness.org>.

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