



[For Immediate Release]

Open Door Work Placement Programme 2024: Empowering Ethnically Diverse Youth in Hong Kong

[24 September 2024, Hong Kong] **KELY Support Group** (“KELY”) is thrilled to announce the successful completion of **Open Door Work Placement Programme 2024** (the “**Programme**”), sponsored by **Prudential Hong Kong Limited** (“**Prudential**”). This life-changing initiative has been instrumental in providing essential career development opportunities for youth from ethnically diverse backgrounds.

Tripling the positive impact for ethnic minority youth

In just one year, the Open Door Work Placement Programme has tripled its impact. From 10 ethnic minority (EM) youth interns and 10 small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) partners in 2023, the programme has grown to 26 EM youth interns and 18 SMEs in 2024. This remarkable expansion underscores the Programme’s effectiveness and the commitment of KELY’s programme partners.

Youth Intern of Open Door Work Placement Programme 2024, Laieba, shared that, “Working alongside Mr. Harris, my employer/mentor, has been an invaluable experience. Through our collaboration, I’ve delved into skincare essentials, cancer prevention, and treatments – but it didn’t stop there – he also opened my eyes to effective business strategies and deepened my understanding of entrepreneurship.”

At the heart of this programme lied the celebration of diversity and inclusion. The youth interns, representing various ethnic communities, brought unique perspectives, skills, and talents to the business world. By fostering an inclusive environment, they are empowered to thrive and contribute meaningfully. These young talents were more than interns; they were catalysts for positive change, driving innovation and growth within the SMEs they joined.

The unique role of SMEs in opening doors for EM youth

SMEs played a crucial role in nurturing this pool of young talent. Despite their size, SMEs possessed the understanding and heart comparable to international conglomerates. They provided a nurturing environment where ethnically diverse youths can hone their skills, contribute fresh perspectives, and in turn, SMEs benefited from the diverse insights and drive these youths brought to the company.

Benny Chan, Chief Executive Officer of Think Technology Solutions Ltd, said, “As an entrepreneur committed to guiding the next generation, I sincerely believe that young people, regardless of their ethnicity or socioeconomic status, are the foundation for our society’s future.

We have a responsibility to create growth opportunities and level the playing field for them, cultivate their diverse talents, and enable them to develop into the pillars of our society.”

As Programme Sponsor, Prudential shared its views on the role of SMEs in this initiative. **Wayne Fong, Head of Corporate Affairs** at Prudential said: “We are honoured to continue our partnership with KELY Support Group in the Open Door Work Placement Programme this year. Through our extensive network, built on years of serving SMEs, we have connected with 18 SMEs this year to provide valuable internship opportunities to 26 ethnic minority youth. By participating in this programme, SMEs are reminded of the importance of diversity and inclusion in the workplace, as well as recognising ethnic minority youth as a potential talent pool. We firmly believe that everyone, regardless of their ethnic background, would shine if given the chance.”

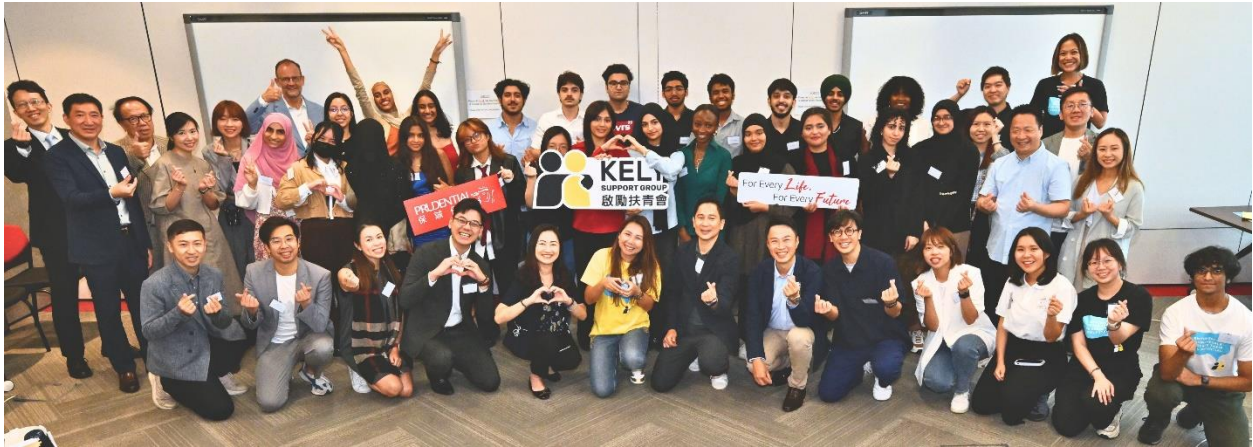
Rounding up with opened doors

A graduation ceremony was held at Prudential’s office on 21 September, where representatives from KELY, Prudential, SME participants and all participating youth were gathered to celebrate their achievements and rejoice in the fruit of their experience together.

Godi Li, Deputy Director of KELY Support Group, said at the ceremony that, “As we reflect on the programme's achievements and look forward to its continued success, we invite the community to join us in supporting these bright young minds. Their success stories are not just theirs alone; they are a testament to what we can achieve when we embrace diversity and work together for a better future. Together, we create pathways for success, bridging gaps and **opening doors** for the next generation.”



Ms. Godi Li (left), Deputy Director of KELY Support Group, presented a certificate of appreciation to Mr. Lawrence Wong (right), Head of Enterprise Solutions of Prudential, at the graduation ceremony of Open Door Work Placement Programme 2024 to show KELY’s gratitude for Prudential's continued support.



Attendees of the graduation ceremony took a photo together to celebrate a union of diverse young talents and bold employers.



Student participants were arranged to have interviews with SME employers to ensure good matching between skills and placement opportunities.



Nigel Raymont (left), professional career development coach, was invited to give a training to all student participants prior to the work placement.

High-resolution images can be downloaded at [this link \(bit.ly/KELY-ODP2024\)](https://bit.ly/KELY-ODP2024).

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About KELY Support Group

KELY Support Group (KELY) is a Hong Kong-based nonprofit organisation whose mission since 1991 is to equip young people with the skills, knowledge, and opportunities needed to support themselves and each other. KELY envision a world where young people are empowered to reach their full potential, and collaborate with schools and various partners to offer programmes to Chinese- and English-speaking youth between the ages of 14 and 24 around our three core focus areas: Mental Health and Wellbeing, Drug and Alcohol Awareness, and Positive Youth Development. Please visit [KELY.ORG](https://www.kely.org) for more information.

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